THE DOCTRINE OF GOD AFTER VATICAN II

INTRODUCTION

IT HAS BECOME commonplace to observe that the doctrine of God is in crisis, an acknowledgement that is softened somewhat in discerning that this is less a crisis of faith itself than of the cultural mediation of faith. For some this is theological disaster, marking the loss of the traditional concept of God to the forces of atheism and secularism. To others it is a liberating factor in that it signals the displacement of an alienating idea of God that clears the way for a long overdue theological reconstruction. One undeniable benefit has been a return of the doctrine of God to its rightful place of centrality in theological discourse—a privileged position it occupied in the 13th century thought of Aquinas and Bonaventure, in the 16th century thought of Luther and Calvin, one retained by Schleiermacher in the 19th century and regained by Karl Barth in the 20th century. Once again, God has become the focus of theological questioning. The difference lies in the way the question has shifted: now the burning issue is the absence or silence of God.

THE NEW WAY OF RAISING THE QUESTION OF GOD

Heretofore the starting point for religion and theology was *Credo in unum Deum*, the creedal distillate of the Christian Gospel. This was the Archimedian point of belief upon which depended anthropology, christology, ecclesiology, sacramentology, etc. Such is no longer the case due to the success of the atheist critique beginning with Feuerbach. The atheist challenge remains, either in the negative form of a massive indifference (here the very question of God's existence pales into insignificance, Sartre tells us, because it makes no difference

whatsoever to the quality of life: believers kill one another just as do unbelievers, and even do so in the name of God), or in the positive form of a religious humanism, even in some quarters of a theology without God. More radical still is what has been called "semantic atheism", i.e. the contention that the very word "God" is without meaning, any meaning, that is, that can be validated in the public forum. Nietzsche's cry "God is dead" gives way now to the assertion that the very term "God" has no referent other than that arbitrarily given to it by believers; no objectively real referent, that is.

What has occurred, in a spontaneous dialectic of history, whether for good or for bad, is the overthrow of classical theism, i.e. of that understanding in which God is the Supreme Being explaining the existence of everything else—a preunderstanding that precedes revelation and makes the latter credible. This Hellenic and Medieval notion of God was called into question when the cultural world that gave it birth ceased to exist. What was rejected was an objectifying of God, cognitively, by way of metaphysics. This could no longer be the *point de départ* for the doctrine of God; it was no longer possible to begin with an idea that was then subsequently given content from the sources of revelation. This rendered suspect any demonstrating or verification of God's existence—though it must be said that the atheist premise was equally incapable of validation. This precipitated a radical shift in the question about God. No longer was the concern "Does God exist?", "Is he real?", but rather now "Is God present and operative in human life?", and "Does that presence make a difference?". This was in fact a return to the biblical question concerning God's role in human history both individual and social, a question especially urgent in the post-exilic period. God now meant, not "He who is" (*Ipsum Esse Subsistens*), nor even "He who is with us" (*mit-Sein*), but "He who will be who he will towards mankind", "He who will be the God of our future". The new note being sounded is that of futurity; somewhat muted is the note of divine transcendence, at least in the sense that transcendence was being deferred.

The shift then was to the God of revelation, more concretely to the God encountered in Jesus of Nazareth. At the very origins of faith then was the attempt to set aside all endeavor to speak about God, in favor of being content to speak about Jesus and his summons to love. The difficulty with this was the impossibility of grounding belief in that God who was the Father of Jesus, in anything other than Jesus's own authority in proclaiming the nearness of that God and his kingdom. But the preaching of Jesus rests on nothing more than his human authority, unless he be recognized as of divine status. This latter confession, however, as to who Jesus is, implies some sort of preunderstanding of God that the believer brings to the encounter with Jesus. Thus does it seem that we can begin neither with a natural theology nor with a purely biblical faith.

Two resolutions to this aporia have emerged from within recent Catholic thought. One arises from rereading Aquinas through Kantian spectacles. The result is a Transcendental Thomism—its practitioners are Karl Rahner, Bernard Lonergan, Emerich Coreth, Joseph Lotz, and a host of disciples [1]—which reconceives human subjectivity as universally oriented towards the Absolute, named at the start simply as Holy Mystery. In this anonymous affirmation of God, there is no prior seeking out of some objective concept of God (something humanly devised, then) with which to approach God. Rather, the human subject as such is always already standing before God. Human subjectivity is understood as intrinsically gifted with transcendence as God's unexacted gift

[1] Cf. Karl Rahner: *Spirit in the World* tr. William Dych (New York: York: Herder & Herder, 1969); also a theological employment of the theory in *Foundations of Christian Faith,* tr. William Dych (New York: Seabury Press, 1978). Bernard Lonergan: *Insight* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1958) with theological application in *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972). Emerich Coreth: *Metaphysik: Eine Methodisch-Systematisch Grundlegung* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1961). J. B. Lotz: *Das Urteil und das Sein* (Pullach bei Munchen, 1957). Helpful also is Otto Muck: *The Transcendental Method,* tr. William Seidensticker (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968).

(or at least offer) of himself. This transcendence is necessarily mediated by categorical reality, above all by concrete historical events, but within such mediation there is conscious experience of this orientation to God which in fact defines man as man. Nonetheless, it remains nonobjective, nonconceptual and unthematic. Categorical knowledge, by contrast, is precisely a thematizing, a focusing down as it were, of this transcendental orientation, of this pregrasp (*Vorgriff*) of what is in fact the divine. The latter then constitutes a universal human experience which is subsequently given expression in the multiple and differing doctrines and beliefs which divide mankind. One common and universal experience is thus given varied expressions and articulations.

The alternative view finds this to give human subjectivity more weight than it can bear. Accordingly, it gives greater stress to the *object* of faith which is in fact the very person and deeds of Christ who is *within history* " the manifestation of the goodness and the living kindness of God " (*Titus* 3:4). This position is represented by Hans Urs von Balthasar for one, who regards theology as more a matter of aesthetics than of science, as an intuition of the splendor and glory of God revealed in Christ.[2] Johann-Baptist Metz advocates it, though differently in using memory as a theological category that stresses the primacy of genuine history over being, over what he would take to be only the illusion of history in Transcendental Thomism; and in preference to the emphasis upon presentiality characteristic of existential thought, one markedly operative in Bultmannian theology.[3] Metz's own thought then is a reaction against the bias for what is individual and private in the interest of what pertains to the social and communitarian. Edward Schillebeeckx also leans in this direction, first by promoting the hermeneutic role in theology (as a reinterpretation

[2] Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar: *Love Alone,* tr. Alexander Dru (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969.

[3] J. B. Metz: *Faith in History and Society,* tr. David Smith (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969).

of living tradition), but more recently by employing the social critical theory of the Frankfort School wherein greater place is given to the discontinuities and the negativities in history. This allows him to give greater emphasis to actual occurrences in their uniqueness, which do not participate in a meaning totality otherwise than by anticipating it.[4] All these theologians are reserved towards the transcendental project of allowing for a common inner experience shaping subsequent expression. They prefer to begin with the given symbols of the community (scriptural, liturgical, sacramental) which then shape subsesequent experiences. The Church then preexists its members whom it forms by incorporating them into itself.

But this option, too, is not without difficulties of its own. Preeminent among them is the lack of some locus in the *humanum* which undergoes history, wherein humankind is open to and enabled to receive God's historical revelation. The only viable resolution of this dilemma seemingly is an even more radical fall back upon experience—not merely the experience of transcendence or of the Jesus-event—in all its contingency and secularity. This would seem to signal a retreat from metaphysics, and a natural theology built upon it, certainly from an essentialistic metaphysics. This then is an implicit acquiescence in Heidegger's charge that traditional theism is in fact an onto-theo-logic. Still, the doctrine of God has to be thought through, and it can be legitimately wondered if therefore all metaphysics can be abandoned. The language at work, for example, intends not only genuine meaning but also a real referent. The sole alternative to classical metaphysics need not be either linguistic analysis or biblical fundamentalism, nor may it mean collapse into uncritical belief or into action. The existence of a transsubjective referent to language here obviously cannot be verified empirically. So, at least in this minimal sense, the activity engaged in here is metaphysical, i.e. it is more than a purely empirical act. The rooting of such activity in experience means

[4] Edward Schillebeeckx: *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, tr. Hubert Hoskins (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), esp. pp. 618-619.

that the metaphysical dimension is an *a posteriori*, not an *a priori* one. But if, by and large, old certainties have been eroded away, the beginnings of a recovery can only lie someplace in the preconditions to thought, in the prerational, even visceral reaction to existence.

This lived experience may make it possible to mitigate any unvalidated presuppositions, especially since the experience at issue is an ordinary and universally accessible one, that is, not a specifically religious experience or encounter. Langdon Gilkey characterizes these as secular experiences in their very security, but occurring at a certain depth level that cannot fail to confront us with what is ultimate in life.[5] They are not direct experiences of God but experiences of ourselves, of our very humanity, which are experiences of God only covertly and negatively. They are experiences of such realities as the gift-like character of existence, of the unconditioned value of life even in the face of death suggesting that the latter is not mere disappearance into the Void, of the transtemporal dimension to certain experiences of joy, of the awareness of being forgiven our betrayals, of the ambiguity of our freedom as rooting our capacity for love. These force upon us the question about God; the answers lie elsewhere, above all in the confessions of the positive religions.

What must be noted, however, is that all such experiences are interpreted ones. There are no such things as brute experiences which are value-free. From the very beginning then we are drawn up into the circle of faith. Philosophies of man no longer acquiesce in the Enlightenment's "prejudice against prejudice". Unavoidably we bring a nexus of preunderstandings, of theories and conceptual systems, to our experiences. Thus a hermeneutical circle arises inevitably between present experiences on one hand, and interpretive norms brought to them from the past on the other. Michael Polanyi has argued persuasively for the recognition that all human knowledge bears

[5] Langdon Gilkey: *Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God Language* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969).

within itself a fiduciary element: " We must now recognize belief once more as the source of all knowledge, explaining the impulses which shape our vision of the nature of things . . ." [6] Conceiving the problem somewhat differently, Han-Georg Gadamer describes what happens as a " fusing of the horizons ", i.e. as a bridging of the horizons of present experience with that forming the background of texts received from the tradition, to avoid either reading into the text something that is not there, or allowing the text to go uninterpreted.[7] The dialectical nature of this affirmation of God has been lucidly posed by Wolfhart Pannenberg: " Only if man, even outside the Christian message, is related in his being as man to the reality of God on which the message of Jesus is based, can fellowship with Jesus mean salvation to him ".[8] This preliminary idea—which makes possible the question but not the answer about God— is radically transformed once it makes possible the encounter with Christ, not so much in the sense that the original " empty " concept is filled in and given content as that the very character of the question undergoes an enriching alteration. The faith encounter by way of the human life of Jesus, in other words, shapes the very question posed about God.

One confirmation of this way of asking about God is provided by Karl Marx who predicted that Marxist theorizers needn't worry about the reality of God, for once the revolution succeeded the very term itself would vanish as otiose. Events have proven him mistaken. The word refuses to go away and is raised today perhaps with greater urgency than ever. Even Marxist theorists behind the Iron Curtain, while explicitly denying any real referent to the term, resort to it as a means of forestalling any absolutizing of the socialist state. For them,

[6] Michael Polanyi: *Personal Knowledge, Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962) p. 266.

[7] Hans-Georg Gadamer: *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).

[8] Wolfhart Pannenberg, " Speaking about God in the Face of Atheist Critique ", *The Idea of God and Human Freedom*, tr. R. A. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), p. 102.

the term has the function of invoking a transcendence that alone is unconditional and so can function in a regulatory way in thought; it appeals to a transcendence but denies a transcendent. For Ernst Bloch, " God " is a cipher or a code word for the limitless possibilities inherent in the human project.[9] Another atheist-Marxist from Czechoslovakia has entitled one of his books *God Is Not Quite Dead,* in which the theme of " God " is used to signify a liberating potentiality in challenging all arbitrarily closed historical and social horizons. This very word is necessary to any notion of humankind in its totality—so much so that the death of God means eventually the death of man as a bearer of meaning. Indeed, Rahner has written that without this word man remains but a clever animal.[10]

But the enigmatic figure of Karl Marx has cast yet another shadow on contemporary theology. This derives from his well-known eleventh thesis on Feuerbach contending that the role of philosophy is not to construct one more theory about the world but to seek to change the world. This " second coming " of Marx " not in the dusty frock coat of the economist . . . [but] . . . as a philosopher and moral prophet with glad tidings about human freedom " [11] has obvious attractions for the contemporary theologian. If God breaks into our history, becoming man in Jesus, proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom, and summoning to salvation, this certainly intends an abrupt change in the direction our history has taken. The consequence is a new and pronounced emphasis upon orthopraxis as the indispensable means of establishing orthodoxy, that is, of rendering credible the mysteries confessed by the Christian. Praxis here means a dialectic between theory on the one hand and practice or behavior on the other. Any dichotomy between speculative and practical reason is thus seen to be a disastrous one. Edward Schillebeeckx indicated how such orthopraxis is at once opera-

[9] Ernst Bloch: *Das Prinzip Hoffnung,* 2 vols. (Frankfort, 1959).

[10] Rahner: *Foundations of Christian Faith,* p. 48.

[11] Sidney Hook, cited by Francis Fiorenza in " Dialectical Theology and Hope, I " *The Heythrop Journal,* IX, 2 (April, 1968) p. 144.

tive in two domains: the mystical and the ethical.[12] The former is the approach to God in prayer, something that can assume a specifically Christian form but allows for non-Christian form as well. The ethical assumes from the very beginning a universal character, marking a concern Christians share with all mankind. Praxis as such is not a norm for truth; Oscar Wilde once observed that willingness to die for a cause is no proof for the truthfulness or goodness of that cause. At the same time, praxis can have a cognitive dimension and function. *Metanoia* and the practice of God's kingdom are then the hermeneutical keys to interpreting Christian beliefs in the texts of the Bible, the Fathers and the teaching Church. It is in his own praxis of the kingdom—in his dealings with sinners, his miracles, his parables, his table fellowship with people, his attitude towards the Law—that Jesus comes to recognize God as *Abba*, caring for and offering a future to his children.[13]

From considerations such as these arises the centrality of hope in Christian existence. Recent reflection, even if allowing a temporal priority to faith, grants ontological primacy rather to hope. Christian life pivots on God's promises to us; if he is with us now, this "already" is the prolepsis of the "yet to come". If the kingdom is already inaugurated in Jesus's human life, its consummation lies ahead of us with the God who is to come as the future of humanity. Without succumbing to the myth of progress, we, like the Israelites of old, set out for the promised land—a land, however, that we ourselves must reclaim and cultivate, trusting in God's promises. Faith in a life to come, in the Eschaton, can only ring true if our hope motivates us to seek a better future here and now.

One reservation should perhaps be registered concerning this granting of primacy to the future, one intended as a qualification not a rejection of such revitalization of the virtue of hope.

12 Edward Schillebeeckx: *Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord*, tr. J. Bowden (New York: Seabury Press, 1980) esp. p. 658.

13 Schillebeeckx: *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, ed. Robert Schreiter (New York: Crossroad, 1984) pp. 147-148.

Hope wills the goodness of God *to ourselves*, but Christian charity, as our reflection of God's *agape* towards us, wills God's goodness *to himself;* we rejoice as it were that God is God. Love of God then which transcends considerations of past, present, and future should not be displaced from its absolute primacy by revivified hope. Simply put, our present love of God is the ground of our hoping for the God of our future.

THE IDENTITY OF THE GOD CONFESSED

When questions are altered in being newly proposed the result is a difference in the nature of the answers thereby available. It is hardly surprising then that the identity of the God who is newly emerging is that of historicity. The retreat from metaphysics in favor of a recourse to history refocuses what is meant by divine transcendence: God is now recognized less as the author of nature than as the Lord of history; he is not so much " above " us as " ahead " of us, less a God of the present than of the future. What this derives from is a pronounced anthropological dimension to theology, which is only to say that man himself has become the starting point for theological reflection. The question about God is after all man's question; the subjective component cannot be ignored. Man is conceived as historical in his very being; history is essential to man and not merely accidental, as if he possessed a nature intelligible in itself apart from its involvement in temporality. The starting point then for religious reflection is not human nature in the abstract but concrete humanity as damaged, as bearing the wounds of sin and suffering. Humanity, both individually and socially, consitutes itself to be what it is by the way it actualizes itself in playing out its freedom. Time is not something suffered as an imposed imperfection from which release is sought (as in Neo-Platonic thought) but a valued prerogative enabling humans to mature in a process of self-enactment. This new awareness of how we are immersed in history stresses human freedom and creative praxis in such wise that history is not the mere reiteration of changeless forms but is the genuine succession of

new and transient forms, meaning the possibility of growth, of genuine novelty in truth and value.[14]

The upshot of this is that such stress on the historicity of mankind means that God cannot be a God *pro nobis* (and this is after all the God we seek) unless he is involved with us historically. The richest implication of this—and it is not one that should go unquestioned—is not that the deity enters our history from without, but that God himself is historical. Process Theology intends this literally: God himself "becomes", actualizing in his consequent nature values made available for his prehension by creatures, values previously lacking to him. This is panentheism pure and simple, by which is meant not that God is simply identified with the world (pantheism) but that he is dependent upon the world for his own beingness. Thus Whitehead can write "it is as true to say the world creates God as that God creates the world".[15] Aquinas strove to preclude such understanding (for him a misunderstanding) by insisting that God's relation to the world—while acknowledged to be actual (God truly creates, knows, loves, redeems, etc.) and intelligible (thus *relationes rationis*)—were not "real" in the Aristotelian sense of bespeaking causal dependence.[16]

A modification of this position appears in the influential work of the Reformed theologian, Jürgen Moltmann.[17] Here too, the thought is panentheistic but in the qualified sense that God, who does not need the world by nature, chooses in his transcendent freedom to depend upon and be intrinsically affected by it. The identification of God's being as love demands this, in that love as such opens the lover to being affected by the beloved, to suf-

[14] For a detailed development of this, cf. Langdon Gilkey: *Reaping the Whirlwind: A Christian Interpretation of History* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976) esp. p. 188f.

[15] Alfred N. Whitehead: *Process and Reality*, Free Press Edition (New York: Macmillan, 1969) Part 5, Chap. 2, Section 5, p. 410.

[16] Thomas Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 13, a. 7, corp.

[17] Jürgen Moltmann: *The Crucified God*, tr. R. A. Wilson and J. Bowden (New York: Harper & Row, 1974) p. 235f.

fering if the latter is afflicted. Theology in the Catholic tradition, granting that this is true in all instances of finite love, is less sure that such is the case with infinite love, which gives altruistically without being enhanced by anything it receives in return (more about this is in a moment).

An alternative position, more accommodated to the Catholic understanding of tradition, prefers to say that while God does change he does so not in his own being but in the world. The genuine import of this is missed if it be interpreted to mean merely that finite realities assumed by God change (the obvious example being the humanity of Jesus). What is explicitly being maintained is that God himself changes, but not in himself but rather in his "other".[18] Undergirding this manner of thinking is a philosophy of identity inspired by Hegel more than anyone else. Here the conception of God as pure being is considered empty and without content until God enacts himself by positing his "other"—non-being in short—so as to constitute himself in the very differentiating of himself from Nothing. What emerges from this is the notion of God as pure becoming rather than being; the very essence of deity is thus "event".

The newness of this concept of God is underscored in what follows logically from it, namely that God is now a God of the future rather than of the past, i.e. not a God who appeared to us once and for all in the past but a God who continues to come to us out of the future—out of the future into the present by way of the past. God is with us not as a presence of eternity within time but as a presence of the future in the present, as the impact of the future upon the present. Thus, divine revelation, while remaining definitive, is at the same time provisional: definitive because it is God's revelation that will not be repudiated and cannot be relativized; provisional in that it is not yet ended and is ever being enriched by new events. Some (Pannenberg, for example) even go so far as to say that the resurrection of Christ remains unfinished and open to future

[18] Rahner: "On the Theology of the Incarnation", *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 4, tr. Kevin Smyth, pp. 113-114.

consummation.[19] At any rate, this is certainly taken to be the case with the human enterprise.

This historicizing of God means replacing the attribute of eternity with that of a primal temporality wherein God does not stand outside of time in a motionless *nunc stans,* but embraces all time—past, present, and future—within himself. Yet he does so successively. God accordingly has his own past and his own future—granted that due to the infinity of his temporality, his past had no beginning and his future will have no end. So viewed, God's being is in becoming and futurity is the mode of divine being. Such a God is not the ground of the phenomenal world but the source of events which he (as "the power over all that is," in Pannenberg's phrase) determines from within history, but within history understood from its end.

Catholic thought has clearly moved in this direction but once again reservedly so. First, it has insisted that the consummation of history will not be a this-worldly one but something eschatological. Its achievement lies not within the capacities of humanity as such but in the transforming power of God alone when temporal history will have come to an end. Thus the myth of continual progress is resisted—if for no other reason than the paradox of the Cross. Secondly, however, a reservation is expressed on the openness of the future in that a greater claim is made of certainty regarding the direction of human history due to God's promises to which he will be faithful. The kingdom will come, and the Church will remain indefectible and infallible in its mediation of that kingdom. Still and all, that absolute future will not simply come, when history has ceased, as a reward earned in temporal life. It has in fact begun even now and entrance into eternal life will be the maturing of human freedom under grace into the fullness of the kingdom. This will be no mere termination but a true consummation. Genuine history thus constructs in freedom its

[19] W. Pannenberg: "Response to the Discussion", *Theology as History,* Vol. 3 of *New Frontiers in Theology,* eds. J. M. Robinson & J. B. Cobb (New York: Harper & Row, 1967) p. 264, n. 74.

own definitive stage—granting God's entry into humanity's making of itself. By contrast, for Process Theology the human project can, in principle at any rate, still end in disaster; and in any case there will be no end to history. For Moltmann, God will be faithful to his promises but in a recreative act which will mean a repudiation of what man will have made of history —thus the marked emphasis on the Cross as destructive and on the discontinuities rather than the continuities of time. The Catholic nuance mitigates this apocalyptic tone in favor of an eschatological one, i.e. the vector runs from the present into the future rather than from the future into the present. But that future with God lies neither at the end of history as its this-worldly termination, nor simply after history, but is already taking shape in the depths of present history. The heavenly Eschaton to come is already transpiring within history.

At the very base of this revised concept of God lies a revitalized doctrine of the Trinity. God is intrinsically processive; divine life is the perichoresis of the Father uttering his Word, and appropriating himself as so uttered in a movement of love that is personified as Spirit. Divine being then is intrinsically self-expressive and self-unitive. But this divine circularity spirals outward, as it were, into the Void, culminating in the Incarnate Word as the self-expression of God into the Void, and in the Paraclete as God's loving reintegration of that humanity with himself. In this there is found the grounding of human history. It is not that human history is the foundation of the trinitarian processions but the other way around.

At least a caution has to be introduced at this point: Incarnation and Pentecost cannot be necessary acts of God; rather they remain instances of his absolute freedom. But contemporary theology tends to view this phenomenon not as a matter of free choice (*liberum arbitrium*) but of freedom in a transcendent sense—something which lies deeper than the opposition between coercion or natural resultancy on one hand and mere option on the other. One way of expressing this is to say that the Logos eternally engendered within God comes forth

as the Logos to become incarnate; one might say as the *Logos Incarnandus.* However, this implies an inevitability, approaching a moral necessity (i.e. that God would not be fully a God of love if he failed to communicate into the world his very self). As such, it can be contested as an excessive assertion. Some qualifiication seems called for then on the meaning of the verb "is" in the oft-cited proposition: "the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity".[20] Some such hesitancy seems called for in order to safeguard the gratuity and altruistic character of divine love for the world, of its unique character as New Testament *agape* rather than as Greek *eros.*

Allied to this recouped trinitarianism is the contention that God's relations to the human life of Jesus as it unfolds historically are *intrinsic* ones. That human life, in its finiteness and contingency, in its free decisions of love, is then constitutive of the very being of the Godhead. Otherwise, those events cannot be thought of as the definitive self-revelation and self-communication of God. Wolfhart Pannenberg, for example, contends that God cannot be understood on the basis of the ahistorical immanent Trinity alone. What is required is a "placing in question (*Infragestellung*) of God's deity within history. God is Father precisely in raising Jesus from the dead; he is Son in his self-differentiation from the Father within our history; and he is Spirit in his glorification of the Father and Son. Pannenberg himself goes so far as to write: "God's Godhead itself is at stake in history".[21] The question of God's identity is here inseparable from the question of the meaning and the truth of Jesus's own history.

What is questionable here is why this is not a collapsing of the immanent Trinity into the economic Trinity—a problem

[20] Cf. K. Rahner: *The Trinity* tr., Joseph Donceel (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970) pp. 31-33 and 99-103.

[21] W. Pannenberg: *Grundfragen systematischer Theologie: Gesammelte Aufsatze, Band* 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), p. 118; cited by Philip Clayton, "The God of History and the Presence of the Future", *The Journal of Religion,* 65/1 (Jan., 1985) p. 104.

even more pronounced in Moltmann [22]—and even an obliteration of the distinction between creator and creature. If intrinsic relation means God is formally constituted as God by his relations to Jesus so that these relationships could not be and apart from them God is not God—then a demurrer seems called for. It is rather true to say that these relations are extrinsic to God, in the sense that they are contingent to his being, and willed by him in all freedom. But, once it is granted that God has chosen to create a world, then by a conditional necessity he cannot fail to relate to it and essentially so, since its very beingness both as nature and as history exists only by way of a grounding in God's being. Nonetheless, God does characterize himself as the kind of God he is by the nature of these freely chosen relationships—bearing in mind that in the domain of history God could choose to relate to the world in the mode of silence and of refusal to communicate his very self.

There is another implication of this historicizing of God's being (which is in fact an ontologizing of time, especially when it is understood as universal history as in Pannenberg's *Universalgeschichte*) in the tendency to shy away from the concept "redemption" in preference for the more history-laden concept "liberation". Jesus is less one who overthrows a disorder at the heart of human existence, conveyed in the precise Christian symbol of "sin", than one who inaugurates the freeing of humankind at large from our all-pervasive history of suffering. This is less a repudiation of a more traditional theology of redemption than an insistence that an inner component of that redemption is earthly salvation within this world. Once again an appeal is made to a certain primacy of orthopraxis—without it orthodoxy is something incredible and ideological —and it highlights that Christianity cannot be left as a matter of the heart only, of personal conversion, without a reform of those social structures which oppress humanity. The reason is that God has entered our history precisely as one who (in Schille-

[22] Cf. J. Moltmann: *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, tr. Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).

beeckx's phrase) " has made the cause of mankind to be his (God's) cause ". Salvation, which in the end will be God's eschatological transforming act (and here Christianity distances itself from Marxism pure and simple), is communicated to us within the ambiguities of history and not outside human suffering. The identity of God here emerging out of our inevitable encounter with suffering is that of a living God who enlists himself in opposition to all forms of evil and oppression; he is God among us.

If there is a danger here it is that of supposing that the divinity of Jesus consists in his saving significance for us—but that is to misplace the emphasis and is contrary to the intention of most so-called liberation theology. The core theological point being made here is that the divinity of Christ is not something behind or alongside his humanity (this is a common misreading of Chalcedon's two nature theory) but is very God in our midst as man, i.e. in the mode and dimension of our humanity. Thus Schillebeeckx cites approvingly Piet Schoonenberg: " We cannot point to anything divine in Jesus that is not realized in and from what is human ", and goes on to observe that failure to acknowledge this tempts us " to slip past this human aspect as quickly as we can in order to admire a ' divine Icon ' from which every trait of Jesus as the critical prophet has been smoothed away ".[23] One implication of this is that the traditional formula " hypostatic *union* " can perhaps be more richly expressed as "hypostatic *unity*. Every theological position runs the risk of over-stating its basic insights. Two which are at least possible here are: i) overstressing the humanity of Jesus to the detriment of his divinity, and ii) giving an exaggerated prominence to present experiences (meaning interpreted experiences) as compared to what is available as normative in the New Testament and in Tradition. One illustration of both is the coalescence of love of God and love of neighbor. This should not be seen as an uncritical identity of the two. Genuine love of neighbor is in fact an implicit love of God (all

[23] E. Schillebeeckx: *Jesus*, pp. 597 and 671.

three Synoptic accounts make this abundantly clear[24]) but this does not compromise the primacy of one's relationship to God.

God's immanence at the heart of our tragic human history has broached another profound and controversial question: Does God's love for us in its kenotic character, and its historical consummation on the Cross, mean that suffering is intrinsic to the Godhead? Does God in short absorb our suffering into his own beingness in order to transform and ultimately to overcome it? Once again, this is positively affirmed by Process Theology of its cosmic God. It is also central in Moltmann's crucified God—not that God suffers by a necessity of his nature, and thus unavoidably so, but rather that his love demands his taking upon himself, freely, the suffering of the beloved, that is, of humanity. Such a perspective enables Moltmann to understand the Cross as a transaction, not between God and man but between God and God, i.e. between the Father and the Son.[25]

On the Catholic side, this understanding has been advanced by Hans Urs von Balthasar on the grounds that this is what the biblical symbols lead us to, in a non-metaphysical theology where conceptual clarity in its objectifying of God must give way to the " reduction to mystery ".[26] By this, something much more than a *communicatio idiomatum* is intended; it does not intend to say only that the humanity of Jesus suffers, which just happens to be the humanity of the Son of God. Certainly, *finite love* which achieves an identification, on the affective if not the ontic level, of the lover with the beloved (love as such is a unitive force—even in God) but is powerless to overcome

[24] Mt. 22: 38-40; Mk. 12: 29-31; Lk. 10: 25-37.

[25] J. Moltmann: *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, p. 23. On this whole question of suffering in God, cf. W. J. Hill, " Does Divine Love Entail Suffering in God" ?, *God and Temporality*, eds. B. L. Clarke & E. T. Long (New York: Paragon House, 1984) pp. 55-71.

[26] Hans Urs von Balthasar, " Mysterium Paschale ", *Mysterium Salutis*, eds. J. Feiner & M. Löhrer, Vol. III/2 (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1969) pp. 133-326; also available in French transl. of *Mysterium Salutis*, pp. 133-326; Vol. 12 (Paris: 1972), and in an independent publication entitled *Theologie der drei Tage* (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1969).

the sources responsible for the anguish of the beloved, is a love that renders the lover vulnerable. But divine love is omnipotent (its power is one in the mode of love) and so would seem to require not that God suffer with his creatures but that he enlist himself in the cause of alleviating and ultimately vanquishing that suffering. The way in which God chooses to do this, i.e. the mode of its efficacy, does, it must be granted, remain mysterious. Obviously, he does not will to banish suffering from without, choosing rather to enter into our suffering and overthrow it (we have at this point only his promises and the anticipation of their fulfillment in the Resurrection of Jesus) from within. But this is a matter not of God's own being as a history of suffering, his trinitarian history, but of his entering into and taking upon himself *our* history which *we* have marred with sin. The rhetorical and indeed religious power of a God who takes suffering into himself cannot be denied. Theologically, however, a stronger case can be made for precluding all possibility of suffering from the deity on the grounds of divine transcendence.[27] Does it make sense to say that God can will to be something lesser than God? Is it not problematic to conceive of God the Father punishing his Son by delivering him over to the "powers of darkness" rather than allowing such evil, which sin alone brings into the world, to work its destruction upon his assumed humanity out of a loving will to enter into solidarity with suffering humankind? On this view, Christ's cry of dereliction from the Cross is not really due to an abandonment of him by the Father. It expresses rather how profound is the alienation from God that results from sin, and its issue which is the experience of death. The more integral truth of the Cross is not that God turns aside from his Son on the Cross but that he remains with him precisely in the midst of what is, humanly speaking, abysmal failure—as he remains with us in our hour of darkness, inexorably setting his face against everything that kills the human

[27] Cf. the persuasive argument for this position by Edward Schillebeeckx: *Christ* p. 724f.

heart. Operative in this concept of a suffering God is the danger of a mystique of death—i.e. the notion that suffering as such is redemptive and salvific, rather than its being such only in virtue of the love wherein it is undergone.

Another clue to the identity of the God we seek presents itself in the revealed name of God, in that name whereby he is invoked by Jesus in the New Testament. There are no parallels in all of religious literature to Jesus's repeated use (170 times in the New Testament) of the name "Father", frequently in its Aramaic form of *Abba*. This is something far different from Plato's idea of Goodness, Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, Plotinus's One, and even from *Yahweh* of the Jewish scriptures though in this last instance God is being named on the basis of an historical acting in human history. As Claude Greffré has pointed out, this privileged name is not a designation for God but an invocation of him; it corresponds to a proper name.[28] It does not intend then the adscription to divinity of male or paternal characteristics as over against feminine or maternal ones, which latter can serve equally as symbols of divine attributes. This revealed name of God is derived from a symbol expressing God's relationship to a unique Son and conveying the notion of obedience—a filial obedience, however, grounded in an unqualified and confident love. What is simply absent from the term is any connotation of dominance or heteronomy. In the Jewish culture of the first century such obedience was highly extolled and was understood in terms of the relationship of the human son to his human father.

