ON BEHALF OF CLASSICAL TRINITARIANISM:
A CRITIQUE OF RAHNER ON THE TRINITY

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CLASSICAL TRINITARIANISM, I shall argue, is one and the same doctrine, whether it be expressed in Latin or in Greek. Of course Latin Trinitarianism has its own special nuances and emphases, many of which it inherits from Augustine, but in its essential logic it does not differ substantively from the orthodox teaching of the Greeks, which was forged by the Cappadocian fathers. If my thesis is correct, then the effort current in our day to appeal to the Greeks in order to criticize the Latins is mistaken, and is liable to lead us away from the tradition of classical Trinitarianism altogether.

I shall try to show this by a critical examination of the work of Karl Rahner, who is probably the most influential of the W·estern theologians who profess to find the Greek doctrine of the Trinity superior to the Latin. I shall be trying to show, first, that his criticism falls with equal weight upon both Greek and Latin Trinitarianism. Secondly, I shall inquire about the motives of this criticism, which amount to a dissatisfaction with classical Trinitarianism as a whole. I think these motives are specifically modern, and that a healthy dose of self-criticism directed toward some of the reigning assumptions of modernity would help us to see that classical Trinitarianism is not so unsatisfactory after all.

The central conceptual issue, to anticipate, is the meaning and justification of the distinction between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity. This distinction is fundamental to classical Trinitarianism, but Rahner moves in the direction of abolishing it or rendering it insignificant.

I. Rahner's Critique of Latin Trinitarianism

Rahner's major essay on the Trinity is a contribution to
Mysterium Salutis entitled "The Triune God as the Transcend-
ent Primordial Ground of Salvation-History"   ; [1] the title an-
nounces the theme of the relation between the economic Trinity
and the immanent Trinity, already suggesting Rahner's conten-
tion that to be drawn into the *Heilsgeschichte* (or economy of
salvation) is necessarily to be drawn into the immanent life of its
triune transcendent ground.   The three aspects of the divine self-
communication in the economy, Rahner claims, are identical with
the three subsistent modes of being of the immanent Trinity:
" each one of the three divine persons communicates himself to
man in gratuitous grace in his own personal particularity and
diversity. . . . these three self-communications are the self-com-
munication of the one God in the three relative ways in which
God subsists." [2]

Rahner takes this claim to be a major reversal and correction
of the role that had been assigned to the doctrine of the Trinity
in the Roman Catholic dogmatics of previous generations.   The
" extrinsicist " theology of neoscholasticism had made the Trinity
into a mystery that must be believed as a revealed article of faith
but that had strangely little to do with us and our experience of
salvation.   As a result, the doctrine of the Trinity played little
or no role in popular piety; even in scientific dogmatics it stood
strangely isolated in a separate treatise, and its connection with
the rest of dogmatics was unclear or even non-existent. [3]   By in-
sisting on the Trinity's immediate relevance for salvation-history
Rahner hoped to show its pervasive relevance for the Christian
life as well as for theology.

Rahner sums up his basic thesis in an axiom identifying the

[1] *Mysterium Salutis: Grundriss heilsgeschichtlicher Dogmatik* (Einsiedeln:
Benziger Verlag, 1965-1981), vol. 2, chapter 5: *Der dreifaltige Gott als trans-
cendenter Urgrund der Heilsgeschichte.* English   translation   by J. Donceel:
The Trinity (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).

[2] Rahner, *The Trinity,* p. 34f.

[a] Ibid., p. 15.

immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity: "The 'economic' Trinity is the ' immanent ' Trinity and the ' immanent ' Trinity is the ' economic ' Trinity." [4] What precisely does this axiom mean? Clearly it must be claiming more than just the identity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit of salvation-history with the three persons of the immanent Trinity; for that is an identity already written into the Creed, which no Trinitarian theology could possibly want to contest. (Try to imagine a doctrine of the Trinity that *denied* that Jesus Christ was identical with the second person of the Trinity, for example.) The distinction between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity has never implied that there were two separate Trinities, but only that there is a difference between describing God *in se* and describing the work of God in the economy of salvation.

If Rabner' s axiom is to amount to a major reversal or correction of anything, therefore, it must be taken to imply much more than the simple identity claim which is all it seems to amount to at first glance. I shall suggest that Rahner means to identify not just the economic Three with the immanent Three, but the *relations* between the Three at the economic level with the *relations* between the Three at the immanent level. In other words, according to Rahner the relations between the distinct roles played by the Three in salvation history are not something different from the inner-trinitarian relations of origin, such as generation (i.e., of the Son) and procession (i.e., of the Spirit), which are essential to God's being *in se,* and which the Latin theological tradition has long claimed are the only source of real distinctions between the Three. If we read Rahner's axiom in this way-and I think we should-it amounts to a very substantial claim indeed. It puts Rahner (and the many who follow him) at odds not only with the whole tradition of Latin Trinitarianism from Augustine onwards but with the Greek tradition as well.

Let us consider what Rahner's axiom leads him to deny. One statement he specifically picks out as false on the basis of his

4 Ibid., p. 22.

axiom is : " There is nothing in salvation history, in the economy of salvation, which cannot equally be said of the triune God as a whole and of each person in particular." 5 Rahner chooses his formulations carefully, so I will not flatly identify the statement he is denying here with the commonly accepted " Latin " rule *omnia opera trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt* (" all works of the trinity 'outward' are indivisible").   But this is a rule whose use in standard Roman Catholic dogmatics he has already questioned,6 and I think it is fair to say that he wants to limit the implications that can be drawn from it, and specifically to deny some implications that were in fact drawn from it by many neoscholastic theologians. (Exactly which implications these are, we shall soon see). In the meantime let me dub this formula "Augustine's rule" and thereby flag it as a major issue in the investigations to come. It is a weakened and qualified version of a principle that appears throughout Augustine's treatise *On the Trinity,* and it seems fair to say that this rule entered the Latin tradition through him. 7

   The next statement that Rahner picks out as false is: " that a doctrine of the Trinity treating of the divine persons in general and of each person in particular can speak only of that which occurs within the divinity itself." 8 This I take as another cautiously phrased formulation meant to limit the implications drawn from another rule that has played a major role in Latin Trinitarianism: *in Deo omnia sunt unum, ubi nion obviat relationis oppositio* ("in God all is one, wherever the opposition of relations does not stand in the way").   I shall call this "Anselm's rule," because the idea is taken from Anselm's treatise *On the Proces-*

   6 Ibid., p. 23.

   6 Ibid., p. 13f.

   7 As shall become evident in my quotations from Augustine later on, Augustine himself holds to a stronger and more unqualified claim than this. For him all workings of the Trinity are indivisible, whether *ad extra* or not. See e.g. *On the Predestination of the Saints,* # 13. This only goes to show his closeness to the Greeks, who initially formulated " Augustine's Rule " in precisely this unqualified fashion.

   Ibid., p. 23.

sion of the Holy Spirit, [9] though the exact wording is derived from the Council of Florence's " Decree against the Jacobites" in 1441.[10] The Council in fact defined this rule as dogma to believed on the authority of the magisterium of the holy catholic Church. As such we can hardly expect Rahner to be denying it. Yet in this case too, Rahner does call into question the use that the Latin tradition has made of the rule and the implications that have been drawn from it.[11] Rahner never denies that the immanent oppositions of relation (i.e., the difference between begetting and being begotten, and so forth) are the source of distinction in the Trinity, but he does seem to be insismng (according to my reading of his basic axiom) that these inner-trinitarian relations are no different from the " economic " relations between Father, Son, and Spirit in the history of salvation. And this, I think, is an identification which defeats the very purpose of Anselm's rule, as it was first formulated by the Cappadocians and later taken over by the Latin tradition.

The import of these two denials is summed up in a statement which Rahner proceeds to *affirm:* "that no adequate distinction can be made between the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the economy of salvation." [12] It is astonishing that anyone should think that such an affirmation would bring one into the orbit of the Greek view of the Trinity, for there is, arguably, no

[11] In Anselm himself this principle is formulated as follows : " On the one hand, the unity does not lose that which follows from it, except when some opposition of relation stands against it; and on the other hand, the relation does not lose what belongs to it, except when the inseparable unity opposes it" *(On the Procession of the Holy Spirit,* chapter 1; translated in *Trinity, Incarnation, and Redemption,* edited by J. Hopkins and H. W. Richardson [New York: Harper and Row, 1970] p. 85 [Note: in Migne's edition for the *Patrologia Latina* this citation falls in chapter 2]). The balanced two-sidedness of this formulation is not retained by the Council of Florence, and when I speak of "Anselm's rule" I mean specifically the *one-sided* version of the rule that I have quoted in the text, which lays the burden of proof always on the side of anyone who wishes to see distinction rather than unity in God.

[10] See *Enchiridion Symbolorum,* 36th edition, ed. Denzinger and Schoenmetzer (Barcelona: Herder, 1977), 1330.

[11] Rahner, *The Trinity,* p. 25.

[12] Ibid., p. 24.

principle of organization more fundamental to Greek theology
than the distinction between *theologia* (the doctrine of God
proper or *Gotteslehre,* whose central topic was the immanent
Trinity) and *oikonomia* (the doctrine of the economy of salva-
tion, whose central topic was the Incarnation).   It seems at any
rate that we have reached the fundamental question raised by
Rahner's axiom, which is simply: what is the point of the dis-
tinction between immanent Trinity and economic Trinity in the
first place? Is there anything we really need it for?

   This question seems to me to get at the heart of the issue.
Most of the Western theologians who advocate a turn to the
Greek doctrine of the Trinity bewail the gap that the Latin tra-
dition has put between the economic Trinity and the immanent
Trinity. I think that there is in fact such a gap, but that it is
present in both traditions and that it is well-placed. The ortho-
dox Greek theologians insisted on it for good reasons, mainly
ontological ones. In our own time Barth has added what I think
are good epistemological reasons for insisting on it. But I am
getting ahead of myself. First of all, what does that gap look
like?

   Here Rabner is very helpful, giving us a clear and sharply
focused formulation of the objectionable gap. The recurrent
targets of his attacks are theses like this: " that every divine per-
son might assume a hypostatic union with a created reality." [11]
Or, stated more generally, that" that which *happens* in salvation
history might have happened through each other person." [14] The
thesis under fire here is a version of what the Latin tradition calls
the doctrine of appropriations-the   claim that, because all works
of the Trinity *ad extra* are indivisible, the various works of crea-
tion, redemption, incarnation, sanctification, and so on, are mere-
ly " appropriated " to a particular one of the Three.

   Interestingly, the thesis Rabner attacks is not a characteristic
version of the doctrine of appropriations, which is usually stated
in terms of the *work* of the three persons rather than their dis-

[ia] Ibid., p. 28.
[14] Ibid.

tinct *roles.* In other words, the sort of claim to which the Latin tradition is most deeply committed is not " any one of the Three could have become incarnate " but rather " we appropriate the work of incarnation to the Son, but it is in strict truth the work of the whole Trinity." This latter claim is not one that Rahner ever denies. It is in fact a claim that enjoys the rather direct support of Holy Scripture, as the angel of the Annunciation says to Mary : " The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you ... " (Luke 1:35). The principal claim is not that any one of the Three could have become incarnate, but that the event called " incarnation " was brought about by all Three working as one. Similar things can be said about the other works of God, also with rather direct Scriptural support. To take one especially pleasing example, the phrase " all things visible and invisible," with which the first article of the Nicene creed describes the Father's work of creation, is taken from a description of the work of the Son in the great Christ-hymn in the first chapter of Colossians (1 :16). Clearly the Latin tradition has good Biblical reason to say that the work of creation is " appropriated " to the Father even though in strict truth the Son also was fully and indivisibly at work in it.

And to repeat, Rahner is denying none of this. The thesis he attacks is not about the indivisibility of the work of the Three but about the interchangeability of their roles in the work. In denying it, Rahner is asserting (for example) that only one of the Three could ever conceivably be identified as the incarnate God. The issue is the identities rather than the works of the Three-who they are rather than what they do. Rahner's claim is that the Three could not play different roles in the joint work of the economy of salvation than they actually do and, furthermore, that it is precisely because of their *immanent* identities (who they are *in se)* that they could not do so. This double claim seems to me to capture the essential import of Rahner's basic axiom. Assessing it is a complex matter that will take up most of our time in Part III.

In the meantime, let us take note that the object of Rahner's attack is not the classical Latin doctrine of appropriations. Once again, as in the case of Anselm's rule and Augustine's rule, Rahner's aim seems to be to limit the implications which neo-scholastic theologians had been drawing from the classical Latin doctrine. Let us also note that unlike the previous two doctrines, the doctrine of appropriations is specifically Latin and not to be found in the Greek tradition (so far as I am aware). Nonetheless, I shall be claiming that it arises in direct consequence of the Greek teaching on the Trinity as soon as some natural questions about it are raised. Augustine gave us the doctrine of appropriations, I shall argue, precisely because as an inheritor of the Greek achievement he raised these natural questions.

To sum up then: Rahner's challenge to Latin Trinitarianism is epitomized by his axiom identifying the economic Trinity with the immanent Trinity. This axiom seems to question the use made of three doctrines: Augustine's rule, Anselm's rule, and the doctrine of appropriations. Furthermore, and most fundamentally, it raises the question: what is the point of the distinction between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity in the first place? I shall be arguing in response that Augustine's rule and Anselm's rule are originally to be found in the work of Greek theologians and that the doctrine of appropriations follows from Augustine's rule as a natural implication. The three doctrines come as a package, as it were, and once we have seen the motive for adopting the whole package, we will have seen the point of the distinction between the economic Trinity and immanent Trinity as well. It is only at that point that we will be able to give a fair assessment of Rahner's axiom, which, while it does not flatly deny the three doctrines, does attempt to limit their implications. The value of those implications, I shall argue, is a specifically modern issue, and it is Barth rather than Rahner who sees their value correctly.

II. Two "Latin" Rules in John of Damascus

My specific historical claim is that the Cappadocian fathers (Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzen,

the great Greek theologians of the generation after Athanasius) developed versions of "Anselm's rule" and "Augustine's rule" in order to explain why it is that the divine Three should not be spoken of as three Gods-an explanatory task that fell specifically to them in the aftermath of Nicaea. I shall document this indirectly, but conveniently, by examining a compendium of Greek theology entitled *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* (commonly known in the West under the title *De Fide Orthodoxa)* written by John of Damascus almost four centuries after the flourishing of the Cappadocian fathers. The convenience lies in the fact that using John of Damascus will enable me to give a relatively close reading of one brief lucid, and conceptually dense text, instead of collecting the relevant passages from a sprawling mass of unsystematic letters, polemics, and orations. In effect, I am letting John of Damascus do the collecting for me. That this convenience should not be purchased at the price of inaccuracy is part of John's own declared intention in writing the book for which he claimed no originality but only faithfulness to the teachings of the great teachers who came before him. In the preface to the larger work of which the *De Fide Orthodoxa* is a part, he writes: **"I** shall add nothing of my own, but shall gather together into one those things which have been worked out by the most eminent of teachers and make a compendium of them." u Judging by the number of allusions to and quotations from the great Greek theologians which his modern editor Bonifatius Kotter found in the work, John is as good as his word. [16]

  John does more than compile and summarize and quote, however; he systematizes. He has been called the last of the church fathers, but he could also be called the first of the systematic the-

  15 Preface to *The Fount of Knowledge,* in *St. John of Damascus: Writings,* trans. F. H. Chase (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1958), p. 6.

  16 In John's chapter on the Trinity, Gregory of Naziansen's Orations are by far the most frequently cited. Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa are also cited occasionally, but not so often as Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria. See the remarks on the *kompilatorische Charakter* of John's work in *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos,* edited by B. Kotter (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1969-), vol. II, xxvii.

ologians, for in giving us an orderly summary of the one age of theology he inaugurates the other. And he does it beautifully-expounding the subtlest of distinctions in extraordinarily simple Greek prose, with no waste of words and with compelling clarity. For all his real and professed lack of originality, he has virtues of conceptual precision and organization which are rare among the fathers who preceeded him and more characteristic of the scholastic theologians who would be his immediate successors.

For his immediate successors were indeed the Latin-speaking scholastics of the Middle Ages, four centuries after him. The *De Fide Orthodoxa* was translated relatively early into Latin-early enough to be available in part to Peter Lombard and to become a major influence on the theology of Thomas Aquinas. The usual judgment, in fact, is that it exercised more influence in the West than in the East, mainly because it was among the few means of access to the thoughts of the East that the Latin scholastic had. [11]

Ironically, one way it might have influenced the West was to cause (or help cause) the separation between the treatises *De Deo uno* and *De Deo trino* which Rahner laments. The two became separated in the interval between Lombard and Aquinas. Whereas the Master of the Sentences subsumes the general doctrine of God under a doctrine of the Trinity, Thomas adopts the arrangement which has since become standard among the Latins, putting a treatise on the nature of God before the treatise on the Trinity. This rearrangement, which Rahner regards as reflecting a characteristically Latin misplacement of the doctrine of the Trinity, comes *after* the introduction of a complete Latin translation of the *De Fide Orthodoxa* [18] and reflects John's order of

[17] For the medieval translations of *De fide orthodoza,* see Ghellinck, *Le Meuvement Theologique du XII e Siecle* (Paris: Desclee, 1948), pp. 374-404. For the judgement that the treatise had a greater influence on the West than on the East, See Kotter, vol. II, p. xxviii.

[18] The translation which Lombard worked with was incomplete (Kotter I, xxii) and hence we may infer that the *systematic* character and organization of John's work only made itself felt later, with the introduction of the complete treatise in translation. For Rahner's remarks on the separation and rearrangement of the two treatises, which "took place for the first time in St. Thomas, for reasons which have not yet been fully explained," See his *The Trinity,* p. 16.

presentation, which treats of the nature, existence and know-ability of God before proceeding to discuss the Trinity. Hence in the very arrangement of John's work we already see evidence against Rahner's expectation that the Greeks might be able to rescue us Latins from the mess we have gotten ourselves in. Per-the Greeks were the ones who got us in this mess in the first place.

Turning from the arrangement of the work to its substance, we find more evidence that this is in fact the case. Let me present the evidence in the form of an overview and commentary on John's long central chapter on the Trinity. [19]

The chapter begins with a confession of the one God and his infinite, simple, and incomprehensible nature. A noteworthy ele-ment of this confession is John's way of speaking in one and the same breath of both the immanence and the transcendence of God. I believe this to be an essential prerequisite for a doctrine of the Trinity, but I shall discuss this matter in greater detail in Part IV.

John proceeds to discuss the Three, devoting one sentence to the Father, one paragraph to the Spirit, and most of the dis-cussion to the Son. The conceptual distinctions made in his dis-cussion of the Son then serve as the basis for a discussion of the relations between the Three, with which the chapter concludes. It is these conceptual distinctions that are our main interest here.

The discussion of the Son is designed to uphold the equal deity of the Son without compromising the oneness of God. The equal deity of the Son is preserved first of all by the doctrine of *eternal* generation, which serves to repudiate the Arian claim that " there was once when he was not " (see the Nicene anathemas), while also affirming that the Son has the same nature and essence *(physis* and *ousia)* as the Father, as the notion of generation (i.e., begetting) implies. For just as whatever a human being begets has human nature and is truly human, so whatever God

1e John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* I, 8. I use the translation in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd series, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979 reprint edition).

begets has divine nature and is truly God. What is distinctive about divine generation, however, is that it is eternal, without change or passion, precisely because the nature involved is eternal and without change or passion. These are the points of doctrine for which Athanasius strove so long and hard.

But this leaves us with a problem: Why we should not say that there are two Gods, Father and Son, just as we say that a human father and son are two human beings? Answering this question takes up the second half of John's discussion of the Son. The question in its fully Trinitarian form-i.e., why should we not say there are three Gods ?-is the central issue of the last and longest section in the chapter, on the relations between the Three. This is the question which it originally fell to the Cappadocian fathers to answer, and especialy to Gregory of Nyssa in his famous treatise to Ablabius *On 'Not Three Gods'.*

John's first stab at the problem is by way of combining two images for the relation of the Son to the Father. Both these images are taken from Hebrews I :3. According to the first, the Son is "the radiance of the Father's glory" and thus is related to the Father as light is to the fire from which it radiates : "And just as light is ever the product of fire and ever is in it and at no time is separate from it, so in like manner also the Son is begotten of the Father and is at no time separate from Him, but is ever in Him." [20] This image illustrates the unity of Father and Son, their co-eternity, and their sharing in all the properties of the one divine nature (Since according to Greek physics, there was no essential property of fire that light lacks, the two being of one nature in the sense that they were both made of the highest of the four basic elements).

But there is something troubling about the little word " in " *(en)* which plays so significant a role in this passage, and con-sequently John must immediately mention a dys-analogy which mars the image: " But whereas the light which is produced from fire without separation, and abideth ever in it, has no proper subsistence of its own distinct from that of fire (for it is a natural

20 Ibid., p. 8.

quality of fire), the Only-begotten Son of God ... has a proper subsistence of its own distinct from that of the Father." [21] At this point we need the second image from Hebrews 1:3, the Son as "the impress of the Father's subsistence." This image illustrates how the Son has his own complete and distinct subsistence (*hypostasis)* and is not a mere quality *(poiotes)* of the Father.

In this way the two images correct and complement each other, as is needful because " it is quite impossible to find in creation an image that will illustrate in itself exactly in all details the nature of the Holy Trinity." [22] Putting the two together, we must say both that Father and Son share all their properties and operations like fire and light, and that they are distinct, whole, individual subsistences like a stamp and its impress. Hence the Son "is in all respects similar to the Father, save that the Father is not begotten," or, in more technical language, "all the qualities the Father has are the Son's, save that the Father is unbegotten, and this exception involves no difference in essence or dignity, but only a different mode of coming into existence *[tropos hyparzei5s].*" [23] Since the diverse modes of coming into existence are the source of what the Latins call "oppositions of relation," it is apparent that we already have arrived at the gist of Anselm's rule.

How have we arrived at Anselm's rule so quickly? To see this we shall need to delve into the technical metaphysical language in the last section of John's chapter on the Trinity. However, in thinking through the two images from Heb. 1:3 we have already aquainted ourselves with the nature of the key metaphysical moves. As we know from his specifically philosophical writings, John is an Aristotelian. This means that his metaphysical vocabulary is drawn from features of the *empirical* world. (Hence the term " metaphysical " in our discussion should not be taken in the sense that it bears in most philosophy after Kant, where it indicates an investigation into things beyond all empirical knowl-

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid., p. 9.
23 Ibid., p. 8.

edge.)   As a result the conceptual problem involved in combin-
ing the two images in the desired way, once stated in full abstrac-
tion, is none other than the metaphysical problem that John faces:
how can the Son be fully God, co-eternal and possessing all the
properties of Deity, and yet not be a second God? But this also
implies that the metaphysical language will have essentially the
same limitations as images drawn from the empirical world; no
one metaphysical formula will say all that needs to be said, and,
indeed, each formula will be positively misleading unless set be-
side another which complements and corrects it.[24]

The metaphysical problem John faces has to do once again
with that little word "in". To begin with, he wants to secure
the unity and full divinity of the Three by saying that " all that
the Son and the Spirit have is from the Father, even their very
being." [25] This is best expressed by saying that the Son and
Spirit have their being *in* the Father. But this way of speaking
unfortunately implies that the unity of Father, Son, and Spirit is
the unity of a compound (*syn1thesis),* that is, the unity of a thing
and its properties, such as a fire and its light and heat, a man and
his height and color, and so on. This is why John also needs to
affirm that the Son and the Spirit are complete individual beings,
not mere qualities inhering in some other entity. This means,
in the metaphysical vocabulary of Aristotle, that the predications
" Son " and " Spirit " belong neither to the category of quality
(poiotes) nor to any of the other categories of entities which
have their being *in* another thing (such as relation, quantity,
place, etc.), but to the category of entities whose defining char-
acteristic is precisely that they do *not* have their being in an-
other entity, namely substance. Human beings, stones, and trees,
in which color (a quality) and height (a quantity) inhere, do
not themselves inhere in any other thing. They therefore *are* in
the fullest and most proper sense of the word, and the sort of

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[24] See Kathryn Tanner on the way that Christian discourse necessarily
" fractures " the secular and philosophical language which it borrows, in *Goa
and Creation in Christian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988),
p. 26f.

[25] John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa,* p. 9.

being they have, in contrast to the lesser sort of being which qualities and quantities have, is called in Aristotelian parlance *ousia,* which is simply the Greek word for " a being." [26] (This is the term which we "Latins" usually translate "substance.")

Clearly this is the sort of being which we want to say the Son and the Holy Spirit have. But if we call them substances, then it follows from the Aristotelian definition of the term that they do not have their being *in* something else. To combine the notion of " substance " with the notion of " existence in another " is, therefore, to violate the rules of Aristotle's metaphysical grammar.

John's treatment of the Trinity is based on the decision to violate this grammar by saying that these three very unique individual substances do indeed have their existence in something else: each one has its existence in the other two. To understand the meaning and motivation of this decision, we must look at the linguistic innovation that the Cappadocians made in Trinitarian discourse and see how it is related to Aristotle's way of talking about substance.

Aristotle distinguishes two kinds of predication using the category *ousia.* " Primary *ousia* " is predicated of individual beings such as Socrates, Peter, and Mary, while " secondary *ousia"* signifies the form or nature or essence they have in common, in this case humanity or "human being." Hence to say "This is Socrates " is to make a predication of primary *ousia,* while to say "He is a human being" is to make a predication of secondary *ousia.* We Latins often translate "secondary *ousia"* with the word " essence."

In the aftermath of Nicaea it was important to be clear about

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[26] I follow here John's definition of *ousia* or substance in the *Dialectica* or *Philosophical Chapters* (comprising part one of *The Fount of Knowledge),* chapter 4: "Being *[to on]* is the common name for all things which are. It is divided into substance and accident. Substance is the principal of these two, because it has existence in itself and not in another. Accident, on the other hand, is that which cannot exist in itself but is found in the substance." *(St. John of Damascus: Writings,* p. 13). This is a simplified version of Aristotle's definition of substance in chapter 5 of the *Categories.*

which kind of *ousia* was meant when the church confessed that the Son was *homo-ousios* with the Father. If it was primary *ousia,* then the confession of *homo-ousios* would amount to the claim that the Father and the Son were one and the same individual being, and the charge of Modalism would seem well-placed, as indeed it did to many non-Arian opponents of Nicaea.[27] But if it was secondary *ousia,* then the question arises, Why we should not say that there are three Gods? For in saying that Father and Son have one and the same substance in this sense of the word, all we have said is that both are truly divine, just as Peter and Paul are both truly human.

   The Cappadocians inherited the second horn of this dilemma in the wake of the compromise between the Nicene party (led by Athanasius) and the homoi-ousians, who came to the agreement that in order to rule out modalistic interpretations of Nicaea, the *ousia* referred to by the phrase "homo-ousios with the Father" must be interpreted as secondary rather than primary *ousia.*[28] Interpreted this way, the homo-ousios does not adequately state the unity of the Trinity, but it does say what it was necesary to say against the Arians, namely that the Son is as truly God as the Father, just as Peter is as truly human as Paul. It merely leaves unexplained how the Three of the Trinity can be one God in contrast to Peter, Paul, and John, who are not one man . It was in order to explain this that the Cappadocians, making use of the image of fire and light from Heb. 1:3 as well as the crucial passage" I am in the Father and the Father in me" from John 14:10, violated the very definition of *ousia* and said that the Three individual substances of the Trinity had their existence *in* one another. In order to say this clearly, however, they needed a term meaning exclusively *primary* ousia, and for that purpose they kidnapped the term *hypostasis* (our " subsistence "), which had previously been more or less synonomous with *ousia.* This in turn allowed them to reserve the term *ousia* for use exclusively in the

[27] See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), III, ix, 6.
[28] Ibid., III, x, 1.

sense in which it was uesd in the Nicene formula (i.e. in the sense of Aristotle's *secondary* ousia). [29]

The fundamental Cappadocian decision about how to deploy philosophical conceptuality in the doctrine of the Trinity can thus be represented as the decision to violate the very definition of the term " substance " (=primary ousia) and say both that the Three are complete individual subsistences and that they have their existence in each other. In saying both these things, the Greek theologians were defending both the oneness of God and the distinctions between the Three. But in saying both these things what exactly did they *say?* Combining the two metaphysical notions of subsistence and " existence in another " is like combining the two images from Heb. 1:3-we have no good images or pictures for the result. This is something which we of course, must expect, since we are talking about the divine nature, which is incomprehensible.

Here we can remark upon John's motives for placing a discussion of the nature of the one God prior to his exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity. A great many of the predicates he assigns to the nature or *ousia* of God as such (incomprehensibility, boundlessness, perfection, and, above all, simplicity) play an active role in his explanation of why the subsistences which share the divine *ousia* should be treated in a way radically different from every subsistence in the created world. The utterly unique characteristics of the divine *ousia* lend intelligibility to the unparalled claim that these three subsistences have their existence "in " each other.

The discussion of the nature of the one God plays another and opposite role: it establishes constraints on (or criteria of success for) the doctrine of the Trinity. In the brief fifth chapter of the *De Fide,* entitled " Proof that God is one and not many," John shows how predicating manyness of God would violate the nature or *ousia* of the deity, and thereby indicates what sort of

[29] The *locus classicus* for this terminological innovation is Basil of Caesarea's Epistle 38, which is often ascribed to Gregory of Nyssa under the title "On the Difference between Ousia and Hypostasis."

threeness would be incompatible with the oneness of God. John argues to the oneness of God from the perfection of the divine nature, via a principle which he later appeals to repeatedly in arguments about the Trinity: " difference [*diaphora]* introduces strife." (A related formulation is " compoundness *[synthesis]* is the beginning of separation.") From this principle it follows that if (as John takes for granted) the divine nature is characterized by perfection, then there can be no such thing as a difference between gods with respect to any particular attribute: there cannot be one god which is less perfect in goodness, wisdom, power, and limitlessness than another god. Being equally perfect, they are to that extent identical and therefore one.

John offers as illustration two specific versions of this argument, concerning two particular attributes. The first concerns perfection with respect to space (i.e., omnipresence) : "if there are many Gods, how can one maintain that God is uncircumscribed? For where one would be, the other could not be." The second concerns perfection with respect to power (i.e., omnipotence) : " how could the world be governed by many? ... if anyone should say that each rules over a part, what of that which established this order and gave to each his particular realm? For this would then rather be God."

Notice, first, the similarity in structure of these two arguments since there can be no limits to the divine nature, either in filling all space or in having power over all things, there can be no boundary separating different gods in either respect. That one god should limit the other with respect either to space or to power is contrary to the very nature of the divine and therefore impossible. The common structure of these two arguments shall be given positive work to do in the discussion of the Trinity. Second, notice what the second argument explicitly excludes: the unity of what is divine cannot flow from a higher principle of unity, for then that higher principle would itself be God. This implies for the doctrine of the Trinity that the *ousia* of God cannot be made into a higher principle uniting the Three. The Three must be united in and of themselves and not by anything higher

or prior to them. Though we can deduce the oneness of God from the nature of the divine *ousia* (for that is what the proof in chapter 5 does), the divine *ousia* itself is not a separate entity which could act as the source of divine unity. In this regard, the divine substance is like any other: properly speaking, only the individual subsistences "exist."   To put the same point differently: if an *ousia* " existed," it would ipso facto be yet another subsistence, not an *ousia.*[30]

Bearing in mind, then, the uniqueness of the divine *ousia,* which is to say the simplicity and limitlessness of all that is God,

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[30] This clarity about the divine *ousia* and its conceptual role is in my view the only significant reason to prefer the Greek treatment of the Trinity to the Latin. The Latins tended to be vaguer about what was meant by the one *substantia* of God and sometimes treated it-ineptly,   I think-as if it were an extra thing above and beyond the Three which they each fully participated in.

Much recent criticism of the Latin view may be a reaction against this inept way of talking about the divine *substantia.* This ineptness was only compounded by some modern patristics scholars, not especially astute philosophically, who spoke of the one substance of the deity materialistically, as if it were a stuff out of which the Three were made. (See Basil's Epistle 52:1 for a succinct refutation of such a materialistic reading of the *homo-ousios,* which would imply that there is a " substance anterior or even underlying " both the Father and the Son. Basil insists to the contrary that there can be nothing " anterior to the Unbegotten." Among the Latin fathers Hilary sounds a similar warning in his *De synodis* sect. 68.)

J. N. D. Kelly is a case in point. His scholarship is far too sound to allow him to miss the fact that the council of Nicaea, the Cappadocians, and Athanasius (in his final compromise with the homoi-ousians) all interpreted the divine *ousia* in the sense of Aristotle's secondary substance; but he was philosophically uninformed enough to think that the " real " meaning of the *homoousios* just had to be reference to " numerically identical substance," i.e., " an individual thing as such "-that is to say, to precisely what the Cappadocians called " hypostasis" ! (Kelly, p. 234). Hence in explaining how it is possible for there to be Three persons in this individual thing, Kelly's only recourse is to make use of inappropriately materialistic analogies such as that of the one substance " being simultaneously present in " the three persons (Ibid., p. 265).