God's fatherhood, as experienced for himself and revealed to us by Jesus, bespeaks a predilection for the "poor", meaning sinners, outcasts, the needy, the hungry, the sick, the deprived, the oppressed—a predilection however that is not exclusive of others. God's seeking out of these merely testifies to

[28] Claude Geffré, "'Father' as the Proper name of God", *Concilium*, Vol. 143 *God as Father*, eds. J. B. Metz and E. Schillebeeckx (New York: Seabury Press, 1981) p. 43-50.

the universality of his salvific love: if God seeks out even these disadvantaged ones then clearly the kingdom of God is near. But it remains love that is the formal motivation for the liberation which God proffers in Christ. This is a liberation for all peoples from " all the slaveries to which sin subjugates them: ignorance, misery, hunger, and oppression . . . In a word, liberation from the injustice and hate which originate in human egoism ".[29]

There remains the question of God's responsiveness to the activity of his creatures. Does the God who has made himself the God of and for humanity change in response to the initiatives of men and women? Or does he remain the changeless, apathetic divinity of traditional theism? Seemingly, God's transcendence precludes his determination by any creature in the sense of his acquiring perfections previously lacking to him (or any diminution of perfections already possessed). Still and all, there does remain a possible way of incorporating alteration within God in his dialogic relationship with his rational and free creatures. First of all, this might be understood as mutation, not in the order of God's very being but in the intentional order constituting his knowing and loving. The reason for such a suggestion is simply that God would be a different sort of God than he in fact is if he had chosen not to create a world or to create a world different from the one that does in fact exist. In either case he both knows and loves something that would not otherwise terminate his knowing and loving. This is compounded by the fact that in its human dimension that world changes freely, introducing genuine novelty into the world thereby so that there is obviously something new for God to know and to react to lovingly. This cannot be so without a mutation in the *objects* of divine knowing and loving. It would appear then that one must allow that God does change, not absolutely but relatively; the alteration does occur not in the divine nature but in God's free relating towards his

[29] Jon Sobrino: *Jesus in Latin America:* cited by Juan Alfaro, " Jesus in Latin America ", *Theology Digest*, 32/1 (Spring, 1985) p. 6.

self-determining creatures. The mutation is not one from potency to act (God is already fully actual and so without capacity for further perfecting) but, if we may so speak, from act to act. With Schillebeeckx we can say, "God is new each moment",[30] but not by way of an enhancement of his being. W. Norris Clarke has expressed this with welcome clarity:

> God's inner being is genuinely affected, not in an ascending or descending way, but in a truly real personal, conscious relational way by His relations with us . . . [but without] . . . moving to a qualitatively higher level of inner perfection than God had before.[31]

Elsewhere, I have suggested that this insight can be richly exploited in trinitarian terms.[32] Remaining immutable on the level of his one divine nature, God is pure relationality on the distinct level of his threefold personhood. A central defining element in the concept of "person" is relation (the human person is thus a unique and freely posited, self-determining relationality within the commonality of humanity). But why could not this regard not only that subsistent relationality which is the eternal Trinity, but incorporate the relationality of the three divine Subjects to human persons as well? If so, then we are enabled to say that God absorbs into his own experience whatever novelty his free creatures introduce into the world, as these latter mark out their own destiny within the parameters set by God—that is to say, not apart from

[30] E. Schillebeeckx: *God is New Each Moment*, tr. David Smith, Conversations with Huub Oosterhuis and Piet Hoogeveen (New York: Seabury Press, 1983.

[31] W. Norris Clarke: *The Philosophical Approach to God* (Winston-Salem; North Carolina: Wake University Press, 1979), p. 104.

[32] Cf. W. J. Hill: *The Three Personed God* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982) pp. 287-289; "Does the World Make a Difference to God?", *The Thomist*, 38/1 (Jan., 1974) pp. 146-174; "Does God Know the Future?", *Theological Studies*, 36/1 (March, 1975) pp. 3-18; "The Historicity of God", *Theological Studies*, 45/2 (June, 1984) pp. 320-333; "The Implicate World: God's Oneness with Mankind as a Mediated Immediacy", *Beyond Mechanism*, ed. David L. Schindler (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1985).

certain definitive acts of God such as above all his raising of Jesus from the dead.

CONCLUSION

All of this leads to the conclusion that God's radical difference from everything that makes up the empirical world inhabited by men and women renders our awareness of him provisional and tentative in kind. In his incomprehensibility, he is known only as (in Rahner's phrase) "Holy Mystery." Our knowledge is positive, and counts as gain, in that we know that God is unknown and unknowable. So much so, that there simply are no proofs for his existence, though it remains possible to verify both the meaning and the truth of the assertion that "God is". This is verification in the sense that such an affirmation cannot be shown to be contrary to either experience or logic, that it is in other words entirely reasonable to confess God's reality. This is especially true if it be acknowledged that both experience and reason testify to a dimension in our knowledge of the world that belongs to mystery and so eludes conceptual grasp and objectification. The verification in question then is one rooted in concrete human experience, common experience that is always interpreted experience, and so includes from the beginning a fiduciary element. The *quinque viae* then of Aquinas remain valid, not in the sense of proving God's existence from a state of pure agnosticism, but by way of clarifying the question, pointing in the direction of its resolution, and giving logical formulations to the answers surmised. Ultimately, however, God is affirmed on the basis of his own self-revelatory act which is in fact a self-communication —one that occurs historically and culminates in the Christ-event. Thus, the question of God is raised today in a non-metaphysical way, in the sense that the one domain of truth with which metaphysics does not concern itself is that of historical contingency. It remains metaphysical in the looser sense that the concern and the language employed is trans-empirical. In the final analysis it is only by way of the life, the preaching,

the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth that God fully discloses himself to humankind, as a hidden God who wills to be nonetheless a *Deus pro nobis,* proffering salvation to all of humanity.

On this account, he is the God of mankind's future, vouchsafing to us his promises, thereby rendering the Christian life one of hope, guaranteeing that he will prevail in the end over against the "deadliness of death" (Moltmann). Such a God is not dead but present and operative in the midst of our history, both individual and social. If that presence appears more often than not in the mode of absence, much of the reason is that we look for him in the wrong places—for example in the structures of power rather than those of kenotic love—forgetting that divine omnipotence is power in the mode of love.

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AN EXPLICATION OF THE *DE HEBDOMADIBUS* OF BOETHIUS IN THE LIGHT OF ST. THOMAS'S COMMENTARY

THE WRITINGS of Ancius Manlius Severinus Boethius exercised a powerful influence on the nature and development of mediaeval philosophy. The extent of his influence was such that I think it fair to say that anyone seeking more than a superficial grasp of mediaeval philosophy must acquire some first-hand knowledge of his work. The trouble is, however, that while *The Conolsation of Philosophy* is well-known and much commented upon, Boethius's other works are relatively neglected.[1] Included in this latter group are the five theological tractates, one of which has this imposing title: *Quomodo Substantiae In Eo Quod Sint Bonae Sint Cum Non Sint Substantialia Bona.* This tractate also has the more managable title *De Hebdomadibus* and it is as such that I shall refer to it throughout this article.[2] I have chosen to give an explication of the *De Hebdomadibus* for three reasons. First the problem with which it deals (the nature of the relation between goodness and substance) is intrinsically interesting and Boethius's solution to the problem is a model of philosophical analysis. Second, in addition to the fact that the philosophical status of the nine axioms listed in the tractate is a matter of some scholarly controversy, the answer to the obvious question of how these axioms function in the tractate as a whole is not at all clear. And third, this tractate is philosophically significant to those philosophers who take St.

[1] I am obliged to Professor Ralph McInerny for awakening my interest in Boethius and for his suggestion that the *De Hebdomadibus* would repay careful study.

[2] All references are to the H. F. Stewart and E. K. Rand edition of *The Theological Tractates* and *The Consolation of Philosophy,* in the Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973).

Thomas as their inspiration since it appears that St. Thomas's existence/essence distinction is adumbrated here. I shall begin my explication by giving a brief overview of the main lines of the tractate. Then I shall lay out the arguments contained in the statement and resolution of the dilemma which Boethius constructs, indicating (by means of Roman numerals in parentheses) where I think particular axioms are meant to apply. Finally, I shall display the axioms as perspicuously as possible and comment on them.

Overview

The groundplan of the *De Hebdomadibus* is as follows. It begins with a brief introduction which contains the nine axioms. Then the problem to be considered is outlined in the form of the following dilemma. Things which are are good. This is the basic assumption which will generate the dilemma. Things which are good are so either by virtue of their substance or by participation. If they are good by virtue of their substance then, since God is the only substantial good, we arrive at an impious conclusion: we identify creatures with their Creator. If they are good by participation then we generate a contradiction: things do and do not tend toward the good. Therefore, the conclusion must be that things which are are not good, which manifestly contradicts the basic assumption. Boethius's solution to the dilemma makes use of a thought-experiment. Abstracting from the first good he distinguishes locutions such as ' to be ' from locutions such as ' to be good.' On the basis of this distinction he is led to conclude that goodness is either a property of things or a principle of things. Re-introducing the notion of the first good, he notes that *it* is good by virtue of its very being. Secondary goods are also good by virtue of *their* being but only because that being derives from the will of the first good. Boethius cautions us against likening the being of particular things to the being of the first good and concludes the tractate by considering and refuting two objections to his solution.

The theme of the tractate is the problem of how substances can be good in virtue of their being without, at the same time, being substantial goods. Boethius is moved to deal with this particular problem by the appeal of a correspondent who urges him to elaborate on his hints towards a solution of this obscure question. Boethius warns his friends not to object to the obscurities resulting from brevity, remarking gnostically that such obscurity will be penetrated only by those worthy of penetrating it. To ensure the requisite obfuscation Boethius supplies us with a do-it-yourself argument kit in the form of nine axioms. "The intelligent interpreter," Boethius tells us "will supply the arguments appropriate to each point." [3] At the outset then it seems clear that it will be one of the reader's tasks to discern the use being made of the axioms in the subsequent discussion.

The Problem

I

1. Everything that is tends to the good
2. Everything tends to its like
3. Things which tend to the good are themselves good
4. Therefore, things which are are good

Step 1 in this argument derives from the common opinion of the learned. Step 2 has a similar ancestry. (Axiom IX) Step 3 is a particular application of Step 2, and Step 4, the conclusion, derives from Steps 1 and 3 together. Now that he has established the goodness of things which exist, Boethius goes on to consider how this is so. Things which are good are so either by participation or by virtue of their substance. These alternatives Boethius seems to consider to be both mutually exclusive and universally exhaustive. He proceeds to treat of each in turn.

Things which are good are so by participation

II

1. All things are good by participation

[3] Boethius, *De Hebdomadibus*, 53-55.

2. If all things are good by participation they are in no way good in themselves
3. All things are in no way good in themselves
4. All things do not tend to the good
5. All things do, and do not, tend to the good
6. Therefore, all things are not good by participation

Step 1 is the overall assumption of argument II. Step 2 is, presumably, a self-evident truth.[4] Step 3 derives from Steps 1 and 2 by modus ponens. Step 4 is derived by modus tollens from Steps 3 and I/3 (suitably recast in hypothetical form). Step 5 is merely the conjunction of Step 4 and Step I/1, and the conclusion, Step 6, is derived from Steps 1 through 5 by reductio ad absurdum. With the elimination of the possibility of goodness by participation it seems as if all things must be good by virtue of their substance.

Things which are good are so by virtue of their substance
III

1. All things are good by virtue of their substance
2. If all things are good by virtue of their substance then the particular being of all things is good
3. The particular being of all things is good
4. If the particular being of all things is good then, if all things are good by virtue of their substance, they are like the first good
5. If all things are good by virtue of their substance they are like the first good

[4] There is a difference between merely being something in a qualified way and being something in an essential way or in one's very substance. In other words, there is a distinction between the substance of a thing and the qualities which it participates. This implies, for Boethius, that if a thing is good by participation, then goodness does not penetrate its inmost structure. The substantial reality of a thing—its essence and existence—differs from its accidental qualities.
Charles Fay, "Boethius' Theory of Goodness and Being," in James Collins, ed., *Readings in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, (Westminster, Md: Newman Press, 1960), p. 171.

6. All things are like the first good
7. If anything is like the first good it is the first good
8. All things are the first good
9. Therefore, all things are not good by virtue of their substance

Step 1 is the overall assumption of this argument. Step 2 is a self-evident assumption. Step 3 derives from Steps 1 and 2 by modus ponens. Step 4 is another self-evident assumption. Step 5 derives from Steps 3 and 4 by modus ponens. Step 6 derives from Steps 1 and 5 by modus ponens. Step 7 is yet another self-evident assumption. Step 8 derives from Steps 6 and 7 by modus ponens and is, as Boethius puts it, " an impious assertion." Step 9, the conclusion, derives from Steps 1 through 8 by reductio ad absurdum.

Our basic assumption was that all things that are are good. But, as we have just seen, they cannot be so either by participation or by virtue of their substance. And since these seem to be the only possible alternatives we are faced with a dilemma. How are we to overcome it?

The Solution

Mentally separating that which is not actually separable, we remove from our minds the presence of the first good. Now, supposing that all things that exist are good, we ask ourselves how this could be so if they did not derive from the first good. According to Boethius we notice immediately that it is one thing for existent things to be good and quite another thing for them to be. (Axiom V) To show us that this is indeed the case, he considers a substance which is white, round, heavy and good. If the substance were not different from its roundness, heaviness, whiteness and goodness, then the identification of the substance with its attributes would lead us to identify the attributes with one another and this, as Boethius says, is " contrary to nature." [5] What about the suggestion that good

[5] Boethius, *De Hebdomadibus*, 105-106.

things might be nothing else but good, i.e. possessing only the quality of goodness? If this were the case then, according to Boethius, we might more properly consider them (or rather it) to be the principle of things rather than things (or a thing). (Axiom IV) There is only one thing that is simply good and we have prescinded from that. We can conclude from this that while things separated from the first good may be good, their very being will not be good. Now comes the crucial passage:

> But since they are not simple, they could not even exist at all unless that which is the one sole good had willed them to exist. They are called good simply because their existence has derived from the will of the good. For the first good, since it exists, is good in virtue of its existence; but the secondary good, since it has derived from that whose existence is itself good, is itself also good.[6] (Axioms IV, VII & VIII)

So, the existence of good things depends on the will of the first good. In the case of the first good, its being and goodness are identical. Just as the being of particular things is derived from the will of the first good, so too is the goodness attached to that being. We might erroneously conclude from this fact that particular things are like the first good because they too are good in virtue of their substance. There is, however, a difference. The goodness of the being of particular things is not good under all circumstances but is so simply because of its derivation from the will of the first good. The being of the first good is good under all circumstances since it is simply good. So, the particular being of things is good but it is not like the being of the first good since the one derives from the other. (Axioms IV & VI)

> Therefore, the first good being removed from these things by a mental process, these things, though they might be good, yet could not be good in virtue of their existence, and since they could not actually have existed unless that which is truly good had produced them, therefore their existence is good and yet that which has derived from the substantial good is not like its source.[7]

[6] Boethius, *De Hebdomabidus*, 117-125.

[7] Boethius, *De Hebdomadibus*, 140-146.

If things did not derive their being from the will of the first good it is still possible that they could be good (perhaps, e.g. by participation) but *their very being could not be good.* Since particular beings cannot be separated from the first good except by a mental process we may conclude that:

1. all things depend for their being on the will of the first good
2. the being of all things is good
3. although the being of all things is derived form the will of the first good all things are not thereby like it since there is nothing like it save itself.

Boethius wants to salvage the transcendental character of goodness without allowing it to usurp the unique postion of the first good. The derivation of the being of all things from the will of the first good establishes the goodness of particular things and, at the same time, establishes an essential difference between the being of particular things and the being of the first good.

Boethius concludes the tractate by considering and refuting some objections.

Objection #1

If things which are good are so by virtue of their being, why are they not, say, white by virtue of their being?

Response

Boethius points to the difference between accidental and substantial predication. To be is one thing, to be white is quite another. (Axiom V) That from which things derive their being is good by its very nature but it is not white. It accords with the will of the first good that things be good by virtue of their being but not white by virtue of their being. If something is white then it is so because it was willed to be so by someone who is not himself essentially white.

Objection #2

Why then is not everything just? (And here, unlike the response to the previous objection, we surely do not want to claim that God is not just!)

Response

In order to reply to his objection, Boethius distinguishes between essence and action. Goodness is a characteristic of what someone is: justice is a characteristic of what someone does. While being and action are one and the same thing in God they cannot be equated in his creatures. We are not simply beings. Our being is not identical with our actions so we are good by virtue of our being but we are not just by virtue of our being. (Axioms IV, VII & VIII)

The Axioms

How are we to understand the axioms that Boethius presents to us? Are they merely a set of random principles which he kept by him on his desk for use in the writing of theological tractates? Or are they something more than that? Is there, for example, some order or systematic connection between them such as to render them especially suitable for the task in hand? If we rely naively on Boethius's statement that he is going to proceed in a mathematical manner we might be betrayed by our twentieth-century sophistication into treating the axioms as if they were constituents of a modern axiomatic system. As such we would expect them to be logically independent of one another and more or less equally fundamental to the system. On inspection, however, the axioms turn out to be concerned with a very few topics, namely, being, that which is, simplicity and complexity. Axioms II-VIII appear to contain three central theses plus some commentary on them, while the less centrally important axioms I and IX have ancillary functions.

Axioms I

A common conception of the mind is defined as "a statement which anyone accepts as soon as he hears it." [8] Two types of these are distinguished: one which is obvious to all men; and the other which is obvious only to the learned.

Axioms II-VIII

Basic Thesis 1

Esse and *id quod est* are different (II)

Comment A (II)

Esse is not yet, whereas *id quod est* is as soon as it receives the form which gives it being.

Comment B (III)

Esse does not participate in anything in any way, whereas *id quod est* can participate in something.

Comment C (IV)

Esse cannot possess anything outside itself, whereas *id quod est* can.

Basic Thesis 2

Merely to be something and to be something in virtue of existence are different (V)

Comment A (V)

To be something signifies accident, whereas *to be something in virtue of existence* signifies substance.

Comment B (VI)

To be something requires accidentals participation, whereas *to be something in virtue of existence* requires substantial participation.

[8] Boethius, *De Hebdomadibus*, 18-19.

Comment C (VI)

Accidental participation presupposes substantial participation.

Basic Thesis 3

Simple things and composite things are different [9]

Comment A (VII & VIII)

In simple things *esse* and *id quod est* are unified, whereas in composite things *esse* is one thing and *id quod est* another.

Axiom IX

The principle contained in this axiom simply states the identity of natures of any two things one of which seeks the other.

Comments on the Axioms

Axiom I

This first axiom is obviously procedural. It indicates that the remaining eight axioms are to be understood as common conceptions of the mind of the kind intelligible only to the learned. The presentation of such recondite theses is in keeping with the remarks Boethius makes in the introduction to the tractate to the effect that such obscure brevity has the immeasurable advantage of communicating one's meaning only to those worthy of receiving it.

Axioms II-VIII

Basic Thesis 1.

Esse and *id quod est* are different

As James Collins remarks " Among the outstanding philosophical difficulties presented by the Opuscula Sacra is the determination of the exact meaning for Boethius of the binary of *esse* and *id quod est.*" [10] For P. Duhem, *quod est* signifies the

[9] This thesis is not explicitly stated as such in the text. However, given the syntactical format of the two previous basic theses I do not think it too far-fetched to suppose that this is what Boethius had in mind.

[10] James Collins, " Progress and Problem in the Reassessment of Boethius," *The Modern Schoolman* Vol. XXIII, no. 1, (1945), 1-23. In this section I

really existing concrete thing whereas *esse* signifies the specific nature or form common to all individuals in the same species. Roland-Gosselin, on the other hand, gives an essentially essentialistic account of the distinction. For him *quod est* signifies total essence whereas *esse* is a constitutive part of that essence. According to H. Brosch, *quod est* signifies the concrete essence while *quo est* (or *esse*) signifies the abstract or formal essence. Brosch also alerts us to the fact that Latin philosophical terminology of the period was neither firmly fixed nor unequivocal. He is not the only person to sound such a warning note. J. de Vries points out that if Boethius was not aware of the distinction between essence and existence then he could hardly have intended *esse* to signify either meaning of the term to the exclusion of the other. In agreement with de Vries, V. Schurr claims that for Boethius *esse* sometimes means essence, sometimes existence, with the essential connotation taking precedence on most occasions of use. He points to the later sections of the *De Hebdomadibus* as one place where the existential use is almost surely to be located.[11] (It will be remembered that this is the section of the tractate in which Boethius remarks on the production of good things from the will of the first good.) To C. Fay, *esse* sometimes signifies form, sometimes essence, and sometimes actual existence. Fay agrees with Schurr in claiming that towards the end of the *De Hebdomadibus esse* takes on an existential connotation.[12] In

am following very closely Collins' historical survey of the various interpretations which have been given to this crucial distinction. Precise references to the authors mentioned may be found in his article. See also Sr. H. V. Clare, "Whether Everything That is, Is Good: Marginal Notes on St. Thomas's Exposition of Boethius's *De Hebdomadibus*," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* Vol. III, no. 1, (1947), 66-76; Vol. III, no. 2, (1947), 177-194; Vol. V, no. 1, 1949), 119-140.

[11] Cf. also Boethius, *De Trinitate*, 20ff.

[12] According to Fay, this section of the Tractate contains Boethius's central insight, which is that since

> creatures are not simple, they could not in any way exist unless that which is solely good had willed them to be. Creatures are good in their existence inasmuch as their existence proceeds from the will of the first good, which is good in what it is. (Fay, p. 170)

view of all this it is difficult not to agree with F. Sassen's suggestion that we adopt the neutral term 'being' as the translation for *esse* so as to avoid attributing to Boethius a terminological precision not warranted by the fluid state of seventh century Latin philosophical terminology.

Comment A.

For *esse* is not yet but *quod est* is as soon as it has received the form which gives it being.

According to St. Thomas Aquinas all three comments on Basic Thesis 1 point to a difference in the mode of signification of the two terms, *esse* and *quod est.*

> Nor is all this to be referred to existent things themselves, of which he has not yet spoken. He is here referring to a way of thinking or to intention. Moreover by *esse,* one meaning is signified; by *id quod est,* another is signified, just as 'to run' signifies something different from what 'that which runs' signifies; for 'running' and 'being' signify abstract concepts such as whiteness whereas 'that which is' (*quod est*), i.e. being (*ens*) and running (*currens*), signify concrete realities, as white describes a concrete reality.[13]

Esse and *quod est* signify the same thing but they do so in different ways: *quod est* signifies concretely and *esse* signifies abstractly. *Esse* is that *by which quod est* exists: in itself, it cannot be said to exist.

Comment B.

Quod est can participate in something, but *ipsum esse* does not participate in any way in anything.

Ipsum esse cannot participate in anything for the simple reason that only what already is can participate and, as we know from Comment A, *ipsum esse* is not yet. It is apparent that the

[13] St. Thomas Aquinas, "In Librum Boetei De Hebdomadibus Exposito," which can be found as Opuscula LXII in Sanctii Thomae Aquinatis, *Opera Omnia,* Tomus XVIII, (New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1948) .I have availed myself of a partial translation of St. Thomas' commentary which is to be found in Mary T. Clark, *An Aquinas Reader* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972), 51-54.

only sense of 'participation' entertained here is the participation by a previously existing substance in an accidental form. In his commentary, St. Thomas, having distinguished three types of participation, has this to say:

I shall pass however to the third way of participating, since it is impossible according to the first two ways for absolute *esse* to participate in anything; for it cannot participate in the way that matter participates in form or accident participates in a subject because, as was said, *esse* itself signifies something apart. Nor can it participate as particular participates in a universal, for those things spoken of as a part can participate in something as whiteness in colour, but being itself (*ipsum esse*) is present in all things: whence others participate in it but it does not participate in anything else. But that-which-is, a being (*ens*), although this is a most common expression, is nevertheless referring to something concrete and so it participates in being itself (*ipsum esse*) not as the more common is participated in by the less common, but it participates in *ipsum esse* as the concrete participates in the abstract.[14]

Comment C.

Quod est can possess something besides what it is itself. But *ipsum esse* has no admixture of aught besides itself.

Since *ipsum esse* is not yet, and since only what already is can participate, then it follows that *ipsum esse* cannot possess anything beside itself. In general, we cannot attribute to something abstractly signified anything other than that which is part of that thing so signified. For example: white, qua white, is colored but not soft or triangular; man, qua man, is rational, but not tall or beautiful.[15]

[14] St. Thomas Aquinas, "In Librum Boetii De Hebdomadibus Expositio."

[15] Cf. Boethius, *De Trinitate*, II, 43-41:

> . . . forms cannot be substrates. For if humanity, like other forms, is a substrate for accidents, it does not receive accidents through the fact that it exists, but through the fact that matter is subjected to it. For when the matter which is subject to humanity receives any accident, humanity itself seems to receive it. But form which is without matter will not be able to be a substrate, nor indeed to be in matter, else it would not be a form but an image.

Basic Thesis 2.

Merely to be something and to be something in virtue of existence are different.

This thesis distinguishes between being something in a qualified manner and being something essentially, between *quod esse simpliciter* and *id quod est aliquid*.[16]

Comment A.

To be something signifies an accident, to be something in virtue of existence signifies substance.

The most obvious manifestation of the difference between being something and being something in virtue of existence is to be found in the modes of existence of substance and accident. A substance is a thing signified in an unqualified manner; an accident is what is signified by a qualification.

Comment B.

Everything that is participates in *esse* in order to exist but it participates in something else in order to be something.

This comment introduces a broader notion of participation than was previously entertained. (Axiom III)[17]

Comment C.

Quod est participates in *esse* in order to be but it exists in order to participate in something else.

This comment points out that substantial participation is presupposed by accidental participation. This correlates with what was said about participation in Axiom III. There it was noted that *ipsum esse* could not participate in any way, for only what already is (i.e. only what already participates (broad sense) in

[16] See note 4 above.

[17] Fay has this to say: "Here, participation is used in the broad sense as equivalent to any reception, and not in the strict sense as the reception of a determination extraneous to the original form or essence of a thing." (Fay, p. 171)

substantial form) can participate (narrow sense) in accidental form.[18]

Basic Thesis 3.

Simple things and composite things are different.[19]

Comment A.

Every simple thing possesses as a unity its *esse* and its *id quod est,* while in every composite thing *esse* is one thing and *id quod est* another

According to St. Thomas, it is at this point that Boethius moves from the intentional to the real order:

We should reflect that what was previously said about the difference between *esse* and *id quod est* was according to the mode of knowing; here, however, he indicates how it is applied to things. First, he shows this in regard to composite things; second, in regard to simple things such as: in every simple thing its *esse* and its *id quod est* are one. Therefore, we must consider that just as *esse* and *id quod est* differ in simple things as mental intentions, so in composite things they really differ.[20]

In simple being the *esse* and the *quod est* are unified, i.e., that *by* which the simple being is and that *which* the simple being is are one and the same. There is obviously only one such Being despite the inference which might be drawn from the manner in which Boethius expresses himself in axiom VII. (Angels, though simpler than we, in that they are not com-

[18] Professor Ralph McInerny warns us against making the blunder of thinking that we are here dealing with three distinct participations:

> It would of course be absurd to suppose that there are three participations being distinguished here: participation in *ipsum esse,* participation in *esse substantiale,* participation in *esse aliquid. . . . Esse Commune is immediately divided into esse substantiale* and *esse accidentale,* per prius et posterius; these are not species of a generic esse. Rather, the one is *esse simpliciter,* the other *esse secundum quid.* (McInerny, 237-238)

Ralph McInerny, "Boethius and St. Thomas Aquinas," *Revista di Filosophia neo-scolastica,* (Anno LXVI 1974), Fasc. II-IV, 219-245.

[19] See note 9 above.

[20] St. Thomas Aquinas, "In Libro Boetii De Hebdomadibus Expositio."

posed of matter and form, are nevertheless not entirely simple since their essence and existence are not identical.) Composite beings do not have that *by* which they are identical with that *which* they are: that *by* which they are is something other than they possess in themselves.

The philosophical significance of the tractate is three-fold First in its treatment of the relationship between being and goodness, it adumbrates the high mediaeval notion of the transcendentals. Second, it provides a clear example of a particular philosophical methodology in action. Boethius has a firm grip on a small set of basic metaphysical principles. A specific problem is analyzed with an eye to the eventual application of these principles. The principles are indeed applied and the problem is solved. It is clear from the tractate that Boethius is conscious of his *modus operandi.* Neither the particular set of axioms employed, nor the use made of them, is in any way accidental. The procedure is not limited in use to the particular problem under discussion. Finally, even if the tractate were no more than a source of St. Thomas's real distinction, it would deserve our attention. But it is more than that. It provides us with a clear example of early Latin philosophical method (as we have seen) and, equally importantly, an example of an attempt to forge philosophically sensitive terminology from recalcitrant linguistic material. As such it reminds us of the fluid and nuanced character of all philosophical terminology and it should send us back to a study of St. Thomas's own works with a renewed interest in discovering what St. Thomas *himself* has to say when the layers of exposition and interpretation are stripped away.

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THE CONCEPT OF PERSON IN ST. THOMAS AQUINAS:

A Contribution to Recent Discussion *

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS accepted and consistently defended Boethius' definition of person: "persona est substantia individua rationalis naturae." St. Thomas' analysis of this definition necessarily involves metaphysical questions because of the implications of the terms "substance" and "nature" and moreover it manifests the inescapable imprint of the theological problematics which surrounded the issue (e.g. the Trinity and the hypostatic union). Both of these influences, metaphysical and theological, have engendered problems of interpretation and criticism. Contemporary discussions of person largely either continue the scholastic controversies or adopt a modern perspective from which to expose apparent contradictions in St. Thomas' doctrine. The purpose of this article will be limited to a consideration of the metaphysical problems concerning the relationship between individual substance, universal, nature, and existence. It is hoped that such a clarification will resolve not only the neoscholastic controversies, but also some of the contemporary problems.

I. BOETHIUS' DEFINITION OF PERSON AND ST. THOMAS' EXPLANATION

A. BOETHIUS' DEFINITION

Boethius develops his definition of person in the *Liber contra Eutychen et Nestorium* after a careful consideration of na-

* I have to thank cordially Father Brian Shanley, O.P. for having revised completely this English version, devoting much time and energy to fit the text and the footnotes to the style of *The Thomist*. He adapted the version in good style and verified the Latin quotations.

ture and substance.[1] In the first chapter he sets out to define nature and discovers four possible meanings. The first and broadest definition, embracing both substances and accidents, describes nature as belonging to all things which by their being can be in some way or another be comprehended by reason: "natura est earum rerum quae, cum sint, quoquo modo intellectu capi possunt." A second definition, comprising substances alone both corporeal and incorporeal, describes nature as anything that can effect or suffer something: "natura est vel quod facere vel quod pati possit." A third sense, taken from the Aristotelian analysis of the motion of natural substances, describes nature as the immanent principle of movement: "natura est motus principium per se et non per accidens." Finally, nature can also refer to the formal cause which provides the specific difference: "natura est unam quamque rem informans specifica differentia" (cf. *ST* Ia. 29, 1 ad 4). It is this last sense which is most important. In sum, "nature" is a broad term encompassing both composite beings and their causes.

Boethius continues in chapter two by first narrowing the relevant sense of nature to substances (thus excluding accidents) and then presenting a complete division of substances. The major distinction is between corporeal substances and incorporeal substances. Corporeal subdivides further into inanimate and animate, with animate dividing into insensitive and sensitive and the latter dividing finally into irrational and rational. Incorporeal subdivides into rational and irrational (the life-principle of animals), with rational incorporeal substances being further distinguished into those that are immutable by nature (the Creator) and those that are not so by nature (the human soul and angels) but may become so by virtue of the immutable substance. Boethius then argues that person cannot be affirmed of inanimate beings or irrational animals. A

[1] All citations from Boethius are taken from the Loeb text in *Boethius: Theological Tractates and the Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. H. F. Stewart and E. K. Rand (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918).

final distinction of substance into universal and particular leads to the conclusion that person must refer to an individual.

Thus the background is set for the definition of person which opens the third chapter: "naturae rationalis individua substantia." Person must be an individual substance of a certain nature, namely rational, which nature accounts for the form or specific difference of the particular substance (the fourth meaning of chapter 1). The connection of this definition with Aristotle's definition of man as a rational animal is unmistakable. It should also be noted that this definition of person is applicable not only to man, in whom the rational nature is not identical with his substance, but also to the angels and the three divine Persons whose substance is identical with their nature.

Boethius realizes that he needs to correlate his definitions with established Greek terminology in order to clarify his meaning, especially concerning the difference between nature and person. The Latin *persona* corresponds historically to the Greek *prosopon* (the dramatic character assumed by an actor wearing a mask; famous individuals in their public presentations). Philosophically, however, *persona* corresponds to the Greek *hypostasis*[2] (individual substance) and the Latin *sub-*

[2] See the investigation of *hypostasis* by H. Dörrie in: *Hypostasis, Wort- und Bedeutungsgeschichte* (München, 1976). According to this analysis, *hypostasis* does not yet occur in Aristotle in a philosophical sense (p. 36, n. 130). Substantia as a translation of *hypostasis* in the sense of substance in the first category can be found first in Marius Victorinus' *Rhetoric* [Halen], pp. 211, 27 (p. 38, n. 141). According to Dörrie, the philosophical meanings of *hypostasis* developed historically from physical and medical ones, especially from sediments in fluids (e.g. the urine). Philosophical meanings came into existence only from the Stoics and the Peripatetics onward. Only in Plotinus does it mean the existence of immaterial substances. It seems to me, however, that Dörrie fails to consider adequately the non-physical prephilosophical meanings. According to Liddell-Scott (ninth edition, 1953), already in the fifth century *hyphistanai* means to place or set under, support, lay as a foundation; further, it also means to bring to a halt, with *hyphistathai* as to stand under as a support. Correspondingly *hypostasis* means also: standing under or supporting and substance or reality as opposed to mere semblance. This latter meaning was not originally limited to the coming-to-appearance of the precipitate of sediments and was still known to St. Thomas (p. 22, n. 56): "substantia enim solet dici prima inchoatio cuiuscumque rei" (*ST* IIa-IIae. 4, 1).

stantia. Boethius defines *hypostasis* or *substantia* which is applied to the individual and includes the accidents as opposed to the essence, *ousia,* which excludes the accidents and to the *ousiosios* or *subsistentia* which applies to the substance *in universali* (the genus or species).

The greek term *ousia,* in Latin: essentia, has in fact two meanings:

1. as essence, nature, excluding the accidents, and
2. as substance, the universal (genus, species) as well as the individual, including the accidents, which is expressed more precisely by *hypostaris* ("under-lying" the accidents, i.e. supporting their being).

Applying these distinctions to man, Boethius reasons: man has *essentia* or *ousia* because he is; he is *subsistentia* or *ousiosis* because he is not an accident in a subject; he is *substantia* or *hypostasis* because he is such a subject of accidents and an individual, other then *subsistentia* or *ousiosis*; and he is a *persona* or *prosopon* because he is a rational individual. Boethius sums up his discussion in chapter 4 by stating that the nature is the specific property of any substance, while person is the individual substance of a rational nature [3] " natura est cuiuslibet substantiae specificata proprietas; persona vero rationabilis naturae individua substantia." The Boethius distinctions serve as the basis for St. Thomas' discussion of person in the *Summa Theologiae.*

B. ST. THOMAS' EXPLANATION OF BOETHIUS' DEFINITION IN *ST* Ia. 29 [4]

St. Thomas appropriates the Boethian definition in his treatment of the Divine Persons and begin with an explanation of the meaning of person in article 1:

[3] Later, as we shall see, the distinction will be explained by Scholastics like Capreolus in the same way: Substance is the being which possesses a certain nature, while the nature is possessed by the substance.