If *this* is Latin Trinitarianism, then by all means let us flee to the Greeks ! It seems quite possible that part of the popularity of the Greek view of the Trinity is, indeed, a reaction by a new generation of scholars against the materialistic and nearly modalist version of Latin trinitarianism which Kelly's generation seemed to take for granted.

let us return to the chapter on the Trinity. John makes a crucial distinction between the way the *ousia/ hypostasis* distinction works in creation and the way it works in God. In created things we see the distinctness of subsistences first and in actual fact *(pragmati)* and subsequently infer the unity of *ousia,* which we therefore see only through reasoning and in thought *(logo kai epinoia).* For instance, we see that Peter and Paul and John are all distinct beings and only infer from their common characteristics that they are of one essence, namely human. But with God it is the reverse. The first thing to be seen is the divine unity, their oneness of essence, working (*energeia),* willing, and movement *(kine sis).* For in God all these are identical-not merely similar, John emphasizes, but identical. [31] One can see no distinctions here because none are possible (as the argument in chapter 5 showed). Thus in God it is the distinctions, not the unity, which are seen second. There is nothing in the working, willing, and acting of God which shows any difference or distinction; we can only infer the distinctions among the Three from their distinct manners of coming into existence-the one unbegotten and uncaused, the other begotten, the third proceeding but not begotten.

This unique feature of the *ousia/hypostasis* distinction in God stems from the uniqueness of the divine *ousia* itself. Since, in accordance with their divine nature, each of the subsistences is limitless, it is impossible for them *to* be separate from each other in space the way Peter and Paul and John are. Hence with respect to space they must be co-extensive, and thus must in a rather literal sense dwell "in " one another. But this dwelling in one another extends to other respects also : just as there can be no boundaries or divisions between them with respect to space, there can be none with respect to time (they are co-eternal) nor with respect to will (they have but one will) nor with respect to working (there is but one divine *energeia)* nor with respect to anything else-except the inner-trinitarian relations of generation and procession. The similarity in structure we noted in the two illustrative arguments of chapter 5 now works as an analogy: just

[31] John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa,* p. 10.

as the Three dwell in one another in the literal spatial sense, they also dwell in one another in the more abstract sense of having the same will, work, and activity. John states the analogy this way:

For with reference to the uncircumscribed Deity *[theotetos]* we cannot speak of separation in space, as we can in our own case [i.e., in the case of created beings like Peter, Paul, and John]. For the subsistences dwell in one another, in no wise confused but cleaving together, according to the Word of the Lord, " I am in the Father and the Father in me," nor can one admit difference in will or judgement or energy or power or anything else whatsoever which may produce actual and absolute separation in our case. Wherefore we do not speak of three Gods.... 32

John has thus shown what he needs to show : the distinctions which make Peter, Paul, and John three different men are not present in the deity to make three different Gods. While three men have three distinct locations, wills, qualities, and activities, the Three of the Trinity have but one location and will, one set of attributes and workings (*energeiai),* and are thus one God. Anselm's rule follows from this: for the only thing left to distinguish the Three from one another is the difference between being unbegotten (the Father) and being begotten (the Son) and proceeding (the Holy Spirit), a difference with respect to what in the standard Latin version of Anselm's rule are called "oppositions of relation " or what John calls " modes of coming into existence." 33

32 Ibid., p. 10f.

33 For the presence of Anselm's Rule in the Cappadocians themselves, see Gregory of Nyssa's justly famous little treatise *On "Not Three Gods",* in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers,* 2nd series, vol. 5, pp. 331-336. According to Gregory the unity of all divine operations *(energeiai)* is what primarily distinguishes the threeness of the one God from the threeness of Peter, James, and John (p. 334). This unity is so pronounced in Gregory's mind that in another treatise (which might actually be Basil's), he can argue from "the identity of their operation" to "the unity of their nature" (Ibid., p. 328). Hence it is not surprising to hear him say, at the end of the treatise *On "Not Three Gods",* that it is "the difference in respect of cause and that which is caused, by which alone we apprehend that one Person is distinguished from another" (p. 336). This, of course, is precisely Anselm's Rule.

A little further on John gives the name *perichoresis* to this dwelling in one another which secures their unity of the Three. Hence we can say, in summary, that the Greek doctrine of *peri-choresis* implies Anselm's rule. Or, to sum up the argument a bit more fully: once it is clearly recognized that the *homo-ousios* of Nicea refers to secondary *ousia* or essence, it is necesary to explain in some way why it is that the three primary substances or hypostases do not constitute three Gods (as they would if they behaved like any other primary substances). The explanation depends on the uniquely divine *perichoresis,* i.e., on the notion that the three subsistences have their existence " in " one another. This notion in turn implies Anselm's rule, which in fact John states on several occasions. And from Anselm's rule, Augustine's rule follows immediately, for if the three subsistences, distinguished only by their different modes of coming into existence, have only one working *simpliciter,* then it obviously follows that they have only one working *ad extra.*

III. *The Point of the Economic/Immanent   Distinction.*

If John of Damascus is right, then Anselm's rule and its logical consequence, Augustine's rule, are inevitable and necessary conceptual elements in any fully worked-out post-Nicene doctrine of the Trinity, whether it be Greek or Latin. But we did not spy the doctrine of appropriations in our examination of John's discussion of the Trinity, and, in fact, it is not to be found anywhere in the *De Fide Orthodo:ra.* How, then, is it related to the other two doctrines? Very closely and necessarily, I think. Let the church father who originated the doctrine show us why.

Here is Augustine, offering his initial formulation of the problem in his treatise *On the Trinity:*

Some persons, however, find a difficulty in this faith; when they hear that the Father is God, and the Son God, and the Holy Spirit God, and yet that this Trinity is *not thre·e Gods,* but one God; and they ask how they are to understand this, especially when it is said that the Trinity *works indivisibly* in everything that God works, and yet that a certain voice of the Father spoke, which is *not* the voice of

the Son; and that *nonei e:rcept the Son* was born in the flesh, and suffered, and rose again, and ascended into heaven; and that *none except the Spirit* came in the form of a dove.[34]

The problem Augustine is addressing is how we are to understand the relation between the immanent Trinity (as described in the affirmations, which he shares with the orthodox Greek fathers, that it is "not three Gods" and that it "works indivisibly") and the distinctive roles which the Scriptures assign to the Three in the economy of salvation ("none except the Son" and "none except the Spirit" etc.). The orthodox doctrine of the Trinity-and as a matter of historical fact this means specifically the Cappadocian doctrine-insists so strongly on the immanent oneness of God that it generates a hermeneutical problem concerning how we are to read the distinction of roles which the Scriptural narratives assign to the Three in the economy of salvation. For example, how can it be proper to speak of only one subsistence of the Trinity descending in the form of a dove, *rather than* the others, if all the works of the Trinity are one and indivisible?

The Cappadocian doctrine, in other words, places a gap between the way we talk about the work of the Three in the economy of salvation and the way we talk about the Three in and of themselves. The task which Augustine sets himself is to bridge that gap, at least in understanding. The bridge must consist in an understanding of why it is not wrong to assign certain actions and works in the economy of salvation to one member of the Trinity rather than the others, even though all three are at work in every action and work which any one of them performs. Augustine's solution is to say "that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit . . . work indivisibly, but that this cannot be indivisibly manifested by the creature ... " Hence "the Trinity, which is inseparable in itself, is manifested separably by the appearance of the visible creature." [35] These separate manifestations of the

[34] Augustine *On the Trinity* I, 5, 8, translated in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* first series, vol. 3 (my emphasis).
[35] Ibid., IV, 21, 30.

inseparable Trinity are the reason for our appropriating the vari-
ous works of God to one person rather than another.

This is the doctrine of appropriations. Precisely because it
serves to bridge the gap between the immanent Trinity and the
economic Trinity, it comes in for fierce attack from those who
wish to deny that there is any gap to bridge. What its critics
have failed to see, however, is that the gap they object to was not
generated by the doctrine of appropriations, but by the Greek
teaching on the immanent oneness of the Trinity, which the doc-
trine of appropriations presupposes. Anselm's Rule, as form-
ulated by the Greek theologians, upholds the oneness of God by
asserting that the only thing that distinguishes the three sub-
sistences from one another is their diverse modes of coming into
existence. Hence, the *working* of the Three is always one, not
three.[36] That means, as Augustine's rule asserts, that the work-
ing of the Three *ad extra* in the economy of salvation is always
one. The distinct roles by which the Three are manifested in
the economy are a *result* of this one working rather than its
source, and thus cannot be identified with the immanent rela-
tions which are the only real source of the distinctions between
them, because *these* relations are intrinsic to the very being of
God and thus logically prior to God's working *ad extra.* Hence
what is manifest in the economy is always the one working of the
one God and not the distinctive divine relations of begetting and
proceeding. The relations between the Three in the economy are
something different from the immanent or inner-trinitarian re-
lations.

It is this sharp distinction between the economic Trinity and
the immanent Trinity that makes the doctrine of appropriations
necessary, and which ought to be recognized as the real target of
critics of the doctrine of appropriations. In classical Trinitarian ...
ism this distinction serves the ontological purpose of upholding
the oneness of God. It has come under fire in recent times, I
think, because in achieving its ontological purpose it has gen-

ae I use the term " working " as an equivalent to both the Greek *energeia*
and the Latin *operatio.*

erated epistemological consequences which are unpalatable to many modern theologians. It upholds the oneness of God by distinguishing between the manifestations of God in the economy of salvation and the attributes of God *in se,* thus blocking any hermeneutical move to " read off " the inner-trinitarian relations directly from their counterparts in salvation-history. I think it is the desire to justify this sort of hermeneutical move which motivates the attack on classical Trinitarianism. Both the Greek and Latin fathers uphold the ontological oneness of God by establishing an epistemic gap between the diverse roles by which the triune God is manifested in the economy of salvation and the inseparable, simple, and incomprehensible attributes of the triune God *in se.* It is this gap which Rahner tries to eliminate with his axiom identifying the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity.

Now Rahner's axiom does not, in fact, serve his purpose adequately, for identity statements do not necessarily close epistemic gaps. The fact that the economic Trinity *is* the immanent Trinity does not by itself justify the hermeneutical move of inferring basic truths about the immanent Trinity from basic truths about the economic Trinity. To see why it does not, consider a few features of the logic of identity statements. An example that is an old standard among logicians will serve to illustrate. It is possible to know a great deal about the morning star, including the fact that it is identical with the evening star (since both terms, "morning star" and "evening star," refer to the same planet, Venus) without knowing all that you might like to know about the characteristic features associated with the term " evening star". The fact that there is a second term, "evening star," which refers to the very same object, is an indication that there might be a whole set of truths about this object which you can get to know only by becoming familiar with a second and relatively independent source of information about it (namely, by looking at it in the evening instead of in the morning). There may, in sum, be an epistemic gap between the *terms* " morning star" and "evening star," even though there is no ontological

difference whatsoever between the morning star and the evening
star. I have argued that according to the Greek teaching there
must be just such a gap between the terms " Father," " Son," and
" Holy Spirit " as used in the doctrine of the immanent Trinity
and the corresponding terms as used in connection with events
in the economy of salvation.

Trying to eliminate an epistemic gap of this sort amounts to
the attempt to be sure beforehand that there is a source of in-
formation associated with one of the two terms that tells us every-
thing there is to know of substance about both terms. A state-
ment identifying A and B does not rule out the possibility that
there is an epistemic gap between the two terms " A " and " B,"
but neither does it imply that there must be one. If there is a
necessary connection between the terms "A" and "B" that can
be known *a priori,* then it may be possible in principle to remove
any epistemic gap between them-that is, knowledge about A may
suffice to tell us everything worth knowing about B. So, for ex-
ample, the arithmetical characteristics of the number 9 can be
" read off " from the arithmetical characteristics of the term
"8 + l," so that there is no epistemic gap betwen the   "9"
and the term " 8 + 1."

If, therefore, the aim of Rahner's axiom is to close the gap be-
tween the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity, it must
amount to more than a simple identity statement. It must be
taken to imply that there is a necessary connection between what
is to be known of the economic Three and what is to be known of
the immanent Three, such that the hermeneutical move of " read-
ing off " the immanent Trinity from the economic Trinity is justi-
fied. The point of this hermeneutical move in Rahner is to secure
the further claim that the revelation of God in salvation-history is
a real self-communication, in which God gives his very own self,
his immanent and *in se* self, as it were, to be known by his crea-
tures. Rahner believes that there could not be such a self-com-
munication if God's threefold relation to us in the economy were
"merely a copy or an analogy of the inner Trinity." [37] It cannot
be, for example, that " the fact of the incarnation of the Logos

[37] Rahner, *The Trinity,* p. *35.*

reveals properly nothing about the Logos *himself,* that is, about his own relative specific features within the divinity." [38] There must rather be a necessary connection between the Three and their manifestations in the economy-a connection so strongly necessary that it allows us to say, "the persons do not differ from their own way of communicating themselves." [39]

Rahner's repeated attacks on the notion that the persons of the Trinity *could have* exchanged roles in the economy gets us very near the heart of his view of the Trinity. For in denying that such a thing is *possible,* he is affirming the *necessity* of its opposite. His basic axiom, therefore, must be taken to claim that the economic roles of the Three are what they are by the necessity of God's own being, since they are identical with the immanent characteristics which distinguish the Three *in se.* The relations between the Three manifested in the events of the economy of salvation are not something different from the inner-trinifarian relations which establish their distinct identities in the first place. Thus the axiom identifies, not just the economic Three with the immanent Three, but the economic relations with the immanent relations. Its central claim is that the relations which allow us to distinguish the Three at the economic level are identical with the relations which are the real immanent source of the distinctions between the Three. This claim can then be used to justify the hermeneutical move of "reading off" the doctrine of the immanent Trinity from the Scriptural narratives of the economy of salvation.

If this claim of Rahner's is accepted, it does not so much refute the doctrine of appropriations as render it otiose, because there is no longer any gap for the appropriations to bridge. But I have been arguing that this gap is an essential consequence of the Greek doctrine of the Trinity. Hence if the gap disappears then Greek Trinitarianism disappears with it. The Greek endeavor to secure the unity of God by talking of the mutual indwelling of the three divine subsistences requires such a gap, which guarantees a sort of separate space internal to the deity

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[38] Ibid., p. 28. [39] Ibid., p. 36.

in which the utterly unique goings-on of the *perichoresis* may take place. Less pictorially (and less misleadingly), my claim is that Greek Trinitarianism cannot succeed without deploying a sharp distinction betwen the immanent properties of the divine subsistences, which are utterly unlike the properties of any created subsistence, and the characteristics which the Three display in the economy of salvation, in which the immanent properties cannot be made manifest, because the economy is a work of God in the created order.

I am not claiming that Rahner has no way at all of securing the unity of the divine subsistences. My claim is that his way of doing so cannot be conceptually equivalent to the Greeks'- whereas Augustine's is. Rahner is departing from classical Trinitarian theology as a whole, both Greek and Latin, in order to conceive of the Trinity in a way that surely has more affinities with Hegel than with Augustine or Gregory of Nyssa. This does not necessarily mean that Rahner is wrong. But it does suggest that he is asking new questions-that in his conversation with Augustine and the Greeks he has, so to speak, changed the subject. He is not so much concerned with how God can be both one and three in the way that Nicea commits us to believe; his question is rather how the doctrine of the Trinity is to illuminate the self-communication of God. (His answer is that it is precisely a self-communication.) [40] Unless the doctrine answers this second question, Rahner is convinced, it is doomed to the kind of neglect and irrelevance to which it had been consigned in the popular piety and textbook theology that he criticizes in the opening of his treatise. **If** this doctrine is to be more than a mystery affirmed piously but blindly and uncomprehendingly, it must show how the very Triune self of God is intelligibly related to our experience of salvation. [41] Rahner, in short, is asking not ontological questions about the Three and the One in God but epistemological questions about how we are to have personal knowledge of God rather than simply doctrinal knowledge about God.

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[40] Ibid., p. *27.*   [41] Ibid., p. 39.

Let us see if we can get a closer view of the nature of these questions. This should help us see why the epistemic gap which classical Trinitarianism places between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity is so offensive to many 20th-century theologians, including theologians as different from Rahner as Eberhard Jiingel and Robert Jenson. The problem seems to be that if there is such a gap, then knowing God in the economy of salvation is not the sam' as knowing God as God really is in God's own inner self. And that is what we want-isn't it ?-to know God's inner self.

Hence in order to see Rahner's basic axiom as well-motivated, we must be able to make sense of a particular kind of epistemological want-the desire to know someone's inner self, the self behind the visible expressions, the appearances and utterances, conduct and activity, in which the self is available to ordinary perception. Thus the motives of Rahner's departure from classical Trinitarianism are closely tied to a set of epistemological assumptions about what true knowledge of another person consists in. According to these assumptions, to know another person is essentially to have epistemic access to their inner self. In light of these assumptions, the epistemic gap between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity seems precisely to obstruct true personal knowledge of God. But, if these assumptions are false, then Rahner's basic axiom is not well motivated and we do not have a good reason for abandoning classical Trinitarianism.

I believe that these epistemological assumptions are false. For philosophical reasons, I think the desire to have epistemic access to a person's inner self is based on a misconstrual of what it is to know another person. Indeed it is based on a misunderstanding of what persons are. I shall call this misunderstanding the expressivist anthropology, but it might also be called the " romantic view of the self." Its first great advocate was Hegel. [42] This view understands persons to be composed of an inner element and an outer element which expresses, represents, or symbolizes the

[42] Cf. Hegel, *Phiinomenologie des Geistes,* paragraph 310, translated in *Phenomenology of Spirit* by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 185f.

inner element. Knowing a person consequently becomes a hermeneutical operation of " reading off " the inner constitution of the person from the person's external expressions, particularly their words and deeds. (The insight that this is a specifically hermeneutical operation becomes explicit in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics).

Rahner spells out his commitment to expressivist anthropology in his essay " The Theology of the Symbol," where he claims that not just persons, but all beings are symbols of themselves in that they express themselves in an outer form and thereby "possess themselves in the other." [43] Thus Rahner grounds his expressivist anthropology in an expressivist ontology whose basic principle is, " all beings are by their nature symbolic, because they necessarily 'express' themselves in order to attain their own nature." [44] From the Hegelian language about "possessing oneself in the other" it is already clear what Rahner's basic strategy for upholding the unity of the Three will be.[45]

[43] Rahner, *Theological Investigations* (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961-   ) vol. 4, p. 231.

[44] Ibid., p. 224. James J. Buckley offers a useful discussion of Rahner's ontology of the symbol in " On Being a Symbol: an Appraisal of Karl Rahner " in *Theological Studies* 40 :453-473. Buckley demonstrates the breadth of topics to which Rahner applies his ontology of the symbol and traces it back to Rahner's unpublished theological dissertation of 1936.

However, I cannot follow Buckley in his attempt to assimilate Rahner's view of the self, which is heavily laden with expressivist language and conceptuality, to a "performative anthropology". J. L. Austin's notion of "performative utterances" was in part an effort to get around the impasses of expressivist anthropologies, and it construes the relation of persons to their words in quite a different way than Rabner. As I hope my further discussion will show, if Rahner had in fact had something like a performative anthropology in mind, he would have had no motive for adopting his basic trinitarian axiom.

[45] The Hegelian move of unifying the Three by talking of One finding itself in its Other, the very finding of which is a Third, is logically equivalent to neither branch of classical Trinitarianism. However, its closest affinities are ironically with the Latin branch, because the Hegelian notion of a finding which is itself a Third is a distant descendent of the Augustinian notion of the Spirit as the bond of unity between the Father and the Son. In general, expressivist ontologies and anthropologies-a *Western* phenomenon if there ever was one-owe a great deal to Augustine, though the debt is often indirect and unrecognized.

From Gilbert Ryle on, the criticisms of expressivist anthropology are well known at least in Anglo-American circles. We need not rehearse them now, however, because I think what is wrong in particular about Rahner's trinitarianism shows itself pretty clearly on its own terms, and what is wrong in general about expressivist anthropologies becomes fairly clear from that point. What is wrong is the claim that the relations between the Three manifested in the economy of salvation are identical to the inner-trinitarian relations which establish their distinctive identities. This claim implies that the relations of the Three manifested in salvation-history are necessary constituents of their "innermost" identities. If this is to be the centerpiece of our account of what it is for God to communicate God's own self, then to know God's own self must mean to have an epistemic grasp of the structures or relations which are the necessary constituents of God's being. And this I think is a patently false view of what it is to know the self of any person, much less a gracious God who *freely* gives himself to be known.

The point is that God's act of self-communication and its structure are not necessary constituents of God's being, but a free act that need not have been; the form or structure of this act (characterized by the relations between the roles played by the Three in salvation-history) is a matter not of necessity but of God's gracious choice. Indeed, what I find perverse about Rahner's account is precisely that it *blocks* a self-communication of God by making the object of our knowledge into an internal necessity of God's being rather than a free act in which God chooses to give God's self to us to be known. Selves communicate themselves in freedom and not of necessity. Thus my criticism of Rahner on this point is not just a matter of defending the freedom of God's grace (though it is that, too). The point is a general one about the nature of knowledge of other persons. To know *any* person is (at least in part) to know them in the way that they freely choose to give themselves to be known. That is to say (and this is *my* philosophical claim) that we misunderstand what knowledge of another person is if we think that it can take place without the say-so of the known.

Let me support my claim with an example. One way of giving oneself to be known is by making a wedding vow. Now what does a wedding vow tell us about the one who makes it? It does not give us a view of their inmost self, whatever that would be. (What a mistake it would have been to think that my spouse's wedding vow was a report or expression of her " inmost feelings"! For I have it on good authority that her feelings on that day were as ambivalent, turbulent and overall terrified as mine.) The promise made on that day has its truth not in its correspondence to an inner self but in the subsequent life of the one who makes it–in a life of loving, honoring, cherishing, and so forth. There is thus no necessity which makes this word a true expression of the one who utters it; it is up to the promiser to make the word true by the way she lives. Nor is this word a necessary constituent of the one who utters it: the promiser existed before uttering this word and could have continued to exist without ever having uttered it. This is not to say, however, that the promiser's identity is in no way bound up with the promise; on the contrary, to make a wedding vow sincerely is precisely to choose what one's identity shall be. Such is the wedding vow which founds the economy of salvation : " You will be my people and I will be your God."

Any reader of Barth will find this point familiar. One of the most characteristic features of Barth's talk about God is his use of a rhetoric of possibility to describe the freedom of God's choice to be our God. Again, and again, at key junctures in his discussions of the economy of salvation, Barth will speak like this : " There is no necessity of this event taking place. But it does in fact take place–by a free and gracious decision of God. We cannot arrive at this decision ourselves, nor can we say how it is possible. We must reckon with the actuality of this event, and we cannot inquire into its possibility prior to or apart from its actuality. But by the same token we must know that it was possible for God to do otherwise. He was not compelled to be gracious, nor to be gracious in just the way that he actually is gracious." This is not a quotation, but it could have been, for

passages like it can be found in any volume of the *Church Dogmatics.*

Perhaps the central locus for this rhetoric of possibility, however, is the doctrine of Election. The Election, according to Barth, is God's decision to be God for us in Jesus Christ. This free and gracious decision is " the eternal beginning of all the works and ways of God in Jesus Christ" [46] and hence the foundation both of the creation and of the economy of salvation. What the Trinity is and is known to be in the economy of salvation results from this choice. The relations between the Three in the economy, therefore, are not necessary constituents of God's being *in se* but rather the identities which the Triune God freely chooses to adopt for our sake, the way a bridegroom chooses to be husband of his bride. What marks the place of this decision in Barth's doctrine of the Trinity is, naturally enough, the doctrine of appropriations. With Barth, as with the whole Latin tradition, the doctrine of appropriations is a bridge between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity, and precisely in its character as a bridge it makes manifest the gap which it spans.

Here, then, we may round off our discussion of the doctrine of appropriations by proposing an answer to the question, " What is the point of the gap between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity? " Barth gives both an ontological and an epistemological reason for this doctrine. The ontological reason is straightforwardly Cappadocian: " The limit of our comprehension lies in the fact that even as we comprehend these distinctions [i.e., in the economy] we do not comprehend the distinctions in the divine modes of being as such. These do not consist in distinctions in God's acts and attributes. If we were to assume this we should be assuming three gods. . .. " [47] For Barth, as for Augustine, the doctrine of appropriations is derived from Anselm's rule. If we identify the distinctions in the economy with the distinctions in the Three as they are *in se,* we divide up God

[46] Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956-   ) vol. II/ii, p. 94.

[47] Ibid., vol. 1/1, p. 372.

by dividing up God's acts. This is the road to Tritheism, and it is precisely what Anselm's rule blocks; in blocking it Anselm's rule generates the epistemic gap between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity. For Barth this epistemic gap is moreover a virtue in and of itself, as it secures the incomprehensibility of God, which in turn stems from the gracious freedom of God. This is in fact the epistemological reason for adopting the doctrine of appropriations: it secures the freedom of God in his revelation.[48]

   In sum, the point of the gap between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity (which is marked by the doctrine of appropriations) is to uphold the oneness and the freedom of God. How deeply these two points are connected is worth long thought –but that will have to wait for another day.

IV. *On Being Drawn into the Trinitarian Life*

   To criticize Rahner's epistemological assumption does not mean to denigrate all his motives. On the contrary, I am persuaded that the basic impetus of Rahner's theological work and the source of his greatness as a thinker is the profoundly pastoral nature of his concern, and especially his earnest desire that theology and Christian life be interwoven in mutually illuminating ways.[49] Clearly he is right that we should not be content to allow the doctrine of the Trinity to sink to the status of a truth of the faith that is piously acknowledged but plays no active role in guiding and shaping Christian life. Let me suggest that Rahner's over-riding pastoral concern with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity can be stated thus : that we should come to understand the life of grace as one in which we are drawn into the Trinitarian life itself. Indeed this phrase-" being drawn into the Trinitarian life "-epitomizes the pastoral aims of many theologians today, and it is of utmost importance to understand what meaning it

   [48] Ibid., vol. Ill, p. 371.

   [49] For a lively and moving expression of this concern, see the programmatic essay that opens the *Theological Investigations,* vol. I: "The Prospects for Dogmatic Theology."

can have in the context of the non-expressivist conceptuality of clasical Trinitarianism. What does it mean to be " drawn into the Trinitarian life " if it does not means penetrating through the economic Trinity to the immanent Trinity?

The foregoing discussion of knowledge of other persons does indeed suggest that, in its expressivist form, the desire to be drawn into the Trinitarian   life is incoherent. It would be like trying to penetrate to the inner self of my spouse rather than letting myself be the object of a lifetime of loving, honoring, and cherishing. (This does not mean we cannot have such incoherent desires; it may well be that we do, and that may have something to do with the size of our divorce rate.)

However, I do wish to propose a sense in which we are in fact drawn into the Trinitarian   life by participating in the economy of salvation.   In the sense I shall propose, being drawn into the Trinitarian   life does not imply the epistemic accessibilty of the immanent Trinity.   This is not because God's "inner self" is withheld from us, but because there is no such inner self to know. I have already given some reasons why selves in general are not like this ; but let me proceed to some theological reasons why the notion of God's "inner self" should be dropped and, in partic- ular, why we should not conceive of the immanent being of God *in se* in a way modeled on the " inner self " of expressionist anthropologies.

First of all let me take it for granted that the " immanent Trinity " or " God *in se"* are phrases designating that about God which is necessary to God's very nature or being (to God's *ousia,* in the Nicene sense).   The inner-trinitarian   modes of coming into existence are one example; the eternity of God is another. Now my claim is that this immanent being is not an expression- ist "inner self." It is no more an "inner self" than my body is (and my body surely is necesary to my very being).   Detailed medical knowledge of the bodily processes without which I could not live or be does not quite constitute knowledge of *me*. Of course, in contrast to my bodily processes, the attributes which are neces- sary or essential to God's very being remain forever incompre-

hensible (in the strict theological sense of " beyond our full cogni-
tive grasp") even in the beatific vision. But to know God's own
self does not consist in knowing the why and wherefore of these
attributes, which would be a highly abstract form of philosophi-
cal knowledge, rather than a way of knowing a person. Similarly,
it would be a Platonistic misconstrual of the beatific vision to
think that its object is the divine essence *per se,* for, as we have
seen, in classical Trinitarianism the divine essense or *ousia* is not
a fourth thing distinct from or residing in the Three. The New
Testament instead connects our glorification with our beholding
the fact of the glorified Christ-that is, with a knowledge of God
as manifested in the consummation of the economy of salvation. [50]

The notion that God has an inner self to which we must pene-
trate is the most recent version of the very old bad habit of con-
ceiving the relation between us and God as a kind of ontological
distance which needs to be crossed in one way or another in order
for God to become accessible to us. It is very natural for us
moderns to think that the epistemic gap which the founders of
classical Trinitarianism observed between the economic Trinity
and the immanent Trinity is derived from a conception of some
such ontological distance. But to conceive of such a distance is
our mistake rather than theirs. It would mean picturing the
transcendence of the Creator as something in contrast to or even
in contradiction with his immanence in the creation-and that
would make nonsense of the very doctrine of creation. For we
creatures could not possibly *be* if we were ontologically distant
from God, whose right hand holds us in being each moment. [51]
The notion of an ontological distance between us and God *in se,*
therefore, runs counter not just to the doctrine of God's omni-

[50] " We know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see
him as he is " (I John 3 :2). And who is this " he " ? Let Paul answer :
" When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in
glory" (Col. 3 :4).

[51] The importance of a "non-contrastive "-and thus non-platonistic-view
of the transcendence of God is the main burden of Tanner's book, mentioned
in note 24. The thesis I am urging here is compatible with Tanner's but
stronger: it is that God's transcendence positively implies God's immanence.

presence but to the very logic of the doctrine of creation. It stems ultimately from a Platonistic misconstrual of God's transcendence, which pictures the basic stuff of the material world as inherently low and infinitely distant from the source of all value and meaning. But the Christian doctrine of creation *ex nihilo,* with its claim that even matter is held in being by God's hand, makes such a distance literally inconceivable.

Hence a proper theological understanding of God's transcendence needs to follow the lead of Paul's speech at the Aeropagus. If we were to impose a distinction between divine transcendence and divine immanence upon this speech, we would have to conclude that for Paul the transcendence of God does not contrast with the immanence of God but rather implies it. For example, the claim that " in Him we live and move and have our being " (Acts 17:28) follows from the claim that God " made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth " (Acts *17*:24). Indeed, the distinction between transcendence and immanence looks artificial here, as it does in most of the Church fathers. For example, how exactly would one sort out the attributes of immanence from those of transcendence in a list like the following, taken from the confession of the nature of the one God at the beginning of John of Damascus's chapter on the Trinity: " having no contrary, filling all, by nothing encompassed, but rather Himself the encompasser and maintainer and original possessor of the universe, occupying all essences intact and extending beyond all things, and being separate from all things, and being separate from all essence [*ousias]* as being superessential [*huperousion]* and above all things and absolute God, absolute goodness, and absolute fullness. . . ." [52] That Augustine too had learned this lesson can be seen from the opening meditation of the *Confessions,* where he asks " Why, then, do I ask Thee to come into me, since I indeed exist, and could not exist if Thou wert not in me? " [58]

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[52] Jobn of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa,* p. 6.

[53] Augustine, *Confessions,* I, 2; in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 1st series, vol. 1, p. 46.

Under the heavy influence of Platonism, however, theologians
came to speak very differently. In middle Platonism, for in-
stance, the transcendent One was conceived to be at such a dis-
stance from the material world-a distance pictured in terms of
celestial height-that a long series of emanations and demigods
is considered necessary to bridge the ontological distance between
us and God, in order to make God knowable to us temporal be-
ings. This Platonistic style of thinking, if found persuasive by
Christians, obviously puts a severe pressure on Christology,
which is apt to be dragooned into providing the first and greatest
of these emanating demigods. More than one scholar sees this
Platonistic conceptual pressure as the main source of Arianism. [54]

Thus the reasons for avoiding this bad old habit show some-
thing about the presuppositions of Trinitarian theology. Any
theology which supposes that there is an ontological distance be-
tween us and God is going to be asking the kind of question
which the doctrine of the Trinity had to overcome rather than
answer. It is an essential precondition for sound Trinitarian
theology to dismiss such questions as " How can the ontological
gap between us and God be bridged? " as poorly posed. The
transcendence of God imposes no sort of distance between God
and us but rather implies that in him all creatures live and move
and have their being. If God is closer to us than we are to our-
selves, and equally and entirely close to every kind of creature
from the highest angel to the lowest mud puddle, then it can no
longer make sense to look for a mediator to meet us partway
along the distance between God and us. There is, in other words,
no point to the Arian Christ. But by the same token there is no
point to a Christ who expresses or represents the inner being of
God. There is no distance to cross between us and God, neither
of celestial height nor of inner depth-hence no intermediary

[54] See, for example, Robert Jenson's tracing of the origin of the Arian heresy
to the breakdown of the Origenist settlement, in *The Triune Identity* (Phila-
delphia: Fortress Press, 1982), pp. 78-84; or see Frances Young's account of
the place of the Logos in the Origenist theology of Eusebius of Caesarea, in
From Nicaea to Chalcedon (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 17£.

being, no mediation of the immediate, no expression of the inexpressible or representation of the ultimate Mystery is called for.

The epistemic gap between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity is not an ontological distance. It is not a gap which we cross at all, for the nature of God *in se* remains to us incomprehensible. The knowledge of God is simply not a knowledge of God *in se,* and it never had to be. Above all, the knowledge of God is not the closing of any gap but precisely the reverse –it requires the establishing of a distance. The infinite ontological closeness of God to us is but one of many attributes of the divine nature which we cannot comprehend. In order for God to be knowable to us, God must become something other than merely God *in se,* something other than infinitely close to us (in addition of course, to remaining infinitely close to us). Hence the decisive feature of the economy of salvation is precisely that God becomes *distant* from us, the way that flesh and blood, bread and wine, word and sacrament are at a created distance from us.[55] The identity of the Three in the economy of salvation is God's way of meeting us in creatures, and this is precisely not God crossing a distance to meet us, but God's choosing to take up a distance from us so that we might meet him.