[4] This article cannot consider all the relevant passages in St. Thomas. See also I *Sent.* 25, 1, 1 and 23, 1, 1; II *Sent.* 3, 1, 2 and II, 1, 2ad 4; *SCG* III, 128, 130 and IV, 26, 52; and *De Pot* 9, 2 and 8, 4 ad 5.

Respondeo dicendum quod, licet universale et particulare inveniantur in omnibus generi, tamen speciali quodam modo individuum invenitur in genere substantiae. Substantia eni mindividuatur per seipsam, sed accidentia individuantur per subiectum quod est substantia: dicitur enim haec albedo inquantum est in subiecto. Unde etiam convenienter individua substantiae habent aliquod speciale nomen prae aliis: dicuntur enim *hypostaseis,* vel *primae* substantiae. Sed adhuc quodam specialiori et perfectiori modo invenitur particulare et individuum in substantiis rationalibus, quae habent dominium sui actus, et non solum aguntur, sicut alia, sed per se agunt: actiones autem in singularibus sunt. Et ideo etiam inter ceteras substantias quoddam speciale nomen habent singularia rationalis naturae. Et hoc nomen est *persona.* Et ideo in praedicta definitione personae ponitur *substantia individua,* inquantum significat singulare in genere substantiae: additur autem *rationalis naturae,* inquantum significat singulare in rationalibus substantiis.[5]

The reply considers successively the two components of the definition: the genus and the specific difference. In the first step the individual in the category of substance is separated from the individual in the other categories (accidents). The second step separates the rational individual substance from the non-rational (within the category of substance). Rational substances are superior because they act by their own initiative, a perfection which is a consequence of their rational nature. Action follows upon being and it is the rational soul which is the act principle or formal cause (also efficient and final) of the free initiative in action.

Thomas further clarifies the definition in the responses to the objections. He notes that although the individual as such is not definable, individual substance can stand as the genus insofar as it signifies not this or that individual (e.g. Socrates), but rather as it signifies the common feature of individual primary substantial being (subsistence) as such. In the second response he explains that since the supposit as individual substance is the basis of person, the human nature of Christ is not the principle of a human person in Him because it has

[5] All citations from the *Summa Theologiae* will be from the Marietti edition of the Leonine text.

been assumed by a divine being. In the fifth response he notes that the separated soul does not merit the name "person" (nor did it when it was united to the body) because although it subsists per se, nevertheless it does not have complete subsistence.[6]

In sum, the basis of the person (the genus of the definition) is the individual substance of man which exists substantially or subsists per se. The constitutive element of person (the specific difference is the rational nature by which the human individual is a person.

II. METAPHYSICAL REMARKS ON THE PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE CLASSICAL DEFINITION OF PERSON

The scholastic controversies concerning the meaning of person have been heavily influenced by the theological problem of why Christ has a human nature but is not a human person. What is it that is wanting in the human nature of Christ such that He is not a human person? Or, to focus the issue more sharply, what has to be added to the human nature in order to constitute it as a *suppositum, individuum,* or person?

The divergent responses given to this question are largely derivative from a more fundamental conflict concerning the metaphysical distinction between nature or essence and *esse.*[7] The Scotistic position denies the real distinction of essence and *esse* and maintains instead that existence is a direct consequence of the nature; it asserts that the human nature of Christ lacks a certain closure because it is open to assumption by the Word. Suarez, while maintaining that *esse* is really distinct

[6] In *ST* Ia 75, 2, ad 1 St. Thomas indicates two criteria for the *individuum* and its *incommunicabilitas:* the first is subsistence as such and the second is perfection as a *totum completum.* The separated soul fulfills the first since it can subsist apart from the body. But it cannot fulfill the second condition since it retains the possibility of connection with the body (*unibilitas*).

[7] See the survey of the controversies in I. Schweizer M.S.: *Person und hypostatische Union bei Thomas v. Aquin* (Fribourg, 1957).

from essence, nevertheless conceives of *esse* as the completing moment of the nature such that true personhood requires that the human nature be individualized and completed by its own act of existence. The Thomist position defends the real distinction of *esse* and essence such that *esse* is seen as the ultimate actuality of a nature which is potential to *esse* or existence while complete in its own formal order. Hence some Thomists have tried to locate the constitutive element of person in the rational individual's existence.[8]

In recent times, U. Degl' Innocenti has vigorously revived the thesis that existence is the decisive or constitutive element of person and has cited texts from St. Thomas, Capreolus, and Cajetan to buttress his position.[9] I disagree with this position and propose to analyze his argumentation and especially his textual evidence in order to clarify the issue. Being his intention to justify the inclusion of existence in the definition of person or supposit, Degl' Innocenti begins his investigation with an apparently dissentrient text in *Quodlibet.* II, 2, 2 (4) which asserts that "*esse* is not part of the meaning of supposit." The

[8] Among NeoThomists there is uncertainty whether Capreolus (as according to Cajetan) was the first to distinguish between the subsistence of the nature and the existence of the individual such that the complete subsistence of the nature with individual existence is the *constitutivum formale* of person. Normally the positions on this question are seen to fall into three families based on their resolution of the Christological question. The first, the Modus Theory, holds that the human nature of Christ has an incomplete *modus subsistendi.* The second, the Union Theory, holds that the lack of human personality in Christ is due to the connection of His human nature with the Word. The third, the Existence Theory, holds that the human nature of Christ is not also a person because it has no human existence but rather subsists by the divine existence. Schweizer asserts that these are the only possible kinds of solutions to the Christological problem. He properly categorizes the position of Jacques Maritain in the *Les degres du savoir* (p. 847) as a Modus Theory approach because Maritain argues that the human nature is open to several possible existences to which it is indifferent. Schweizer notes: "Erst wenn eine substantielle Natur ihren Modus der Abgeschlossenheit erhalten habe, sei sie auf ihre eigene Existenz hin determiniert." (p. 39)

[9] U. Degl' Innocenti, *Il problema della person nel pensiero di S. Tommaso* (Rome, 1967).

context of the remark is a discussion of the difference between nature and supposit in the angels. Since the difference cannot be due to a material principle, as is the case in material substances, it must be due to the *esse* which belongs more to the supposit than to the nature. Although the *esse* itself does not belong to the concept of the supposit, nevertheless it pertains to it: " licet ipsum esse non sit de ratione suppositi, quia tamen pertinet ad suppositum et non est de rationae naturae." [10] Degl' Innocenti solves the problem which this text poses for his thesis by distinguishing two different meanings for *suppositum* in the sentence. In the first clause, governed by *licet*, *suppositum* includes the *esse* only indirectly; here the *suppositum* is the individual nature to which *esse is* added extrinsically and so is designated only connotatively (*connotative* or *in obliquo*). But in the second clause, governed by *tamen*, the *suppositum* is the composite of nature and *esse* and so *esse* is included in the concept or definition.[11]

This interpretation, however, seems untenable. First, it is highly unlikely that a single word should bear two different meanings in one and the same sentence. Secondly, according to St. Thomas (and Aristotle), existence is not part of the definition of anything but rather presupposed; therefore existence is only designated connotatively. While it is true that St. Thomas holds that immaterial substances are composed of essence and *esse*, in contrast to material substances composed of matter and form, nevertheless this composition is the very condition of any created nature's being and not a part of its definition. Thirdly, Degl'Innocenti himself concedes that St. Thomas never explicitly distinguishes between two such senses of *suppositum*.[12]

[10] Marietti edition, ed. Spiazzi (Rome, 1956).

[11] Degl' Innocenti, pp. 16-18.

[12] Nevertheless, Degl' Innocenti believes that St. Thomas himself held that *esse* is the constitutive feature of person. He cites ST IIIa. 19, 1 ad 4 as evidence: "esse pertinet ad ipsam constitutionem personae." But this passage means the same thing as the "esse pertinet ad suppositum" of the Quodlibetal text. The issue in the *Summa* text is the distinction between

In defense of his interpretation, however, Degl' Innocenti cites Capreolus and Cajetan as explicitly distinguishing these two senses of *suppositum*. In a passage in the *Defensiones*, Capreolus mentions two possible meanings of persona or *suppositum:* according to the first, *suppositum* is said denominatively of the individual which subsists per se; according to the second, *suppositum* is said formally of the composite of the individual and the being whereby it subsists.[13] According to Degl' Innocenti, this passage contains the crucial articulation ("distinzione capitale") of Capreolus' interpretation of St. Thomas' concept of person because in the second or formal meaning of *suppositum* existence functions as the constitutive feature of person.[14]

Yet Degl' Innocenti's interpretation of Capreolus is erroneous because he fails to take adequate account of the context. Capreolus is defending his conclusion that Christ did not assume a human person or created supposit against five objections from Aureolus. The fourth objection claims that if personality adds something positively real to the nature, as Capreolus claims, then seven inconsistencies (*inconvenientia*) would arise. The passage in question is part of Capreolus' reply to the sixth problem: that the nature underlying the reality would appear more as the supposit than the composit of the nature and that reality (sc. being, subsistence).[15] Capreolus answers that the supposit of material things is neither an individualized nature nor the composite of nature and *esse*.

action and being which will be considered below. The "esse completum et personale" is referred to the person as a whole complete supposit of which the nature is the constitutive part.

[13] The passage reads: "Illa etiam persona, vel suppositum, potest dici dupliciter: primo modo, denominative, et sic suppositum dicitur illud individuum quod per se subsistit; secundo modo, formale, et sic suppositum dicitur compositum ex tali individuo et ex sua per se subsistentia." *Defensiones Theologiae Divi Thomae Aquinatis*, ed. Paban Pegues (Turin, 1900-1904) V: p. 110b. As will be seen, however, this passage is misleading if it is not read in context.

[14] Degl' Innocenti, pp. 35-36, n. 7.

[15] *Defensiones*, p. 91.

Rather, the supposit is something intermediate: the individual nature standing under such *esse*. In this way the individual adds something to the nature (sc. individual principles, accidents) while the supposit adds something to the individual (sc. being or subsistence).[16] Further, the supposit is not a composition of nature and *esse* ("compositio ex his"), but rather a composition with these ("compositio cum his") so that it is a unity rather than some third thing. The composite of the individual nature and its *esse* (the "*aggregatum*") is not fittingly designated the supposit unless perhaps we distinguish" (nisi forte distinguamus) between the denominative designation of supposit (as *individuum*) and the formal designation whereby the supposit would be the composition of nature and *esse*.[17] Thus Capreolus makes this distinction only as an ad hoc hypothetical possibility (to a very special objection of Aureolus) after clearly stating his own position that the supposit is the individual nature standing under its *esse* ("individuum naturae stans sub tali esse") and that it is no composition out of nature and *esse*. For Capreolus, *esse* is a "formal aspect" of the whole supposit and is designated only "per modum connotati" or "in obliquo."[18]

[16] "Nos enim dicimus quod natura in rebus materialibus sit suppositum, nec quod compositum ex natura et ex esse sit suppositum; sed quod aliquid medium est suppositum, scilicet individuum naturae stans sub tali esse. In talibus enim individuum addit supra naturam, et suppositum supra individuum." (p. 110a). The additions mentioned in the sentence correspond to those made by Thomas in the *Quodlibet* text.

[17] "Et inducit illa ad ostendenum quomodo angelus componitur ex essentia sua et ex esse suo; quae compositio magis proprie dicitur compositio *cum his*, quam compositio *ex his*. Dico ergo quod, quia ex natura individuata et ex esse non resultat aliquod tertium vere unum; ideo *aggregatum illud non proprie dicitur persona*; nisi forte distinguamus, sicut de albo, quod album est duplex, scilicet denominativum et formale." (p. 110b) What follows is the text cited above in n. 13 which must be read within this context.

[18] ". . . quod St. Thomas intellexit personalitatem addere aliquid positivum supra naturam rationalem et individuum naturae rationalis (sc. esse actu) . . . *quia esse sic est de ratione suppositi quod non est pars illius* nec intrat eius essentiam, sed se habet per modum connotati et importatur in obliquo, quasi dicatur suppositum esse idem quod individuum substantiale habens per se esse." (p. 105a)

Degl' Innocenti also cites another text from Capreolus' *Defensiones* in order to support his thesis that *esse* is the constitutive part of the supposit. In the context of a discussion of the relationship between nature and supposit, Capreolus considers the view of an opponent who admits the real distinction of *esse* and nature but nevertheless wants to defend the thesis (contrary to St. Thomas) that supposit and nature are identical in angels. The opponent's argument asserts that "supposit and nature seem to signify nothing more than the concrete and the abstract; hence, the supposit doesn't signify any more than the nature because the abstract does not signify any more than the concrete." Capreolus rejects this thesis and replies that the supposit or the concrete differs from the nature or the abstract in that the abstract excludes everything that does not belong to the definition of the species while the concrete includes the abstract potentially and implicitly (as opposed to actually and explicitly). "One (the concrete) is designated as possessing, the other as possessed (the abstract); one (the abstract) is designated as a part, the other (the concrete) as a whole." [19]

Degl' Innocenti misinterprets the text so as to construe *esse* as that which is excluded by the abstract and included by the concrete, as if the *esse* were included potentially in the concrete supposit and related to it as a part to a whole. Capreolus' text, however, has a different meaning. He is defending the difference of supposit and nature by saying that although they coincide essentially, they nonetheless have an asymmetric relationship to each other: the abstract nature excludes the con-

[19] "Si autem quaeratur quomodo suppositum differt a natura in talibus ubi nihil accidit praeter rationem essentiae nisi ipsum esse (in talibus enim videtur significare suppositum et natura, abstractum et concretum, ex quo suppositum non aliud significat quam natura, nec abstractum dicit aliud quam concretum); respondetur quod pro tanto suppositum differt a natura in talibus, quia abstractum excludit a sui significatione omne quod non est de ratione specificata; concretum autem illud includit non actu, sed potentia, non explicite, sed implicite. Unum enim illorum significatur ut habens, et aliud ut habitum; unum per modum partis, aliud per modum totius." (I: p. 238b).

crete supposit; yet the concrete supposit includes, at least potentially, the abstract nature and is related to that nature as the whole to a part or the possessor to the possessed. Degl' Innocenti himself concedes, in contradiction to his interpretation, that the concrete individual concerns *esse* actually and not potentially; to get around this difficulty he resorts to making the concrete supposit into a kind of "concrete universal" (*concretum universale*).[20]

Turning now to Cajetan, Degl' Innocenti cites in support of his thesis Cajetan's resolution of an apparent contradiction in St. Thomas' teaching on the difference between supposit and nature in immaterial beings. The discrepancy arises from a comparison between the aforementioned *Quod.* II, 2, 2, where supposit and nature are said to differ insofar as *esse* does not belong to the essential nature but pertains instead to the supposit, and *ST* Ia. 3, 3, where it is asserted that supposit and nature are identical in immaterial substances because there is no matter to account for accidents.[21] Degl' Innocenti purports to find in Cajetan's solution a confirmation of the double meaning of supposit: the one including *esse* only externally, the other including *esse* internally as a constitutive principle.

Yet in fact both St. Thomas and Cajetan intend supposit consistently to mean the same thing. As Cajetan indicates in his commentary on the *De ente,* however, St. Thomas considers the relationship between supposit and nature from two different perspectives in the apparently contradictory texts. In *ST* Ia. 3, 3, the perspective is that of the internal or intrinsic difference between supposit and nature. Since the supposit of a material substance intrinsically includes individual material principles which are not included in the definition of the nature, there is a difference between nature and supposit. In immaterial substances, however, which do not have any intrinsic prin-

[20] Degl' Innocuti, p. 97 ss.

[21] "In his igitur quae non sunt composita ex materia et forma, in quibus individuatio non est per materiam individualem, idest per hanc materiam, sed ipsae formae per se individuantur, oportet quod ipsae formae sint supposita subsistentia. Unde in eis non differt suppositum et natura."

ciples different from the nature, supposit and nature are the same from that perspective. Yet in *Quod.* II, 2, 2, there is another, extrinsic perspective according to which *esse,* as the existential act of the supposit, is accruing to the whole supposit (consisting of essentials and non-essentials). Therefore nature and supposit are really distinct in every being except God.[22] Supposit means the same thing in either perspective and in nowise includes *esse* as its constitutive part; *esse* is designated only connotatively as the existential act belonging to the whole supposit.

Since the ultimate goal of Deg' Innocenti's analysis is to display *esse* as the constitutive feature of person, it is therefore necessary for him to analyze the meaning of *esse.* For St. Thomas, *esse* as *actus essendi* can mean both the existence of a being as a whole and the act of its nature qua formal cause.[23] Degl' Innocenti makes a point of distinguishing between *esse* as *existere,* denoting the mere fact of a thing's being grasped by the senses (facticity), and *esse* as *actus essendi,* denoting the ultimate actuality of the formal nature.[24] It is supposedly *esse* in the latter sense which is the constitutive element of the person. Yet this distinction does not mean what Degl' Innocenti asserts. The existence of the person as a whole is not reducible to the act of the nature qua formal cause. The formal cause of the man actualizes a material principle (the body)

22 "In substantiis autem separatis, aliis a prima, suppositum differt a natura duobus modis tantum, scilicet extrinsece secundum rem et secundum rationem. Nihil enim reale intrinsecum sibi includit suppositum in eis quod non includat natura, quia non individuatur per aliquod positivum contrahens naturam specificam, quod sit velut differentia individualis supposito intrinseca, sicut est in substantiis materialibus. Sed quia in eis, ut patebit, existentia differt realiter a natura, quae primo, ut dictum est, est actus supposit, ideo suppositum in eis differt extrinsece a natura; addit enim extrinsece realitatem existentiae. Differt secundo secundum rationem, ut patet." Cajetan, *In 'De ente et essentia'*, ed. P. Laurent, (Marietti: Turin, 1934), p. 134.

23 The relevant texts are treated historically and systematically by A. Keller S.J. in *Sein oder Existenz? Die Auslegung des Seins bei Thomas v. Aquin in der heutigen Scholastik,* Pullacher philos. Forschg., (München, 1968).

24 See Degl' Innocenti, p. 213-215.

and the resulting composite or whole is the supposit which enjoys personal existence. *Esse* belongs to the whole, not the form or nature alone.[25]

The principal motive for seeking to make *esse* the constitutive feature of the person is its status as ultimate actuality. Since *esse* is related to the nature as act to potency, and since act is prior and more perfect than potency, the highest constitutive feature of the person must be *esse*. This interpretation seems not only to accord with St. Thomas' unique metaphysical vision, moreover it seems also to respond positively to contemporary existential concerns. Yet, as I see it, the relationship between *esse* and essence must not be understood to reduce essence to a mere limiting or potential principle to *esse*. Essence of all beings is indeed a potential receptive principle to *esse* which it receives from a first causal source (*esse subsistens*) as actuality and ultimate perfection in the line of transcendency. In the line of immanency, however, essence is a real perfection in every being and so indeed can be said to cause a being's *esse*. Thus while it receives *esse* as actuality from a transcendent source, nevertheless essence in its turn is the formal cause or actuating principle in the individual supposit or person which also includes a material or potential principle (i.e., the body).[26]

[25] Although the *esse* of a being is one, it nevertheless can be considered from two perspectives: (1) as the act of the nature qua form and (2) as the existence of the whole which has the nature as its formal cause. It is *esse* in the latter sense which is more known to us and by which we gain the former. God as First Cause causes the existence of the formal cause which in its turn functions as a cause of the whole. In this sense it can be said that the nature is the cause of the personal existence of man: "unde patet quod actualitas per prius invenitur in forma substantiali quam in eius subiecto; et quia primum est causa in quolibet genere, forma substantialis causat esse in actu in suo subiecto" (*ST*Ia. 77, 6). The existence of the whole man in an individual body is distinguishable from the *actus essendi* as an effect to its cause. Thus by reducing personal existence to the act of the nature, Degl' Innocenti undermines his own position that existence is the *constitutivum* of person.

[26] In the definition of person "rational nature" functions as the specific difference (the decisive determination of the genus caused by the formal

Given this understanding of the relationship between *esse* and essence, it is not necessary to locate the constitutive element of person in *esse*. Nothing prevents maintaining both that there is a real distinction between *esse* and essence and that the rational nature of man is the constitutive element of the human person as is stated clearly in the texts of St. Thomas. Thus the Scotist view contains at least a partial truth insofar as it locates the essence of person in the rational nature of man which determines the special mode of the person's being (his individual being per se).[27] The error of those like Degl'Innocenti who assert that *esse* is the constitutive feature of person is their preoccupation with the way the question is posed by the Christological issue of the hypostatic union. St. Thomas' philosophical treatment follows a decidedly different route (e.g. *ST* Ia. 29, 1). His procedure is to discover the special feature of person from an analysis of individual substances (the genus); he does not proceed from the rational nature of man in order to define personhood in the direction of the individual existent.[28]. The constituting feature of person is thus seen to lie in the rational nature which functions as the specific difference in the definition. The question of existence belongs properly to the supposit or subsisting individual which figures

act) indicating precisely the formal act-principle by which the individual person exists. Therefore St. Thomas prefers to speak of "rational nature" rather than "rational essence" because "nature" better expresses the causal aspect (*ST* Ia. 29, 1 ad 4). The formal cause is a principle of actuality in the person, not of potentiality (the potential principle relies on his body and being an animal).

[27] To this extent the distinction made by H. Mühlen in *Sein und Person nach Johan Duns Scotus* (Paderborn, 1954) is instructive even for those who do not accept the full Scotist position. The author gains from Scotus the view that personal immediacy consists in the special mode of being or subsistence in the person and has "den Charakter des Für-sich-seins und Insich-seins" (p. 99). But he goes beyond the Scotist position (in the sense of Heidegger and M. Müller) when he explains this character as "Verselbstung und Andacht als Grundmöglichkeiten menschlicher Personalität" (pp. 106ff.).

[28] "Hoc nomen 'persona' non est impositum ad significandum individuum ex parte naturae, sed ad significandum rem subsistentem in tali natura." *ST* Ia. 30, 4.

in the genus of the definition. Thus *esse* is not the formal constitutive feature of person and only enters into the consideration of person insofar as every person is generically an individual substance or supposit.[29]

B. THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE PERSON

1. Some Contemporary Positions

Since the classical definition of person connects the individual substance with the universal rational nature, the question arises as to how these two apparently conflicting features are related. The classical scholastic solutions have been to assert that individuality results either from individual forms (the Scotist position) or from the body (the Thomist view). Contemporary proponents of the Thomistic position have offered some stimulating speculations concerning this issue. O. Schweizer considers the person in terms of the specifically complete human nature ("in der spezifisch vollständigen Menschennatur") and states that since the nature by itself is universal and abstract, the body as principle of individuation becomes a determinative element of the human person ("ein ausschlaggebendes Element der menschlichen Person").[30] J. Maritain believes that there is a tension in St. Thomas' thought between the individual and the person because a human being is an individual on the grounds of the material body while the person is constituted by the rational soul; man as an individual is only a part of the whole (sc. the state or the universe) while man as a person is a "relative whole" with regard to God.[31]

[29] Some reference must be made to the interesting discussions of these questions in two works of E. Forment: (1) *Ser y persona*, Second edition (Barcelona: 1983) and (2) *Persona y modo substancial*, Second edition (Barcelona, 1984). Forment agrees with Degl' Innocenti in locating the constitutive feature of person in existence, yet his argumentation is quite different because it is based mainly on a consideration of the theme of participation.

[30] Schweizer, p. 111.

[31] See *Les droits de l'homme et la loi naturelle* (New York: 1942), pp. 13-14. See also the critical appraisal by J. Cocteau in *Les fondements thomistes du personalisme de Maritain* (Ottawa, 1955).

The position of W. Kluxen merits special consideration. He maintains that the human person is the point of intersection of the nature concretized in the body and the equally concrete existence. By virtue of its particular essential determination, being passes from metaphysical universality (*ens communissimum*) to such extreme concretion that " existence appears as that of the singular individual existent in such wise that, in sharp contrast to the community of being as metaphysically conceived, the former is in the strictest sense incommunicable." [32] Further, it is equally important to Kluxen to note " that the form in the concrete individual does not remain in the generality which is proper to it by its very nature, but becomes itself the form of *this* individual.[33] The connection with the material body (as principle of individuation) is essential to the soul because it is of its very nature to be a part of man who is constituted by body and soul. Kluxen further asserts the identity in *esse* of man and soul to be such that by its connection with the body, the soul gains the personal being of man which it subsequently loses at the death of the body.

Obviously, indeed, not all the commentators have been sympathetic and J. Endres has formulated some basic objections to the classical definition of person resulting from contemporary philosophical positions.[34] First, the classical definition of person contains an intrinsic contradiction because it tries to determine the person as individual when it can only point out the universal feature of a rational nature. This goes against the tradition's recognition that the individual is impos-

[32] " das Sein als jenes des singulären, individuellen Seienden erscheint, wo es ganz im Gegensatz zur Kommunität des metaphysisch begriffenen Seins im strengen Sinne inkommunikabel ist." W. Kluxen, " Anima separata und personsein bei Thomas v. Aquin," in *Thomas von Aquin. Interpretation und Rezeption*, ed. W. Eckert O. P. (Mainz: 1974), p. 101.

[33] " Dass die Form im konkreten Individuum nicht in der ihr von hause aus eigenen Allgemeinheit bleibt, sondern selbst individuell Form *dieses* Individuums wird." Ibid., p. 103.

[34] " Thomasischer Personbegriff und neuzeitlicher Personalismus," in Eckert's collection (p. 117ff.).

sible to define: *individuum est ineffabile* and *de singularibus non est scientia.* The classical definition of person can only consider man universally, even though it is precisely individuality and incommunicability which constitute personhood. Secondly, the classical definition fails to take into account the features of the human person which seem to be most important: self-consciousness, freedom, and relationality.[35] Indeed, the classical emphasis on subsistence renders the person closed into himself. In sum, the classical view is too objective ("*sachlich*") because of its derivation from a universal, abstract, and rational conceptualization. By contrast, the contemporary perspective (e.g. Personalism) is more sensitive to the ineffable, subjective, existential, singular, and historical character of the human person. Finally, it has been objected also that the human soul must be seen to be individual in itself instead of in dependence upon the material body.

2. Some Observations on the Contemporary Problematic

The first issue to be considered is the relationship between the universal and the individual. The question is one of broad metaphysical significance, however, and should not be restricted to the special study of person. For both Boethius and St. Thomas, the relationship between universality and individuality is unproblematic because of Aristotle's resolution of the question. The essence or nature is not a Platonic universal concept opposed to or separate from the individual, but rather is immanent in the particular as its "*to ti en einai*" or formal cause (*quod quid erat esse* or *Sosein*) and so its principle of actuality.[36] The universal (genus or species) is indeed related

[35] See the characterization of this view in the articles on "Person" by A. Halder and M. Müller in: *Staatslexikon,* Sixth Edition, VI: 197-206 and *Lexikon fur Theologie und Kirche,* Second Edition, VIII: 287-290. It should be noted, however, that the latter article is problematic in terms of its translation of Boethius' definition.

[36] Cf. my commentary in: *Aristoteles' Metaphysik* [*Meiner PhB*], *307/308,* Vol. I, Second Edition, (Hamburg, 1982), pp. 31ff. and Vol. II, Second Edition, (Hamburg, 1984), pp. 387ff.

to the individual essence as to its *fundamentum reale,* but it does not subsist as such apart from the consideration of the intellect (cf. *ST* Ia, 76, 2 ad 4). Thus the rational soul as the formal cause or actuality of man is the *constitutivum formale* of person.

Since the individual (e.g. Socrates) encompasses both essential features and non-essential features (accidents), it is strictly speaking indefinable by virtue of the latter. Yet the individual is definable as a member of a species on the grounds of its essence. Thus the ineffability or non-definable character of the individual holds insofar as the individual is considered in its concrete particularity, but it does not perdure when the individual is considered in its essential aspect. And the latter consideration does not ignore the relationship between the essence and the concrete individual being in which it is found; indeed the classical definition precisely indicates the necessary connection between the rational essence and the substantial being of the human individual. Thus while it must certainly be conceded that contemporary existential and historical considerations of the human person enhance our understanding, nevertheless such considerations could be assimilated by the classical perspective and find therein a certain needed corrective.

Secondly, it should be understood that matter as the principle of individuation serves to individuate the whole composed of matter and form and not just the form alone. The formal cause becomes individual by matter only insofar as it is numerically one in the individual supposit; as such it is the act-principle for the individual being rendering its existence distinct from any other being. St. Thomas notes, however, that while the whole being, individualized by its matter, is incommunicable; nevertheless the form, although individualized by matter, or better still by the supposit, remains *secundum rationem* communicable to many.[37] Thus in the composite, the

[37] See *ST* Ia. 13, 9: "considerandum est quod omnis forma in supposito singulari existens, per quod individuatur, communis est multis vel secundum

formal cause (e.g. the soul in man) remains the principle of specific universality and the matter remains the principle of individuality.

Thirdly, it must be noted that the human soul possesses a certain individuality in itself apart from the body even though the body contributes an initial material condition. The reason for this is that the human soul (unlike animal souls) subsists per se even though it is united with a body (*ST* Ia. 75, 2) and so belongs to the realm of immaterial substances although it occupies the lowest rank therein (*ST* Ia. 89, 1). St. Thomas consequently distinguishes two degrees of individuality: there is the incomplete individuality where something subsists per se and not as an accident and there is the complete individuality where something subsists independently as neither an accident nor a part.[38] The human soul enjoys the first or incomplete kind of individuality but not the second or complete kind of individuality because it is a constitutive part of the nature of man, connected with a body, and fundamentally constituted so as to possess that capacity for conjunction (*unibilitas*) even after the death of the body. Yet the soul's qualified individuality is properly its own despite the necessary initial contribution of the material body.[39]

Fourthly, it cannot be inferred that the incarnated soul en-

rem vel secundum rationem saltem . .. ." See also the discussions of *ST* Ia. 30, 4 and *De potentia* 9, 2. The first text discusses the common feature of personality as not only in the genus and species, but also in the individual mode of existence. The second text, especially in the ad 2, likewise developes this point.

[38] "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod 'hoc aliquid' potest dici dupliciter: uno modo, pro quocumque subsistente: alio modo, pro subsistente completo in natura alicuius speciei. Primo modo, excludit inhaerentiam accidentis et formae materialis: secundo modo, excludit etiam imperfectionem partis. Unde manus possit dici 'hoc aliquid' primo modo, sed non secundo modo. Sic igitur, cum anima humana sit pars speciei humanae, potest dici 'hoc aliquid' primo modo, quasi subsistens, sed non secundo modo: sic enim compositum ex anima et corpore dicitur 'hoc aliquid.'" *ST* Ia. 75, 2 ad 1. See also I *Sent.* 25, 1, 1 ad 7 where St. Thomas distinguishes between three meanings of "*incommunicabilitas.*"

[39] See *De ente et essentia*, c.6. This point is much neglected nowadays.

joys personal existence on the grounds that its existence is identical with the existence of the man. The existence of the soul coincides only partially with that of the man; that is, only insofar as it is the formal cause of the existence of the whole man who is also constituted by the body as a material or potential principle. In this life personal existence belongs to the supposit. Thus the soul does not lose personal existence at the death of the body because it never enjoyed it to begin with.

The status of the soul after the death of the body, however, has been variously interpreted. Anton C. Pegis has asserted that there is a textual contradiction in the teaching of St. Thomas.[40] In *Summa contra gentiles* II, 81, St. Thomas considers the question of whether the rational soul continues to exist after the death of the body. The response hinges on whether the soul has any proper functions apart from the body. St. Thomas asserts that the soul does indeed have such proper functions, namely *intelligere* and *velle*, and so separate subsistence. After the death of the body the soul will enjoy another mode of existence (*modus essendi*) with a correspondingly more perfect mode of cognition (*modus intelligendi*) which is more conformable with the soul's nature.[41] Yet in *Summa Theologiae* Ia. 89, 1, in the context of a discussion on

[40] "The Separated Soul and its Nature in St. Thomas," in *St. Thomas Aquinas (1274-1974) Commemorative Studies* (Toronto: PIMS, 1975), pp. 131-158.

[41] "Sciendum tamen est quod alio modo intelligit anima separata a corpore et corpori unita, sicut et alio modo est: unumquodque enim secundum hoc agit secundum quod est . . . Esse vero separatae animae est ipsi soli absque corpore. Unde nec eius operatio, quae est intelligere, explebitur per respectum ad aliqua obiecta in corporeis organis existentia, quae sunt phantasmata: sed intelliget per seipsum, ad modum substantiarum quae sunt totaliter secundum esse a corporibus separatae, de quibus infra agetur. A quibus etiam tanquam a superioribus, uberius influentiam recipere poterit ad perfectius intelligendum. . . .. Unde et, quando totaliter erit a corpore separata, perfecte assimilabitur substantiis separatis quantum ad modum intelligendi et abunde influentiam eorum recipiet. Sic igitur, etsi intelligere nostrum secundum modum praesentis vitae, corrupto corpore corrumpatur, succedet tamen alius modus intelligendi altior." The citation is from the Leonine text published by Marietti (Turin, 1961) nn. 1625-1626. See Maurer, pp. 132-134.

the possibility of intellectual operations by the separated soul, St. Thomas apparently contradicts the earlier teaching by asserting that the separated soul's cognitive operations are less perfect than those of the incarnated soul and even against its nature because it is proper to the human soul to perform intellectual operations in conjunction with the body.[42]

W. Kluxen has noted a similar problem in St. Thomas' teaching. He interprets St. Thomas to imply that separation from the body does not entail a deficiency in the soul's existence but rather in its nature.[43] Since it belongs to the nature of the soul to be a part of man, connection with the body is essential to it; separation therefore results in a deficiency in nature.[44] Yet St. Thomas also implies that the nature of the soul is not exhausted by its function as the formal cause of the body; while it comes into being in a certain relationality with matter, it nevertheless subsists per se and survives the death of the body. Thus Kluxen perceives a certain tension or even contradiction in St. Thomas' teaching because the soul seems to have a kind of " twofold existence " (" eine zwiegespaltene Existenz "). Separation from the body is both gain and loss (of personal being and its natural mode of cognition) for the soul. Kluxen even questions whether the soul's existence after death is true individual immortality or just a certain indestructibility.[45]

[42] " Animae igitur secundum illum modum essendi quo corpori est unita, competit modus intelligendi per conversionem ad phantasmata corporum, quae in corporeis organis sunt: cum autem fuerit a corpore separata, competit ei modus intelligendi per conversionem ad ea quae sunt intelligibilia simipliciter, sicut et aliis substantiis separatis. Unde modus intelligendi per conversionem ad phantasmata est animae naturalis, sicut et corpori uniri: sed esse separatum a corpore est praeter rationem suae naturae, et similiter intelligere sine conversione ad phantasmata est ei praeter naturam. Et ideo ad hoc unitur corpori, ut sit et operetur secundum naturam suam." See Pegis, pp. 134-138.