On this view, being drawn into the trinitarian life means, first of all, to exist (i.e., to live and move and have our being in the triune God). But secondly, and epistemically, it means to be drawn into the life of God with God's people-to sigh "Abba," to obey the sacramental command to take and eat, to learn from the Holy Spirit how to love one another as God has loved us. To want something other than this-something higher (as a Platonist) or deeper and more inner (as an expressionist)-is to look away from the place where God has given God's own self to be known. It is to seek something that has already been given, in the mistaken notion that what we seek is necessarily hidden some place far away.

[55] See John of Damascus's explanation of the term "the place of God" as meaning wherever in creation God's working is manifest: "by the place of God is meant that which has a greater share in His energeia and grace," as for example, the flesh of Christ, the Church, etc. *(De fide orthodoxa* I, 13, p. 15).

What, then, are we to make of the popularity of the notion
that being drawn into the trinitarian life means finding a way
to penetrate into the inner self of God? Does it result merely
from the desire to seek God rather than be found by him-that
old, old desire to get a jump, as it were, on prevenient grace?
Who could ever entirely rule out *that* motive? But there are also
specific features of modern thought which make the notion of an
ontological distance between us and God almost as compelling a
notion for us as it was for the Alexandrian community which pro-
duced Arianism. These features evoke a longing to draw near to
something invisible and impossibly distant. By all means let this
longing be treated with pastoral respect, but let not a theologian
indulge in it without a healthy dose of critical inquiry into its
nature and historical origin.

I have already made one suggestion about the sources of this
poignant sense of ontological distance by pointing to the per-
vasiveness in the modern era of expressivist anthropologies,
which put an ontological distance between inner and outer. This
distance is pictured as depth rather than height, but it too prob-
ably has its ultimate origins in Platonism, mediated through the
Augustinian notion of finding God in the inner depths of the
soul, which seems to be a translation of Platonic dimensions of
height into an inner dimension of depth. Surely another source
is the Newtonian revolution in physics and indeed every other
scientific development that contributed to what Max Weber called
the *Entzauberung,* the disenchantment or de-animation of the
world. Christian theology has not yet fully assimilated the fact
that the created order can legitimately be treated in a wholly
naturalistic fashion. I think this assimilation needs *to* be a major
item on the theological agenda. (May I venture the opinion
that " transcendental " and " existentialist " theologies often rep-
resent efforts to postpone this item of the agenda?) And yet an-
other source of this sense of distance-allow me to grind quite a
different theological axe-may be the Calvinist penchant for a
rhetoric of distance between us and God. **If** Max Weber is at all

correct, this penchant itself had no small influence on the *Entzau berung* of the world. [56]

All these historical forces and more have led us moderns to think of God as ontologically distant and hence to think of God in a less than trinitarian fashion. The weaknesses that Rahnet finds in much Roman Catholic trinitarian teaching indicate not a fundamental problem in the tradition of Latin Trinitarianism but a more recent failure of modern Western theology to be fully trinitarian. Hence I suspect that the desire to be drawn into the trinitarian life is at root simply the desire to know the trinitarian God, instead of being stuck with the dominant modern concept of a God whose home is always far away. If this is the great theological need of our time, it is a need which cannot be met by giving recipes for crossing the distance between God and us, for such recipes begin with premises which already defeat the purpose. The task ahead of us is rather one of recovering and re-learning what it is to think as Christians-in this case, specifically to re-learn the point of the doctrine of the Trinity from the Church fathers. This need for recovery has perhaps a particular urgency in our time, as we often seem to be in danger of losing our grip altogether on what it is to be Christian. Yet it is not of itself a specifically modern need, but rather is part of the on-going project of recovering the heritage of Christian thought which began the first time Jesus Christ opened up the Scriptures to his disciples that they might understand what was written there concerning him.

[56] On the connection between Calvinism and the origin of modernity, and especially the connection between Calvinism's one-sided emphasis on the absolute transcendence of God and the *Entziiitberung* of the world, see Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribners's Sons, 1958), chapter 4, and especially p. 105.

DISTINGUISHING CHARITY AS GOODNESS AND PRUDENCE AS RIGHTNESS: A KEY TO THOMAS'S *SECUNDA PARS*

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HE RESPECTIVE functions of charity and prudence Thomas Aquinas's moral theology provide a key to his nderstanding of the virtues. Charity and prudence serve distinct functions. In Thomas's position, a person can have the acquired virtues without having charity; such a person has a virtuous life, but it is unified by prudence, not by charity. But why is such a person without charity? Is this absence of charity due simply to the absence of faith? Is this person with the four acquired virtues but without charity simply an unbeliever? Or is this person simply a *rightly-ordered* person whose lack of charity is due to the absence of personal *moral goodness?* Is such a person simply one who, in common parlance, is a well-integrated person but not necessarily a morally good one? In a word, is moral goodness a necessary condition for the acquired moral virtues?

To answer this question we will begin with the contemporary distinction between goodness and rightness and then discuss the two virtues and their functions. In the final section we will relate our findings to present-day problems in the ethics of virtue.

I. *Goodness an_d Rightness*

Since Democritus we have realized that living rightly is not necessarily an indication of *being* good. Democritus noted that being good required not only that we act rightly but that we want

to act rightly. [1] Over the centuries philosophers and theologians
have consistently made reference to the fact that living rightly,
or as they called it " doing the good," was not a sufficient condi-
tion for describing a person as good. From Ambrose and Augus-
tine to the present, authors have insisted that a moral description
of persons is more than a mere deduction from external activity. [2]

Some writers, however, did not simply make reference to this
distinction, but rather spent considerable time in commenting on
the insight involved. Kant, for instance, in his *Foundations   of
the Metaphysics of Morals* distinguished   from the beginning be-
tween action!> done out of duty *(Handeln   aus Pfiicht)*   and duti-
ful actions *(pfiichtmiissiges   H andeln).*   In attempting   to describe
the only thing which we can call " good," that is, the will, Kant
argued that a dutiful act was only good if the act was done out
of duty. For example, a state executioner who executes on ac-
count of his duty to execute is good and the action is good. But
if the executioner performs the dutiful act on some other account,
then the action is not good, though it is dutiful. Interestingly
Kant did not consider whether an act not dutiful could be called
good: Is an executioner who acts out of duty but botches the job
still to be called good?

George Moore in his *Ethics* made a similar point but for dif-
ferent reasons. Unlike Kant's interest in goodness, Moore wanted
to describe a right action free of any consideration of an agent's
motives and his solution was utilitarianism.   In the process of
separating the agent's action, Moore realized that the right act
of a person with bad motivations involves a paradox: " A man
may actually deserve the strongest moral condemnation   for
choosing an action which is morally right." [3] However,   like

[1] See his *Fragmenta M oralia,* no. 109, as cited in Stephen Toulmin, *An Ex-
amination of the Place of Reason in Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univer-
sity Press, 1958), 170.

[2] Bruno Schuller of Miinster provides ample historical evidence in his *Die
Begrundung sittlicher Urteile* (Diisseldorf: Patmos, 1980), 140.

[3] George Moore, *Ethics* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1912), 193-5. Cf.
H. J. Paton, "The Alleged Independence of Goodness," in *The Philosophy
of G. E. Moore,* ed. P. Schilpp (New York: Tudor, 1952), 113-134; Richard
Hare, *The Language of Morals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964).

Kant, Moore did not discuss a person who sought to act rightly but who failed actually to perform a right action.

Contemporary moral theology has carried the distinction further. Moral theologians like Bruno Schiiller,[4] Josef Fuchs,[5] Klaus Demmer,[6] Louis Janssens,[7] and Richard McCormick[8] maintain that if a person *strives* out of love or out of duty to realize right living, then the agent is good, notwithstanding the fact that the actual realization may be right or wrong. Goodness does not require right action; goodness requires that the agent be striving out of love or out of duty to realize right living. Good

[4] Bruno Schuller, " The Debate on the Specific Character of Christian Ethics," in *Readings in Moral Theology No. 2: The Distinctiveness of Christian Ethics,* eds. Charles Curran and R. McCormick (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 207-233; "Direct Killing/Indirect Killing," in *Readings in Moral Theology No. 1: Moral Norms and the Catholic Tradition,* eds. Charles Curran and R. McCormick (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 138-157; "The Double Effect in Catholic Thought: A Reevaluation," in *Doing Evil to Achieve Good,* eds. Richard McCormick and Paul Ramsey (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1978) 165-192; "Gewissen und Schuld," in *Das Gewissen,* ed. Josef Fuchs (Diisseldorf: Patmos, 1979), 34-55; "Neuere Beitrage zum Thema 'Begrundung sittlicher Normen '," in *Theologische Berichte 4,* ed. Franz Furger (Zurich: Benziger Verlag, 1974), 109-181; "Various Types of Grounding for Ethical Norms," in *Readings in Moral Theology No. 2,* 184-198; *Wholly Human* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1985).

[5] Josef Fuchs, *Christian Ethics in a Secular Arena* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1984); *Christian Morality: The Word Becomes Flesh* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1987); *Essere del Signore* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1981); *Personal Responsibility and Christian Morality* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1983).

[6] Klaus Demmer, *Deuten und Handeln* (Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitatsverlag, 1985) ; "La competenza normativa de! magistero ecclesiastico in morale," in *Fede Cristiana e Agire Morale,* eds. K. Demmer and B. Schuller (Assisi: Cittadella Editrice, 1980), 144-169; *Leben in Menschenhand* (Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitatsverlag, 1987) ; "Sittlich handeln als Zeugnis geben" *Gregorianum* 64 (1983) : 453-485; "Sittlich handeln aus Erfahrung" *Gregorianum 59* (1978): 661-690.

[7] Louis Jans sens, " Norms and Priorities in a Love Ethics," *Louvain Studies* 6 (1977) : 207-238; "Ontic Good and Evil," *Louvain Studies* 12 (1987) : 62-82.

[8] Richard McCormick, "Bishops as Teachers and Jesuits as Listeners," in *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits* 18/3 (1986); *Notes on Moral Theology 1981-1984* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1984).

people can act rightly or wrongly. This insight complements the insight of Kant and of Moore that bad people can act rightly or wrongly.

Does Thomas Aquinas present any ideas that might be germane to this discussion in his *Summa theologiae?* Thomas conceived of *right* living and *right* acting in terms of the four virtues. Prudence unifies the acquired virtues and thus enables the virtuous person to *attain* the mean in both acting and living. Prudence perfects both the agent's life and the agent's act. Without prudence, the agent's life will be disordered, and his choices will more than likely be disordered (or wrong) as well. Nonetheless, whether or not a person has charity, he will be able to live an ordered life as long as he has prudence and the other virtues. He will be able to attain at least to this degree of the virtuous state. On the other hand, whether motivations for right living are good or bad does not at all pertain to prudence per se nor to the other acquired virtues.

In none of the questions concerning the acquired virtues does Thomas actually ask why one should seek the virtuous life. Certainly the entire *Secunda pars* begins with his treatise on the last end, and subsequent sections consider " those things by means of which man may advance towards this end" (I-II 1, prologue). In the treatise on the virtues, however, Thomas never makes a direct connection to the last end; he never asks, " why be virtuous?" In themselves the virtues may not necessarily presuppose that a person be united to the good last end. They may serve the purposes of the good person, but they may also serve a bad person's purposes as well. In light of the contemporary distinction, therefore, "why be virtuous" does not ask "why be good" but rather " why live rightly ". The decision to live rightly, like the choice to act rightly, can be made, as Kant and Moore knew, by people with good or bad motivations. Thomas, too, apparently anticipates the distinction, because he clearly considers it possible that a bad person could have the acquired virtues.

On the other hand, according to the *Secunda secundae,* the virtue of charity has two functions. First, it complements prudence. In uniting us to the last end, charity obviously concerns

right living, for with charity we are able to attain the most per-
fect end. [9] George Klubertanz studied how prudence is comple-
mented by charity and called this full complement, the " ultimate
rectitude." [10]

Charity has, however, another function which is not a comple-
ment of prudence. Charity not only attains the supernatural end;
it also occasions merit. The one who acts out of charity is the
only one who merits. Charity alone serves as the moral descrip-
tion for the morally good person. Thus, on the one hand charity
acts as the full complement of prudence directing action to the
last end and attaining the ultimate rectitude or rightness. On the
other hand, as a description of motivation-compare   Kant's per-
son who acts out of duty-only   the person who acts out of char-
ity is good.

The one who has charity will attain by grace the most perfect
end or most perfect *terminus ad quem.* But by charity one will
also have a morally good *terminus a quo:* united to God in charity
one has a morally good motivation for seeking right realization.
One who strives out of love for God to be more united with God
will strive to be more virtuous or rightly-ordered. In the striv-
ing, not the attaining, we find charity as opposed to prudence,
and here we find goodness as opposed to rightness.

My thesis is that through prudence Thomas unifies the virtues
to give direction for a rightly-ordered life, but through charity
Thomas gives a description both of the perfect complement to
prudence and of the morally good person.

II. *Prudence*

In the *Prima secundae* Thomas states that virtue perfects the
person in view of doing good deeds (I-II 58.3; 68.1). But what
does " good " mean? The answer is simple : the good is that

[9] On the importance of attainment in the *Summa theologiae,* see James
Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University
of America Press, 1983), 222, 256ff.

[10] George Klubertanz, "Ethics and Theology ", *The Modern Schoolman* 27
(1949): 38.

which is perfect. The good perfects, but the good perfects be-
cause it is itself perfect.1[1]

   In his *Commentary on the Sentences,* Thomas writes "good-
ness pertains to the communication of perfection"   *(lni IV Sen.*
d. 46, q. 2 a.1, sol. 2). In *De veritate* he tells us that "good is
the status of that which perfects " (*DV* 21.6). The *Compendium
of Theology* states, "The perfection of anything is its goodness"
(CT 103.203).   In *De malo* 1, a work contemporary with *Prima
pars,* Thomas proposes three uses of the word good, and each use
is as a perfection. "The perfection of a thing is called good." [12]

   In the *Summa theologiae,* the definition of the good in terms
of perfection is most clear. The question of God's goodness (I 6)
follows the question of God's perfection (I 4).   In the question
between these two, Thomas states " something is good insofar as
it is perfect" (I 5.5). When he asks whether God is good, he
repeats his earlier remark that " something is good insofar as it
is perfect" and offers three ways in which something is perfect.
He concludes that no created thing but only God fulfills this three-
fold perfection within God's essence (I 6.3).   God is, therefore,
good in that God is at once the perfection or fulfillment of God's
self. God is; nothing about God waits for completion.[13]

   The question of God's goodness does not concern another form
of goodness often found in theological language. When we speak
of God's goodness today, we often mean God's benevolence. The
statement that God is good, therefore, can have two meanings:
either we speak of the God who is the fullness of being, thorough-
ly without need, and fully perfect, or we speak of the God who
loves, who is mercy and benevolence, and who willingly extends
the divine presence to our lives. The first is Thomas's primary
meaning : God is the most perfect being; in God there is nothing
wrong.

11 Cf. Joseph de Finance, *Essai sur l'agir humain* (Rome: Gregorian Uni-
versity Press, 1962), 86.
   12 De malo 1.2: " Perfectio rei bonum dicitur."
   13 Dalmazio Mongillo, "Le componenti della bonta morale," *Studia Moralia*
15 (1977) : 483-502.

Thomas's concept "perfect" is similar to our term "right." The perfect lies not in striving or effort but rather in completion or attainment. In modern English, the attainment of what is due is what we call right, and the lack of what is due is what we call wrong. Thomas calls the attainment " good," but his meaning does not differ from our use of the word " right ". Hence, Thomas's most perfect is our most right.

The virtues are " good" (Thomas's term) or " right " (our term) because they perfect, that is, they help us attain our perfection. As Thomas writes at the end of the *Summa,* nothing is perfect unless it attains its end (III 44.3 ad 3). The theological and acquired virtues are all called virtues because they perfect, but the theological virtues differ from the acquired in terms of what does the perfecting. In the former, the divine law perfects; in the latter, reason perfects. The divine law and reason both make us perfect, complete, or rightly-ordered.

In the human, however, the perfection is two-fold (I 62.1; I-II 3.2 ad 4; 3.6). The first level of perfection is what we can attain with our own natural powers; the second is beyond our powers. The difference in the two levels, therefore, is the difference in the ends attainable: only by grace do we attain the second perfection (I-II 62.1). In either case, the good or the perfect is said to be seen insofar as it *attains* its end (II-II 184.1). Inasmuch as the virtues are about perfection, therefore, the virtues are about making us right or complete. But what makes the acquired moral virtues perfect ?

Prudence, we know, perfects us with regards to things to be done (II-II 47.5). But prudence is not to be confused with art, a point that Thomas appears to enjoy making (I-II 57.4; 58.2 ad 1; 58.3 ad 1; 58.4; 65.1; II-II 47.4 and ad 2). Art concerns transient operations, but prudence concerns immanent operations (I-II 57.5 ad 1; Cf. 68.4 ad 1). Prudence does not simply make our choices right; prudential choices are not simply right choices or acts. Rather, as immanent operations prudential choices make both our action and ourselves right or more perfect.

Thomas underlines the effect prudential choices have on us.

He clearly states that the matter perfected or made right by prudence is reason (I-II 61.2; 66.1; Cf. 61.3; 61.4; 63.2 ad 3). In this regard, prudence is an intellectual virtue, but unlike the other intellectual virtues, prudence engages a different material object (II-II *47.5).* Through external operations, prudence always engages the same objects as the moral virtues. Though the moral virtues perfect the rational, irascible, or concupiscible appetites, they do this inasmuch as they engage objects which will perfect these appetites. The objects which they engage are right if they are prudential ones. If the object of justice, temperance, or fortitude is not prudentially chosen, then the act will not be just, temperate, or fortitudinous, nor will it perfect the agent. By making right choices willingly, the agent is on the way to becoming more rightly-ordered.

Thomas states six times that *among themselves* the four virtues are interconnected (I-II 65.1, ad 1, ad 3, ad 4; 66.1 ; 66.2). (That they are thus interconnected at least suggests the possibility of having the virtues without having charity.) Furthermore, he writes, without prudence the moral virtues are nothing more than inclinations (I-II 58.4 ad 3). They are only inclinations because they cannot perfect; and they cannot perfect because they cannot attain the right act.[14] The constitutive element for the acquired virtues is not that they partake in charity but that they partake in reason or prudence. Because the moral virtues require prudence, it is from that dependency on prudence that the three moral inclinations receive the title " virtue," a point explicitly made by Thomas.[15] Justice, temperance, and fortitude are not virtues without prudence.[16]

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[14] *ST* I-II 65.1 ad 1: "Sicut etiam naturales inclinationes non habent perfectam rationem virtutis, si prudentia desit." Cf. I-II 58.1; 66.2.

[15] *ST* II-II 47.5 ad 1: "In cuius definitione convenienter ponitur virtus intellectualis communicans in materia cum ipsa, scilicet prudentia: quia sicut virtutis moralis subiectum est aliquid participans ratione, ita virtus moralis habet rationem virtutis inquantum participat virtutem intellectualem."

rn That prudence requires the moral virtues (I- II 58.5) may lead one to think that the moral virtues are descriptive of moral goodness. But they are no more than rightly-ordered dispositions. A drunk, cowardly, or unjust person is disordered and incapable of rendering a prudential judgment. Further-

Since prudence shapes natural inclinations into virtues, not surprisingly Thomas argues that the virtues are interconnected through prudence. He illustrates this interconnection by drawing a parallel between prudence and charity. In question 68 he writes that the moral virtues are brought together through prudence, just as the gifts of the Holy Spirit are connected through charity (I-II 68.5). In question 66 he states, " the connection among moral virtues results from prudence, and as to the infused virtues, from charity" (I-II 66.2).

In other places Thomas suggests a form/matter relationship between prudence and the virtues. Thus, " the whole matter of the moral virtues fall under the one rule of prudence " (I-II 65.1 ad 3). According to another passage, in defining the mean prudence stands as that which is formal in all the virtues (I-II 66.2). Though he does not develop this form/matter relationship, it is related to the question concerning the mean and the measure of moral virtue.

In the moral virtues, the mean has the character of rule and measure (I-II 64.3). To attain its proper perfection, a moral virtue must attain the rule of reason (I-II 63.2; 63.4; 71.6; *74.7;* II-II 8.3 ad 3; 17.1; *27.6* ad 3) : the moral virtues are "good" (Thomas's term) to the extent that they attain that rule (I-II 64.1 ad 1). The virtues are measured by this rule of reason, i.e., it judges whether the virtues have attained the mean. But prudence [11] stands as that measure and rule (I-II 64.3). In establishing that rule or mean of reason, prudence makes the virtues " good," because the " good " in the acquired virtues is the good as defined by reason (I-II 62.1; 62.3; 63.2).

more, one may think that what distinguishes the intellectual from the moral virtues is that the latter concern morally good persons. But clearly for Thomas the difference is that the former confer only aptness in use of the virtue, whereas the latter also perfect the appetite to be rightly inclined for the use of the virtue. Thus the intellectual virtues enable us to perform right acts, whereas the moral virtues enable us also to become rightly-ordered (I-II 57.1). On Thomas's frequent descriptions of virtue giving right order to the appetitive faculty, see I-II 55.2 ad 1; 56.3; 57.4; 57.5; 58.5; 63.2 ad 3.

[17] On the importance of prudence as measurement, see Karl Merks, *Theologische Grundlegung der sittlichen Autonomie* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1978), 125ff.

Because prudence directs the moral virtues in the choice of means and, more importantly, because it appoints the mean that all virtues are to attain, prudence is the most excellent of the acquired moral virtues (I-II 66.3 ad 3; cf. modifications in II-II 47.6 and ad 3; 47.7). In a multitude of ways, Thomas demonstrates the superiority of prudence over the acquired moral virtues. In establishing the hierarchy among the virtues, Thomas argues that in terms of principles, prudence is superior because it puts order into acts of reason (I-II 61.2; 61.3; 61.4). Moreover, since the cause of *human* " good " or " perfection " is reason, (I-II 18.5; 61.2; 66.1) the virtue nearest the cause is more excellent (I-II 66.1). Furthermore, in terms of powers which virtues perfect, prudence is more excellent (I-II 61.2; 66.1). Finally, Thomas states that prudence alone is goodness essentially (inasmuch as the " good" is what reason appoints as the mean), whereas the other virtues are good by their participation in prudence (II-II 123.12) . Prudence excels over the other virtues "simply" (I-II 66.3) ; it is the principle of all the human virtues (I-II 61.2 ad 1).

In light of the foregoing, we can conclude (with both Thomas and Aristotle [18]) that a moral virtue is " a habit of choosing the mean appointed by reason as a prudent person would appoint it " (I-II 59.1). The person who has the acquired moral virtues is, simply speaking, a prudential person. The ambit in which the moral virtues function is an ambit defined by prudence. Prudence, engaging the good (Thomas's term) or the right (our term), engages the proper mean or perfection for the virtues. In doing that, it unifies the virtues, serving as form and the interconnecting link, making habits or inclinations genuine virtues. Unlike the other moral virtues, it is good in itself because of its relation to reason, which finds what is "good" (Thomas's term) or what we call the " right " for the person developing in virtue. The prudential decision-what we might call a reasoned decision-is always the right one.

If the virtues require prudence, do they equally require charity?

[18] *NE* II 6. 1106b 36 - 1107a 2.

Thomas defines virtue by prudence and parallels the functions of prudence and charity in uniting the virtues. But what does he say about the person who is without charity but has acquired prudence? Thomas deals with this issue on several occasions. First, in his definition of virtue, Thomas adopts Augustine's definition of virtue but drops the coda, "that God works within us, without us " (I- II 55.4). This makes clear that for Thomas virtue's essence is not necessarily derived from grace. Rather, from the beginning of his treatise on the acquired virtues, Thomas entertains the possibility of virtue in a purely secular ambit, and later on he explicitly considers the acquired moral virtues without charity.

Thomas asks whether the acquired moral virtues are virtues without the person having charity. He responds that even though they are not perfect in attaining the last end, they are still virtues (II-II 23.7, ad 1 and ad 3). Here Thomas considers the simple fact that virtuous acts of themselves do not attain the final perfection yet are nonetheless virtuous. The final perfection is the second happiness which humanity can attain only through charity.19 In an earlier passage he makes a similar observation: the acquired virtues were in the Gentiles and can be considered *per seas* a perfection of the human natural powers (I-II 65.2). Here the absence of charity means not a lack of personal goodness but rather a lack of faith.

On two other occasions, however, Thomas considers the absence of charity in the virtuous person specifically in terms of one's goodness or badness (our terms). First he mentions that a virtuous person without charity can sin (I-II 63.2 ob. 2) and adds that the acquired virtues are compatible with sin, even mortal sin (I-II 63.2 ad 2). Second, he mentions that virtues without charity can be in the good and bad alike (I-II 65.2 ob. 1) but then adds the clarification that he is referring to virtue in the imperfect sense (I-II 65.2 ad 2). That a person be a believer or

19 On charity and the attainment of the last end, see Jean Porter, " Desire for God: Ground of the Moral Life in Aquinas," *Theological Studies* 47 (1986) : 48-68.

unbeliever, be in mortal sin or not, indeed even be good or bad does not determine whether or not that person has the four acquired virtues.

The absence of charity may actually be found not only in the good Gentile but also in the bad Christian who maintains a virtuous life of a sort. This paradox makes sense in a system where the acquired virtues are measured by the attainment of the rule of reason (II-II 17.1). As we shall see later, this measurement is different from the measure of charity.

One looks in vain for some concept of " goodness " akin to that used by Fuchs, Schuller, Kant, or Moore in any section on the acquired moral virtues in general or in the more specific sections of the *Secunda secundae.* Thomas does not consider people who try to be just, wish to be just, or strive to be just on account of benevolence or charity. The just person, like the temperate or the brave person, is the one who actually lives justly, temperately, bravely, regardless of charity. The entire focus of the treatise on justice is on perfection or attainment of humanity's first happiness.

This ought not to be a surprise. If a person with the acquired virtues can be wicked or in mortal sin, then Thomas is certainly not far from the insight of the above-mentioned authors; people can live rightly despite the fact that they are bad, selfish, or egotistical. The function of prudence in unifying the acquired moral virtues is specifically the function of making our lives rightly-ordered. But we must now ask whether the virtue of charity has a different function and whether that function is what makes us good.

III. *Charity*

Like any good scholastic, Thomas likes distinctions. In establishing charity as a theological virtue, Thomas distinguishes the theological from the acquired virtues and does so by reference to the two-fold meaning of happiness (I-II 62.1). Furthermore, inasmuch as the theological virtues refer to the supernatural end, they have God as their object, while the object of the acquired virtues is something comprehensible to reason (I-II 62.2). **The**

object of the theological virtues is the last end (II-II 4.1). What subsequently distinguishes the three theological virtues from one another is their relationship to the last end. It is union with the last end which distinguishes charity from faith and hope.[20]

Thomas specifically distinguishes charity on two counts. First, charity seeks union with God as. its end or *terminus ad quem.* Both faith and hope seek God, but faith seeks God for truth, an? hope seeks God for the sake of help; only charity seeks God for the sake of God alone *(propter seipsum)* (II-II 17.6). Charity seeks no other end, but the last end (II-II 26.3 ad 3) : to rest in God (II-II 23.6).

Second, this union with God is not simply an end to be attained; it is also a union already enjoyed. This point, that charity's union with God is already enjoyed, is often emphasized by Thomas. [21] Charity unites the soul to God immediately (II-II 27.4 ad 3). It belongs immediately to charity that we should adhere to God through union (II-II 82.2 ad 1). Since faith and hope imply distance of things not yet seen or possessed, charity, which already has the object (*iam habetur),* is the greatest of the theological virtues (I-II 66.6). Charity is already united to God *(iam unitum est)* (II-II 23.6 ad 3). Only charity has union with God (II-II 24.12 ad 5). As already enjoyed, charity becomes the source out of which all morally good actions are performed.

The starting-point out of which charity acts, its *terminus a quo,* is an already existing union with God. Though Thomas rarely refers to the scholastic distinction between *termin:us a quo* and *terminus ad quem,* nonetheless he distinguishes charity from other virtues not only by the end it seeks, but more importantly by the starting-point out of which it acts : union with God, a union that is already present. As present and as the source of

[20] Gerard Gilleman, *The Primacy of Charity in Moral Theology* (Westminster: Newman Press, 1959), 130ff.

[21] Conrad van Ouwerkerk, *Caritas et Ratio: Etude sur le double Principe de la vie morale chretienne d'apres* S. *Thomas d'Aquin* (Nijmegen: Janssen, 1956)' 22ff.

action, Thomas provides a description of the *terminus a quo* or
motivation for a virtue.

Since both the beginning and end of charity consist in union
with God, the increase of charity also involves this union.   Char-
ity in glory, which is perfect, is nevertheless identical in kind with
that charity which is imperfect (I-II *67.6* and ad 1; 11-11 19.8).
In heaven the imperfection of charity will be perfected, but what
will be perfected already exists, namely, union *(De spe* 4 ad 13;
cf. ad *7* and ad 14).   The imperfection of charity is simply that
the union one already has with God is not a union of final rest;
the end out of which one acts points onward towards the end
still being sought.

Since charity remains the same in kind, it increases not through
any new addition to itself. Charity increases not by going from
a state of absence to a state of possession but by becoming more
present (11-11 24.5 ad 3); charity increases by its adhering more
and more in the subject (II-II 24.5).   Furthermore, it increases
not in external acts but in its internal exercise. Charity increases
by having a deeper radication in the agent (II-II 24.4 ad 3).

But this deeper radication in the agent does not occur by any
particular mean being attained.   When Thomas asks whether
charity observes the mean, he responds that the love of God is
not subject to a measure because there is no mean to be observed
(II-II 184.3).   The measure of charity is to love God above all
(II-II 26.2 and 3; *27.3,* 5 and 6; 44.4 and 5).   Furthermore, this
measure is, therefore, a measure without mean.   The more we
love God, the better our love is (II-II *27.6).*

When asking specifically how charity grows, Thomas re-
sponds: by an agent striving for greater union. Charity's increase
does not occur in the particular execution of an act, but rather
in the striving *(conatur)* to realize the act (II-II 24.6 and ad
1).   In the act of striving, the deeper radication occurs. Effort,
and not attainment, is the source of charity's increase because the
deeper radication of union with God is an increased intensity of
that union. Simply put, charity increases in the intensity of its
exercise (II-II 24.4 and 5).   Without having a mean to be at-

tained, Thomas argues that charity grows by simply loving God as much as one can. Without referring to a mean to be attained, to some *termin:us ad quem,* Thomas focuses on the exercise of the union, on the *terminus a quo.*

In this light, charity and prudence have different measures. Prudence measures whether an action has attained the mean. Charity measures whether we are loving God as much as we can. In fact, Thomas acknowledges these distinct measures and states that external acts must be measured by two rules, by charity and by reason (II-II 27.6 ad 3). On the one hand, we must ask whether one acts out of a striving for greater union with God; on the other hand, we must ask whether the reasonable mean has been attained. These two measures, I think, are not far from our concepts of moral goodness and of rightness. [22]

We have seen two functions attributed to charity. The end which charity attains is related to our concept of rightness, for it is the ultimate perfection of prudence; it differs from the end out of which charity exercises itself, which is related to our concept of moral goodness. Thomas makes an analogous distinction in his use of two different concepts to describe consequences of charity: goodness and merit. These two effects reflect the two different functions of charity. [23]

Thomas makes the assertion that charity has goodness essentially, whereas the other virtues do not (II-II 27.6 ad 1). This assertion apparently conflicts with another one that prudence has goodness essentially and the other virtues are only good through prudence (II-II 123.12). But the latter "good" is only understood as that which is attained through the reason. As he writes at the beginning of the treatise on human action, in human actions good and evil are predicated in reference to reason (I-II 18.5). The good which is fixed by reason is not the good which is convertible with being (I-II 55.4 ad 2). The only essential

[22] Cf. parallel passages in *In III Sent.* d. 27, q. 3, a. 3 ad 1, ad 2, and ad 4; *In Rom.* 12.1, 964; *De caritate* 2 ad 13.

[23] Odon Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux Xlle et XIIle siecles* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1942-1954), III 599; IV 475.

perfection occurs through union with God (I-II 3.8). Only God
is good essentially (I 6.3; II-II 161.1 ad 4) and it is that" good-
ness " which charity has. Thus the assertions that charity is the
only virtue with goodness essentially and that prudence is the only
virtue with goodness essentially only make sense when we realize
that the word " goodness " refers to different causes for and dif-
ferent attainments of perfection.

   Nonetheless, the word " good" in both contexts does refer to
perfection. In the case of prudence, reason perfects; in the case
of charity, God's own essence perfects. In this sense our earlier
insight returns: Thomas's "good" functions much the same way
as our " right ". By God perfecting us we attain the fullness of
our being. Attainment remains for Thomas intimately linked to
the word" good." Thomas's "good" does not refer to our con-
cept of striving or moral goodness; rather, it refers to our word
" right ". As George Klubertanz put it, through charity we at-
tain the "ultimate rectitude."

   Our concept of moral goodness appears, therefore, not in the
fact that God gives us charity, for we receive salvation gratui-
tously and, as the Scriptures point out, we are made right.
Rather, moral goodness appears as our response to the gift of
charity and is recognized by God as merit.   Here is the second
function of charity. In the question on merit, Thomas argues that
merit has two causes, God's ordination and the human free will,
and both pertain to charity. As the fruition of the divine good is
the proper act of charity, it is through charity that we merit. In
union with the last end, charity can command all the other virtues
 (I-II 114.4 ad 1) and an act is meritorious only insofar as char-
ity does command it. (I-II 57.1)   The acts of all the other vir-
tues are meritorious only insofar as they are commanded by char-
ity (I-II 114.4), and no act is meritorious unless it is done out
of charity (I-II 114.4 ad 3).