[43] Kluxen, p. 99.

[44] Ibid., p. 105: " Die auf das Wesen gerichtete Betrachtung unterstreicht das Verwiesensein der Seele auf den Leib so stark, dass die 'Mangelhaftigkeit' der abgeschiedenen Seele ganz klar erscheint."

[45] See W. Kluxen, " Seele und Unsterblichkeit bei Thomas v. Aquin," in *Seele*, ed. Kremer, (Leiden-Köln, 1984), pp. 66-83.

Despite the arguments of Pegis and Kluxen, however, the texts of St. Thomas need not be interpreted as entailing a contradiction. In *Summa contra gentiles* II, 81, the central issue is the possibility of operations by the separated soul as such and there is an emphasis on the fact that the separated soul belongs to the realm of immaterial substances and so is similar to the angels. In this regard it could perhaps be ventured that if the operations are specified by the formal nature, then the operations of the separated soul will be more specific and more natural because more spiritual. Yet such an inference is ruled out by *Summa Theologiae* Ia. 89, 1, where it is asserted that although the separate soul is capable of intellectual operations, such operations are imperfect and (in this sense) against its nature because the human soul is naturally connected to the body in being and in operation.

Yet it must be noted that both texts teach that the separated soul enjoys another mode of existence. It is not so that the existence of the separate soul remains unchanged while its nature undergoes a diminishment (Kluxen). The nature of the soul remains unchanged.[46] Connection with the body, while conformable to the soul's nature, is nevertheless not essential to the soul itself; that is, connection with the body does not affect the nature of the soul itself, but rather its mode of being or subsistence (as *suppositum*). Therefore separation from the body does not entail a deficiency in the nature of the soul, but rather a change in its mode of being and this for the better.

Fifthly, the understanding of substance involved in the classical definition of person is not antithetical to contemporary emphasis on freedom, self-communication, etc. These latter concerns involve the actions of the person which are distinct from and dependent upon the substantial being. Indeed it may be ventured that human actions can only obtain their true communicative openness when the person's existence is "closed" and self-subsistent in the classical sense.

[46] "et cum fuerit a corpore separata [sc. anima], manente tamen eadem animae natura." *ST* Ia., 89, 1.

It may be stated in conclusion that because the nature is designated by the universal but not identified with it, and since although the universal is opposed to the individual the nature is indeed immanent within the particular, therefore the classical definition which includes both the rational nature and the individual human being is not intrinsically contradictory. Nor is the classical definition inadequate for the contemporary quest to analyze and interpret personal human experience. For the classical understanding of substantial being and nature (qua *essentia, sosein*) gives them a transcendental or analogous universality (not generic) which does not exclude the particular but rather positively embraces it. Contemporary criticisms about "empty abstractions" fail to grasp the true intimate connection of such meanings with the individual existent. It is common nowadays to oppose personal values like responsibility and self-consciousness to the classical conception of substance in the way that subjectivity is opposed to objectivity (and human life to inanimate things). Yet this is a false dichotomy because the classical understanding of substantial being in its transcendental analogous charter embraces both subjects and objects and is indeed indispensable for a proper understanding of person and personal identity.[47]

C. THE INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS OF THE PERSON

Finally, I wish to consider briefly a third problem which concerns the question of personal action. The classical definition of person seems inadequate because it does not articulate the uniqueness of the personal activity by which the person achieves completeness and for which he is responsible.[48] More-

[47] The problems which arise for the understanding of person when the traditional concepts of substance and being are rejected in favor of a neo-positivist or analytic approach can be observed in the interesting collection: *Identität der Person*, ed. L. Siep, Aufsätze aus der nordamerikanischen Gegenwartsphilosophie (Basel-Stuttgart, 1983). Translation from: The Identities of Persons, ed. S. Rorty (Univ. California Press, 1976).

[48] Obviously this bears upon the legal aspect of person as it has been developed by modern thinkers such as Leibniz, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel. Yet

over, it may be doubted that the unique individual and historical character of personal activity can be accounted for at all by the abstract classical definition. Obviously such criticisms merit careful and thoughtful consideration. Let it suffice here, however, to offer the following observations.

First, St. Thomas clearly recognized the essential connection between person and action. When he discusses the meaning of the specific difference (*natura rationalis*) of the definition in *ST* Ia. 29, 1, he immediately identifies rational substances with responsible activity ("*dominium sui actus*"). W. Kluxen has analyzed the ethical import of this teaching.[49] His Holiness John Paul II has considered this feature of the classical definition in the light of the contemporary phenomenological analyses of personal action in R. Ingarden, M. Scheler, J. de Finance, and M. Blondel.[50]

Yet despite the intimate connection between person and action, the definition of person cannot encompass personal action because the definition is necessarily aimed at a being's essence. In man, the personal being is distinct from personal action and is related to it as a cause to its effect. Instructive in this regard is the teaching of St. Thomas in *Summa Theologiae* IIIa. 19, 1ad 3, where he denies that the hypostatic union in Christ entails the possibility of only one mode of operation by stating that although *esse* pertains to the very constitution of the person and so entails unity, nevertheless operation is an effect of the person according to his form or nature thus making it possible for there to be a plurality of operations in Christ without prejudice to his personal unity.[51] Personal actions do not con-

the legal influence on the understanding of person was present even in the Scholastics. Alcuin, for example, developed the concept of person from that of legal power. Cf. V. Serralda, *La philosophie de la personne chez Alcuin* (Paris: 1978).

[49] Kluxen, *Anima separata* p. 113ff.

[50] K. Woytila, *The Acting Person,* trans. Andrzej Potocki, D. Reidel: Boston, 1979).

[51] "Ad tertium dicendum quod operari est hypostasis subsistentis, sed secundum formam et naturam, a qua operatio speciem recipit. Et ideo a

stitute the essence or being of man. To replace the primacy of personal being with the primacy of personal actions would result in activist or existentialist view of man.

Secondly, St. Thomas likewise demonstrates in *ST* Ia. 2,9 1 that although he understood personal actions as individual, historical, and unique events ("*actiones autem in singularibus sunt*"), nevertheless he did not consider this feature of personhood to be incompatible with the universal rational nature of man. As was seen above, the essential nature of each being is intimately connected with its individual existence as the formal specifying cause of its being and operation. In the case of man, his actions proceed from and are specified by his rational nature. The consequence of this intimate connection is that the nature of a being can be inferred inductively from the character of its operations.[52]

Thus in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, the classical definition of person involves no failure in comprehension of personal activity. It is rather the case that human action is seen within the proper context of human being. Each individual human actualizes and achieves his personality through free, unique, historical actions grounded in his rational nature. The achievement of personality is the work of a lifetime; for not every act of man is necessarily a personal moral action, as on the other hand every personal action is certainly truly human.

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diversitate formarum seu naturarum est diversa species operationum: sed ab unitate hypostasis est unitas secundum numerum quantum ad operationem speciei . . . Et similiter in Christo oportet quod sint duae operationes specie differentes, secundum eius duas naturas: qualibet tamen operationum est una numero in Christo, semel facta, sicut una ambulatio et una sanatio."

[52] "Natura enim uniuscuiusque rei ex eius operatione ostenditur. Propria autem operatio hominis, inquantum est homo, est intelligere . . . Oportet ergo quod homo secundum illud speciem sortiatur, quod est huius operationis principium. Sortitur autem unumquodque speciem per propriam formam. Relinquitur ergo quod intellectivum principium sit propria hominis forma." *ST* Ia. 76, 1.

KARL RAHNER'S EXISTENTIAL ETHICS: A CRITIQUE BASED ON ST. THOMAS'S UNDERSTANDING OF PRUDENCE

I

KARL RAHNER'S THEORY of a "formal existential ethics," which he proposes as a necessary supplement to the "essential ethics" of the Thomistic natural-law tradition, has been both praised as a brilliant adaptation of the tradition to contemporary philosophy as well as criticised as a misleading and unnecessary break with Thomism. William A. Wallace, one of the critics, characterizes Rahner's ethics as an unfortunate combination of mysticism and casuistry.[1] Personal moral decision-making, according to Wallace, should depend on the virtue of prudence plus "gifts of grace" instead of on a theory of private spiritual discernment. A genuine Thomism in his view already achieves what Rahner wants to accomplish with the problematic category of existential ethics and simultaneously provides more coherent and explicit safeguards against situationalism and abuse.[2]

Rahner's chief expositor, James F. Bresnahan, claims in his extensive dissertation on Rahner's ethics that the extent of Wallace's misunderstanding of "the need for 'existential' ethics is hard to convey in a short space," and that Wallace is wrong in thinking that Rahner displaces prudence.[3] In the

[1] William A. Wallace, O.P., "The Existential Ethics of Karl Rahner: A Thomistic Appraisal," in *The Thomist*, 1963, vol. 27, pp. 493-515.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 510-513.

[3] James F. Bresnahan, S.J., *The Methodology of "Natural Law" Ethical Reasoning In The Theology of Karl Rahner, And: Its Supplementary Development Using The Legal Philosophy of Lon L. Fuller*, 1972 Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University (available from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich., no. 72:29520), footnote 106, pp. 77-78.

course of this exchange, not much is said by either party about the characteristics of the virtue of prudence itself. An investigation into the function and status assigned to prudence by St. Thomas may be of use for deciding whether existential ethics is in keeping with his moral teaching or, rather, a distortion. But first, in order to evaluate Wallace's criticism and claim that prudence is a preferable alternative to Rahner's proposal, a brief description of Rahner's categories of essential and existential ethics is in order.[4]

Rahner uses the category of essential ethics in two ways. First, he identifies it with what he portrays as a somewhat static and conservative natural-law tradition. Second, he uses it to refer to his own description of a rehabilitated dimension of ethical reasoning that complements and calls for a supplemental category of existential ethics. Essential ethics in both cases refers to the moral principles or laws derived from knowledge of the essential elements of human nature. The difference has to do primarily with disagreement about what it is that constitutes human essence. According to Rahner, essence is much less unchangeable and much more "open" than traditionally or ordinarily assumed. As a consequence, he argues, claims about natural law should be less absolute and universal than they often are.

Whether one understands essence as fixed or fluid, however, essential ethics involves a syllogistic application of natural law to circumstances. A universal principle based on human essence

[4] An understanding of Rahner's ethics is made difficult by several factors: his thinking is deeply indebted to "transcendental" Continental philosophy; some of the relevant texts and criticisms are available only in German; passages dealing with ethics appear in widely scattered (and unindexed) essays; he does not conceive of himself primarily as an ethicist and thus is not systematic in his discussion of his moral theory; his prose may be charitably described as challenging; and the only extensive analysis of his ethics written in English is Bresnahan's 650-page dissertation, which contains a wealth of information and explication. Bresnahan has published two helpful summaries: "Rahner's Christian Ethics: in *America*, 1970, vol. 123, pp. 351-354 and "Rahner's Ethics: Critical Natural Law in Relation to Contemporary Ethical Methodology," in the *Journal of Religion*, Jan. 1976, vol. 56, pp. 36-660.

is contained in the major premise, an actual situation is described in the minor premise, and an imperative is presented in the conclusion. In Rahner's view, most versions of essential ethics have the defect of only anticipating problems in sufficiently analyzing the situation in question and in adequately articulating the relevant universal norm. They tend to suppose, Rahner notes, that "Whoever knows the universal laws exactly and comprehends the given situation to the last detail, knows also clearly what he must or may do here." [5]

Rahner unabashedly affirms the authority of natural law and the legitimacy of its reference to essence for determining normative principles,[6] but he distinguishes between a permanent "core" essence knowable by "transcendental reflection" and an historically, culturally, and biologically changeable human nature available to empirical observation.[7] When discussing the permanent and necessary part of human essence, Rahner tends to focus on what he describes as its transcendent subjectivity and freedom. He understands freedom (not merely to choose between actions but primarily to create one's spiritual and moral future) as "a basic condition of the person" without which "man could not stand before God as a responsible agent . . . , without it he could not be the subject of guilt before God nor of profferred and accepted redemption and pardon." [8] Although he recognizes the material dimension within which freedom operates, Rahner emphasizes the freedom to determine oneself rather than the contingent factors by which the self is determined.

[5] Karl Rahner, "On The Question of a Formal Existential Ethics," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. ii, trans. Karl-H. Kruger, 1963, Helicon Press, Baltimore.

[6] Rahner, "The Problem of Genetic Manipulation," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. ix, trans. Graham Harrison, 1972, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, p. 231.

[7] Rahner, "The Dignity and Freedom of Man," *Theological Investigations* vol. ii, pg. 236. In "The Experiment With Man" and "The Problem of Genetic Manipulation," *Theological Investigations*, vol. ix, pp. 205-250. Rahner discusses the human capacity, increasingly facilitated by science and technology, for self-manipulation.

[8] Rahner, "The Dignity and Freedom of Man," pp. 246-247.

By human transcendence and subjectivity Rahner means one's self-awareness precisely as such a free creature oriented to God [9] and able to reflect on what it is about human nature or essence that makes distinctively human activity possible.[10] That is, a distinctive feature of being human, according to Rahner, is the ability to reflect on the conditions of the possibility of being human. A related feature of Rahner's understanding of human nature is that he sees nature to be so penetrated and malleable by God's grace that it is impossible to draw as sharp a line between nature and grace as some natural-law theorists suppose.[11] This results in a further qualification of what can be claimed to follow from an understanding of nature or essence in the way of natural law.

Rahner nowhere denies the normativeness of the Thomistic catalog of the inclinations of human nature (self-preservation, sexual desire, the nurturing of offspring, to live in society, and to seek God). But given his complex view of human essence, in which "essential" transcendence and freedom are related to empirically discernible contingent characteristics, and in which the lines between these two spheres are nowhere clear, he is reluctant to enumerate principles of natural law or to claim eternal validity for them.[12] This is the point at which Rahner introduces his "formal existential ethics"—*formal* because it contains no material content but rather has to do with the structure of a dimension of moral obligation, and *existential* because it has to do with individual imperatives rather than general obligations derived from essence [13]—and the point at which, on Wallace's account, the virtue of prudence is unfortunately neglected.

[9] Rahner, "The Problem of Genetic Manipulation," p. 231.

[10] See Bresnahan, chapter 1, for a thorough discussion of Rahner's understanding of essence and for relevant citations.

[11] Rahner, "Concerning the Relationship Between Nature and Grace," *Theological Investigations*, vol. i, trans. Cornelius Ernst, O.P., 1961, Helicon Press, Baltimore, pg. 315.

[12] Rahner, "The Problem of Genetic Manipulation," p. 230.

[13] Donal J. Dorr, "Karl Rahner's Formal Existential Ethics," in the *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 1969, vol. 36, pg. 213.

A formal existential ethics refers to a moral reality to which, according to Rahner, essential ethics, by its very nature, cannot sufficiently attend. It refers more precisely and attentively than essential ethics to the element of human nature characterized freedom, subjectivity, and individuality. Whereas essential ethics applies to human nature in general, existential ethics applies to the unique individual who is, Rahner affirms, always more than one of many repeatable instantiations of humanity. Existential ethics is not intended by Rahner to verge on situation ethics, which in its extreme forms denies the authority of general moral norms and affirms the absolute uniqueness and autonomy of the individual, but it does correspond to what Rahner sees as the element of truth in situation ethics: that there is an important sphere of individual moral obligation not expressed by general rules.[14]

Rahner refers to at least three main considerations compelling the development of existential ethics. The first is that even a redescription of essential ethics (one taking into account the openness of essence) does not adequately apply to the freedom characteristic of the human condition, a freedom that is encountered in the capacity to create one's moral and spiritual being by obeying an imperative beyond the moral law. It is not a freedom of indifferent autonomy but a freedom of absolute obligation to love God and one's neighbors.[15] The details of this obligation, Rahner says, cannot be specified precisely: the demand cannot be known in advance or sufficiently articulated by objective norms, although it always has to be fulfilled in concrete action. Only a "genuine individual ethics," which goes *beyond* essential ethics without contradicting objective norms and without slipping into situation ethics, "can preserve the mystery of freedom."[16]

[14] Rahner, "On the Question of a Formal Existential Ethics," pp. 220-225.

[15] Rahner, "The Dignity and Freedom of Man," pg. 247.

[16] Rahner, "Theology of Freedom," *Theological Investigations*, vol. vi, trans. Karl-H. and Boniface Kruger, 1969, Helicon Press, Baltimore, pp. 187-190.

The second consideration is the failure of essential ethics to do complete justice to the singular reality of a concrete situation. This failure, according to Rahner, is manifested in the gap between the specific distinctiveness of a concrete situation and the generality of the language that attempts to describe the situation as a " case " in the form of a proposition in the syllogistic scheme of practical reasoning. The failure is further expressed in the subsequent inability of the deduced imperative clearly and unambiguously to apply to the situation in question.[17] Rahner claims that existential ethics, in contrast, contains a qualitatively different " pointing gesture " that specifies exactly, without mistake or distortion, what is to be done.

The third factor compelling the formulation of an existential ethics follows from Rahner's observation that a system of natural law based solely on essence contains both positive and negative precepts that only establish the boundaries of what is or is not to be done. Although the negative precepts can never be contradicted, the positive precepts are frequently so broadly general that the individual is faced with a choice of a variety of possible options.[18] A choice is required, but the specifics of how to make the choice, or of how to put a particular choice into effect, are not given by essential ethics. Rahner denies that such choices are a matter of indifference and affirms the probability that " from some other source altogether, only one of these ' permitted ' possibilities is designated as the only morally right one " in the situation.[19]

In summary, Rahner's formal existential ethics is an attempt to articulate what is involved in achieving a closer moral approximation of the will of God for a unique individual in a specific situation than can be determined by the application of a list of universal moral laws based on a universal human essence. Rahner does not deny that there is such an essence; he just denies the way in which it has been characterized and

[17] Rahner, " On The Question Of A Formal Existential Ethis," pp. 220-225.
[18] Ibid., pg. 224.
[19] Ibid., pp. 224-225.

that it is productive of a moral sytesm with the all-encompassing applicability or certainty claimed by some Thomists. Without denying the validity of the natural law as a legitimate expression of God's will, Rahner's claim is that God has something additional to say to the individual whether the individual recognizes the message is coming from God or not. While the essential dimension of morality refers to specifiable inclinations, and obligations, existential ethics refers to no "thing" in particular but rather to a capacity or a process of discerning obligation, of self-determination, and of relation to God expressed in concrete moral choice. Essential ethics *has* a content; existential ethics *is a way* or dimension of individual moral " being " that finds concrete expression in moral action.

Assuming for the moment that there is such a dimension of moral obligation beyond the purview of what Rahner describes as essential ethics, and setting aside questions about the relation between essential and existential ethics and the possibilities of conflict, one has to ask (particularly in light of Wallace's charges of unwarranted mysticism at the expense of the virtue of prudence) how an existential ethics is known. Rahner says that one of two functions of the " organ " of conscience is involved—not the function operative in the syllogistic reasoning of essential ethics, but another part of conscience that operates as a " technique " for hearing individual imperatives. " If we seek a traditional name for this," Rahner says, " we would call it the charismatic art of ' discernment of spirits ' . . . the ability to discern the unique call of God for the individual as such . . ." [21]

This technique or art is described by Rahner in *The Dynamic Element in The Church,* especially in the essay on " The Logic of Concrete Individual Knowledge in Ignatius Loyola," where

[20] Ibid., pg. 214.

[21] Rahner, " Gerfren im heutigen Katholizismus," 1950, Benziger and Co., Einsiedeln, pg. 17. (Trans. by and quoted in Wallace, pp. 497, 495.) The essay appears in English as " Dangers in Catholicism Today," in *Nature and Grace,* c. 1964, Sheed and Ward, N.Y.

Rahner appropriates for existential ethics the second of three ways of religious decision-making, " the discernment of spirits," in Ignatius's description of the process of " election." [22] Rahner says the second mode of knowing God's will in this process is intellectual but non-discursive. In an ordinary discursive way of knowing, on this account, a judgment about the goodness of a motivation or impulse follows from a prior determination of the goodness of the consequent actions performed. In other words, discursive knowledge is a case of knowing a tree by its fruits. The *non*-discursive knowledge upon which Rahner says his existential ethics depends is the opposite: one knows the impulse to be supernaturally good from the start and decides what to do on the basis of its authority. In the discernment of spirits, Rahner says, one experiences a kind of " consolation " in a realm of pure transcendence where one encounters the express will of God himself without the mediation of any object of knowledge.[23]

Anticipating at least one objection, Rahner says that to point out that an object-less experience is an unconscious experience is to miss the point:

> The absence of object in question is utter receptivity to God, the inexpressible, non-conceptual experience of the love of God who is raised transcendent above all that is individual, all that can be mentioned and distinguished, of God as God. There is no longer ' any object ' but the drawing of the whole person, with the very ground of his being, into love, beyond any defined circumscribable object, into the infinity of God as God himself as the *divina majestad*.[24]

This kind of explanation invites more objections, but Rahner says that the experience of such a " consolation " bears the " stamp of divine origin " and has the status of a first principle

[22] Rahner, *The Dynamic Element In The Church*, trans. W. J. O'Hara, c. 1964, Herder and Herder, N.Y.

[23] A helpful summary of this aspect of Rahner's ethics is provided by Dorr, pp. 211-229.

[24] Rahner, *The Dynamic Element In The Church*, pp. 134-135.

of logic or ontology.[25] It is self-warranting and, before its mediation by objects, indubitably reliable.[26]

Perhaps in order to guard against charges of irrationalism or "Illuminism," Rahner maintains that this process operates within the boundaries of what is and is not permissible that already are established by natural law. He adds that although the requisite knowledge is "non-discursive," it is not finally divorced from reason:

> After all, these stirrings do not consist of merely indifferent, blind drives like hunger, thirst, and so on. They consist of thoughts, acts of knowing, perception of values, etc. They themselves contain an objective conceptual element, they can be expressed and verfied. The experience of consolations and desolations is not the experience of merely physiological states, but of impulsions having a rational structure. They are always also the product of one's own activity of an intellectual kind.[27]

Rahner attempts to resolve the apparent tension between the non-discursive moment of this process and the "objective conceptual element" by speaking of a dialectic in which one places the memory of the object-less transcendent promptings, experienced in the moment of divine consolation, alongside the proposed concrete course of action as an "experimental test" of the rightness or wrongness of the choices to be made. The determination is made on the basis of "whether the two phenomena are in harmony, mutually cohere . . . whether instead of smoothness, gentleness and sweetness, sharpness, tumult and disturbance arise."[28] This entire process is not just available to a spiritual elite or only to Christians. Rahner claims it is employed without awareness by "nearly everyone" confronted by important choices, where the final decision is not made "by a rational analysis" but rather by a feeling of suitability and contentment accompanying and validating the proper decision.[29]

[25] Ibid., p. 142.
[26] Ibid., p. 145.
[27] Ibid., pp. 102-103.
[28] Ibid., pg. 128. Cf. pp. 162-163.
[29] Ibid., pg. 166.

II

There are undoubtedly a number of features of Rahner's account of essential and existential ethics where even a critic seeking a more flexible understanding of the traditional natural-law doctrine would want to raise objections. My own reservations have to do with Rahner's analysis of "essence"—with the presuppositions behind the distinction between a sphere of freedom and transcendence, on the one hand, and materiality on the other—and with the characterization of existential ethics' dependence on "non-discursive" knowledge. For example, aside from the question of whether it is a good idea to appeal to spiritual promptings and consolations for moral knowledge and authority, there is the larger question of whether this kind of knowledge really is object-less and non-discursive. In other words, one could ask whether there is in fact any qualitative difference between a "pointing gesture," [30] such as supposedly specifies the application of an existential imperative and an imperative command expressed verbally. If there is no difference in kind in the commands, one wonders what makes the category of existential ethics distinctive and necessary. If the difference between essential and existential ethics has to do rather with the way in which moral knowledge is obtained, one is driven back to the question of whether existential ethics is really just situational intuitionism with a painted-on-halo.

These questions warrant further investigation, but Wallace's objection about Rahner's neglect of the virtue of prudence is more directly relevant to the question of whether Rahner's theory is a legitimate and compatible extension of St. Thomas's teaching. Wallace's objection suggests that the virtue of prudence as understood by Thomas may more straightforwardly accomplish with a familiar and circumscribed vocabulary much of what Rahner wants to achieve with his problematic appeal to existential ethics. Not only may prudence make pos-

[30] Ibid., pp. 20-21

sible within moral reasoning a flexibility, a recognition of historical and cultural influences, and direct applicability to particular individuals in concrete cases, but it may do so without sharing Rahner's indebtedness to Kantian notions of subjectivity or to the philosophy informing transcendental Thomism.

Wallace objects that Rahner's complaints about the natural-law tradition pertain to an "essentialist" doctrine found in neo-scholasticism but foreign to Thomas Aquinas,[31] so that although Rahner pays "lip service" to prudence in discussing the application of general principles to circumstances, he "first represents this inadequately, then states the problem in such a way that demands a solution in terms of a post-Tridentine doctrine which substitutes the voice of conscience for the prudential decision, then finally proceeds to show how the latter doctrine is itself inadequate." [32]

Rahner's most substantial statement about prudence is as follows:

> The role assigned to this virtue by Aquinas is, of course, well known, though at various times it has been almost forgotten by some moral theologians. But the question is, what is the nature of this virtue and what is its object? If one tries to answer this question, one must candidly admit that prudence first envisages the full range of general principles, then the concrete circumstances, and inquires what principle or combination of principles is to be actually applied in precisely these circumstances.[33]

He goes on to ask, rhetorically, whether these circumstances have to do with abstract essences or if there is also something absolutely individual and unique involved which prudence might discern. Asserting that prudence only makes a distinctive contribution to moral reasoning if the "'inexpressibly individual' element" actually exists, Rahner claims that "the appeal to prudence . . . does not solve the set of problems that we have in mind, but only notifies their presence." [34]

[31] Wallace, pp. 500-502.
[32] Ibid., pp. 506-507.
[33] Rahner, *The Dynamic Element in The Church*, p. 23.
[34] Ibid., pp. 23-24.

The importance of all this, according to Bresnahan's explanation *contra* Wallace, is that prudence has to do more than juggle the objectifiable elements of the situation and the relevant universal principles. Prudence has to recognize " the immediate self-awareness of the 'person' in his uniqueness." The claim Bresnahan reiterates on behalf of Rahner is that prudence is a bridge between essential and personal ethics (another way of referring to existential ethics) and that its true significance is diminished if the personal element is ignored.[35]

Nonetheless, neither Rahner nor Bresnahan demonstrates that prudence actually plays in Thomas's understanding the role they envision for it. Moreover, Rahner has attributed to St. Thomas a foreign conception of a full-blown dimension of personal moral reality that prudence supposedly perceives. An adequate understanding of the function of prudence requires recognition of a private " personalist " or existential dimension of ethics, Rahner claims. He then refers to the existence of such a dimension as evidence that prudence has to do more than apply universal principles to essences and concrete circumstances, which, if Wallace is correct, is a misunderstanding of prudence to begin with. Bresnahan is right in defending Rahner against the charge of ignoring the virtue of prudence, but the more serious charge is that prudence as understood by Thomas obviates much of the need for Rahner's supplement. It does not obviate all of what Rahner says is the need for existential ethics, however, because Rahner, while identifying himself with Thomas, describes a dimension of personhood characterized by a subjectivity, transcendence, and freedom that explicitly depends on a very different philosophical vocabulary and consequently requires a corresponding theory of individual moral obligation.

Bresnahan observes that Rahner's major study of Thomas claims " to be *both* interpreting Aquinas's very own thinking *and* yet also doing so in relation to basic starting points and

[35] Bresnahan, pp. 75-78.

methodologies (Kant's turn to the subject and 'transcendental method,' Heidegger's phenomenology and search for 'fundamental ontology') which could not have been and were not in fact part of Aquinas's own explicit viewpoint and reasoning for his positions." [36] Rahner himself says his concern

> is not with the Thomas who was conditioned by his times and dependent on Aristotle, Augustine, and the philosophy of his day. There is also such a Thomas, and we could conduct a historical investigation about him. Whether or not we are correct in doubting that such an approach could get to the really *philosophical* in Thomas, the primary concern of this historical work is not to be 'history,' but philosophy itself. And if what matters is to grasp the really philosophical in a philosopher, this can only be done if one joins him in looking at the matter itself. It is only then that you can understand what he means.[37]

Rahner's hermeneutical approach to Thomas Aquinas is noted here because an alternative description of prudence, one that does not depend on the philosophical concerns that Rahner believes he is justified in reading into Thomas in order to get to the "truth" behind Thomas's vocabulary, is most likely not going to attend to the kind of "subject" associated with Rahner's existential ethics and which is supposedly perceived by prudence.

III

Thomas unfortunately suffers the fate of being identified too closely with the tradition he inspired, with the result that many critics of the natural-law tradition think they are refuting St. Thomas in the course of dismissing a particular articulation of natural law. Or, as in Rahner's case, sympathetic attempts to correct the excesses or limitation of the tradition have little continuity with Thomas's own teaching. If Thomas is read as describing a basically Aristotelian ethics of virtue in which prudence is assigned much of the deliberative work and com-

[36] Ibid., pp. vi-vii.

[37] Rahner, *Spirit In The World*, trans. William Dych, c. 1968, Herder and Herder, N.Y., pp. xlix-l. Quoted in Bresnahan, p. vii.

manding of action that later theorists attribute to the syllogistic reasoning of natural law, Rahner's refinements are superfluous at best. If prudence does something different than merely apply universals to "cases," and if it can determine obligation and specify the right thing for an individual to do in a concrete and contingent situation, there is no need to appeal to anything like existential ethics as a corrective or necessary addition to prudence—unless one wants to retain the bulk of Rahner's transcendental anthropology.

In an authentically Thomistic ethics, rather than *deducing* conclusions from an array of naturally known principles, one is *habituated* to the correct judgment of what is to be done. Prudence is the perfected or developed habit concerned with "doing." It is the virtue "dealing with action and concerned with things good and bad for man," [38] both in matters of justice in social relations and in the development of an individual's own character.[39] Unlike the certain conclusions of the speculative sciences, the conclusions of prudence, which deals with practical matters, the "contingent individual incidents, which form the setting for human acts," are only probable.[40] Prudence deals with the singular as opposed to the universal.[41] Its judgments are conjectural and deliberative,[42] the opposite of non-discursive, involving a determination of "what happens in the majority of cases." [43] Prudence is related to universals in that it possesses knowledge of "general moral principles of reason," but its main focus is on the "individual situations in which human actions take place." [44] Thomas goes so far as to say that if it were necessary for an individual to have only one

[38] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary On The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C. I. Litzinger, O.P., c. 1964, Henry Regnery Co., Chicago, # 1177. (Subsequent citations will be in the form, *Ethics:* 1177.)

[39] *Ethics:* 1259.

[40] Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, Blackfriars Edition, McGraw Hill, N.Y., 2a2ae, 47, 9. (Subsequent citations will be in the form, *Summa:* 2a2ae, 47, 9.)

[41] *Ethics:* 1247.

[42] *Ethics:* 1174 and 1189.

[43] *Summa:* 2a2ae, 47, 3.

[44] Ibid.

kind of knowledge, one ought to choose knowledge of "particulars" because as this kind of knowledge is "closer to operation" it is more likely to lead to right action.[45]

The development or perfection of prudence depends, in large part, on memory, maturity, and education. It uses principles which "are not inherited with human nature, but are discovered through experience and instruction."[46] One becomes prudent through practice[47] and through the "seasoning" of time[48] so that one is gradually and progressively enabled to deal with situations and to make a decision in the way a wise individual "would so decide it."[49] Rather than looking to universal rules for guidance about a future course of action, prudence "learns from the past and present."[50]

Right reason about things to be done, or about "means," according to Thomas, also requires that one be correctly oriented to ends, which depends on the rightness of one's appetites or inclinations, the dominion of the moral virtues.[51] Thomas was engaged in reconciling an Aristotelian ethic of habituated virtues with a Christianized Stoic ethic of law in which the divinely promulaged natural law is part of the make-up of human minds.[52] Rahner's existential ethics is a response to a common version of this synthesis in which law predominates. To be sure, Thomas modifies the virtue ethic, but nonetheless the epistemic significance of the element of law is subordinated to the element of virtue. The role of law is theological: Whereas Aristotle sees human orientation to political

[45] *Ethics:* 1194.

[46] *Summa:* 2a2ae, 47, 15.

[47] *Summa:* 2a2ae, 47, 16.

[48] *Summa:* 2a2ae, 47, 3.

[49] *Summa:* 2a2ae, 47, 7.

[50] *Summa:* 2a2ae, 47, 1.

[51] *Summa:* 1a2ae, 57, 4. Cf. *Ethics:* 1269.

[52] The preceding observations about the importance and role of prudence, and also the remark about the nature of the synthesis of law and virtue, are indebted to Professor Victor Preller's 1982 Princeton University seminar on Thomas Aquinas. See also Thomas Gilby's remarks in the appendices of vol. 36 of the Blackfriars edition of the *Summa.*

goods, Thomas insists on the Augustinian notion of human orientation to God as the final end. This Christian understanding of human ends changes the role played by prudence in that Thomas views the first principles of natural law, knowable by synderesis, as the first principles of practical reason. They function as a framework within which prudence operates, as a theological explanation for agreement about its judgments, and as a source of motivation. For Aristotle, in contrast, prudence or *phronesis* operates without first principles.