   We are only recognized as morally good when we have com-
manded acts out of charity. The command out of charity is par-
ticularly important, for charity does not elicit the acts of the other
virtues but commands them (II-II 23.4 ad 2; *De caritate* 5 ad

3). Charity does not pertain to the specific essence of a virtuous act; rather it functions as the command out of which one acts. Charity works formally (II-II 23.2 ad 3; cf. ad 1). Remaining formal, that is, without pertaining to the specific essence of a virtue, charity remains distinct from the other virtues. [24] Even when a virtuous act is commanded out of charity, two distinct measures remain operative.

As if to underline the function of charity as source of merit, Thomas uses often the phrase "out of charity" or *"ex caritate"*. In the question about the object loved out of charity (II-II 25), the phrase " *ex caritate"* appears sixty-six times. In the parallel article in *De caritate (De* 7), it appears forty-nine times. No other virtue is used with this grammatical form, and the use of this form is evidence for my position: for Thomas only charity can serve to describe a *terminus a quo* for human action, i.e., only charity is developed by Thomas as a description for moral motivation. Indeed, Thomas's *ex caritate* is not far from Kant's *aus Pfticht.* In both cases it is the sole criterion for an agent's moral goodness.

IV. *Conclusion*

First, the virtue of prudence, like the other intellectual virtues, concerns the perfection of reason. This perfection, in turn, perfects the habits in the various appetites and makes these habits virtues. Just as moral goodness is not a necessary condition for science or art, neither is it a condition for the acquired moral virtues. Rather the function of prudence, like the function of the moral virtues, is to make us rightly-ordered and our actions right.

Second, the virtue of charity has two functions. First, inasmuch as it perfects us in attaining the last end, it makes us complete or perfectly right. Inasmuch as charity is derived from God

[24] On the centrality of charity's formality, see Gerard Gilleman, *The Primacy of Charity,* 34ff., 164; Klaus Riesenhuber, *Die Transzendenz der Freiheit zum Guten: Der Wille in der Anthropologie und Metaphysik des Thomas von Aquin* (Munich: Berchmanskolleg Verlag, 1971) 112ff; Conrad van Ouwerkerk, *Caritas et Ratio,* 46ff.

it makes us perfect as God is perfect. Thomas calls this perfec-
tion of God " good ". We see his usage as similar to our usage
of the word "right".   When charity makes our actions "good"
(Thomas' s term), that is, when it directs our actions to the last
end, charity attains ultimate rectitude and fully complements the
other virtues.

Third, the other function of charity pertains to moral goodness
or what Thomas calls" merit". It is the human response to God's
gift. It is the self-exercise of the agent striving to love God as
much as one can. It has no measurable mean; its object of love
is God and the neighbor in God. It seeks union and deeper radica-
tion of that union through intense *striving*. It exercises itself
through commanding acts.

Fourth, the two virtues have a certain independence from one
another. Prudence and the acquired virtues can exist without
charity. Similarly, charity does not elicit but only commands the
virtues and remains formal. Thus any action requires two meas-
ures, one which pertains to whether the action is right or pru-
dential, that is, one which asks whether the mean has been at-
tained. The other measure asks whether the act originates from
a command of charity, that is, whether the agent has striven to
love God and neighbor as much as the agent could.

Fifth, this being said, a caveat is needed. Thomas does not
work out a distinction between goodness and rightness. He does
not have the conceptual distinction at hand because it did not yet
exist. Nonetheless, certain distinctions he does make parallel our
own, and it seems to me that, were Thomas here today, he would
draw the same conclusions as we have or, at least, similar ones.

Finally, unfortunately for our purposes charity is a theological
virtue and thus focuses on union with God. On the other hand,
benevolence could provide a non-theological description of moral
goodness. He states that benevolence differs from charity solely
by the fact that the latter enjoys union with God (II-II *27.2,* ad
2, ad 3). But he does not develop his thoughts on benevolence
as he does with charity. [25]

[25] Karl Rahner, "Reflections on the Unity of the Love of Neighbor and the
Love of God," in *Theological Investigations VI* (Baltimore: Helicon Press,
1969)' 231-252.

These insights gleaned from Thomas should help certain contemporary discussions concerning an ethics of virtue. First, the four related acquired virtues are observable. Our description of one another as temperate, fortitudinous, just, or prudent is based on experience. From experience we come to expect a certain rightly-ordered dependability in people who in the past have been consistently rightly-ordered, in judgment, temperament, or the like. The experience, the expectation, and the dependability are all based on observable behavior. But charity, without any mean, is not observable. Since there are no elicited or specific acts of charity, we cannot deduce from one's actions that someone is acting out of charity. Like the observations of Kant and Moore, we can see that people's actions are right, but we cannot know that their motivations are good. That the four virtues are observable, while charity is not, complements the distinction between goodness and rightness.

Second, making the distinction is helpful for advancing the importance of virtue ethics. Philosophers like William Frankena [26] and Vernon Bourke [27] have argued against the usefulness of a virtue ethics on the ground that an ethics of duty refers to moral rightness whereas an ethics of virtue refers primarily to moral goodness. I think their position becomes untenable when we study Thomas's treatment of the functions of prudence and charity, for inasmuch as the virtues are interconnected by prudence the virtues concern rightness.

Like George Klubertanz, I argue that through rational discourse we can establish an objective ethics based on virtue. Whether a person has charity or not, that is, whether a person is morally good or not, is a separate matter. The question of moral goodness can be examined by moralists and ethicists, by spiritual directors and directees. But the question of rightness

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[26] William Frankena, "McCormick and the Traditional Distinction," in *Doing Evil to Achieve Good,* eds. Richard McCormick and Paul Ramsey (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1978), 146ff.; *Ethics* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1973), 70.

[27] Vernon Bourke, " Aquinas and Recent Theories of the Right," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 48 (1974) : 187-197.

can be discussed readily by proponents of virtue, whether in theology or philosophy, without entertaining the issue of goodness.

Finally, ethicians and moral theologians in describing persons and their actions as just, temperate, fortitudinous, and prudential inevitably help people toward self-understanding and toward defining life-goals. In the process, however, we must be aware of the fact that many good people lack the emotional development, personal freedom, and intellectual acumen which the virtues require. Some of these people strive to love God and neighbor, notwithstanding the fact that they do not arrive often at prudential decisions. These people are good. On the other hand, others, through nature and nurture, have attained a level of personal integration in which their conduct in society is predictably dependable. They are virtuous or rightly-ordered.   But for these people there remains the same question which exists for all people, that is, whether given their talents they strive as much as they can to love God and neighbor.

NECESSARY PROPOSITIONS AND THE
SQUARE OF OPPOSITION

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T IS COMMONPLACE to define contradictory, contrary, and subcontrary propositions in the following way: contradictory propositions cannot both be true and cannot both be false; contrary propositions cannot both be true but can both be false; and subcontrary propositions can both be true but cannot both be false. In his *Introduction to Logic* [1] Irving Copi raises a problem with two of these definitions which he believes forces him to limit the range of propositions which can be used in the square of opposition. Since contrary propositions can both be false, but the falsity of a necessarily true proposition is not possible, a necessarily true proposition has no contrary. Therefore, only contingent propositions can be contraries. Subcontrary propositions can both be true, but the truth of a necessarily false proposition is not possible.[2]

This problem is rarely raised in other logic texts, but, it is interesting to note, it is mentioned by a number of neoscholastic philosophers, for example, P. Nicholas Russo,[3] Rev. H. Grenier,[4]

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[1] Irving M. Copi, *Introduction to Logic* (New York: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 178-179. Copi first introduced this problem in the fifth edition of his work on the basis of an article by David H. Sanford entitled " Contraries and Subcontraries," *Nous* 2 (1968) : 95-96. Sanford argues that the most reasonable way to resolve the problem of necessary propositions is to assume that contingent propositions comprise the square of opposition.

[2] Copi, pp. 178-179.

[8] Nicholas Russo, *Summa Philosophica* (Boston: Apud Marlier et Socios, 1[;85), p. 23.

[4] Henri Grenier, *Thomistic Philosophy,* Vol. I (Charlottetown, Canada: St. Dunstan's University, 1950), p. 69.

G. Sanseverino, 5 Jacques Maritain, 6 F.-X. Maquart,7 P. Coffey,8
and others. 9 (It is also mentioned by Bishop Whately. 10)   Each
of these philosophers makes necessarily true or false propositions
an exception to the definition of contrary and subcontrary propo-
sitions. The reason is they and Copi interpret the definitions of
contrary and subcontrary propositions to mean that the falsity
of each contrary proposition is possible and the truth of each sub-
contrary proposition is possible.

It should be mentioned, however, that the position of the philo-
sophers cited above is not entirely the same as Copi's. Copi rea-
sons that these definitions imply that necessary propositions have
no contrary or subcontrary. The other philosophers believe that
necessary propositions can be contraries and subcontraries. Thus,
in the case of necessary propositions contrary and subcontrary
propositions are, instead, defined merely in terms of their quan-
tity and quality, not by whether or not they can both be false or
can both be true.

In fact, Copi and some of the other philosophers cited above
assert that, when the propositions composing the square are nec-
essary, one can infer the truth of the universal from the truth of

5 Gaietano Sanseverino, *Philosophia Christiana,* Vol. II (Neapoli: Vin-
centii Manfredi, 1862), pp. DCCXXXVIII ff.

6 J. Maritain, *An Introduction to Logic* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1937), p.
135, notes 1 & 2.

7 F.-X. Maquart, *Elementa Philosophiae,* Vol. I (Parisiis: Andreas Blot,
1937)' p. 126 ff.

8 P. Coffey, *The Science of Logic,* Vol. 1 (New York: Longmans, Green &
Co., 1918), p. 225, 226.

9 Joseph Gredt, *Elementa Philosophiae,* Vol. I (Friburgi: Herder, 1929),
p. 46, notes 1 & 2; Sylvester J. Hartman, *A Textbook of Logic* (New York:
American Book Co., 1936), p. 162 ff; Roland Houde and Jerome J. Fischer,
Handbook of Logic (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1954), p. 61;
Eduard Hugon, *Cursus Philosophiae Thomisticae,* Vol. I (Parisiis: P.
Lethielleux n.d), p. 155; Dennis C. Kane, *Logic: The Art of Predication
and Inference* (Providence: Providence College Press, 1978), p. 98 ff; Francis
P. Siegfried, *Essentialia Philosophiae* (Philadelphia: Dolphin Press, 1927), p.
25; Francis Varvello, *Minor Logic,* trans. and supplemented Arthur D. Fearon
(San Francisco: Univ. of San Francisco Press, 1933), p. 73 ff.

10 Richard Whately, *Elements of Logic* (Boston: James Munroe & Co.,
1854), p. 77 ff.

the particular and the falsity of the particular from the falsity of the universal. [11] Maritain maintains that in the case of necessary propositions one can infer the truth of one contrary from the falsity of the other and the falsity of one subcontrary from the truth of the other. [12] The positions of Coffey and Maritain are not essentially different, for each of them relies upon the principle that contrary propositions cannot each be necessarily false, since in necessary matter either the universal affirmative or the universal negative will be true. [13] **If** one assumes this principle, the forms of inference suggested by Coffey and Maritain can be done in a number of ways, and the truth or falsity of none of the four propositions comprising the square will be undetermined.

Copi and these philosophers are probably not alone in interpreting the definition of contrary opposition to mean that the falsity of each contrary proposition is possible and the definition of subcontrary opposition to mean that the truth of each subcontrary proposition is possible. Although most logicians do not explicitly exclude necessary propositions, this is implicit by their use of contingent propositions in their examples of contrary and subcontrary propositions. The purpose of this article is to show that this interpretation is not correct and that necessary propositions are not an exception to the customary definitions of contrary and subcontrary propositions. I will argue that these philosophers have, in fact, misunderstood these definitions and that contrary propositions can both be false and subcontrary propositions can both be true even in the case of necessary truths or falsities.

Before the correct interpretation of these definitions is explained, it should first be pointed out that Copi is not correct in suggesting that only contingent propositions can fulfill the requirement that the falsity of each contrary proposition be possible and the truth of each subcontrary proposition be possible. This requirement is also fulfilled when each contrary proposition

[11] Coffey, p. 225; Grenier, p. 70; Houde and Fischer, p. 62; Hugon, p. 156; Maquart, p. 127; Whately, p. 77 ff.

[12] Maritain, p. 135, notes 1 & 2.

[13] See Sanseverino, pp. DCCXXXVIIIff;   and Whately, p. 77.

is necessarily false and the subcontrary propos1t10ns are both necessarily true. If each contrary proposition is necessarily false, then the falsity of each of them is possible; and if each subcontrary proposition is necessarily true, then the truth of each of them is possible. For instance, the contrary propositions that all propositions are true and no propositions are true are each necessarily false, while the subcontrary propositions that some propositions are true and some propositions are not true are each necessarily true. The set of propositions that all numbers are even, no numbers are even, some numbers are even, and some numbers are not even is another example.

These counter-examples are also one reason why the forms of inference suggested by Coffey and Maritain are invalid, for in these examples one cannot validly infer the necessary truth of the universal from the necessary truth of the particular or the nec-·essary falsity of the particular from the necessary falsity of the universal. Neither can one validly infer the necessary truth of one contrary from the necessary falsity of the other nor the necessary falsity of one subcontrary from the necessary truth of the other. It must be recognized, though, that if one contrary proposition is a necessary truth, then the other contrary must be a necessary falsity; and if one subcontrary proposition is a necessary falsity, then the other subcontrary must be a necessary truth.

Yet, must one assume, as one does in these counter-examples, that in the case of contrary propositions the falsity of each of them is possible, or that the truth of each subcontrary proposition is possible? Is there another sense in which contrary propositions can both be false and subcontrary propositions can both be true which does not exclude any necessary propositions? The following analysis will show that there is.

In certain valid deductions one speaks about the conclusion being necessarily true or necessarily false. For example, if an E proposition is true, the A proposition is necessarily false. An 0 proposition is necessarily true given a false I proposition. In speaking this way, one in no way implies or even suggests that the A proposition is itself a necessary falsity or that the 0 prop-

osition is itself a necessary truth. The reason is that the falsity of the A proposition and the truth of the O proposition are conditionally (contingently, relatively) necessary. The falsity of the A proposition is conditionally necessary with respect to the truth of the E proposition, although the truth of the A proposition is in itself still possible if it is a contingent proposition. If the O proposition is contingent, then its falsity is in itself possible although its truth is conditionally necessary with respect to the false I proposition.

These remarks reveal that the fundamental philosophical distinction between conditional and absolute necessity involves a distinction between conditional and absolute possibility. If an A proposition is contingent, its truth and falsity are each possible. Yet, if the E proposition is true, the A proposition is necessary false, which means its truth is not possible, but this impossibility is conditional upon the truth of the E. The A proposition remains a contingent proposition with its truth and falsity each possible, for the A proposition is necessarily false in relation to the truth of the E proposition and is not necessarily false in itself. Thus, contrary propositions can't both be true, not in the sense that one of two contrary propositions will be a necessary falsity, but in the sense that the truth of one of them is conditionally impossible with respect to the truth of the other.

Similarly, if an I proposition is false, the O proposition is necessarily true, which means its falsity is impossible. However, its falsity is impossible in relation to the false I proposition, and the O proposition may still be contingent, with its truth and falsity each possible. In this way, subcontrary propositions can't both be false, not in the sense that one of two subcontrary propositions will be a necessary truth, but in the sense that the falsity of one of them is conditionally impossible with respect to the falsity of the other.

The very same point must be made in the case of contradictory propositions. They can't both be true, but obviously not in the sense that one of them will be a necessary truth and the other a necessary falsity. Rather the falsity of one of them is condition-

ally necessary with respect to the truth of the other, and thus the
falsity of one of them is conditionally impossible with respect to
the falsity of the other. This explains how contradictory proposi-
tions can be contingent propositions with their truth and falsity
each possible while the falsity of one of them is also impossible in
relation to the truth of the other and vice versa.

When an E proposition is false, the A proposition is not neces-
sarily true (or necessarily false). Because a false E proposition
does not necessitate the truth of the A proposition, the A proposi-
tion is not necessarily true in relation to the false E proposition,
which means its falsity is not impossible in relation to the falsity
of the E. In this way, its falsity or truth are conditionally pos-
sible with respect to the falsity of the E proposition, since from
the falsity of the E proposition neither the truth nor the falsity
of the A proposition is necessitated. If the truth of an A proposi-
tion is conditionally impossible in relation to a true E proposi-
tion since the true E necessitates the falsity of A, then the truth
or falsity of an A proposition must be conditionally possible in
relation to a false E proposition since the falsity of the E does
not necessitate the truth or falsity of the A proposition.