Thomas's first principles, however, play a much more restricted role than Rahner assumes. The naturally known first principle of practical reason—that good is to be done and evil avoided—functions much like the so-called law of non-contradiction, the first principle in Thomas's account of the speculative sciences, stating that nothing can both be and not be at the same time. It is not the sort of principle from which specific conclusions can be drawn. In most cases, determinations of practical as well as speculative principles that actually are used for guiding thinking or behavior are made on the basis of what appears to happen most of the time. The first principles of natural law are associated, of course, with Thomas's list of natural inclinations. Although stated as rules on occasion, they primarily have to do with the achievement of goods. As rules or general principles, they are so abstract and general that they are devoid of any meaning except that which they receive in conjunction with the operation of the cardinal virtues under the direction of prudence. Prudence, rather than *synderesis,* determines what it actually means to act according to right reason in each case. This is where Thomas joins natural law and Aristotelian virtue. He associates the principle or inclination to preserve "being" with the virtue of fortitude, the inclination to achieve the goods necessary for the sustenance of life with temperance, and the inclinations to live in society and to know God with justice and prudence.

Synderesis, which perceives first principles, only determines the *ends* of human action; prudence acting in accord with right

appetite and directing or perfecting the operation of the virtues [53] determines the means, what actions in particular are to be done.[54] Prudence, not a syllogistic application of the formal principles of the natural law which express those ends *generally* (to pursue good, to act according to right reason, to act justly), determines and commands what is to be done in order to achieve those ends on the basis of counsel and judgment [55] and in light of its experienced understanding of the common good.[56]

Natural law plays no significant epistemic function in making moral determinations. It functions formally to account for the judgments of prudence. In order to carry out the actual work of determining what is to be done, prudence needs much more than the general precepts of natural law and an understanding of the circumstance in question. Prudence both shapes and is shaped by the virtues and general social agreement about the goods to which they are oriented. That is, rather than relying on the intuitions of *synderesis* and applying them syllogistically to circumstances, prudence depends on education into the customary judgments of society about what human goods in particular are appropriate and about how they are to be achieved. The judgments of prudence, in turn, become part of the content of moral education, which informs moral deliberation. Thomas notes that prudence has to do with things about which we deliberate, and that to deliberate well about what is to be done is the sign of a prudent individual.[57] He summarizes the mutual dependence of prudence and the virtues by observing, for example, that "the happiness of active living, which is gauged by the activiles of the moral virtues, is attributed to prudence perfecting all the moral virtues . . ." [58]

Making moral determinations, for Thomas, is not a matter

[53] *Ethics:* 2111.
[54] *Summa:* 2a2ae, 47, 6.
[55] *Summa:* 1a2ae, 57, 6. Cf. *Summa:* 2a2ae, 47, 8-9.
[56] *Summa:* 2a2ae, 47, 10.
[57] *Ethics:* 1189.
[58] *Ethics:* 2111.

of applying universal laws to situations. Thomas's virtue of prudence does much of what Rahner says that essential ethics leaves undone, but it does so without verging on the excesses of existential ethics. It attends to singulars, both singular individuals and to unique circumstances. It does not regard an individual as only an instance of humanity in general, but then again it does not grant moral authority to each individual's autonomous subjective awareness, and it regards situations as contingent rather than as " cases." It does not limit freedom by confining obligation to a rigid and content-laden articulation of the natural law, but then again it does not make the achievement of a particular conception of freedom a moral imperative. Prudence is especially concerned with specifying what particular choice out of all the permitted possibilities is to be made here and now by an individual or a community. That specification and its consequent command is made by reference to the common good and within the context of agreement about virtues and ends rather than by reference to a private spiritual consolation or the law of nature.

Prudence is to natural law for Thomas much as existential ethics is to essential ethics for Rahner. However, Thomas's conception of natural law and Rahner's understanding of essential ethics are far from equivalent, and the authority and certainty claimed by Thomas for prudence are quite different from Rahner's claims about existential ethics. Much of the difference, as noted above, has to do with Rahner's notions of transcendence and subjectivity. There is, to be sure, an important element of transcendence in Thomas's ethics, but it is carefully qualified. For Thomas, the nature of the transcendent reality to which humans are ordered is unknown. Moreover, Thomas is reluctant to say we even have certain knowledge of the world we inhabit. As opposed to God's certain knowledge, we merely name the essences of things on the basis of their sensible accidents.

For Rahner, humans are able " transcendentally " to deduce the conditions of the possibility of their being and behavior.

As much as he wants to distance himself from the pretensions of neo-scholastic views of essence and of human essence in particular, he still wants to say something certain about human essence and essential ethics. As admittedly flexible and conditional as his description of essence is, he claims it necessarily includes a sphere of transcendentally knowable freedom, individuality, and subjectivity requiring a supplemental existential ethics of its own.

Rahner and Thomas are both saying, in effect, that the essential ethics of natural law does not encompass the whole of moral obligation. For Thomas, in light of the limited content and epistemic power of natural law, and because of the contingent nature of action and the uniqueness of circumstances, which always could be other than they are and which admit of exceptions, our moral deliberations require the discursive skill of prudence and its probable judgments. For Rahner, it is the same element of contingency, plus an element of private subjectivity foreign to Thomas, that requires the non-discursive, spiritually prompted discernments of existential ethics and its certain judgments.

Along with his claims about the nature of the reality to which existential ethics applies, Rahner introduces a claim about the certainty of its conclusions that Thomas says is necessarily lacking, even with the assistance of spiritual gifts, in human deliberations about what is to be done. If one doubts the existence of (or at least the possibility of gaining access to) the transcendental dimension of personhood that Rahner describes, if one shares Thomas's scepticism in the sense of a reluctance to claim certain knowledge of God's will for specific human actions, and if one finds the discursive deliberations of prudence more reliable than the non-discursive discernment of spirits, then existential ethics appears to be a particularly imprudent alternative to the account of moral decision-making provided by Thomas Aquinas.

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SPACE-TIME AND THE COMMUNITY OF BEINGS: SOME COSMOLOGICAL SPECULATIONS

INTRODUCTION

ALBERT EINSTEIN, in his essay "Relativity and the Problem of Space," makes several interesting comments on the implications of relativity theory for the Newtonian concepts of absolute space and time. Among these are the following:

Since the special theory of relativity revealed the physical equivalence of all inertial systems, it proved the untenability of the hypothesis of an aether at rest. It was therefore necessary to renounce the idea that the electromagnetic field is to be regarded as a state of a material carrier. The field then becomes an irreducible element of physical description, irreducible in the same sense as the concept of matter in the theory of Newton.[1]

On the basis of the general theory of relativity . . ., space, as opposed to "what fills space," which is dependent on the coorrdinates, has no separate existence.[2]

There is no such thing as empty space, i.e., a space without field. Space-time does not claim existence on its own but only as a structural quality of the field. Thus Descartes was not so far from the truth when he believed he must exclude the existence of an empty space. The notion indeed appears absurd, as long as physical reality is seen exclusively in ponderable bodies. It requires the idea of the field as the representative of reality, in combination with the general principle of relativity, to show the true kernel of Descartes' idea; there exists no space "empty of field."[3]

[1] Albert Einstein, *Relativity: The Special and the General Theory* (New York, 1961), pp. 149-150.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

. . . Space-time is not necessarily something to which one can ascribe a separate existence, independently of the actual objects of physical reality. Physical objects are not *in space,* but these objects are *spatially extended.* In this way, the concept " empty space " loses its meaning.[4]

These statements raise some interesting questions for the philosopher working within the Judaeo-Christian metaphysical and cosmological tradition. Einstein's concept of the space-time continuum constituted by the field (or by the plurality of fields seen as interrelated) amounts in effect to a reduction of space-time to relation, to that which is constituted by a universal relational network. One may ask whether this concept is, as many seem to believe, a demolition of the classical and Christian view of the world, or whether, on the contrary, it amounts to a rediscovery of that view from the perspective of the vocabulary of contemporary physics. To ask the question in a slightly different way: Does *relativity* have anything to do with *relativism* and hence with the anti-ontological thrust of the latter? This question inevitably involves us in the more general question how the physical structure of the cosmos does or does not reflect the ontological structure of being—i.e., how is the cosmos as known by physics related to the world-order as the intelligible object of a philosophical cosmology? How are the various levels of cosmic order, from inorganic matter to the human level, related to one another?

It will be the contention of the present essay that the relativistic concept of the cosmos not only is not destructive of the classical and Christian one, but converges with it, because the latter is grounded in the concept of being as being, and being in turn must be understood as the universal concept and reality which has reality by virtue of the community of beings, i.e., by virtue of relation. These concepts will be further clarified in the course of the discussion. Let it be clearly understood, however, that what follows does not pretend to constitute a rigorous logical derivation of a cosmological system but is

[4] *Ibid.*, " Note to the Fifteenth Edition," p. vi.

rather a series of speculations, of brief glimpses of areas of convergence which have drawn attention to themselves in the course of the struggle for ontological and cosmological truth. As such, they are presented as a step along the way in the search for understanding, not as an end, still less as a completed system. The discussion will, however, be loosely organized into the following areas: 1) the concept of being as community; 2) the concept of extension in its function of relating physical to ontological concepts. The essay will conclude with reflections on some applications of interest to the philosopher and perhaps especially to the Christian philosopher.

I

The concept of being is, for Christian thought, inseparable from that of the analogy of being. This is the case because being is the ultimate analogous universal in which, as St. Thomas points out, all universals are grounded,[5] and because analogy is the logical tool by which Christian thought, whether explicitly or implicitly, seeks to clarify the meaning of universality. Now the analogy of being has two aspects: 1) A horizontal one, in which the analogy makes possible the predication of universal terms of a multiplicity of beings within a class; 2) A vertical one, in which the concept of analogy is applied to the problem of the possibility of predicating a term of both God and creatures. The concept of analogy is ultimately grounded in the vertical analogy which in turn makes possible the horizontal.

Obviously, this needs further clarification. When we apply a predicate to a multiplicity of subjects, we may do so in three ways:

1) Univocally, so that the predicate has the identical same meaning in application to each subject.

2) Equivocally, in a merely homonymous way.

3) Analogously, so that the meaning of the predicate in its various applications is both the same and different.

[5] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. 1, Q. 13, Art 5.

An effort must be made to clarify the peculiar character of the analogous term, which is so crucial to the present discussion. The use of the universal term *humanity* provides a useful starting-point. This term is often mistakenly supposed to be a univocal term and is, in fact, routinely used in this manner by egalitarian ideologues, who are fond of insisting that all human beings share the same humanity, whatever may differentiate them. Such a univocal concept of humanity is quite evident, for example, in the feminist effort to replace the terms *man* and *woman* with *human being* or *person*. Yet it seems evident enough, at least to the present commentator, that, while the term *humanity* can validly be applied to all human beings, it is applied analogously, not univocally. It can, for example, be stated correctly that both Jesus Christ and Hitler are human beings, but one would be on more questionable ground in trying to argue that their humanity is the same humanity. And yet, if they are not the same, yet not wholly equivocal, in what sense are we justified in predicating the same term in both cases? How can we talk intelligibly about the kind of fusion (not *con*fusion) of what is common and what is not common, what is the same and what is other, in such cases?

Wittgenstein's analogy with games has proven useful for clarifying this issue.[6] We can look at all the things which we call "games" and see that somehow they are all validly called "games;" they belong together. The temptation is to assume that we are justified in including them all under the same universal because there is some one respect in which they are all the same, some character of "gameness" which they possess in the same way, regardless of individual differences. The problem, however, is that when we look for some one feature common to all games, we never find it. We may identify some trait such as competitiveness which applies to most games, but it does not apply to all. Yet somehow, irreducibly and undeniably, games, as a group or family, do belong together. But how do we talk about the belonging-together of

[6] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York, 1970), pp. 31 ff.

things which are different, which are not reducible to a single univocal term? What is the basis for this apparent community of unlike things?

It is here that the vertical aspect of the analogy becomes crucial. When we examine the relation of God to creatures, what we find is a situation in which God is the prime analogate and creatures are both united and differentiated in terms of the variety of relations which all have to God as the common term, a relation which can be called *imaging*. This means, in effect, that it is first and foremost a common term in the realm of final rather than formal causality, which unites the creatures who make up the analogy. Formal causality follows because each member of the community strains toward the Creator, attempting to image the Creator, and thus the images, while different, can be said to form a family. Thus being as being could be thought of as the universal community of images of the Creator, Who is Being itself.

For Christian thought, then, the cosmos is understood as the family of beings drawn into community by the analogous universality grounded in the diversity of relations to a common Creator Who is the final cause of all. The dynamics of the community involve both a vertical force, a reaching out, a tension, toward the reality of the transcendent end, and a horizontal force, a reaching out to one another in community. We are involved on both levels with the primordial reality of the reaching out of the Same toward the Other, to the extent that we could almost define a *thing*, a *being*, as a sameness reaching out toward otherness. Thus, in order to fully understand the analogous community, we must explore it somewhat more deeply in its aspect as a *vestigium trinitatis*.

II

If being is understood as the community of beings which are mutually other yet belong together, then we can say that, in one aspect, the basic structure of being consists of the triad of the Same, the Other, and the Relation which unites them

while maintaining and requiring their mutual otherness (since without otherness there could be no relation). This parallels the Trinitarian community consisting of the Father as primary identity, the Son as difference or otherness emerging out of that identity (and hence as the principle of form, of intelligibility, of limit, the Word or Logos), and the Spirit as the love uniting them. But this three-sided structure with its roots in the inner life of God is also in some sense the very structure of created being, that is, it enters essentially into the composite structure of being. We have, that is, the primary identity of each thing with itself, the otherness with which the non-self confronts it, and the mutual reaching out of the self and the other toward one another. Self and other in relation, community, is the primary structure of being. If we try to eliminate the threefoldness of the structure, we end up with something less than existent being, we end up, e.g., with pure sameness or pure otherness. This becomes clearer if we look closely at the classical dualities by which the composition of created being has been characterized, e.g., matter and form, substance and accidents, etc. Clearly, these are in reality not dualities but trinities. Each involves an element of sameness (e.g., matter, substance), an element of otherness (e.g., form, accident), and the relation which unites them. Without the relation which makes them an organic unity, they dissolve into their components and the fact that they are at all becomes incomprehensible.

Let us take substance and accidents as an example: If accidents do not in some way inhere in substance so that the substance itself is truly modified by them, and if the substance itself is not truly present in the accidents and manifest in them, then we have neither substance nor accidents because there is nothing of which the substance is a substance (it is not related to anything), nor is there anything for the accidents or appearances to manifest.[7] What we are left with is a stratified

[7] For an extended discussion of this issue, see Risieri Frondizi, *The Nature of the Self: A Functional Interpretation* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1971).

picture of things in which each thing has two layers, one of which is an immutable substance and the other a constantly changing flow of phenomena, neither of which has any demonstrable essential connection to the other—they are simply put together like a sandwich to make a " thing " which, however, is no real thing, but only a flow of chaotic appearances behind which one would like to believe is a noumenal something wholly inaccessible to knowledge or experience.

The point of the above is that what we have by virtue of this threefold constitution of being is a situation in which there is a complete unity which yet pre-supposes clear distinction and otherness, the unity of community. And the relation which constitutes community has a kind of subsistent reality itself because community itself is always more than the sum of the parts which enter into it. Relation, one might say, is that which prevents the components from being flat and two-dimensional, that by which the same stretches out, reaches out, toward the other. It is the principle of tension by which existents stand out and are both in their sameness and their otherness.

The various dualistic systems of thought attempt to eliminate the three-sided structure and then replace it with a two-sided or even (paradoxically) a " one-sided " structure (keeping in mind that " monism " is, in reality, simply a truncated dualism, a dualism which rejects one side of the duality but still pre-supposes it as that which is being negated). The nature of this problem emerges more clearly when we consider that much of contemporary thought centers around the effort, usually unsuccessful, to overcome such dualisms as mind and body, male and female, etc. Modern dualism exemplified by thinkers such as Descartes, appears to have its spiritual source either in a rejection of existence or in an inability (of whatever etiology) to really see and appreciate the texture of created existence, perhaps reflecting a need to assert human dominance over a passive universe and thus to negate the presence of existence, i.e., of the act of existence which gives a

thing an independent and unique, active reality, not reducible to anything else. In any event, with the loss of the appreciation for existence, there emerge dualisms which in a certain sense retain the elements of sameness and otherness but remove relation and thus really eliminate sameness and otherness as components of existence, reducing them to subjective concepts which need not be submitted to.

Now much of contemporary thought is in fact an effort to overcome such dualisms. The problem is that when thinkers who lack an awareness of the trinitarian structure of reality try to do this, they generally attempt to reduce these dualities to a monistic unity rather than to restore the three-fold constitution of being.[8] When this happens, the end result is a kind of flattening of the structure of reality as experienced, a kind of removal from it of the vivid "standing out" of existents as unique othernesses bound to one another in community. Since it appears to be by and in this three-fold structure that we have the straining, the tension, to be and to be more abundantly, one of the things lost when we flatten the world out into this one-dimensional unity is the straining for immortality (though one could argue that this is not so much lost as suppressed). But the straining for immortality must be understood as the tension of the created trinity to participate in the life, the community, of the uncreated Trinity. The end result of the suppression of this tension is an immanentism which affirms that "this world" is the only reality but which

[8] The feminist movement is an interesting example: Feminists are correct, certainly, in observing that there is a fundamental disorder in the relations between men and women which, it might be argued, characterizes the modern outlook on sexuality. However, feminism's answer is a defective one because it seeks to eliminate the dualism characterizing the modern outlook by eliminating the very concepts of male and female, man and woman, by doing away with the very idea of difference or distinction between men and women. This really keeps the dualism while negating it. The real answer, in contrast, is to restore the full sense of the difference between male and female and their complementarity—i.e., to overcome the dualism of male and female, not by doing away with men and women, but by restoring the community of man and woman.

is not associated with any joy in existence, since existence without the straining toward fuller existence, toward eternal life, really ceases to be existence in the full sense. Such a world neither "stands out" nor "stands together," but is a flat uniformity without flavor.

III

This understanding of being as the community constituted by the three-fold (trinitarian) structure of existence in its vertical tension toward the uncreated Trinity and in its horizontal tension toward other existents opens the way toward a clearer understanding of the relation of the concept of being to that of space. In establishing this connection, some of Heidegger's categories are very helpful. The latter, in trying to understand the problem of being and existence, again and again resorts to such images as "home," "dwelling place," etc.[9] Central to his thinking, in other words, is the concept of a "place" where we live, where we exist, in relation to Being, as "ek-sistents" standing in the lighted place where Being shows itself and where, in turn, we are responsible for Being, where we are called to care for Being. What must be kept in mind by way of commentary on the use of such terminology is that what, above all, characterizes home is family, and family is community. This is certainly without question the case when we are talking about the everyday, literal significance of *home*, the place where one physically dwells. The home is always a center for community. There is, first of all, the community within the home, the family. Beyond this is the fact that the house itself has a place within some kind of network or community of such homes, a neighborhood, a city, or whatever. Similarly, being as being is or is constituted by the relation of community which unites beings in their diversity, in their otherness. One experiences the reality of being as something

[9] See especially his essay, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell (New York, 1977), pp. 323-339.

that one stands in as one stands on one's own earth insofar as one experiences oneself standing within a community of beings. Thus, appropriately enough for both Heidegger and this writer, it is in the home, that is, the homely, what is experienced as custom, as where one stands and belongs, that being shines upon us. In contrast, what Heidegger calls the homelessness of modern man is closely tied to the subjectivism which characterizes not merely certain schools of philosophy but the everyday experience of many ordinary people. Since subjectivity in itself is a kind of nothingness, to withdraw into subjectivity is to withdraw into nothingness, into a kind of outer darkness of separation and isolation from the place where community, based on openness of subjectivity to otherness and hence on relation, allows the formation of a lighted place where one can warm oneself, where being is present as the medium, the place, in which we live and are.

It is thus evident that the image of space is central when we try to talk about the community of beings. The community, the being-present of beings to one another, requires an open space. But it can be argued that what constitutes space is relation, i.e., that in a certain sense we have space when things are in relation to one another, when there is a common system of coordinates which, however, are themselves a function of relation. Some such understanding seems to be what Einstein is getting at when he indicates his rejection of the Newtonian concept of empty space as meaningless, since space itself is a function of things which are extended. Thus, rather than say that things are in space, we might more correctly say that they "space." But they "space" insofar as they relate to other beings, insofar as they reach out to other beings. Indeed, one could argue that extension is precisely a matter of reaching out, that things extend and thus "space themselves" insofar as they reach out to other things, insofar as they *stretch out* (to more accurately translate *extendo*). Thus we must say that being in some way involves space because being is community, and community is the togetherness of existents

stretched out (extended) toward one another and toward God. The stretching out of the Same toward the Other could, in fact, be regarded as that which gives form to the Same so that it is no longer merely the Same, no longer mere identity, but becomes in some way an other with boundaries in relation to a world of others in which it exists. Heraclitus certainly pointed in this direction in his image of reality as constituted by opposing tensions (Fragment 51).

IV

Before proceeding further, a note of clarification on the meaning of the word *identity* may be in order. Identity can have two meanings:

1) It can mean the sameness of a thing with respect to itself, a sameness which includes relation because it presupposes a certain otherness of the thing with respect to itself and thus implies bringing the otherness into relation, synthesizing. In this case, the identity is the belonging-together discussed by Heidegger in his lecture on this subject.[10]

2) It can mean the hypothetical, non-existent state of a being which has not actualized itself by stretching out into relation and community. Understood in this way, its meaning is close to that of the concept of pure potentiality. Identity in this sense does not refer to the identity of anything which is, but rather is a limiting concept referring to a pole of being, to one of the poles between which all things actually are. It is, i.e., the pole of pure sameness which can be thought of as the opposite of pure otherness, neither having any existent reality but constituting the framework of what is. (It should be noted that there can also be a kind of stretching, a tension, or more accurately, *distension,* toward one pole or the other in certain aberrations of thought and existence which seek to abolish the community which is each being as well as all beings by reducing being wholly to sameness or difference).

[10] Martin Heidegger, *Essays in Metaphysics: Identity and Difference* (New York, 1960), pp. 11-32, "The Principle of Identity."

Clearly, identity, when understood here as primary identity, refers to the second of these two meanings.

V

It must be understood that the stretching out toward the other in community is also a stretching, a tension, to endure, a tension toward the endurance of the relationship, of the community, and with it of the creature whose existence is a belonging to the community. Thus time, also, is not an empty framework which may or may not contain anything, but is a function of the existent stretching toward its limits, a function of the extended creature, and in this way what contemporary physicists call the space-time continuum must be understood as a function, an accident, of the community of beings. In contrast, for the Newtonian universe with its absolute space and time, understood as empty receptacles, the totality of creatures is simply an aggregate of unrelated things scattered through space, and a succession of unrelated events. Clearly, the Einsteinian understanding of the universe is more congruent, in this respect, with the concept of the world as the *community* of beings than is the Newtonian.

Obviously, then, extension is to space as endurance is to time (duration). Just as there is no space separate from extended things, so there is no time separate from enduring things.

It must, of course, be understood that these processes of extension and endurance are not autonomous processes in each creature but rather occur in relation to the extension and enduring of other creatures. Thus space and time and their structure are functions of a complex relational framework. Since the extending and enduring are two aspects of the same process (an issue to be further clarified below), it can be expected that what affects one will affect the other. Thus peculiarities in the structure of space in a given sector of the relational framework will be tied to peculiarities in the structure, the flow, of time, and thus time and space may have different shapes in different times and places. An ontology based on the concept of the

community of beings thus leads one to expect phenomena similar to those predicted by relativity theory.

The above can perhaps be clarified from a somewhat more " homely " perspective if we ask the question: What is a place? A place can be thought of as what exists from the perspective of a particular existent when there is a plurality of things in relation and that existent is seen as at the center. For example, I move into a house, I put my own furniture into it, play my own music on the stereo, get to know my neighbors, plant a garden, etc. What has happened is that a given multiplicity of interrelated things was there and a new thing (myself) has entered into that relational network. As a result, it has become a new relational network, a new place. A place, in other words, is a given relational network. It would be not quite meaningful to say that the place was there before I became part of it because, due to my becoming a part of it, it became a different relational network, a different place. There was no empty space there all along which provided a set of absolute coordinates. Of course, because things also have, as one of the constituents of their being, the tension to endure, the old " place " in some sense endured while changing and so there was also continuity, but not the kind provided by an abstract " empty space," by a neutral space unaffected by what occupies it. Place is thus the network of relations which I am within when I *dwell* somewhere.

Of course, space-time, as here understood, is not subjective because it is always the extending-enduring of the community of beings relative to one another and to the whole, not any one creature's private extending-enduring. Space-time could be said to be constituted by the mutual *indwelling* of existents.

Interestingly, the concept of the curvature of space and time is inherently quite plausible from the perspective of an ontology which sees existents, in their aspect as separate and distinct but standing together to form a community, as constituting (" standing together ") being. In contrast, the Newtonian concepts of absolute space and time are most congruent with a

world-view grounded in a kind of flattening of our experience of being, i.e., with the idea of a cosmos in which any location in space and time is essentially equivalent to any other. The Newtonian cosmology, in fact, precludes the "standing out" of existents. In contrast, the relativistic concept of space-time is open to a universe with multiplicity and variety, with all kinds of unexpected twists and turns, a universe in which there are mountains and valleys, not just a flat plane. The flat plane concept of the world is in fact most in keeping with contemporary ideologies which seek not only to interpret the cosmos as flat and uniform, but to make it so when its flatness is not readily apparent (e.g., in society).

But if the concepts of absolute space and time are congruent with modern ideologies this means they are congruent with modern subjectivism which, it must be recalled, had its origin at about the same time as Newtonian physics. And the connection may well be an intrinsic one, as it seems that Newton, in fact, envisioned absolute space and time as God's sensorium, as a sort of matrix of divine consciousness in which the physical universe exists and is known.[11] Thus absolute space and time were for Newton a sort of infinite subjectivity. And, indeed, the notion of such absolutes is very closely related to that of the infinite potentiality, the near-nothingness, which is subjectivity, and thus one might argue that Newtonian physics in fact makes subjectivity the ground of being. In contrast, for Einsteinian cosmology, space-time is always an accident of corporeal beings, a function of their extension-endurance. Space-time itself forms a common matrix only insofar as the existents of which it is an accident exist in a community, a cosmos, so that the commonness is a function of the community

[11] On this subject, see Newton's "General Scholium" in *Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematical Principles* (University of California Press, 1934), pp. 543-547, as well as his *Optics*, Quaestio XVIII, quoted in Eric Voegelin, "The Origins of Scientism," *Social Research*, December, 1948, p. 471. Voegelin's discussion, in the same essay, pp. 470-473, of the religious motivations behind Newton's concepts of absolute space and time, provides an interesting commentary on these texts.

of beings, and space-time, in its structure, manifests the diversity, the " standing out," of beings. It is not a limit on their standing out, as are Newtonian space and time, since, in the relativistic concept, even space and time (space-time) are differentiated.

VI

The concept of extension in relation to the community of beings may be further clarified and related to the concept of the *field* as constitutive of space-time, if we examine extension in relation to motion. What we must keep in mind, first of all, is that motion, in a strict sense, means not merely local motion (change of place) but all processes of change and growth (or decay). From this perspective, the extension of a thing, the extension which constitutes space, is itself a motion, a stretching out which is a process, not merely a state. Similarly, time, as St. Thomas understands it, is the measure of motion.[12] This is, in effect, a way of saying that time is constituted by motion—that, like space, it is not an empty receptacle into which things or events are placed. Thus things, in extending, in reaching out beyond identity to community, by that action, that motion, simultaneously generate (constitute) both time and space. It almost appears that space and time need to be seen as verbs rather than as nouns, i.e., that things extend and endure. But the extending and enduring constitute a single act which is perceived in terms of the two axes of space and time. It is thus the extending of things which constitutes space-time.

It is thus evident that motion must be thought of as the most elemental category of being, and thus as that which constitutes the cosmos. This implies, as already noted, an understanding of motion as including extension, i.e., the act by which a thing is " spread out " into many places, or, more accurately, that by which a thing " stretches out " into many places (whether in physical or intelligible space). Thus the very fact

[12] *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. 1, Q. 10, Art. 1.

that a thing is one and at the same time many (whether this means occupying many points in space or being represented, as a species, a universal, in many individuals) constitutes a kind of motion because it is a stretching out of the thing beyond the infinitesimal point which it would be in the absence of motion. Similarly, the fact that a thing is one even though not existing all at once, in an instant (i.e., the fact that there is continuity in change), is motion. Heraclitus's statement, *metaballon anapauetai* (changing it rests), really represents both situations, though it corresponds more explicitly to the latter. (The fact that motion means not merely change, but continuity in change, cannot be stressed too much. Even in regard to local motion, it would be meaningless to speak of motion from point A to point B, except on the assumption that the thing that arrives at point B is in some way the same thing that set out from point A).

It is motion, thus understood, which constitutes, which generates, space-time. Yet motion, understood in this way, is really another way of talking about the reality of the One and the Many, the paradoxical togetherness of identity and difference, self and other, etc. Motion, in this sense, is incapable of further analysis. We cannot ask, as Zeno and others have, how or if motion is possible, because it simply *is*. We cannot question it any further, not because it is unintelligible or (in the loose sense) mysterious, but simply because there is nothing more elemental than itself to which it might be reduced. It is itself the most elemental thing there is. To seek to further interpret or analyze it is to try to understand motion in terms of what is not motion, to understand the moving in terms of that which does not move, and this is absurd. Zeno and his followers tried to do this in the ancient world by understanding motion in terms of discrete instants or points in space following one another, and ended up with a series of proofs of the impossibility of motion, e.g., Achilles and the tortoise. Instead of understanding motion, they abolished it.

It is, parenthetically, rather interesting to note how the

effort to abolish motion takes the form of an effort to draw what is stretched out into that which is not stretched out, the infinitesimal point. One may compare this to contemporary speculation on the idea of the " black hole," a phenomenon in which matter, extended in space and time, is drawn into an infinitesimal " space " in which both space and time disappear. In effect, being is drawn into nothingness. In a sense, the subjectivistic project which has characterized so much western thought since Descartes could be seen as an effort to turn all creation into one enormous " black hole." The effort to draw the thing extended in space and time into an infinitesimal point does not differ significantly from the effort to force the thing understood analogously as part of the community of beings (i.e., as stretched out in physical or intelligible space-time or both) into identity.

The stretching out of beings, the motion which constitutes them, may be understood not only in terms of form but also of splendor, i.e., in terms of the radiance by which beings reach out to one another. The understanding of things as stretching out to constitute space and time certainly provides a foundation for the clarity and precision of the boundaries that distinguish one thing from another, and thus for what we might think of as the hardness and solidity of things. What also emerges from this perspective, however, is a sense of the radiance of what is, i.e., the fact that things shine, that they reach out to our senses, for example, in the form of light waves, so that they can be seen, so that they can appear. But this reaching out is, again, extension, and it is, again, by virtue of extension, of the fact that things reach out, that they have definition, that they have form, that they take up space and endure. In this way, form and splendor both have their ground in extension.

Now, if we think of visibility as the paradigmatic way in which things appear, some interesting conceptual relationships emerge. Things can be seen because light flows from them to our senses (whether by the thing producing its own light, as

the sun does, or by reflection). They can be seen because they reach out, they extend, and in so doing they give off energy, which is a product of motion. But our word *energy* is derived from the Greek *energeia,* which signifies *act* or *actuality.* And to say that a thing is actual is to say that it is not merely potential, that it has become closed to the potentiality to be an infinite number of things and has become this particular thing and no other. To be actual is thus to have definite form, definite boundaries, to be extended. But extension is motion (in the most general sense), and thus, again, *energeia* and actuality. We thus find ourselves with a whole group of interrelated concepts, i.e., form, boundary, solidity, extension, actuality, motion, *energeia,* energy, light, radiance, appearance, etc. They are not, of course, a series but are interrelated and interdependent, like the community of beings itself.

It is thus evident that, in a real sense, to be is to move, to "stretch out" and in so doing to give off energy and appear, and thus the concept of the cosmos put forth by relativistic physics, that is, the concept of space-time as a function of the field, points, in its own way, to the very reality of being to which a philosophy of being points.[13]

VII

In conclusion, a couple of areas of application of these cosmological speculations to the theological-moral dimension may be in order. Because, from the perspective of the Judaeo-Christian vision of reality, the world is tragically fallen and thus we must allow for secondary processes of evil which are destructive to the cosmos, as well as for the primary processes which build it up, it is relevant, when we relate the idea of the

[13] The New Testament use, in the Prologue to St. John's Gospel, of the verb *phainō,* of which *phainomenon* (hence phenomenon) is a participial form, to characterize the activity of the Light that shines in the darkness and is not overcome by it, could also lead to interesting speculation concerning the role of revelation as the appearance, the splendor or radiance, which is grounded in the stretching out of the Word of God toward the creation.

creation as the community of beings constituted by extension to the relativistic picture of the cosmos constituted by motion, to speculate on the reality of processes destructive to the community, i.e., processes in opposition to those of motion and extension. If extension is the process by which beings stretch out to others to form community, the process by which identity reaches out to difference, the same to the other, in opposition to this we must postulate a process which may, for lack of a better term, be called *dis*tension, a process in which a being in a certain sense reaches out to the other but not in order to affirm and upbuild it but in order to draw it into its own primary, non-existent identity, its own subjectivity. It is a process, as noted above, in which what is stretched out is drawn into what is not stretched out, the infinitesimal point which is nothingness.

Here an interesting point of convergence of physics and metaphysics emerges when we consider the speculations of contemporary physicists on the concept of the " black hole." Obviously, the question whether or not " black holes " literally exist is one which must be left for the physicists and astronomers to resolve. It is interesting, however, to speculate on the possibility that the idea of the " black hole " may have emerged, in contemporary thought, as a symbol of a spiritual phenomenon, i.e., that of the creature which, instead of stretching out in love toward other creatures and thus affirming and constituting all creatures in space-time, instead of *ex*tending, *dis*tends and pulls everything around it into the nothingness, the abyss, of its own subjectivity, its own primary identity, thus abolishing the extending-enduring of things and eliminating both space and time by drawing them (or the field which constitutes them) into an infinitesimal point which is also an infinite nothingness.

The " black hole," looked at in this way, reminds one very much of one of the most fascinating and terrifying social and political phenomena of our time, the totalitarian state. The normal state, as a finite institution, extends in a finite way to

generate a space in which both society and individual can be. The abnormal, totalitarian state, in contrast, is an unlimited power which *dis*tends in such a way as to pull society and individual into itself and devour them. Extension and distension can appear similar on the surface, as if their differences were merely quantitative, but they are in fact radically different in kind. While one, in socio-political terms, creates a social space, the other, while it might seem from a distance merely to be creating a different and narrower social space, in fact abolishes social space. Power (normal power, that is) means the ability to extend and constitute the self and the other in space-time, one expression of which is society. Distension is thus the abolition of power, the negation of all efficacious action. It can manifest itself as an explicitly totalitarian society or, temporarily, as an atomistically individualistic society which prohibits everything except subjectivity, but sooner or later the difference disappears.

Thus the reaching out, the extending or stretching of beings toward one another (grounded ultimately in the stretching of the Creator toward the world and in the corresponding movement of response which this stretching evokes) is the source of that touch, that relation, which establishes community, which in some way creates and heals. This extension is what we mean by love. In contrast to this, we find, in the fallen world, an opposite movement of distension, by which a being draws back into itself, into its subjectivity, and touches others in a way that does not create and heal but destroys, that is, in a way that attempts to draw them down into its own subjectivity, which is really a nothingness when it does not extend but distends. These two possibilities of relating must be understood, not merely as opposing subjective or "spiritual" states of things, but as in some way actual forces which things exert upon one another, ways in which things, by their extending and distending, shape the space which constitutes the community and is thus in some way the environment, the dwelling place, the home, of all creatures. One suspects this is quite

literally true even when what we call the material world is brought into relation to "spiritual" forces. Whatever the evidence for or against faith-healing, there does not seem to be much question but that there are people who have a touch which is healing (and others whose touch kills). Anyone who gardens knows that, whether or not one actually goes so far as to talk to plants, it is most certainly necessary to love them, to care for them, perhaps even to pray for them, if the garden is to fluorish. Thus, whether one's life is a stretching out to others or a drawing back into oneself has repercussions not merely for oneself but for the whole community of beings, human and non-human. As Dostoyevsky again and again reminded us, we are all of us responsible for all.

This is perhaps why, as Adrienne von Speyr says, "Every Yes that is spoken gives to the Church's Yes to God more weight, more meaning and 'gravitational pull' for those who still have to utter their Yes . . ."[14] The saying Yes to God, the extension of oneself toward the God who extends Himself to us, in some real way creates a space in which others are also drawn out of self-absorption into the community generated by love. This is certainly why the Church has always held that the work of people called to contemplative vocations has as much or more value for the world and for the Church as that of those living the active life, because the prayer of contemplatives for the world is itself a real influence on the space of community which constitutes the world in Christ.

And thus our search has taken us from the consideration of space-time as grounded in motion (extension), to the concept of the community of beings, and, at last, to the culmination of that community in the Communion of Saints, seen as the actualization of the whole creation's straining, its stretching, toward the God who reaches out to it in love and hence calls it into being and sustains it in being.

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[14] Adrienne von Speyr, *They Followed His Call: Vocation and Asceticism*, (New York, 1979), p. 23.

CONSTRUCTING AND RECONSTRUCTING THE HUMAN BODY

Scriptural Anthropology

TODAY BIOETHICAL ISSUES are much discussed by theologians. Yet they make little use of the Bible in solving these problems. Why? Is it because these bioethical issues are so new it seems unlikely the Bible has much to say about them?

Rather it is because many suppose that scholars have shown the Bible's moral teaching to be so historically conditioned that it cannot be normative for " modern man " but only paranetic, i.e. it exhorts and motivates us to do good and avoid evil but provides no concrete norms of good and evil still valid today. Such norms must be supplied by philosophical ethics and the empirical sciences. Hence, in moral argument we should avoid Biblical " proof-texting." [1]

The recent development of " canon criticism " provides, I believe, a way out of this impasse.[2] The doctrine of Biblical inspiration means that although the Council of Trent declared the Bible inspired " in all its parts ",[3] yet this guarantee of inerrancy applies not to these parts taken in " proof-texting " iso-

[1] For a collection of current essays on this subjects see Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick, S.J., eds. *The Use of Scripture in Moral Theology* (Readings in Moral Theology, No. 4) (New York: Paulist Press, 1984) and Robert J. Daly, S.J., et al. *Christian Biblical Ethics from Biblical Revelation to Contemporary Christian Praxis, Method and Content* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984) for a more systematic argument. For my own position see, " The Development of Doctrine about Sin, Conversion, and the Following of Christ " in *Moral Theology Today: Certitudes and Doubts* (St. Louis: Pope John Center, 1984) p. 46-64.

[2] See Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 3-47.

[3] Council of Trent, Session IV, DS 1504, Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, n. 11.

lation nor merely in their context within a given book of the Bible, but in their ultimate context within the total Canon.

Consequently, seriously to view the Bible from the perspective of a "historicist" rather than a "classical world view" (as Bernard Lonergan urged us to do [4]) we must not leave the concrete moral teaching of the Scripture on the shelf of the past. Instead let's use a hermeneutic by which God's Word revealed in history truly illuminates today's problems.

Scripture and the Construction of the Human Person

Today we are concerned about problems of artificial human reproduction and of genetic engineering. Does the Bible cast any light on these puzzles? To ask about reconstructing humans, we must first ask how God constructed them.

Through much of its history Catholic theology read the Bible through the eyes of Platonism because this seemed to make the Gospel intelligible and credible to the Greco-Roman world. Perhaps it was this Platonic theology that Lonergan was thinking about when he spoke of "the classical worldview" with its neglect of human historicity. Platonism helped theology defend the "primacy of the spiritual" and especially the dignity and immortality of the human spirit. But it also favored a non-biblical dualism which identified the true human person with the soul and considered the body as its tomb.[5]

If we shelve this Platonic theology and seek a less dualistic, more historicist anthropology, we discover the first chapters of *Genesis* wonderfully provide such an anthropology as the basis of a moral Instruction or *Torah*.[6] This Torah forms the cove-

[4] Bernard Lonergan, "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical Mindedness" (1966) in *Second Collection*, ed. by W. F. K. Ryan and B. J. Tyrrell (London: Darton, Longmans, Todd, 1974), pp. 1-9.

[5] For an extensive discussion of this history see my *Theologies of the Body: Humanist and Christian* (Braintree, Mass.: Pope John Center, 1985), pp. 101-250.

[6] Isaac M. Kikawanda and Arthur Quinn, *Before Abraham Was* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abngidon Press, 1985), discounting the Documentary Hypothesis not from a conservative but from an advanced literary point of view, have pro-

nant foundation of both Old and New Testament around which the whole Canon takes its unity.

Genesis 1-3 teaches that each of us is of the earth but becomes alive by a creative gift of God's own breath. By this divine inspiration we are shaped in God's image so that He shares with us as his intelligent and free co-workers the care and use of the subhuman creation. Yet our dominion over nature cannot be autonomous, as the Serpent would delude us into believing, but a stewardship to share cooperatively in God's Reign. Hence it must always perfect and not pervert or waste God's gifts.

Thus God commands Everyman (Adam) to "conserve and cultivate" (2:15) the Garden, that is, a creation already adapted to human needs, yet still further perfectible by our creative efforts. We are "to guard" this Paradise, that is, conserve its ecological order, but also to "cultivate" it, that is, use human art or technology to make it truly our home. To live thus will eventually let us approach the Tree of Life, that is, share the Creator's eternal life; but to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (2:17), that is to use our freedom autonomously as God's rivals rather than his co-workers, can only be self-destructive.

Genesis goes on to show that in fact we who are Adam's family have chosen that way of self-destruction. We have made our earth in large measure a desert resistant to our struggles to make a living ("In the sweat of your brow you shall eat your bread", 3:17)) and poverty is the lot of most of us. The invention of agriculture and the arts only seems to increase our capacity for evil (4:2). Brother out of envy kills brother (4:8). Men exploit women as Lamech did, and make other men their slaves (4:19-24).[7] In their powerlessness women

vided a new reading of *Genesis* according to which the theme of the creation and flood stories is the blessing "Be fruitful and multiply" (1:22, 28; 9:7) in opposition to the contraceptive, infanticidal fear of overpopulation motif of the Mesopotamian epics, i.e. it is an affirmation of life.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 56 f. where the authors show that in the list of the sinful descendants of Cain, "Jabal, the ancestor of all who dwell in tents and keep

seek power by occultism or raise sons to be tyrants (6:1-4). Only the mercy of God has saved us from the natural disasters to which our foolishness has made us liable. In our search to build the utopian City of Man we construct Towers of Babel only to find the human community break up into irreconcilable and warring factions that can no longer communicate with each other (11:1-9). The rest of the Old Testament Canon exemplifies this human condition with vividly honest realism.

In the New Testament Jesus appears as the New Adam, as God created us to be (Rm 5:15). Speaking of marriage, He refers to these same texts of *Genesis* (Mk 10:2-9) to ground his own moral teaching. In the Sermon on the Mount He also cuts through our self-destructive search for autonomy by teaching us to trust in God's providence for what we are to eat and to wear (Mt 5:25-34).

Yet this trust in God should not make us passively accept the human misery caused by injustice and neglect. In the parables of the Talents (Mt 25:14-30), the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), and Lazarus and the Rich Man (Lk 16:19-31), etc., Jesus calls us to be responsible for our world. He works miracles of deliverance, healing, and feeding to show us that God wants the restoration of the Garden. Jesus's teaching centers on this renewal of God's Reign which begins in him as the power of his Spirit is manifested in the ministry of His Church. While promising the final triumph of this Reign, He leaves the ultimate mode of its outcome up to our cooperation.

Consequently, we may use technology to restore paradise on earth; or we may destroy ourselves in a nuclear holocaust or some other disaster, leaving only a faithful remnant to receive the Lord; or our story may end somewhere between these two extremes.[8] It is up to us!

This victorious consummation of the Reign of God exceeds our cooperative efforts but will crown them. Jesus agreed with

cattle" (Gn 4:20), the term usually translated "cattle" probably includes "human cattle," i.e. slaves.

[8] Cf. *Theologies of the Body* (note 5 above), pp. 585-588.

the Pharisees against the Sadducees in teaching the resurrection of the body (Mk 12:8-127). Moreover he showed that although the Scriptures leave the resurrected life in mystery, yet properly understood they imply that it will transcend the exigencies of birth and death, so that in the world to come there will be "no marriage" and we shall be "like angels" (Mk 12:25). Therefore, St. Paul affirms our bodily resurrection yet calls this body a "spiritual body" (I Cor 15:44-29).

The Gospels interpret these obscure references to the risen body for us in their narratives of the Transfiguration and of the Risen Lord by stressing two promises. First, our risen body will be truly ours, truly human, not a ghost (Lk 24:37-40). Second, it will be transformed in a mysterious way which made the witnesses of the Risen Christ hesitate to recognize him. The Fourth Gospel assures us that Jesus's risen body retains its wounds (Jn 20:27; cf. Lk 24:40). I understand this to mean that in the risen body we will retain the memory of our whole earthly life which often now seems to us so absurd but whose meaning will at last be clear—the story of God's love for us.[9]

Biology and the Construction of the Human Body

What are the biological facts and theories which should be placed under the light of this Biblical anthropology to reveal their full human and moral significance? The human body has been constructed by the long, chancey, imperfect process of evolution. This evolution has been guided by the natural selection of features that make for reproductive success in a terrestrial environment itself undergoing a complex history. To understand this process is to be able to control it.

A living organism is a complex homeostatic system. It takes in energy from its environment; then under control expends this energy so as to maintain itself for some time essentially intact against environmental forces to which, however, it will

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 599-604.

eventually succumb. During this life-span it grows and differentiates its own parts as instruments of its various activities to the point where it is mature enough to reproduce itself. Its progeny will have a unique combination of parental traits, and probably genetic mutations not present in its parents.[10]

As a complex system it is a whole with differentiated parts and sub-systems of parts, whose functions must be co-ordinated in the service of the whole by a *governing part* without which homeostasis would fail.[11] As Aristotle, the Father of Biology, saw, this governing part must be " the first to live and the last to die ",[12] since on it depends the beginning and continuance of all life functions, including the embryological self-construction of the organism; and with it perishes the last vestiges of the organism's life, though some of the parts may continue to sustain a simpler kind of life.

This need for a governing part was for Aristotle just one instance of a fundamental principle of what today we call " general systems theory,"[13] namely, that " In every system of moved movers there must be a move unmoved with respect to the motions proper to that system "[14] Since this governing part not only moves all the other parts, but guides them, i.e. moves them in a determinant way, it must also be equipped with all the *information* necessary to maintain the organism in

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 276-280, 319-332.

[11] See my essay, " A Critique of the Theory of Delayed Hominization ", in Donald G. McCathy and Albert S. Moraczewski, O.P., eds., *An Ethical Evaluation of Fetal Experimentation* (St. Louis: Pope John Center), pp. 113-133 with references; Gabriel Pastrana, " Personhood and the Beginning of Human Life ", *The Thomist*, 41 (1977): 247-294 and William A. Wallace, O.P., " Nature and Human Nature as the Norm in Medical Ethics " (unpublished address at the St. Thomas Colloquium, Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D.C., Feb. 1, 1987) have both defended delayed hominization on the basis of Thomistic principles, but in my opinion without sufficient attention to the details of his Aristotelian method in biology.

[12] *De Juventute et Senectute*, C. 2, 468a 14 sq.

[13] Compare Aristotle's conception with Ludwig von Bertalanffy, *Problems of Life* (New York: *Harper Torchbooks*, 1952), pp. 123-146.

[14] *Physics*, Bk. VII-VIII.

homeostasis and to construct the mature organism. This " information " is not conscious but is embodied in some kind of physical structure and function, i.e., an arrangement of interacting parts in space.

All evidence known to me[15] indicates that this governing part exists and begins to act in the self-construction of the human organism at the moment of its conception when the genetic material introduced into an ovum with the sperm has been united to the ovum's genetic material by the initiating energy supplied by the sperm. This fused genetic material becomes the nucleus of the zygote, the governing part of a new and unique organism, supplied with all the information needed to guide the entire process of self-construction.

This information first guides the single cell to begin a process of division and subdivision. At no time is this clump of cells simply a collection, because it is always a self-constructing organism whose homeostasis and development is guided by the information present first in a dominant cell, and then in a dominant set of cells. Already within the tiny mass called the blastula a metabolic gradient exists differentiating a more passive from a more active pole, the governing part which will finally become the human head.

Up to fourteen days or so this apparently unified organism can split into twins having the same genetic package, i.e. the same information. Why this happens is not yet certain. Some evidence points to a genetic basis, i.e., two organisms may be initiated at conception. Or it may be that twinning is merely an embryological accident which causes the original organism to lose a few cells. Since at this stage all the cells are minimally differentiated, the original organism has no difficulty in restoring its lost parts; while in the separated part some set of cells becomes dominant and unites the other cells into a second complete organism, as happens naturally in asexual reproduction, or artificially in " cloning ".

[15] See my article in note 11 above.

Similarly it may occur (although not yet observed in human embryos) that still minimally developed bodies of twins (identical or non-identical) may accidentally fuse so that one twin dies and the other absorbs it cells. Thus neither twinning nor fusion supports the notion of some proponents of early abortion that there is *no* individuated human person during this developmental phase.

In the mature human person the governing part is undoubtedly the central nervous system, or more precisely the brain. This system appears in the organism very early as the first clearly differentiated organ, the neural streak, which is the direct successor to the nucleus of the zygote and the active pole of the blastula. Once it is differentiated the brain continues to guide the construction of the whole body both through the nervous system and by hormones which it secretes or causes other organs to secrete.

The mature human brain is the marvel of the marvels in the universe, a system of connections which probably outnumber all the stars![16] The wonderful computers we are perfecting today undoubtedly provide us with some kind of analogy to the brain. Computer and brain are both complex systems of circuits which transmit, combine, and permutate information. Because purely electronic, computers can process information more rapidly than the brain which operates electro-chemically. But the brain far exceeds in complexity any existing computer. Moreover, it constructs itself. We can hope to invent computers that will approximate any brain processing of information, because if we can understand how our brain works, we should be able to copy it at least analogously. Conceivably we may be able even to produce living organisms that can compute, and eventually reproduce the human brain itself from non-living matter.

Yet the fact there is such a good analogy between brain and computer shows that computers will never be able to think,

[16] See Karl R. Popper and John C. Eccles, *The Self and its Brain* (New York: Springer International, 1977).

because brains can never think either! The identity theory so popular among analytical philosophers, acording to which thought is simply brain-function neglects the fact that, since the function of the brain is nothing more than the transmission and permutation of signals in space, it is useful, even necessary for thought, but it cannot think.[17]

Thought is a process which can be *modeled* by a spatial pattern, but it cannot be reduced to something spatial. In a spatial pattern the parts of the pattern are external to each other, and can be unified only by transmitting a signal from one part to another. That is why both the computer and the brain are a system of circuits. But thought is a totally reflective process in which the totality of information is self-present, " self conscious." To think, I must not only receive information, I must know that I know it.

While in any living system there must be a governing part, below the level of human thought this governing part in itself does not govern consciously, as does the human being by means of its uniquely developed brain. Consciousness, because it is non-spatial, cannot be a brain process, although brain processes are its necessary condition. Of course we human beings do not know perfectly what is going on in our brains or the rest of our bodies. The region of our consciousness and self-awareness is restricted and many of our bodily functions are unconscious.

The fetus in the womb only begins dimly to have some kind of sensation. The child only little by little becomes truly self-conscious and free to make deliberate decisions. Even in adulthood we spend much of our lives asleep with only dream awareness, and even the most skilled athlete, dancer, or practitioner of yoga has a relatively shallow control of his or her body. Yet although this subjective penetration of the body by thought is so imperfect, in principle it is possible for us to understand and at least control our whole bodily structure.

Although the fetus constructs itself, this is not the whole

[17] *Theologies of the Body* (note 5 above), pp. 319-332 with bibliography note 59, p. 340.

story. As a system the organism needs constant input and develops by interaction with its environment. The fetus is not part of its mother, but develops by interaction with her. During pregnancy this interaction is kept at a minimum precisely in order that the child in its most vulnerable, formative stage will not be too much affected by its environment. We know of course that the fetus can be affected by drugs, some hormones and infections in its mother's blood, and there have always been speculations about pre-natal psychological influences by the mother, but on the whole the fetus floating in amniotic fluid within protective membranes and receiving its input from the mother only through a placenta designed to filter out most harmful factors is wonderfully isolated and protected.

But after delivery the human infant still has a very long way to go. Because the human brain is so complex, gestation is comparatively very long and for much longer the child remains highly dependent on its parents not only for food and protection but also for its psychological development and socialization, including learning language on which human communication depends. Even gender identity and the ability to enter into the family—the normal reproductive unit for the human species—are not simply given genetically but are learned by interaction with the parents.[18]

Social scientists, for whom culture is a basic explanatory category, try to find cultural rather than biological explanations of human behavior and emphasize the variability and plasticity of behavioral patterns. But sociobiology, however premature some of its theories, has shown there are biological, genetic restraints on this plasticity.[19] Although male and female roles in the family vary in different cultures, the nuclear family has everywhere predominated because it is species spe-

[18] On the development of gender identity see Mark F. Schwartz, A. S. Moraczewski, and J. A. Monteleone, eds. *Sex and Gender* (St. Louis: Pope John Center, 1984).

[19] See Arthur L. Caplan, *The Sociobiology Debate* (New York: Colophon Books, 1978 and E. O. Wilson, *On Human Nature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978).

cific and rooted in basic biological relations. Consequently, there is every reason to believe that any disruption of these basic biological relations will probably be harmful to the full maturation of the offspring.

These biological facts, viewed from a Biblical perspective, are unified in a Christian anthropology which can serve to ground a Christian bioethics.

Reconstructing Human Beings

What marks our times in human history is that the full scope of God's gift to us of co-dominion over the creation through scientific technology has become manifest, even to the remaking of our own bodies. Of course prehistoric humans used fire, made tools, created art, and even performed surgical operations on themselves. The rise of agriculture and of urban life, etc., marked another great stage in human control, but it was hardly dreamed this control might extend to the very production and reconstruction of life. Today what seems the first level of reconstructing ourselves is that of the surgical alteration of the body, whether this be cosmetic, or the excision of pathological organs, or transplantation of organs, or finally the insertion of artificial organs.

No serious ethical objection arises to maintaining the body by transplants which replace pathological parts, if the benefits exceed the risks.[20] Nor would it necessarily be wrong to replace parts which are not pathological but for which more perfect organs might be furnished, i.e. to give a basketball player longer legs. Certainly there is no objection in principle to cosmetic surgery to improve a person's appearance, even if this is not abnormal. All such reconstructions are a use of art to perfect nature.

But what of mutilations which go counter to bodily integrity? It is generally admitted that if the parts removed, e.g. blood or

[20] See Benedict M. Ashley, O.P. and Kevin D. O'Rourke, O.P., *Ethics of Health Care* (St. Louis: Catholic Health Association, 1986), pp. 155-161 with bibliography, pp. 255-256.

skin, can be regenerated, or if no significant bodily function is eliminated, such mutilations can be justified if the benefit exceeds the risks. Thus one can have preventive surgery to avoid appendicitis, or surgery on the stomach to assist in weight reduction, or out of charity can give blood or one kidney or other duplicated organ to another. One cannot, however, give an important single organ for transplant, nor even one of a pair of organs if this seriously diminishes function, e.g. an eye, since this means a loss of three-dimensional vision.

By the principle of totality one may also destroy an organ to save the life or health of the whole body, provided there is no other way to do so. This principle, however, does not justify sterilization for contraceptive purposes, even when pregnancy is a threat to mental or physical health or life, because an alternative exists, namely abstention.[21] Abstention is difficult but not impossible, since in other instances people have to abstain from sexual activity for the sake of health or life and do so.

Much more radical than such surgical reconstructions is what is just beginning, namely, *genetic reconstruction,* that is, to actually change the genes of a cell by inserting or removing genes from the chromosomes, thus changing the information it contains and will transmit to its progeny.[22] This technique gives us control of evolution at its roots, since instead of depending on random mutations and natural selection to produce varieties and eventually species more adapted to survive in a changing natural environment, we can produce them for our own human purposes.

No ethical objection to using such methods to improve plants and animals for human use need be raised, provided full account is taken of the environmental impact and the possible accidental production of noxious species. Indeed, it is highly desirable that these techniques be perfected in order to remedy

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 128-130, with bibliography, pp. 252-254.

[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 131-135, with same bibliography.

genetic defects. Such defects (4000 are already known)[23] are due to harmful mutations and are a form of trauma to the organism which it is the proper role of medicine to correct. Since it seems we all have at least five or six such defects genetic therapy is sure to become a major field of medicine.

Such therapy can either aim to correct the defect at its roots in the zygote or more superficially seek merely to supply some substance necessary for normal functioning which a genetic defect hinders the organism from producing for itself.[24] Or it may aim at correcting harmful mutations in some group of cells which form a differentiated part of the body. Thus cancer cells may have suffered such a mutation rendering them resistant to normal control by the organism as a whole so that they form malignant tumors.

But serious ethical questions begin to arise at the borderline where the aim of genetic reconstruction shifts from therapy to the "creation" of new human types.[25] Soon it should be possible at will to produce twins or "clones", i.e. many genetically identical children, or to guarantee a male or female child. A further step would be to produce a child to recipe, with just the right set of characteristics; say, a six foot five, blond, muscular but brainy male athlete; or a beautiful, brunette, five foot six, female opera singer. The ultimate step would be to construct science fiction types, let us say with eyes in the back of their heads, and an extra pair of hands, or with built-in computers.

The ethical principle involved is not difficult to formulate

[23] See Sandra Blakeslee, "Genetic Discoveries Raise Painful Questions," *New York Times*, April 22, 1987, Y, pp. 1, 23.

[24] See Garmy M. Atkinson and Albert S. Moracewski, O.P., eds., *Genetic Counseling: The Church and the Law* (St. Louis: Pope John Center, 1980 and Donald C. McCarthy and Edward Bayer, *Handbook on Critical Sexual Issues* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1984), pp. 137-158.

[25] S. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation: Replies to Certain Questions of the Day*, Feb. 22, 1987, *Origins*, 16 (40 March 19, 1987): 697-711; I, 6 deals with experimentation on cloning, parthenogenesis, and human-animal hybridization.

abstractly. It would be licit to restructure parts of the human body if this would truly contribute to the good of the whole human person, since it is right to use art to perfect nature. But can we say that what is for the good of the governing part is for the good of the whole person, i.e. what is good for the brain is for the good of the body?[26]

Certainly the body exists for the brain. Every organ of the body (except the reproductive system) exists either to maintain the brain (e.g. the lungs keep the brain supplied with oxygen) or to execute its commands. Thus the hands are instruments to manipulate the environment as the brain wishes. It would seem therefore that ideally we could get rid of all our organs except the brain which could then be supplied with oxygen and necessary nutrients artificially and fed information from computers hooked up directly with the brain circuitry. Such a brain could go on experiencing the world, thinking, and sending out commands to be executed by computer operated machinery. Thus all the many ills and malfunctions to which the bodily organs are subject could be eliminated. Also the brain's commands might be better executed by machines than by our rather feeble, easily tired, and sometimes poorly coordinated bones and muscles.

Five objections must be raised to such futuristic projects. First, it is not easy to invent machines as good, everything considered, as our present bodily organs, for all their liabilities. Yet this objection does no more than challenge human ingenuity.

Second, although the organism is a system whose unity depends on the action of its governing part, the relation of this part to the other parts is not purely hierarchical, i.e., it is not just a one-way street. Rather it is reciprocal. The subordinate parts depend on the governing part for coordination and guidance, but it depends on them for homeostatic maintenance and information.

[26] For some speculations on this topic see *Theologies of the Body* (note 5 above), pp. 595-605.

Thus, if the brain were separated from the body it could be maintained by machines but the information it would receive would be purely *objective* since machines are not self-aware. Now human experience is both objective and subjective. The information we receive from our senses is always projected against a background of its relation to ourselves as subjects aware of objects and simultaneously aware of ourselves as aware of these objects. The brain would continue to have some element of subjectivity, but it would be minimal, since the brain, in order to be as objective as possible, is wonderfully isolated from direct contact with the outer world.

We know our own existence in relation to the world by the sense of touch which is spread around the whole periphery of the body and throughout our muscular structure. Thus the brain is "in touch" with reality through the entire body. Therefore, we think with our body as a whole, not merely with our brain.

Third, as we have seen, the brain does not itself think because thought is not a physical but a spiritual, non-spatial activity which can be only the activity of our non-material intellect and will, although ultimately it is the activity of the total person, body and soul together, each in its respective role. The whole body, therefore, is at once the instrument and the expression of the human spirit. Hence it is through the body that we communicate with others and relate to them. Because material media of communication are only signs of spiritual thoughts and will acts, they are always inadequate to their task. Unlike angels who can simply open their minds to each other, we struggle to express ourselves by words, gestures, signs, gifts, and never wholly succeed.

What if we could never touch another human being bodily, or see or hear them bodily present to us, but would be condemned to communicate always, as it were, by telephone, radio, or TV? Would not such communication fall far short of what we humanly need for love or friendship? Why did Our Lord

want to abide with us really present in Body and Blood, though in faith, in the Eucharist?

Fourth, may not radical alterations of the body exceed variation within a species and produce a distinct new species, no longer human, thus breaking the continuity of the human community and its redemptive solidarity in Christ? My guess is that this may be biologically impossible, because our enormously complex brain is perhaps actually at the limit of evolution. Computers are limited by the finite speed of electric currents why not the brain?

Fifth, transcending all these objections is the risk of self-destruction. Human creativity is dependent on the brain. If to improve the human body we reconstruct it radically, how can we be sure we will not so injure the brain as to lessen or destroy human creativity? So enormously complex is our body, it will always remain in a degree mysterious to us. In reconstructing ourselves may we not overlook some factor that will imperil our very capacity to think? Alterations of other parts of the body are less perilous because as long as we can think we can correct our mistakes. The only way to be safe would be for the scientists to experiment on human guinea pigs while remaining safely themselves exempt.

Artificial Reproduction

Advance in genetic reconstruction has stimulated biologists also to experiment with artificial reproduction, and the issue of eugenics, artificial insemination, and *in vitro* fertilization are front page news. Scientists are not just concerned to help infertile couples. They know that artificial reproduction will facilitate the development of genetic reconstruction, which will be difficult except for subjects reproduced *in vitro*.

The public has been astonished at the resistance of the Vatican to *in vitro* fertilization as a remedy for sterility.[27] How can the pope who has so encouraged fertility by condemning birth

[27] Note 25 above.

control now condemn parents who want to use modern techniques to have children? The media claim that the Vatican objects to contraception and artificial reproduction because they are artificial. As we have seen, however, the Church has no objection to the artificial, but, to the contrary, urges us to use technology to further natural ends, and only condemns uses which it judges frustrate those ends.

But are not healthy children included in the natural ends of marriage? The recent document answers [28] that some forms of artificial reproduction such as *in vitro* fertilization and artificial insemination whether by a donor or even by the husband or by surrogate motherhood may produce a biologically healthy child but not a truly *normal* child. While it may be ethically permissible to bring into the world a child at risk for some minor defect, or some unforeseen and unavoidable major defect; it is not licit to risk a foreseen, certain, and major defect just to satisfy would-be parents.

How are test-tube babies not normal? As yet there is no evidence such infants suffer from any biological or neurological abnormality (though note that in the *in vitro* procedure abnormal embryos are discarded and fetuses discovered to be seriously defective are likely to be aborted). Yet, as we have seen, the construction of a human being is not just anatomical. Essential to human normality are the personal identity and human relationships generated in a normal human family. No matter how much loved by its new parents, the adopted orphan is not simply a "normal child", but a *deprived* child whose deprivation the adopting parents do everything to compensate. Yet realistically they know they cannot do so perfectly.

Advocates for contraception told us that having children should be simply a matter of personal choice. Now we have advocates for artificial reproduction telling us that sterile parents have an *insuperable* urge to have children. We also hear adopted children urgently seeking their biological parents.

[28] *Ibid.*, II, A, 1.

A child's sense of security vital to its whole psychological and religious development is founded in realizing that it belongs to its parents not merely by their fragile subjective attitudes but by the normal linkages of flesh and blood.

This security needs to be recognized and supported not merely by the family but by the whole community. Hence to beget a child out of wedlock is a serious deprivation of the child, and this applies to insemination by a donor, or to surrogate motherhood. Although a child can sometimes be kept in ignorance, it may suspect the truth, and as such modes of reproduction become more common every child will have suspicions it too is a changeling.[29]

Most Catholics seem to oppose donor insemination and surrogate motherhood, but many are puzzled at the Vatican's condemnation of artificial insemination by the husband and *in vitro* fertilization using the married couple's ovum and sperm, since the genetic link with the parents is preserved.[30] How then is the resultant child not normal? If one accepts the teaching of *Humanae Vitae*[31] on the inseparability of the unitive and

[29] See my article, "A Child's Rights to Its Own Parents: A Look at Two Value Systems", *Hospital Progress*, August, 1980, pp. 47-59.

[30] Vatican *Instruction*, II, B. For history of Church's attitude to this question see John C. Wakefield, *Artificial Childmaking: Artificial Insemination in Catholic Teaching* (St. Louis: Pope John Center, 1978).

[31] The principle of the inseparability of the unitive and procreative meaning of the marital act explicitly formulated by Paul VI in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (1968), and reaffirmed by the Synod of Bishops in 1980 and as expression of the work of this Synod by John Paul II, in the encyclical *Familaris Consortio* (1981). In my opinion it is a solemnly definable (but not yet defined doctrine) implicitly contained in the biblical teaching on the purpose of the Creator in making humanity sexual. The condemnation of contraception seems an inescapable conclusion from this principle (and is of course authentic and binding magisterial teaching) but whether it is definable is still a debatable question. On its theological basis see Thomas P. Doyle, O.P., "The Moral Inseparability of the Unitive and Procreative Aspects of Sexual Intercourse" in *Moral Theology Today:* (note 1 above), pp. 243-260 and Ronald Lawler, John Boyle, and William E. May, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1985), pp. 57-65, and 146-175. For the history of the matter see John T. Noonan, Jr., *Contraception: A History of its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and*

procreative meaning of the marital act, it follows that just as a contraceptive act is not an authentic marital act, so only reproduction by the marital act is authentic human reproduction. Therefore, the child produced by a medical technician is deprived of its right to be generated normally and is, in the perspective of a holistic conception of the human person, a seriously defective human being.

Of course such a child is still truly a human person created by God, who ensouls in His own image, and endowed with all human rights. But it is also a victim of its parents' mistaken idea of parenthood, of its physician's mistaken understanding of the proper limits of his profession, and of the unjust laws of society which permit and condone procedures contrary to the dignity of the human person. Our understanding of the child not as a possession of the parents but as a gift of God, already so damaged by the U.S. courts' defense of free choice abortion will be further eroded by an approval of such forms of reconstructing the human person.

It cannot be expected that the results of producing human beings so deprived will be immediately evident, because the damage is as subtle as it is profound. But the Church from her previous experience with divorce and contraception is not in doubt that such consequences are inevitable. As such practices become more common the very concept of marriage and parenthood, already seriously undermined, will be further eroded, along with the sense that the child is not a possession of the parents but a gift of God. Our human community will have a new deprived minority, human persons deprived of that fundamental sense of security on which human hope and the conviction that " God is in his heaven, all's right with the world " is instinctively based.

Thus Jesus's teaching, " Let the little children come to me because of such is the kingdom of heaven " is expressed in the

Canonists, Enlarged Edition Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986); especially the new Appendix, pp. 535-554 (although Noonan's practical suggestions require further discussion).

compassion of the Church for children. She has learned that compassion from centuries of care for the orphans whom negligent parents have abandoned. In our age when the family is so seriously undermined she has to be an advocate for the unborn, while at the same time she promotes the development and application of technology in the pursuit of God given, truly human goals.

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BOOK REVIEWS

On Theology. By SCHUBERT M. OGDEN. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986. Pp. 160 with bibliography and index. $19.95 (cloth).

I

Professor Ogden's new publication is an archtypically Protestant work. I am a Lutheran reviewer. And this is a Catholic journal. There is thus some irony in the circumstance that my objections to Prof. Ogden's positions may be summed up so: he obeys all too simply the rule that *gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit.* Indeed it might be said that Ogden's motto is *gratia naturam ne iudicat quidem sed celebrat.*

But first I must attend to the generalities. This is a very good book. It is a collection of essays written over an 11-year period. It does not, therefore, have the virtues of a continuous argument or exposition. In compensation, it has in full measure the virtues of essay form. And it has the virtues of Schubert Ogden's thinking, which is always marvellously *straight.* He knows precisely what he thinks, brooks little obfuscation—or even discussion—and says what he thinks clearly and quickly. I recommend the reading.

So to the matter. I found that after each of the first four essays—"What Is Theology?" "On Revelation," "The Authority of Scripture for Theology," and "The Task of Philosophical Theology"—I made notes of issues which the essay posed to me, and about which in each instance I think a position contrary to Ogden's true. Then in the remaining chapters—"Prolegomena to Practical Theology," "Theology and Religious Studies," "Theology in the University," and "The Concept of a Theology of Liberation"—I found chiefly even blunter statements of Ogden's side of these issues; those thematically concerned for the subject of any of these chapters will, of course, find much else and much, indeed, that is very valuable.

II

Ogden begins the first essay by defining Christian theology as "the fully reflective understanding of the Christian witness of faith. . . ." (p. 1) At the end I noted: there are three actual conceptions of Christian theology's *given.* We may suppose that theology is antecedently presented with God, or with the gospel, or with faith. The first two positions are reconcilable in case God is triune, since then he and his word are one; Catholicism and Reformation need not oppose one another here. But the third, which is Ogden's, is simply an alternative.

At least, it surely is a simple alternative as Ogden conceives it. For the "faith" of which Ogden speaks is not faith in the gospel; it is that "faith" without which human life does not proceed and which is therefore found in all. His definition is careful: theology's given is a particular witness "of faith," the species of such witness that Christians happen to make in their historical tradition of symbol and concepts. Thus Ogden is able to conduct his description of Christian theology entirely without mentioning any message *to* the believer, anything of the sort to which the church has ecumenically referred as "the gospel." It is instead the Christian *religion* which differentiates Christian witness from other witness to faith, which is itself the same in all.

It will be apparent that this conception of theology must include a very particular conception of divine revelation, which is made explicit in the second essay. Ogden notes that all conceptions of relevation in one way or another distinguish between two sorts; his essay is chiefly concerned to analyze the relation between them. His form of the distinction is between "original" revelation and "decisive" revelation. He argues that modern insight makes it impossible to maintain any form of the position that original revelation is incomplete, to be perfected by decisive revelation. For the faith that responds to revelation is the faith without which humanity itself is impossible, and we no longer can regard merely natural humanity as "merely."

To traditional positions, he then notes no alternative but that which he espouses, that the original revelation in which faith and humanity are *constituted* is the same prior to all religions, that religious revelations provide the concepts and symbols which so *objectify* faith that it can become self-conscious, and that decisive relevation in Christ provides the concepts and symbols by which the faith in which humanity is constituted can be *adequately* objectified. Thus in fact Ogden's argument for the necessity of revelation in Christ is a classic instance of argument for the absoluteness of the Christian religion.

The truth, I would like to suggest, is that "decisive" revelation *neither* merely completes nor merely explicates "original" revelation. Rather, the gospel is *polemically* related to the religion it finds antecedently occupying the field. And since the gospel cannot be itself apart from this polemic, we may very well regard the religion with which it struggles as "revelation." But Ogden does not seem to notice this third possibility, even though it is the position of Barth and others whom he regularly takes for his opposition.

It is hard to know what grounds could count between positions so opposed as those of this author and the present reviewer. I have been tempted simply to point out that he is up to one thing and that reflection for which the gospel is the given is up to another, and leave it a terminological

choice which you will call "theology." But perhaps it is some sort of neutral consideration, that any position constituted in an argument for the absoluteness of the Christian religion has a very considerable burden of historical failure to hoist.

The burden is anyway increased when he comes, in the third essay, to consider the authority of Scripture. Since the gospel-proclamation is not, according to Ogden, the given for theology: the proclamatory character of the New Testament, as this is made inescapable by modern methods of biblical study, itself disqualifies the New Testament text as authoritative. We have to reconstruct, out of the New Testament, the original apostolic witness *of* faith. Only the first immediate expression of the specific Christian witness to faith can claim authority over any other Christian witness of faith.

One cannot simply reject Ogden's position on this point. It is indeed, by both Catholic and Reformation insight, the apostolic *witness* which is finally authoritative, and modern awareness of the post--apostolic origin of much of the New Testament is indeed a profound problem which all who regard the canon as final *norma normans* must somehow face. But when it is the apostolic preaching of the gospel which is finally authoritative, the problem is soluble, for gospel-proclamation, precisely to be itself, has history, so that it is appropriate that there be a certain temporal stretch within the canonical witness to the apostles' preaching. But *faith,* at least as conceived by Ogden, is itself without history, so that the smallest temporal distance from the immediate witness of the apostles' own faith—supposing there ever was such a thing—must deprive that witness of any special authority.

All these matters come to a final head in the fourth of the more substantive essays. Here we have a set of theses, of which the climactic fourth reads: "Precisely as the task of an *independent* philosophy, philosophical theology is necessarily *presupposed* by a specifically Christian theology whose task is the fully reflective understanding of Christian faith" (p. 84, my emphases). The faith to which religions bring symbols and concepts is supposed to be a possible object of analyses *without* commitment to any set of such religious symbols or concepts. Schleiermacher knew better, and the century-long failure of those who did not take Schleiermacher's advice on this point adds to Ogden's historical burden. Moreover, is there not a contradiction here? If religiously-uncommitted faith can be analyzed, surely it comes to objectification without religious commitment. What need then of *any* particular religion?

III

The final issue may be: *Is* there such a thing as a describable faith, given with humanity, that is *pre*-supposed in every religion? Some strands of

Catholic thought have supposed there is— though not that strand to which this journal is dedicated. It would be possible to think that what is pre-supposed by "positive religion"—we seem back in the 19th century and may as well use its language—is the sheer "religious *a priori*," the mere need to have some religion, of which no further analysis is possible than the assertion that it subsists. There has been much phenomenology of "human existence" which has supposed itself neutral of commitment. It is possible, however, to think that supposition a delusion.

Deitrich Bonhoeffer notoriously characterized American religion as "Protestantism without Reformation." Perhaps one could equally well characterized it as *nouvelle theologie* without the church. American religion, that is, lacks—or has overcome—both Catholicism's communal matrix "*gratia*" and "*naturam*," and the Reformation's insistence that "*perficit*" must include "*iudicat.*" It would be possible to argue that it is the Catholic matrix which enables Catholicism to remain Christian while pursuing the critique of religion somewhat less fervently than it might; and that it is the Reformation's passion for critique of religion which has enabled it to remain Christian without any very dense presence of the church. The theology of American religion, which has lost—or overcome—both, has seldom been better described than by Professor Ogden.

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Christian Satisfaction in Aquinas; Towards a Personalist Understanding. By ROMANUS CESSARIO, O.P. Washington D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1982. Pp. xxi + 368.

This book is a remakable "exercise in historical theology," aimed not only at describing the development and final form of Thomas's soteriology (see the book's main title) but also at suggesting how Thomas's theology is available for contemporary soteriological discussions (see the book's subtitle) (xiii, 255). After an Introduction, Cessario begins by scanning the works in which Thomas speaks of satisfaction (Chapter I). The explication of Aquinas begins with his biblical commentaries (Chapter II), moves through the *Scriptum super Sententias* (Chapter III) as well as *De Malo, De Veritate, Summa Contra Gentiles* and other works (Chapter IV), and climaxes in a lengthy treatment on satisfaction in the *Summa Theologiae*—including (roughly) christology (Chapter V) and sacraments (Chapter VI). Chapter VI also functions as a chapter summarizing "Saint Thomas's theology of image-restoration accomplished through

satisfaction" (xx). Cessario's method—letting his theses emerge as he helpfully summarizes Aquinas's central texts—makes this one of the few unyielding theological texts which will prove accessible to students as well as a challenge to teachers of Aquinas.

At the risk of committing the sin of systematic theologians when faced with historical theology, I will defer to others on the historical issues of philosophy and textual dating (Chapter I)—as well as the intriguing ways Cessario plots the similarities and differences between Aquinas, Augustine, Anselm and others (e.g., an Appendix on Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo?*) in order to make three comments on the book's contribution to contemporary soteriology.

First, placing all of Aquinas's exegesis in Chapter II not only enable Cessario to emphasize the importance of Thomas's Scriptural commentaries while avoiding problems in their chronology (xviii) but also sets conceptual issues in the context of the images and teachings of Scripture. The point could be expanded. By locating Aquinas's claims about satisfaction in contexts which range from exegesis to sacraments (particularly Baptism, Penance, and the Eucharist), from our virtues to specific activities (particularly almsgiving, fasting, and prayer) (55, 69, 252, 226), Cessario suggests the inseparability of conceptual and other sorts of practical issues when dealing with "Christian satisfaction." For example, knowing that "the standard biblical text" for issues of satisfaction is Galatians 6:2 ("Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ") (38) or that Psalm 50 "was frequently employed in the liturgical and paraliturgical prayer of the medieval Dominican priory" (47) or how Thomas uses "the metaphor of medicine" (58, 66) or how Thomas weaves "traditional definitions of satisfaction" into "traditional penitential practices" (68)—these sorts of insights tell us more about the context for Aquinas's claims about Christian satisfaction than any technical analyses of *satisfactio*. Cessario's personalism is (happily) more like a call for us to turn to persons-as-agents engaged in such practices as well as (or, in my opinion, rather than) persons-as-subjects expressing themselves (cp. xiv).

Second, these diverse contexts are precisely what generate the need for Aquinas and (following his lead) Cessario to pursue the range of conceptual issues that arise with regard to *satisfactio*. Even with the *Scriptum super Sententias* Cessario shows acts of satisfaction "are not isolated mercantile exchanges" but "find their worth within a broader context . . . of the relationship betwwen God and man which is the love of friendship or charity" (64). Nonetheless the *Scriptum* "suggests the setting of a courtroom if not a marketplace" (124). Indeed, an important sub-thesis of the book is that Aquinas's position on this issue—and other issues (146, 154)—developed from the *Scriptum* to the *Summa Theologiae* as Thomas

learned how to integrate satisfaction into love (91, 113, 119, 124, 136, 186, 192, 198; cp. 37). Indeed, it is Aquinas's gradual integration of satisfaction as a motive for the Incarnation subordinate to love (166) that enables Aquinas aptly to locate satisfaction within the Christian life (cp. 47, 136, 142, 166) and accounts for Cessario's subtitle.

Third, I am not clear on Cessario's (or my own!) stand on how we ought sort out the respects in which Thomas's and our perspectives merge (cp. xiv). In his conclusion Cessario is cautious, suggesting that "if the term 'satisfaction' cannot be restored to current usage, then certainly the substance of Saint Thomas's understanding of satisfaction can and should be" (256). But, given Cessario's own persuasive display of the way *satisfactio* pervades the very texture of Aquinas's theology, I am not sure we can have the "substance" without the term—or vice-versa. Clearly Cessario thinks the merging is substantive. But he himself teaches us that supporting this claim involves supporting claims for exegetical, liturgical ecclesial, and other practices. Those of us who think that *satisfactio* is *a* description rather than "*the* guiding model or key notion" (xx, my emphasis) for thinking Christ crucified will need to see such support worked out in relation to the competing soteriologies Cessario mentions (267) as well as ecumenical discussions of justification which were understandably outside the scope of this book (151). But a single book can only accomplish a single thing—and this book clearly succeeds in showing us how Thomas can be brought to bear on contemporary theological issues. All students of Aquinas and/or soteriology ought to read this text.

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How We Know. Edited by MICHAEL SHAFTO. San Francisco: Harper & Row. 1985. Pp. xv and 171. $14.95.

How We Know is a collection of six papers delivered in 1984 at the twentieth Nobel Conference, held at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota. Two words that came to my mind as I worked through the papers were "fascinating" and "frightening". The Conference dealt with cognitive science and a number of the authors have come up with interesting, provocative, and often original observations about how the human mind operates when it tries to remember and to understand. In his Introduction Michael Shafto, who is a Scientific Officer in the Personnel and Training Research Programs of the United States Office of Naval Research, notes that cognitive science as the work of a coalition of thinkers is barely a decade old, and he reminds the reader that the methods

of cognitive science are those of experimental psychology, physiology, and computer science. Though the Conference was supposedly aimed at non-specialists, the reader unfamiliar with cognitive science might find some of the papers a bit difficult.

Certainly the backgrounds of the authors are very impressive. The first four papers in the collection are by Gerald Edelman, Brenda Milner, Roger C. Schank, and Herbert A. Simon respectively. Edelman is the Director and Scientific Chairman of the Neurosciences Research Program at Rockefeller University; Milner is Professor of Psychology in the Department of Neurology at McGill University; Schank is Professor and Chairman of the Computer Science Department at Yale; and Simon is Professor of Computer Science and Psychology at Carnegie-Mellon University. Calling his theory of the human brain "Neural Darwinism," Edelman claims that the brain is Darwinian. Taking Darwin's theory of natural selections and applying it to the brain, Edelman argues that during ontogeny and behavior those groups of neurons are chosen that are adaptive for the organism. Milner explores the neurophysiological basis of that special moment when a new experience affects the brain. Insisting that memory is not merely a passive reproducer but rather actively selective, Milner, relying on her studies of patients with loss of memory, suggests that the frontal lobes of the brain have a special role in memory. Interested in the interface of memory and perception, Schank notes that, because human memory is dynamic and the memory of the computer is not, the programming of the intelligent functions of memory into a computer is a very difficult task. Human memory is able to relate new experiences intelligently to past experiences and just how it does this regulating is not now known. Schank, offering a number of examples of the intricacies of human memory, tries to bring the problem into sharper focus and he does convey something of the mystery of human knowing. Simon explains the basic conceptual framework of cognitive science and argues that just how similar a computer is to human intelligence is an empirical question that should be answered not through some kind of introspective self-analysis but through experiment.

Reading the fascinating experiments in the first four papers, the non-specialist reader may be amazed at what computers can do. For the most part the papers are not dry but are peppered with case studies and stimulating observations. I found Edelman's discussions most technical and dry but Milner's observations of much-publicized amnesiac patient HM was especially interesting and informative. Simon's paper, "Some Computer Models of Human Learning," seems the clearest and easiest to grasp of the four. When I had finished the four papers I suspected that Shafto's statement that among cognitive science's key assumptions is "that the underlying principles of intelligent behavior can be understood mechanistically" (p. xi) was quite accurate.

The fifth paper was written by Daniel C. Dennett, Professor of Philosophy at Tufts University, and the sixth by Arthur R. Peacocke, Director of the Ian Ramsey Center for the study of ethical problems at St. Cross College, Oxford. I was disappointed that Dennett's paper " Can Machines Think? " was preoccupied mostly with Alan Turing's test concerning whether a person could through questioning distinguish the teletype answers received from another person from those received from a computer. Turing's point, and Dennett accepts it, was that if the computer could regularly fool the person trying to judge the source of the answers then the computer could be said to think. It is not that Dennett's observations about Turing's test are uninteresting but I would have found more interesting some philosophical reflections about the models of human knowing presented in the first four papers and about how those models challenge or confirm some traditional non-mechanistic philosophical views of knowing.

Peacocke's paper is marvelous and increases the value of the collection considerably. Beginning his paper by wondering if the previous five papers have been about the mysterious human person who goes about in the world, Peacocke sugegsts that the papers' emphasis on the mechanism of human knowing can cause one to wonder where all the mystery has gone. Peacocke is right in saying that the impression received is that mechanism has misplaced mystery. But the theologian continues:

> Have we been hearing the apotheosis of reductionist and mechanistic-materialist accounts of the human condition? That would be a superficial interpretation of what we have read, it seems to me, for there can be little doubt that the cognitive sciences are beginning to touch, almost literally, the very nerve center of our self-apprehension as persons in a way that can be both intellectually exhilarating and profoundly disorienting. How is this new wave of discoveries about how the human being functions in his or her distinctively human activities and proclivities going to be assimilated, not only to the folk wisdom of ordinary speech, but to the accumulated insights of art, literature, music, and religion, into the tragicomic dilemmas of the human condition? (pp. 146-147).

Peacocke presents a view of humanity that does not succumb to any mechanistic reductionism but that is ready to affirm and indeed welcome any genuine discoveries of cognitive science. Calling his paper " Christian Materialism? " Peacocke distinguishes it from any materialism that claims that human brains in human bodies are nothing but atoms. Suggesting that nothing in the previous papers necessarily precludes nonreductionist and more holistic accounts of persons and human behavior, Peacocke sketches just such an account. Rejecting any dualism that would claim that the person is made up of two entities one of which is a soul, Peacocke links his view with the holistic view of person that emerges from both

the Old and New Testament. Refusing to reduce consciousness to nothing but cerebral physicochemical events Peacocke suggests that in his "materialism" consciousness and mental activity may be looked upon as coming into existence when certain complex structures have evolved. Peacocke insists that one "can be epistemologically antireductionist about mental processes and events and still not postulate an *entity* called the mind" (p. 152). Though he never refers to the French paleontologist, Peacocke is very close to Pierre Teilhard in his emphasis on matter and Peacocke's description of the emergence of consciousness and mental functions seems the same as Teilhard's law of complexity-consciousness.

The other thinker that Peacocke reminds me of in his refusal to reduce the human person to anything less than mystery is the Catholic existentialist novelist and philosopher Walker Percy. In reflecting on his experience of the study of science as a medical student Percy noted that he discovered that science could not utter a single word about the individual person as individual but only as a member of a group. The following words of Peacocke could have been written by Percy:

> In human beings the world has become conscious of itself and consciously and actively responds to its surroundings; in human life a new mode of interaction is introduced in the world. Oddly, however, this product of evolution is strangely ill at ease in its environment. Human persons alone amongst living creatures individually commit suicide. Somehow, natural selection has resulted in a being of infinite restlessness, and this certainly raises the question of whether human beings have properly conceived of what their true 'environment' is" (p. 158).

Peacocke not only has written an insightful, carefully reasoned paper that sheds light on the dimension of personal existence that seems lacking in the other five papers but he has done so in a way that cognitive scientists should be able to appreciate and respond to if they wish. Confessing that the word "materialism" in his title is to be taken in a somewhat Pickwickian sense, Peacocke uses the word to suggest that matter has possibilities that can include and even go beyond the explorations and discoveries of cognitive science. With phrasing that delights, Peacocke suggests that the study of human intelligence "is attending to only the echo of a whisper of a hint of a rumor of that incessant inner and outer dialogue that constitutes the essence of human self-awareness" (p. 165). Amidst the interesting and informative papers that make up *How We Know* Peacocke's contribution best captures "the echo of a whisper of a hint of a rumor" and in so doing does much to put the other papers into a proper perspective.

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Reason and Right. By GARTH HALLETT. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984. Pp. x + 189. $16.95 cloth; $8.95 paperback. Teacher's Guide $5.00.

This book is clearly intended to be used as a textbook in introductory ethics courses. This fact almost certainly accounts for four of its most attractive features: its area of focus, its lucid structure and exposition, its relative brevity, and its large number of discussions of current moral issues.

Professor Hallett contends that an introductory course in moral philosophy should do three main things: discuss specific moral problems, acquaint with background theory, and train in moral reasoning. The last equips students to deal maturely with problems they will encounter throughout life. Yet this area is neglected, if not omitted, in most ethics text books. Hence the focus of *Reason and Right.* Other topics are approached through their relation to such reasoning. For example, Professor Hallett uses the case of Kitty Genovese (who was murdered while thirty-eight witnesses remained passive) to arrive at a discussion of the nature of moral reasoning, as distinguished from "thoughts" and reasoning in general. In this context he injects a treatment of areas that might be thought to belong to background theory: psychological egoism, ethical egoism, psychological altruism, ethical altruism.

Before commenting further on the book's method of exposition, I should like to mention another consideration which, although not examined at length by the author, brackets his entire discussion and is not without implications for ethical questions passed over in this work. Early on, Professor Hallett suggests that one reason for teaching moral philosophy is to encourage in students a *concern* for moral issues. Using the Genovese case, he says:

> Doubtless we too might be more open than we are, more perceptive of others and their needs, more alive to the appeals, muted or screamed, that reach us, more or less frequently, more or less clearly, according as we are tuned to receive them. That is one function of an ethics course. Through examples and discussion it jogs the moral imagination (p. 7).

The author ties the desire to act ethically with his discussion of moral reasoning by noting that rationalization is often inferior reasoning insofar as the merely self-concerned agent may deliberately ignore pertinent facts. On the other hand, one who genuinely wants solutions to ethical problems will seek to reason well, which requires practice in identifying effective reasoning. In a "Retrospect" redolent of these points, Professor Hallett explicitly raises the Socratic question of the relation between knowledge

and living well. He ends with an invitation to examine this issue, suggesting its importance for the course as a whole.

Indeed, without demeaning the motives of students, the ethics professor who concurs with the classical attitude toward the goal of the study of moral philosophy must take seriously this role of jogging the moral impulse. As St. Aquinas (who held that despite original sin the human orientation toward acting morally well remains intact) recognized, genuinely moral action requires free choice, and systematically morally good behavior must be preceded by commitment. Clever is Professor Hallett's approach to exposing logical shortcoming (in arguments proffered for a variety of reasons) that may result from the lack of such commitment. Who wants to admit being deliberately defective in logic? At least such a consideration may jog one to reflect upon the *humanly* deficient state of one generally unconcerned about ethics.

The subject of moral motivation provides a bridge to the more theoretical debate, not taken up in this book, about the nature of value-judgments. If descriptive, they can be true or false. If prescriptive, they are inherently action-guiding but are not statements of fact, and hence not true or false. Prescriptivists emphasize the logical impossibility of one's adhering to a value-judgment while not acting according to it in the relevant circumstances. For all value-judgments are said to be both prescriptive and universalizable; an attempt to exclude oneself from an apparently embraced universal directive, provided one is physically and psychologically capable of acting according to it, reveals insincerity. Sin, then, becomes impossible. Much has been said about this implication, but the other side of the coin is that only according to descriptivists can one judge a principle true or false *prior* to its acceptance, and so decide to act according to what is *first* understood to be right. Mention of the role of ethics courses in encouraging such a decision suggests a descriptivist posture, and Professor Hallett surely assumes one (e.g., in Chapter Three), although he does not explicitly connect it to the issue of moral motivation. This descriptivist stance allows him to analyze syllogisms containing value-judgments as ordinary syllogisms, containing propositions/assertions (rather than imperatives), and so contributes to the simplicity of the text.

The overall lucidity of this work is achieved through its structure as well as through the author's use of concise, colorful, extremely to-the-point prose. The passage already quoted illustrates this usage.

There are two main parts to this work: the first four chapters, which deal with the nature, importance, and assessment of moral reasoning, and the last four, which offer practice, *via* numerous moral examples, in analyzing ethical problems according to the procedures already laid down.

Both parts are preceded by one-page overviews of their topics, and most chapter sections in the first part are followed by exercisees. In Chapter Four (Part One) the author introduces "arguments for analysis", the type which constitute major portions of Part Two. Thus, as Professor Hallett points out, the emphasis gradually shifts from the theory of moral reasoning to its practice. A separate teacher's guide, not reviewed here, offers answers for exercises and provides analysis of typical arguments.

The four chapters of Part One are well arranged. Working through examples to an initial description of moral reasoning by combining notions of reasoning (through which one looks for an answer through a sequence of judgments) and moral statements (which are categorical), the author manages in Chapter One to introduce the relatively sophisticated notions of the universalizability of singular moral judgments and hence morally relevant circumstances. His discussion of psychological and ethical egoism might have provided the basis for a brief treatment of the free choice-determinism debate; however, given the complexity of the topic, it is understandable why Professor Hallett simply assumes the "libertarian" stance.

Having distinguished "repetition" decisions from broader "framework" decisions, the author characterizes ethics as the study of framework questions: those involving general norms to guide particular choices relating to human happiness and welfare. This provides the basis for dealing, in Chapter Two, with the question of whether definite answers to such questions are possible. The discussion of relativism, or "moral skepticism", is especially helpful. Professor Hallett examines the two grounds proffered in its favor—the fact of disagreement and the difficulty of moral persuasion—and adopts Renford Bambrough's refutations, adding some refinements and examples. But the author complements this section with explanations of why relativism or skepticism continues to have influence: (1) moral questions, being very complex, may appear to have no correct answers; (2) sometimes two courses of action *are* equally acceptable; (3) the emotional component of ethical debates may blur the distinction between truth and preference. Hence the examination of relativism has the positive result of underscoring the need for careful scrutiny of moral argumentation.

In Chapter Three the author offers the tools for this. Again using examples, he discusses premisses and conclusions, helpfully stressing that the former are simply *offered* as evidence for the latter. Thus, as distinguished from moral reasoning, through which one looks for answers, moral arguments actually offer them although the acceptability of these depends on the weakness or strength of the argument. As preparation for assessing this Professor Hallett suggests a diagramming technique similar to Copi's

and quite effectively dissects "real-life" examples taking into account propositions veiled as questions "imperatives" and sentence fragments. Through illustration he distinguishes soundness and validity "premiss strength" and "connection strength". His descriptions are noteworthy here: avoiding more technical terms he characterizes the connection between premisses (taken collectively) and conclusion as "thin" or "unbreakable" "weak" or "airtight". To critique moral arguments he lists four components of two-step analysis and evaluation procedures, built on his preceding discussion. Again he does not rest here. When the argument is judged weak, the author suggests that students attempt to strengthen it.

One way to accomplish such strengthening is simply to give the argument the most sympathetic reading possible, a process enjoined by "the principle of charity", which Professor Hallett explains in Chapter Four. This principle is favored as a path to the discovery of truth, the goal of argument assessment for those appropriately committed. Here again we are reminded of the overarching orientation that renders most fruitful the study of ethics and, to the extent it underlies the principle of charity, puts one in a position to begin the evaluation procedure without ambiguity. First, however, any ambiguity of the propositions must be recognized, and, again through illustration, the author shows that sometimes on no interpretation can an argument be salvaged. A common model—"a fatal configuration"—of such an argument is analyzed and formalized, and exercises are offered for developing skills in recognizing concrete examples that embody the faulty structure.

I have rather systematically outlined the first part of this work because it provides the basis for what follows and because it can be of great benefit even if one disagrees with aspects of the author's "Background Remarks" in Part Two. The sequence within these chapters is commendable, beginning with a collection of arguments for analysis and evaluation and moving to theoretical discussion ("Background Remarks") as a foundation for the processes. The author points out that the theoretical remarks are sketchy, but his procedure has the virtue of stimulating the desire to find relevant criteria.

In his "'Background Remarks" Professor Hallett does not remain neutral; he attempts to articulate general principles based on uncontested cases. His non-neutrality reinforces the rejection of relativism, but in the opinion of this reviewer the development of his position manifests several flaws. Certain human goods, taken as givens, are to be subsumed under the principle "Good should be done, evil avoided" as a guide to action. This principle which in a more precise formulation has in the

Thomistic tradition been called the first principle of practical reason, is thus given a moral interpretation—not an uncontested point.

In a criticism of a position attributed to Elizabeth Anscombe the author does not find apposite the crucial distinction between moral and nonmoral evil. Thus when Professor Anscombe contends that bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki was immoral because killing innocents as a means to an end is murder, Professor Hallett replies that, as inflicting the nonmoral evil of pain in an operation for the sake of health shows, doing evil to achieve good is obviously sometimes justified. Regardless of whether or not Professor Anscombe is correct, it is clear that Professor Hallett's parallel does not hold. Professor Anscombe's claim is that the direct voluntary act of killing innocents is in itself morally evil as such; it is not justifiable, even for the sake of another moral or nonmoral good. On the other hand, Professor Hallett himself grants that cutting into the body is not in itself a moral evil; surely both professors would agree that the morality of this kind of act depends upon other factors. Now one cannot move legitimately from the claim that, since *this* kind of act is in certain circumstances morally justifiable, so is *any* kind of act. Professor Hallett may want to argue against the possibility of intrinsically evil acts, but he does not make his case. Furthermore, although too intricate to be elaborated on here, the principle of double effect and its relation to the killing of innocents is treated at length by Professor Anscombe in the book cited in *Reason and Right*. Given Professor Hallett's decision to deal with the complicated issue of justifiable killing, judged by many (including Professor Anscombe) in the light of this principle, his failure to examine it in some detail is distressing. These points underscore the fact that the author does not offer a well-developed theory regarding the criterion of morality.

The author supports "value-balancing" to arrive at decisions; this process involves assigning numbers to various values. There are obvious problems with this procedure, as is evident from the admission that in some cases "hindsight suggests some adjustments in the weighting" (p. 186).

At times Professor Hallett's generally commendable tendency to present his material concisely results in oversimplification and imprecise language. For example, he embraces the common analytic-synthetic distinction, claiming that synthetic or substantive statements cannot be necessarily true. Thus he passes over recent discussions of necessarily true non-"empty" statements and the consequent implications for considering the status of moral principles that have exceptions built into them. Also, in one place he equates an imperative and descriptive utterance—a confusion to which descriptivists and prescriptivists alike would object.

By and large, however, Professor Hallett condenses much helpful theory in his "Background Remarks", including a treatment of positive and negative norms, moral acts and moral rules, rules of preference for distributive justice, and the relation of morality and the law. In the discussion of the last topic the author derives guidelines for the legal regulation of morality by relating J.S. Mill's principles to those of Basil Mitchell, which the author embraces. This is but one instance of Professor Hallett's references to figures in the history of philosophy and his attempts to apply their thinking to contemporary problems. Similarly, conditions for justified civil disobedience are articulated in the context of a look at the *Crito*.

The wide range of contemporary issues offered for discussion, the frequent invitation to students/readers to reflect further on various subjects (often sections close with questions even on points tentatively settled), the bibliographies for further reading accompanying "Background Remarks", and the explicit request by the author for suggestions for improvement reveal an attitude of openness and genuine desire for continued exploration. Particularly in skillful hands *Reason and Right* can convey this sense to students, helping to make a philosophy *course* as stimulating as *philosophy* truly is.

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Human Rights: Fact or Fancy? By HENRY VEATCH. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985. Pp. xi + 258. $30.00.

In a clear and readable fashion, Veatch presents a natural law foundation for human rights. He begins (Chapter I) by portraying law as being in search of an ethics. Using very colloquial language, Veatch discusses a variety of efforts to found ethics and finds them all wanting. He rejects both standard teleology and deontology. "Put baldly the principle that was used against the teleologists was that the mere fact that someone desires something can never, as such, be a ground for saying that it is therefore only right that he should have what he desires. Likewise . . . [there is] no judgment of duty or obligation, but what it demands a justifying reason; and no justifying reason can ever be given for an obligatory action, unless it be in terms of some end or purpose which such an action serves" (p. 26). Veatch also presents an interesting discussion of the libertarian stance as a possible foundation for law but ultimately concludes that rational egoism is not an ethics at all.

Veatch dialogues with libertarians in various parts of the volume. And well he might, not only because two foundations "of a more or less Libertarian persuasion" (p. ix) provided him some funding, but also because the arguments advanced are exteremely interesting if not ultimately convincing. Throughout his work, however, the main partners in dialogue are teleology and deontology. Evident early on is Veatch's knack for summarizing other positions in a lucid and interesting way. At times, he seems a bit too summary or short but main line of the argument is always easily detected.

Having written off "practically the whole of contemporary ethics as being largely bankrupt" (p. 49), Veatch proceeds in Chapter II to argue for natural law. He believes that an Aristotelian teleology is still quite plausible and builds his case with reference to Aristotle, Aquinas, and, occasionally, Richard Hooker. He enlivens his argument in this chapter and throughout with reference to life and literature—here in particular referring to Jane Austen's *Persuasion* and Henry Adam's account of General Ulysses S. Grant. Ethics for Veatch must be based on the real world and the nature of things. There is a moral dimension to nature. There is "a veritable natural end, or natural perfection, or natural *telos,* of human life" (p. 56). This is not to ignore contemporary science but to try to see reality clearly. Persons are to seek after this natural end. Moral laws are "the naturally determined 'how-to-do-it' rules for attaining our natural human end" (p. 85). These laws, however, only become operative as we recognize them and consciously put them into practice. Thus Veatch is developing a natural law ethics and arguing that values are objective.

In the course of showing that the "Way of Aristotle" provides a way out of the "Dilemma of Teleology versus Deontology" Veatch encounters the natural law philosophy of Germain Grisez and John Finnis. He finds their view "eccentric" and their position "elusive." He believes they are "seeking to convert natural-law ethics into a seemingly almost unequivocal deontology and yet at the same time without having to sacrifice the teleological character of their ethics" (p. 95). Their attmpt is unsuccessful but instructive. Grisez in particular does not seem to recognize natural ends and speaks of these with a Kantian voice. While "Grisez-Finnis" would recognize the obligatory ends of human beings in line with Aristotle and Aquinas, their methods of evidence and demonstration "depart radically from the natural-law tradition" (p. 104).

Veatch's critique of Grisez and Finnis seems unduly harsh. Certainly their work; especially that of Grisez, is wide-ranging and at times obscure. Yet Grisez's consideration of human inclinations as grasped by reason pointing to certain goods and providing the basic principles of the natural law seems worthy of further consideration or more detailed refutation.

Perhaps Grisez's new book *The Way of the Lord Jesus,* published too late for inclusion here, would shed light on this dispute. The case of "Grisez-Finnis" points to a difficulty one has with a number of sections of Veatch's work. While hitting the main points of varied counter-positions and summarizing well, he does not always convince. His arguments are solid, built on experience and reflection, but not always completely suasive. This applies to "Grisez-Finnis" and to the main argument for rights to follow.

The core of Veatch's argument lies in Chapter III. Here he seeks to elaborate a natural law justification of human rights. He commences by considering the relationship of the common good to the individual good. Only through working with others can an individual satisfy his or her needs. Outside of civil society, one can hardly become human. The common good "needs to be understood as an intermediate end, designed to provide to all the individual citizens, without discrimination, the necessary means for each of them to achieve his own *telos* or perfection" (p. 121). Veatch wishes to strike a balance here between a political community which swallows up individual rights and an individual egoism which views social life as a necessary evil. Contrary to the libertarians, Veatch would argue for an active role for law and government. Laws, both for individuals and for civil society, are rules of reason based on human experience. And "the well-being of one's fellow citizens is regarded as integral to, and part and parcel of, one's own well-being" (p. 150).

With this detailed foundation, Veatch now comes to the question of rights. People can't be presumed to have rights yet he would argue that they do in fact. Interestingly, he would ground rights in duties: "because man's natural end is determined for him by nature, that end will be obligatory and in consequence a person's every action and his entire behavior will be governed by a regard for his duties toward himself" (p. 164). Certain rights which others have an obligation to respect flow from these duties. Veatch argues strongly for human rights to life, liberty, and property. From the political aspects of liberty flows a number of political rights—to vote, to freedom of speech, to habeas corpus, to trial by jury and so forth. It would be more convincing if Veatch had developed more thoroughly the precise way that these rights flow from the right to liberty. These rights are crucial for Western Democracies but need one universalize them in each instance (e.g. trial by jury) by founding them in natural law?

Veatch characterizes the rights he so strongly defends as "negative" rights. Such are needed if we are to live humanly. He denies, however, that persons have "positive" rights to food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, etc. Individuals are obligated to work and thus to provide themselves with these things. Of course, the political community may very

well provide these elements of so-called "positive" rights as a matter of public policy but these are not rights *per se*. Here the common good may be seen to extend far beyond guaranteeing individuals' lives, liberties, and property. In fact it may be morally incumbent upon public officials to institute such policies even though they are not matters of individual rights.

Veatch's argument against "positive" rights falters when he comes to speak of the family. He recognizes here an exception to his contention that there are no "positive" rights. "For may not infants and small children, and minors generally, be able to claim rights to care, nurture, and education from their parents?" (p. 195). Yet Veatch does not feel that he has the requisite background to discuss the family and its exceptional status in detail. He recognizes that denial of these "positive" rights opens the way to abortion, euthanasia, and infanticide. While finding these implications repulsive, he cannot see clearly how they are to be eliminated. An exception of such magnitude and profound implications vitiates his argument substantially and should force a reconsideration of the core of the enterprise. His notion of the common good seems open to serious challenge and the derivation of rights from duties must be reexamined.

In a subsequent section, Veatch elaborates on the notion of the common good and individual rights. The common good will necessarily entail limitations on individual rights. He would now see individual rights as being inalienable but not absolute. Furthermore, "in natural-law theory, a man's freedom of action with respect to the use of his life, liberty, and property may cease to be justified if his unimpeded employment of these things outruns his needs and requirements for the attainment of his natural end" (p. 204). Yet the community may not restrict these three basic rights merely to reform the individual. This is the business of the individual himself or herself. Again, one might question the adequacy of Veatch's notion of the common good. While personal morality is ultimately interior, it is deeply affected by the environment. Personal formation in virtue is very dependent on the community and communal values. Public officials rightly have a concern for the public morality.

Following his extended discussion of human rights Veatch comes to his final chapter where he investigates the relationship of Aristotelian teleology to the nonteleological view of nature in modern science. He argues that modern science's rejection of teleology is not based on empirical evidence but is rather an "almost dogmatic" stance. The hypothetico-deductive method of current science "in its initial stages . . . is . . . radically and completely 'underdetermined' by experience" (p. 230). He moves on to ground his thinking in the modern philosophy of science which seems to indicate that theories and hypotheses can neither be confirmed nor disconfirmed by the data of experience. Citing Thomas Kuhn's

groundbreaking work on the structure of scientific revolutions, Veatch argues that natural law philosophers need not be too defensive about the natural teleology on which their work rests. Such philosophers can come to the truth and to the reality of things while leaving to scientists the technological productivity which enhances modern society and which philosophers do not attempt to match. Science classifies and orders data according to certain paradigms so as to manipulate the world. Realistic philosophy works at a different level seeking to know things as they present themselves to common sense. The two need not conflict.

Veatch's efforts to relate contemporary science and Aristotelian philosophy offer many good insights. Kuhn's analysis, however, is widely contested and needs some further justification. The day-to-day work of scientists, which seems to be at a remove from the debates on the philosophy of science, continues to have a profound impact on our world and deserves to be debated in detail. Veatch does not engage science at this level in his work.

Overall, Veatch offers a provocative, interesting and clear presentation on human rights. It shows both breadth and depth of insight. Like any good philosophical work, it provides more questions than answers. Yet, even for a reviewer predisposed toward natural law, the core arguments seem questionable and not completely convincing. The text engages but does not persuade. However, the engagement itself is stimulating and worthwhile.

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Property and Natural Law in Rerum Novarum *and the* Summa Theologiae 2-2, Q. 66, AA, 1, 2, 7. By ABDON MA. C. JOSOL, C.SS.R. Rome: Academia Alfonsiana, 1985. Pp. xii + 239.

In this dissertation dealing with Pope Leo XIII and the principle of private property, Abdon Ma. C. Josol, C.SS.R., investigates the teachings on natural law and private property found in (1) the manuals of Mateo Liberatore, S.J., and Tommaso Cardinal Zigliara, O.P.; (2) their drafts of *Rerum Novarum*; (3) *Rerum Novarum*; (4) *Summa Theologiae* II-II, Q. 66, aa. 1 and 5; (5) *ibid.*, Q. 66, a.2; and finally (6) Thomas's use of the phrase *potestas procurandi et dispensandi* in the *Summa Theologiae*. He provides a real service in presenting the scope of the social question facing Leo and the efforts of the drafters of *Rerum Novarum* to link the right to own private property with a Thomistic theory of natural law. He

also has an impressive bibliography which covers the European literature on Leo XIII and his times.

There are two problems, in my judgment, with Fr. Josol's dissertation. First, he expresses his reservations about the soundness of Pope Leo's proposal concerning the social question. He thinks that the doctrine of natural rights to private property, as expressed in *Rerum Novarum* and understood in the late nineteenth century, was a defense of large property owners (p. 9). He implies that Leo unwittingly provided a papal blessing for laissez-faire capitalists. Furthermore, thinks Josol, the chances of the industrial laborer becoming a small land owner were very minimal if not wishful thinking (p. 9).

Leo wanted the poor working man to receive a just wage, save, and invest his savings, for greater security, in land or moveable goods (*Rerum Novarum* 4). (The numbers in citations to *Rerum Novarum* are those assigned to paragraphs in *Seven Famous Encyclicals,* Glen Rock, N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1963.) By contrast, "the Socialists, in endeavoring to transfer the possessions of individuals to the community, strike at the interests of every wage earner, for they deprive him of the liberty of disposing his wages, and thus of all hope and possibility of increasing his stock and of bettering his condition in life" (*ibid.*). Leo taught that "the law should favor ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many people as possible to become owners" (*Rerum Novarum* 35).

Leo opposed both laissez-faire capitalism and socialism. He wanted a fairer distribution of a nation's wealth, and the most reliable means of insuring this was a broader base of property owners. "The result will be that the gulf between the vast wealth and deep poverty will be bridged over, and the two orders will be brought nearer together" (*Rerum Novarum* 35b).

Successive events have proven the wisdom of Leo's position. All of the pontiffs since Leo have proposed the principle of private property as both a natural right and a principle of a just social order.

Josol's bias against private property as a key solution to the social question of 1891 appears again in his conclusions to Part I: "The want of clear analysis of the doctrine of collective ownership proposed by the Socialists coupled with the lack of objective data on the dynamics of exploitation of the workers similar to what Buret, Villerme, and Marx had done, would to a degree excuse the drafters of *Rerum Novarum* from the accusation of taking the wrong side of the protagonists" (p. 75). Perhaps Josol's personal experience under the Marcos regime in the Philippines has influenced his judgments about private property ownership.

Josol disagrees with Liberatore's, Zigliara's, and Leo XIII's teaching about the natural inequalities among men in talents, resourcefulness, and sheer energy. These three were convinced that the natural inequalities

among men accounted for the social positions people hold, the amount of wealth they produce and own, and their influence within society.

The second problem with Josol's dissertation is his contention that "Leo XIII's teaching on private property based on natural law has more affinity with that of . . . John Locke, than with that of St. Thomas" (Final Remarks, p. 216).

John Locke's theory of private property is not that of *Rerum Novarum.* In Locke there is no provision made for the common use of private property. He does speak of land being "in common" before it is appropriated by an individual's mixing labor with land, thus turning it into private property (*Second Treatise on Civil Government,* ch. 5, 27). What Locke owns, by dint of human labor, belongs to him alone. The only limit he places upon ownership is not allowing produce to spoil uselessly (e.g. fruits, meat, consumer goods). Were Locke to produce more food or wool than he could use, then he would be violating the so-called common use of the earth for all men. When non-perishable precious metals replaced bartering, with no spoilage, then Locke allows for unlimited expansions of ownership.

In this accounting, Locke sees no obligation to share his bounty with others. What is his belongs exclusively to him. *Rerum Novarum,* by contrast, despite a notion of common use toned down so as to give no support to socialist varieties of common use, insists upon the Thomistic sense of obligation on the part of the rich to share with the poor. *Rerum Novarum* (7 appealing to *S. Th.* II-II, Q. 66, a.2 ad 1) stressed the *universal destination* of the earth for the use of all mankind (as did Locke), the *reality of private property* (as did Locke), based upon various entitlements (Locke used the entitlements of first use and a value theory of labor; to these Leo adds parental obligations, recurring needs of man for material goods, and human providence); and *common use of both private and public property* (Locke is deficient here) based upon the requirements of charity and justice (cf. 19 quoting *S. Th.* II-II, Q. 66, a.2).

Leo Strauss asserts in his *Natural Right and History* (University of Chicago: 1953, pp. 202-251) that the owners of property Locke has in mind are large land-owners, not the common people. Leo XIII stresses the right of everyone, especially the poor, to own some private property, e.g. "land or moveable goods" (*Rerum Novarum,* 4), home, tools, means of livelihood. Locke contrasts the early state of nature when there was an abundance of unclaimed land with the later state of civilization when there is no unclaimed property. He claims that the early state of nature no longer exists, and that it is beneficial to society that the productive landowner acquire even more property. In doing so, he champions laissez-faire capitalism and unlimited acquisition.

Forty years later, Pope Pius XI realized the attempts of some writers to attribute the Church's social teaching on property to spurious sources when he wrote:

> Let this be noted particularly by those seekers after novelties who launch against the Church the odious calumny that she has allowed a pagan concept of ownership to creep into the teachings of her theologians and that another concept must be substituted, which in their astounding ignorance they call 'Christian' (*Quadragesimo Anno* 46).

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Gods and the One God. By ROBERT M. GRANT. Vol. 1 of the Library of Early Christianity (Wayne A. Meeks, General Editor). Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986. Pp. 211. $18.95.

No one is more qualified that Robert M. Grant to discuss the relations between early Christianity and its classical environment. As the author of two important introductions to the New Testament, *Augustus to Constantine, The Early Christian Doctrine of God, Early Christianity and Society, Gnosticism and Early Christianity,* and much more, Grant brings the fruits of a lifetime of scholarship to his task. It is cause for special rejoicing that he has produced a book which the beginning student as well as the specialized scholar can read. In this review I want to raise some questions and make some criticisms, but let it be clear at the outset that this is an important and valuable book.

Beginning with a discussion of the references to pagan religion in the Book of Acts, Grant then surveys how, around the time of Christ, many gods were moving from the East to Rome. A third chapter looks at attacks on idolatry in the New Testament and other early Christian texts. That analysis leads into discussions of the functions and myths of various classical deities and the philosophical views of God in the ancient world. Finally, a series of chapters begins with the Christian doctrine of God and then traces the development of Christology from its beginnings through several centuries (with special emphasis on how that development took shape in Antioch) to the culminating formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Grant has always written in a spare, clean style most scholars can only envy; this is one of the reasons for the popularity in the classroom of his

introductions to the New Testament. That style makes this work suitable even for beginning students, though attention to such an audience's background seems uneven. For example, Justin Martyr gets clearly introduced: "The first significant Christian apologist was Justin Martyr, who wrote at Rome around the year 150" (p. 87). But two pages earlier we were suddenly reading about Philo without any such introduction, without even locating him in Alexandria. Again, one passage concludes with the statement that, "in the second and third centuries, all ran the risk of dynamistic or modalistic Monarchianism" (p. 111), and another refers to "a Spanish Priscillianist" (p. 151), but such terms are never defined.

Theologically oriented readers may grow impatient with some chapters. Grant has the historian's passion for the clearly established fact. Thus his second chapter sets out at some length the evidence for the date of the first worship in or near Rome of the Baal of Sarepta, Asclepius, the Great Mother, Isis, Serapis, Dionysius, Mithras, and the God of Israel. Later on (pp. 114ff), Grant shows how many deities, not just Zeus, could take on the attributes of cosmic creator—the case is made for Apollo, Athena, Dionysius, Hermes, and Isis. In both cases, examples seem multiplied past the point where we learn anything of more than antiquarian importance.

On the other hand, the survey of Greek philosophy begins with the pre-Socratics and then puzzlingly skips to the pseudo-Aristotelian *On the Heavens* and the writings of the middle Platonists. Appeals by others to Plato appear again and again in later chapters, but not an account of Plato's own views. Greek philosophy without Plato and Aristotle does seem a bit like *Hamlet* without the prince of Denmark. Useful as Grant's surveys are, moreover, the early chapters lack the overarching vision of Charles Cochrane's *Christianity and Classical Culture* or Eric Voegelin's *The Ecumenic Age,* which attempt far more ambitious syntheses as they survey much of the same territory.

When Grant turns to the development of Christology, however, the threads of his narrative come together and we have the best kind of scholarship: at once a useful introduction for the student and a challenging interpretation for the scholar.

He sets the development of early Christology in a context of syncretistic speculation on Logos and Sophia, in which middle Platonist metaphysics, Gnosticism, Jewish thoughts on Sophia, and cults of cosmic deities provided a rich mix of concepts and imagery in which to think about Jesus Christ. Understanding that context sheds new light on the Christological debates: one sees in a new way why some options seemed attractive, others dangerous. Grant traces in particular the development of Christology in Antioch from Ignatius through Theophilus to Paul of Samosata and makes a remarkably coherent story of that mysterious period.

Good historical studies like this one tend to shed valuable light on contemporary theological debates. For instance, although Grant never directly addresses contemporary feminist theology, it could draw support from some of his conclusions. Jewish reflections on Sophia, the Wisdom of God, seem to him the crucial intellectual context for the metaphysical side of Christology—and Sophia was feminine; Philo called her the daughter of God (p. 102). In Grant's view, "The language of the wisdom literature also leads directly to the prologue to the Gospel of John, except for the fact that John, correlating this divine principle with the obviously masculine Jesus, feels he should change the gender of the divine principle" (p. 104). Such an analysis raises the question of whether masculine images really are essential to Christological metaphysics. Later on, after citing a fragment of *Hebrews* (quoted from an alternative manuscript tradition by Jerome) which called the Holy Spirit the mother of Christ (p. 142) and a similar passage in the Nag Hammadi *Apocryphon of James,* Grant notes that, after all, *ruach* is feminine in Hebrew, and *pneuma* neuter in Greek—which makes it odd to insist on a masculine pronoun for the Spirit.

Grant does not portray the development of the doctrine of the Trinity as a unified march forward, simply working out ideas already implied as early as the New Testament itself. He insists on "the many shades of doctrinal variety to be found within early catholic Christianity. . . . Our point is that in the early centuries the Christian doctrine about God—Father, Son, and Spirit—was remarkably flexible and that at least the emphasis changed from one generation to another" (p. 135). He reminds us that "triadic" expressions are not necessarily Trinitarian (p. 156) and that "before Nicaea, Christian theology was almost universally subordinationist" (p. 160). Yet this is not an exercise in debunking. Grant certainly shows connections between pagan philosophy and myth and Christian theology, but he sees them as the appropriate use of intellectual resources from the surrounding culture, not as either the betrayal of the Gospel or low-minded Christian plagiarism from its intellectual betters. Similarly, he certainly thinks early Christian theology developed—and therefore changed—but he does not point out that change to condemn or expose it.

This is the first volume of the Library of Early Christianity, edited by Wayne Meeks, a series devoted to "taking down fences" and discovering what dialogue with other disciplines can contribute to the study of the New Testament, with a particular focus on social history. We live in the midst of an exciting time for such inquiries, and the reputations of Professor Meeks and the authors of his volumes lead to anticipation of a truly important series, of which this book marks an auspicious beginning.

Congratulations to the publisher must be qualified only with regret that a work so valuable to students should be available only in a hardback edition costing nearly twenty dollars.

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God, Guilt, and Death: An Existential Phenomenology of Religion. By MEROLD WESTPHAL. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984. Pp. xiv + 305. $27.50.

At each stage of its history existential thought has been deeply engaged with the phenomena of religion. However, the appeal to the existence has produced starkly opposed responses to the question of the significance of religion. The original and most obvious contrast is that between Kierkegaard and his near-contemporary, Nietzsche. Where the first reflects on the existence of the "single one" as a way of defending religious consciousness against Hegelian rationalism; the latter makes a similar turn to existence (as the will to power of life) precisely in order to "unmask" the "lies" that tempt one to the religious life. Or, more recently, one could contrast the efforts of Marcel and Bultmann, who find in existential thinking the key to a deeper appreciation of traditional religiosity, with the resolutely atheistic project of Sartre, for whom "we are in a situation where there are only human beings," where "even if God existed it wouldn't make any difference."

In spite of such controversy over the *value* of religion, the philosophical approach to religion in terms of existence has had the beneficial effect of shifting the locus of questioning from the cognitive status of religious utterances to the problem of the *meaning* of the religious life. An existentail approach does not exhaust itself in analyzing the evidential structure of propositions about God, the soul, etc., as though religion were simply a mode of cognition, but rather explores the question of "what it is (means) to be religious." In our own time Paul Ricoeur has taken up this issue in a way that seeks to do justice both to the critical moment in existential thought and to its promise of a deepened religious sensibility. Along with a "hermeneutics of suspicion" (grounded in the works of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud) Ricoeur calls for a "hermeneutics of recovery" which would reinvest the "symbolism of the sacred" with a depth drawn from consciousness of our existential situation. It is in the horizon of this latter project that we may locate Merold Westphal's sig-

nificant contribution, *God, Guilt, and Death: An Existential Phenomenology of Religion.*

This book, addressed to a general audience of believer and unbeliever alike, has many virtues. While it draws judiciously from the central works of existentialism and phenomenology, as well as from a wide variety of literature on the world's religions. it is written in clear and engaging prose, entirely free from tedious jargon. And while Westphal's sympathies are clearly with those who find a continued vitality in religious consciousness today, his book is written in the spirit of inquiry; it gracefully avoids the twin dangers of polemics and devotionality. He is sensitive to objections without allowing them to paralyze his arguments, and he offers some bold, important generalizations without being blind to the limits of his evidence. Finally, the book contains original phenomenological investigations, striving after eidetic insight through study of personal experience, world literature, and (mostly standard) works on other cultures and their religious life (including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, various forms of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Amerindian religions). Because Westphal draws on such a diversity of materials, there are likely to be many points with which the specialist will take issue. But an adequate phenomenology of religion must tackle this diversity, and Westphal has certainly given us one of the most accessible examples of such an enterprise.

Westphal's approach to the existential question—What does it mean to be religious?—is phenomenological. This means, first, that we are interested in the significance of religion from the descriptive first person perspective of the believing soul. The believing soul (a term borrowed from Ricoeur) is not simply "one who believes or affirms this or that proposition," but one "who *sees* things in a certain way" (257). We are concerned here with a form of life or experience. Second, we are interested in *understanding* the meaning embedded in this experience, rather than in *evaluating* it (e.g., in terms of its cognitive status) or *explaining* it (e.g., in terms of its causal genesis). By bracketing (*epoche*) our urge to explain—or explain away—the self-understanding of the believing soul, we hope to grasp what is essential (*eidos*) to realigiosity as such and so to understand what it means to be religious. Phenomenology "lets the believing soul speak" (12).

But it does not follow that everything we hear is to be taken at face value. *Existential* phenomenology goes a step further, interpreting these witnesses in terms of a philosophical framework of existential categories, especially selfhood, guilt, and death. Thus, this is a hermeneutic procedure enabling us to "[understand] believing souls better than they understand themselves" (19). Both the virtues and the dangers of this

controversial hermeneutic maxim nicely illustrated in Westphal's attempt to bring the most diverse traditions of religious consciousness into his eidetic schema.

Westphal's first task is to exhibit the sacred as "the source of the peculiarly religious dimension of meaning in human experience" (xii. He examines the sense of the sacred in various traditions and concludes that, whether or not this domain is populated by God or gods, it is experienced by the believing soul in ambivalence. The sacred is experienced simultaneously as attractive and repellent, as provoking both joy anl dread, as nearness and as wholly other. Such ambivalence, expressed in the language of paradox, originates in the believer's sense of "ontological inadequacy" (28). The notion of ontological inadequacy introduces one of the book's most important philosophical claims, viz., that experience of the sacred presents a decisive challenge to our every Cartesian self-certainty. In the presence of the sacred the believing soul must confess, in effect, "It is, but I am not (fully), real" (32).

Westphal's emphasis on the ambivalence present in this experience of what he, following Rudolf Otto, calls the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans,* is central to his understanding of religious phenomena. Nor does he shrink from using it as a criterion for recognizing authentic religiosity. Those for whom the sacred lacks the aspect of the *tremendum* (the reader will have no trouble finding examples) are said to be after "cheap grace." On the other hand, those critics of religion for whom every believer is of this sort fail to deal fairly with religion—their criticisms amount to "cheap shots" (47).

Explicating further the sense of ontological inadequacy, Westphal argues that it is not simply a feeling of powerlessness. The sacred does challenge the fact of my independent existence; but it challenges its *worth,* my value, as well. This is manifest in religions where a personal God is present as law-giver or judge. But Westphal is at pains to show that even in cases where no God is present, where the sacred is felt as the "numinous," "mana," a kind of "electricity," the believing soul testifies to the sense in which the sacred is a challenge not only to power but to worth. He concludes that in such cases "the holy has ceased to signify an ontology where fact is cleanly separated from value" (41).

To be religious, then, is necessarily to be ambivalent, "to be of two minds" (47), about the sacred. In an effort to gain deeper insight into this ambivalence, Westphal turns to Kierkegaard: On the one hand the experience of the sacred as *fascinans,* with its absolute *telos* of eternal happiness (48), claims the infinite interest of the believing soul, while on the other hand, as *tremendum,* it places in doubt my "worthiness to be happy" (76). Further, the absolute promise of the sacred demands the

resignation of my relative goals, a perpetual "dying to immediacy," the recognition that "I am nothing before God," that "before God we are always in the wrong." Westphal identifies two forms of ambivalence in which the believing soul confronts these demands: the "ambivalence of inertia" and the "ambivalence of resentment."

The ambivalence of inertia arises when the attempt at a resignation of immediacy encounters the overwhelming weight of mundanity as inertia (Kierkegaard), habit (Augustine), and everydayness (Heidegger). Since the *fascinans* of eternal happiness requires the *tremendum*—the abysmal spiritual tension needed at every moment to renounce the world—"I discover that I cannot satisfy the claim because I discover that I cannot unreservedly want to" (51). The ambivalence of resentment, on the other hand, is traced to the challenges to one's Self and one's worth. Appealing to Freud, Scheler, and Nietzsche, Westphal shows how the believing soul is torn between the promise of security and belonging which the sacred brings with it and the feeling of resentment at having one's independent being and value reduced to nought. Because we are self-centered, we resent the challenge of the sacred. As Nietzsche says, "If there were gods how could I endure not to be a god? Hence there are no gods" (65).

Westphal's analysis of the ambivalence of resentment provides an example of how he both incorporates and criticizes the testimony of hostile critics of religion such as Nietzsche and Freud. His strategy is not so much to attack Freud's analysis of religion as to neutralize it. He does not deny the phenomenological validity of many of Freud's analyses. But Freud, unlike Westphal, sees in them a reduction of religious phenomena to psychological ones, with the corresponding dismissal of religion as illusion. Since Westphal has bracketed questions of evaluation he can argue that "the psychological argument cuts both ways." If belief can be seen as a wish-fulfilling illusion grounded in our longing for protection and help, disbelief can just as easily be seen as a wish-fulfilling illusion expressing our rebellion against the father's supremacy (59), i.e., as a struggle against the ambivalence of resentment.

Such tactics are hardly an adequate answer to Freud. Freud could surely accept Westphal's counter-argument while still insisting that his psychological explanation exhausts the content of both belief *and* disbelief. But, to the extent that Westphal is correct in thinking that the level of understanding can be held distinct from that of evaluation, his approach is adequate to clear a space for his own, purely phenomenological, efforts.

Given the ambivalence in which the sacred is experienced, Westphal asks what it is that the believing soul gets out of religion. "Religion is both a means to various ends and an end in itself" (71). Two chapters

are devoted to a consideration of religion as an end in itself, but the book takes its title from Westphal's attempt to show how existential philosophy can illuminate the essential significance of religion as a means for solving the problem of guilt (73) in the face of death.

Essential to Westphal's existential interpretation of guilt is the claim that guilt cannot be reduced to phenomena in which self-evaluation plays no role; neither to the fear of punishment—"fear is object oriented while guilt is subject oriented" (75)—nor to "introverted aggression" (Nietzsche, Freud). For him, guilt necessarily concerns our "feeling of self worth," our "worthiness to be happy." There *is* a connection between guilt and fear of punishment, but they are not identical. Drawing on Ricoeur's analysis of dread as a fusion of guilt and fear, a "fear of punishment which demands precisely the punishment it fears" (77), Westphal can offer a nice definition of the guilt component in this fusion: "in guilt I approve of the other's disapproval of me" (78).

Appeal to the other in this definition could occasion some controversy. Has not Heidegger argued that in conscience, which reveals my "being guilty," "Dasein calls to itself"? Against this Westphal argues that it is "one of the most firmly established phenomenological insights . . . that self-consciousness is always mediated by consciousness of the other" (81). As a mode of self-consciousness, then, guilt implies a relation of an other against whom I measure myself. But *which* other? After arguing, not altogether convincingly, against Freud's view that the other here is internalized parental authority, Westphal states the essential point: "Of course from a theological perspective, guilt is always in the final analysis guilt before God" (86). But the philosopher will want to know whether it is possible to locate existential-phenomenological evidence to support this theological view. Is there a dimension of experience in which the accusatory voice of the non-sacred other (parents, peers, etc.) is less likely to provide a convincing account of my feeling of guilt? Westphal finds such evidence in an existential interpretation of death.

His reading of Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilich* shows how consciousness of death inaugurates a movement in which Ivan Ilich's mundane desire for the approval of the other gives way first to a situation in which he "can only disapprove of their approval" (92). This leads to a radical questioning of his life as a whole: "What if indeed my whole life . . . was not the right thing?" Awareness of death leads Ivan Ilich to recognize a "disapproval of which he could only approve"—in short, to a consciousness of guilt, but one where the evaluations of others play no role. At this point Westphal enlists the aid of Heidegger and Jaspers to provide an eidetic account of the situation. From Heidegger we learn that "death individuates." Authentic consciousness of death frees us from the inertia of everydayness, our identification with the Anonymous

Anyone, and forces us to recognize our responsibility for being who we are. While such alienation from the "they" can be terrifying (as Ivan Ilich shows us), it also "challenges us to that isolation without which we cannot be ourselves, without which the term 'self' is applied to us only out of politeness" (98).

Jaspers's distinction between Existenz and existence, which consciousness of death puts into relief, further highlights the relativity of my objective self and forces me to confront the absolute question, grounded in my freedom, of whether I "have fulfilled the task of becoming a self," whether I have "used the gift of selfhood wisely" (101). This question, according to Westphal, provokes the genuine sense of guilt. The believing soul is one which has felt guilty at "betraying its potential"—a betrayal which is, for both Jaspers and Heidegger, an aspect of individual existence as such. Religion is one way of coping with this feeling so as to be able to die in peace (101), *whether or not* there is belief in an afterlife (95).

The existential-philosophical interpretation of guilt and death thus provides the basis for Westphal's account of religion considered as a means to an end. It is easy enough to show the presence of these themes in Biblical religion—indeed, the philosophies of guilt and death from which Westphal draws his inspiration have sometimes been simply as watered-down versions of Judaeo-Christian themes. But Westphal wants to argue that these issues lie at the root of religion *in general*; so he turns to other religious traditions for confirmation of his analysis.

The almost universal presence in the world's religions of images of stain, pollution, and defilement, of rituals of purification, and of judgment of the dead is taken as evidence that the concern with guilt and death is an essential aspect of religion, and not simply "a piece of ethnocentric projection" (120). One obstacle to this argument is that stain, defilement, etc., often seem to lack the specifically moral aspect—the aspect of intention and subsequent responsibility—which we associate with guilt. But Westphal argues, again following Ricoeur, that even where defilement stems from unintentional violation of taboo and where punishment stems from impersonal forces automatically striking back, the defiled one accepts responsibility for the act as his, and the order he violates "is as much an ethical as a physical order. We are not dealing with a pre-moral experience, but with experience in which the moral and the physical have not been clearly distinguished by the abstractive power of the intellect" (117). But does this mean that we will not be led astray when we describe such experiences in terms of our own developed moral vocabulary?

Reinterpreting different religious traditions in light of existential categories can indeed alert us to underlying affinities. And Westphal is careful to note that in searching for his *eidos* he is not denying the many

differences evident in the way various religions both conceive of and deal with the issues of guilt and death. But no matter how "soft" (xiii) his claim to Husserlian *Wesenschau* may be, it is still, to my mind, questionable whether images of stain and defilement, or the phenomena of taboo and retaliation, can really be brought so easily into the framework of guilt and death as Westphal presents it. It may be that nothing essential is lost in translating the religious expressions of diverse cultures into a language heavily invested with specific conceptions about the centrality of selfhood and its moral worth and responsibility. On the other hand, it is possible that a more particular investigation into the way in which the whole issue of selfhood, responsibility, etc., is handled in various cultural traditions might require us to revise our own sense for the philosophical, and religious, place of these notions.

Westphal rounds out his account of what is essential to religious consciousness by considering the non-utilitarian dimension of religion as an end in itself. In phenomena of worship, celebration, hymns of praise, etc., the anti-Cartesian tenor of religious consciousness again becomes evident. Such forms aim not at providing some kind of relief for the Self; they serve to open the Self for an encounter with the sacred. Here the believing soul engages in forms of what Westphal calls "useless self-transcendence" (139). For example sacrifice—which would seem to be a paradigm of means-ends petition—involves more than this, viz., abandoning the Self's claim to primacy, a form of pure homage and praise, a communion feast or celebration of the presence of the sacred. Westphal suggests that we think of these forms of useless (i.e., non-instrumental) self-transcendence in terms of three models derived from the philosophical tradition: Aristotle's account of *phronesis,* Kant's description of disinterested aesthetic perception, and Gadamer's concept of play. In religious terms, such activities express the ever-present struggle against merely instrumental piety and exhibit the "risky surrender" (141) of the Self in which alone true encounter with the sacred is possible.

The book's final three chapters are devoted to exploring the different ways guilt and death are treated in "exilic," "mimetic," and "covenantal" religions—an ideal typology that encompasses the world's religions. Rather than reviewing this aspect of the work, however, I would like to conclude by raising some questions about Westphal's project as a whole.

The most serious doubts arise around the implications of bracketing the question of truth in the attempt to understand. To what extent is this really possible and, especially in the case of religion, desirable? In answer to Kierkegaard's objection that, "while it is possible to understand Christianity without being a Christian, it is not similarly possible to understand what it is to be a Christian without being one" (15), Westphal insists, by appeal to the notion of *Verstehen,* that it is indeed possible

to understand what it is like to be a Christian (16). The question, though, is whether an understanding adequate to counter Kierkegaard's point can be achieved at all if one places in suspension the issue of truth. There is certainly a clear distinction between the project of understanding the religious life and the project, say, of analyzing religious utterances in terms of empirico-logical criteria of evidence. But Gadamer, to whom Westphal appeals in several places, has suggested that understanding is never finally achievable without putting into play the question of truth at least at the level of the inquirer. Part of trying to understand the Other may involve the putting at risk of our own commitments, not their bracketing.

Westphal is in a sense aware of this. He insists that the neutral attempt to understand is not proposed in the name of a "desire to be rigorously scientific" but by a "passion for self-understanding that is neither detached nor disengaged" (22). The aim of his study, in fact, is to explore the believing soul as a "possibility" that can "lay claim upon my (our) existence" (164), and he concludes the book with the claim that his investigations will have succeeded if they enlarge "our understanding of the possibilities life offers us, thereby enabling us to live our lives with greater integrity" (252). But just how much closer to this goal of integral living can a hermeneutic procedure bring us which ignores the question of truth as such? What, if anything, distinguishes a phenomenologically disclosed eidetic possibility (an understanding of a form of life) from a possibility in the sense of a live option, one that can be chosen, now, in good faith? Can we make a way of seeing things our own without raising the truth-question—especially where what we seek to understand is religion, in which the truth-claim would seem to be something essential?

Stated somewhat differently, if the issue of truth is an essential part of religious consciousness, at what level does the issue arise in the attempt to understand what it means to be religious? One might well agree that it is not an empirical question (20)—i.e., that religion is not to be construed as in competition with science—but, if it is also not part of the attempt to understand, where *does* the question of religious truth arise?

Westphal might argue that a phenomenological approach simply assumes *as phenomenon* the truth-claim implicit in the idea of faith; this is no reason to leave the level of understanding for that of evaluation. Certainly there is something right about this. But I wonder if, at least in our own culture now, the whole question of faith can be so easily presupposed. Might there not be, in addition to the ambivalence of inertia and resentment that Westphal discusses, something like an ambivalence of faith itself? As Baudelaire expressed it in a letter to his mother

(March 6, 1861): "I desire with all my heart to believe that an external invisible being is interested in my fate. But what does one do to believe it?"

It may be that such a difficulty is a peculiar product of the development of Western scientific rationality, and not a problem for religious consciousness as such. But even so, an inquiry which explores not mere possibilities, but possibilities which can claim us in an existential sense would, it seems, want to find some way of raising the whole question of truth, not in an external evaluative way, but precisely as itself a part of the project of understanding for the sake of self-understanding.

I confess I don't know how this is to be done without falling back into "inappropriate" modes of evaluation. The existential-phenomenological theory of truth is at present insufficiently developed to allow us to understand what religious truth might be. But since Westphal's reflections are in other respects so thought-provoking, I can only wish he had tried to integrate this problem into his investigation.

One final word. By concentrating in this review on philosophical issues —and even methodological ones, the lengthy discussion of which Westphal explicitly (and rightly) abjures—I have not been able to indicate one of the book's most attractive features: the wealth of detailed, concrete discussions of exemplary literature from the world's religions. Westphal has obviously done a lot of meditating on these sources, and his efforts to co-ordinate them are to be highly recommended for anyone with an interest in forms of the religious life.

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