This remains true even when the A proposition is itself a nec-
essary proposition. In this case, while either its truth or its fal-
sity is in itself impossible, its truth or falsity is conditionally pos-
sible in relation to the false E proposition. Just as the truth or
falsity of a contingent A proposition is in itself possible while its
truth is conditionally impossible with respect to a true E proposi-
tion, so also the falsity of a necessarily true A proposition is in
itself impossible while its falsity is conditionally possible with
respect to a false E proposition. There is no contradiction is say-
ing that the falsity of a necessarily true A proposition is in itself
impossible although its truth or falsity is conditionally possible
with respect to a false E proposition, just as there is no contra-
diction in saying that the truth of a contingent A proposition is
in itself possible although its truth is conditionally impossible
with respect to a true E proposition. Thus, if an A proposition
is in itself a necessary truth, one can still assert without con-

tradiction that its truth or falsity is conditionally possible with respect to a false E proposition, for this simply refers to the relation the A proposition has to the false E proposition, since the latter necessitates neither the truth nor falsity of the A proposition.

Thus, contrary propositions can both be false, not in the sense that the falsity of each proposition is in itself possible, but in the sense that, because the truth or the falsity of one of them is not necessitated by the falsity of the other, the truth or falsity of one of them is conditionally possible with respect to the falsity of the other. Subcontrary propositions can both be true in the sense that the truth or falsity of one of them is conditionally possible with respect to the truth of the other since the truth of one of them does not necessitate either the truth or the falsity of the other. Because the possibility referred to in these cases is a conditional possibility between propositions, necessary propositions are not an exception to the square of opposition.

THE THOUGHT-EXPERIMENT:
SHEWMON ON BRAIN DEATH [1]

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MODERN TECHNOLOGY as it advances often brings with it new ethical problems. One such problem is "brain death." In times past, that is, up until the 1960s, medical men considered cardiopulmonary collapse as the criterion for the death of the person, for with heart failure the body ceases to function as a whole living organism. As technology and science advanced, however, scientists discovered that when the heart failed the very first organ to be irreparably damaged was the brain. Moreover, around this time they discovered how to revive the heart and to keep the body alive even after the brain had been destroyed. These discoveries and advances alone might not have sufficed to raise the issue of brain death. But science also discovered the crucial role the brain plays for consciousness and *a fortiori* for the specifically human abilities of knowing and willing. It is thus that we now have the question: once the brain has been irreparably damaged, and the possibility of consciousness and personal life thereby excluded, is such a person really dead, even though his body is alive and functioning?

But it would be less than honest to say that this is an adequate history of the brain death criterion. For with the dawn of organ transplantation a new demand for living organs arose, one that had never been known before. Under the old cardiopulmonary criterion of death, the demand for living organs could not be met since the organs of a person " dead " in that sense of the word

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[1] " The Metaphysics of Brain Death, Persistent Vegetative State, and Dementia", *The Thomist,* 49 (January, 1985): 24-80.

could not be transplanted; under the brain death criterion they could. Such a situation will quite naturally give rise to, or at least heavily contribute to, a less than objective handling of the issue. Happily, however, the literature on brain death has recently seen a serious objective appraisal of the issue: D. Alan Shewmon's article *The Metaphysics of Brain Death, Persistent Vegetative State, and Dementia.* Shewmon argues persuasively that the new criterion of death is sound. He argues for an exact formulation of the criterion of the death of the person, viz., the death or irreparable destruction of one specific part of the brain, namely, the tertiary cortex. Thus, the death of the person occurs with the irrevocable destruction of the tertiary cortex, even if the rest of the body is still functional.

In the following pages I will consider Shewmon's analysis of the issue and expose some of the major problems with his arguments. My critique will focus chiefly on an analysis of a certain thought-experiment of which Shewmon makes extensive use. I do this both because of its central role in Shewmon's argument and because of the light it sheds on the whole problem of using brain death as the criterion for the death of the person.

The Thought-Experiment

Shewmon has set out to show that only the teritary cortex is the critical structure or formed matter necessary for the human essence.[2] In a later passage, however, he mitigates this claim slightly, in case science should someday discover that some other area (or just some fraction of this area) is the critical area.[3] But in either case, Shewmon maintains that the crucial area is to be found in the neocortex of the cerebral hemespheres. By the time his analysis has reached page fifty-nine, he believes he has established this much. The following is an examination of his thought-experiment and how he establishes the above claim.

Shewmon begins with certain observations about how the human essence relates to the various parts of the body. Modern

[2] Ibid., p. 56ff.
[a] Ibid., p. 59.

technology has developed ways to remove parts of a man's body without killing either the man or the part. Science can remove a person's kidney, for example, and transplant it into another person's body without killing either the person or destroying the living cells of the kidney. Moreover, neither person [4] undergoes a substantial change in the process, that is, both undergo some change, but neither becomes a different kind of thing because of the change. In Shewmon's terms the same substantial forms have endured in the respective bodies.

On the basis of such facts, one might naturally ask oneself how much of the original tissue of a man can be removed before the person can no longer inhabit his body, before the body is no longer compatible with the human essence. In Shewmon's terms, when does the old human substantial form give way to a new non-human substantial form? What part of the body is the crucial part, and what parts are dispensable for the human substantial form? With these problems Shewmon begins his thought-experiment.

After suggesting that if one removes a limb of the person (and does so carefully, so that neither the limb nor the person is lost) one would still have the same person with the same human essence as before, Shewmon writes,

Now suppose this person were unfortunate enough also to have his other three limbs amputated and kept alive in the same way. Then his kidneys were removed so that he required regular hemodialysis. Although he is no longer in the best of health, he is obviously still alive and the same person as before. Now his intestines are removed, and he has to receive all his nutrition and fluids intravenously. At this point he is placed on a cardiopulmonary bypass machine, so that his heart and lungs may be excised without ill effect. The liver is also taken, and his blood is purified through a pig liver in series with the bypass machine. Air is forced through his trachea, permitting him to speak with us. As he describes his feelings about all this, it is undeniable that he is still alive and still the same person as before. Since the functions of all the vital organs except the brain are now subserved by mechanical devices, the torso has become a superfluous

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[4] We leave aside here the question whether the kidney has undergone a substantial change or not.

shell and may be surgically removed from the neck without any detri-
ment to the patient. Of course, all the machines are now reconnected
to the blood vessels of the neck. In order to preserve communica-
tion with the patient air is maintained through the trachea. Although
now reduced to only a head and neck, this is still the same person as
before, as he himself will attest if we ask him. In the meantime all
the removed parts have been connected to machines to keep them
alive as well.[5]

Within this paragraph there has been a significant shift in the
kind of evidence supporting Shewmon's speculations. The experi-
ment starts by amputating an arm and ends by removing every-
thing from the neck down. That is to say, the experiment starts
with something science can in fact do, but ends with something it
cannot in fact do. This means that at some point the experiment
moves from having empirical evidence-that   if we were to do X,
say, to the person, his body would not be rendered incompatible
with the human essence-to not having empirical evidence-that
if we were to do Y to the person, his body would not be rendered
incompatible with the human essence. And yet this latter is the
crucial thesis of Shewmon's paper. Therefore, the first question
to be asked is: what evidence does Shewmon have for the claims
of his thought-experiment?

Now it must not be supposed that because Shewmon has no di-
rect empirical evidence to support the claims of his thought-ex-
periment that he therefore has no evidence whatsoever. First of
all, there may be empirically evident facts which are related to
and which indirectly support his claims. Second, there are other
kinds of evidence besides empirical evidence. In fact, these other
kinds of evidence-insight   and logical inference-are more reli-
able than empirical evidence because they can afford greater cer-
tainty.

But if we consider the kind of evidence Shewmon makes use
of to support his thought-experiment, we do not find either in-
sight or logical inference; we do find among the empirically re-
lated evidence some evidence that supports his claims, but weakly,
and some that only supports his claims under certain false as-

[1] Ibid., pp. 44-45.

sumptions which Shewmon implicitly rejects. But most significant of all, we find a series of closely related question-begging assumptions upon which his claims stand or fall. We will start with this last.

Before we begin, it must be noted that the direct empirical evidence in Shewmon's case is not simply missing (as it is in questions like, is there life in other galaxies?) but is actually against Shewmon's thesis. For if we did perform an experiment of this sort, amputating someone from the neck down, we would render his body incompatible with the human essence, for the person would die. Shewmon of course knows this but assumes (and this is the significant assumption) that the above is only true because of the technical underdevelopment of modern science, and that someday science will be able to keep such a person alive. Thus someday we will have the empirical evidence we lack today to show that the human essence is no more rendered incompatible by the loss of everything from the neck down than it is by the loss of a limb.

In light of the technological advances of science, Shewmon's is not an unreasonable assumption. Advances that have already been made provide empirical evidence supporting (in the sense of lending plausibility to, but by no means even directly substantiating) Shewmon's claims.

But this assumption has implications, implications that expose its significance. Suppose for a moment that the brain [6] is *not* the crucial part of the body that makes it compatible with the human essence.[7] Then, even if science advanced beyond its present state and could develop a mechanism that could duplicate all that the body does for the functioning of the brain, the *person* would still die. In other words, if the brain is not the crucial tissue mass necessary and sufficient for the human essence, then even if the

[6] Shewmon has not got this far in the above quoted passage, yet I anticipate here his more final result.

[7] This is, of course, itself an assumption, one in fact contrary to Shewmon's claim. But it is legitimate because it is not used to prove, establish, or even support the contrary of Shewmon's claim. It is used only to expose the assumption upon which Shewmon's claim rests.

extracerebral body could successfully be functionally duplicated and replaced, the original head and neck would nevertheless be rendered incompatible with the human essence. Only if the brain *is* the only tissue mass necessary for the human essence can it be true that it can be kept alive through some other means than the natural body and the human essence not lost. But this is what Shewmon seeks to establish by his thought-experiment. In other words, Shewmon's thought-experiment begs the question.

How does Shewmon's thought-experiment beg the question? First of all, if the experiment were ever actually done, it would be as simple to verify (or falsify) Shewmon's claim as it is to verify that the person is not lost when he loses a limb. But the fact that Shewmon's thought-experiment has never been done before and cannot be done now forces Shewmon to make an assumption, namely that it could at least in principle be done. Let us call this assumption, that it is in principle possible to amputate a person from the neck down or (as Shewmon claims in the end) from the tertiary cortex down without killing the person, P. Now if it is true that it is in principle possible to amputate a person from the tertiary cortex down without killing the person (i.e., without rendering the rest of the body incompatible with the human essence), then it is also true that the tertiary cortex alone is sufficient to support the human essence. Let us call this Q. Therefore P implies Q. But Q is exactly the conclusion Shewmon wants to support or establish with his thought-experiment. Therefore by assuming P, which implies Q, Shewmon assumes what he wants to show. Completely formalized the argument looks like this.

$$P$$

$$\therefore Q$$

Again, why does Shewmon have to make the first assumption? Because the empirical evidence up to now is against him. This being the case he has to assume that it is only a matter of time before it is not against him, meaning that it is in principle possible to excise the extracerebral body without killing the person.

But it is only when this assumption is given that it follows that the cerebral body is sufficient to support the human essence. And this is exactly what Shewmon wants to establish. Therefore by making the first assumption (into which he is forced by the empirical evidence to date) Shewmon also assumes the truth of what he wants to show and thus begs the question.

What remains to be answered is the question: Is it in principle possible to excise the extracerebral body without killing the person, or in Shewmon's words "what is the minimum part of the human body still capable of supporting the human essence ? " [8] It would take considerable effort and resources to answer these questions. But the answer to a much simpler question will suffice for the purposes of this analysis (a critique of Shewmon's practical proposals regarding the brain dead) and this simpler question is : how can Shewmon's claim about the tertiary cortex be established? Once we answer this question, its relevance to the larger question will be clear; it will shed light on the practical problem of brain death.

What of Shewmon's claim? One way to substantiate it is, of course, empirically. Through empirical means science has already discovered that some parts of the body can be removed altogether, some can be removed and replaced, and some can be removed and even replaced with artificial devices. (The most notable example of this last is the human heart.) In these cases science has found that the person does not necessarily die from such operations, and from this one can draw the conclusion that in these cases the body is still capable of supporting the human essence. But the question Shewmon is asking is what is the minimum part of the body necessary for the human essence. He is seeking the border where the body all but ceases to be compatible with the human essence. And the answer he gives is the tertiary cortex. In principle his answer could be established empirically, just as it has been established that some parts of the body are not necessary for the body's compatibility with the human essence. Experiments of a theoretically simple nature but with a high degree of technical sophis-

s Ibid., p. 44.

tication would suffice to verify or falsify Shewmon's claim about
the tertiary cortex. Unfortunately, however, science cannot as yet
perform even such operations as brain transplants successfully
(which would still leave us short of substantiating Shewmon's
claim) and therefore cannot even discover whether an old body
with a new brain would be the person of the old body, the person
of the new brain, or any person at all. Therefore for now the
question cannot be answered empirically, although in principle it
could be answered in this way. How then can the question be
answered?

I mentioned before that there are not only other kinds of evi-
dence (and therefore other ways of answering a question) but
kinds which afford greater certaj,nty than the empirical, namely,
insight and logical inference. But these methods of answering a
question, of gathering evidence, are only applicable in certain
cases to certain kinds of objects. Insight [9] is only possible with
natures which have a highly intelligible structure. [10] Take for ex-
ample the nature of moral responsibility, and consider how in-
telligible it is that it presupposes a second nature, namely freedom.
One can grasp with a simple act of insight that no one is respon-
sible for an act which is not done freely. In such cases, because
of the intelligibility of the natures at stake (and because of the
power of the mind to understand), one can know with certainty
that the one nature requires the other. But the relationship of the
body to the human essence, to the spiritual entity that a person
is, is not a relationship that is highly intelligible. That there is
a relation is empirically verifiable, and, as we suggested, science
has established to some extent what that relationship is. But how
there ever could be such a relationship between spirit and matter
is an apory of the first magnitude-let alone what the minimum
of the matter for the relationship must be. The apory is generated
in part by a failure to understand the nature of the human spirit.

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[9] Logical inference does not operate without insight into the entailment of
one proposition by another (or others) . Therefore we consider only insight.

[10] See Dietrich von Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy* (Milwaukee: Bruce
Publishing, 1960) chapter 4, p. 63ff,

But it is also generated by our inability to understand matter.
Philosophically there is some hope that with insight we could
penetrate far into the nature of spirit. But the nature of matter
defies philosophical penetration. Matter, as Bacon saw, must be
pushed and pulled, heated and cooled, cut into and sewn together;
it must be physically manipulated and observed before it reveals
the secrets of its nature. One must prod it and watch how it
reacts to learn what its nature involves. Shewmon's claim can
only be substantiated in this way. There is no insight that could
substantiate it, for the natures in question are not open to in-
sight. The body must simply be cut down to a tertiary cortex
and prodded into personal life before Shewmon's claim can be
established. Until then it is unverifiable and unfalsifiable specula-
tion.

Shewmon could object that his article asks the question-what
is the minimum part of the human body still capable of support-
ing the human essence?-and gives the tertiary cortex as answer
only insofar as this is useful and related to answering another
question, the real question of the article: Are the brain dead still
living persons, or have their bodies been rendered incompatible
with the human essence? This question, he might say, does not
lack empirical evidence at all. Those patients whose neocortex
has been destroyed show no signs of presence in the vegetative
body.

. . . in spite of their apparent wakefullness,there is no real awareness
of their body or environment. Even though their eyes are open and
may even track a slowly moving object, they show no evidence of
effort at communication through eye movements, as patients with
' lockedin syndrome' do.11

This objection brings up a second series of critical remarks one
can make against Shewmon. First of all, it does not follow from
the fact that there are no signs of the person present in his body
that the person is not present in his body; it would only follow if
to be in the body was the same as to exhibit signs of being in the
body. Second, although Shewmon never commits himself to actu-

11 Shewmon, p. 34.

alism of the above sort [12] and would reject the accusation were he
accused of it, he often argues like an actualist. Indeed some of his
arguments can only be seen as sound from the point of view of
actualism. Above Shewmon writes that such patients show no
efforts at communication. Later on, speaking of dementia and
Alzheimer's disease, he writes: "Patients at this stage of the ill-
ness have sensory perception and can move around, but do not
speak or show any evidence of intellectual understanding of their
surroundings." [18] Shewmon takes this as support for the con-
clusion that " The body has been rendered incompatible with the
human essence, so a substantial change must have taken place." [u]
But this reaso.ning is only support if certain more fundamental
actualist claims are true, namely (in this case), that to be present
in the body it is necessary to exhibit some signs of awareness of
one's surroundings, intellectual understanding, or attempts at
communication. But this assumes that to be in the body is the
same as to be active and functioning in the body, something which
Shewmon in another place denies.[15] Yet in spite of his denial, he
makes arguments the conclusions of which rest on the truth of
the claims of actualism. We shall see a second case of his implicit
actualism in his answers to objections to which we tum now.

   In the course of answering various objections to his article,
Shewmon significantly modifies the basic claim he has been mak-
ing throughout the paper. In response to the objection that under
his view the embryo could not be a person since it lacks the ter-
tiary cortex, which alone is the tissue with which the human
essence is compatible, Shewmon writes :

What is necessary for the human soul is not the actual functioning of
the essential brain structures but their *potential* for functioning.
Someone who is asleep is not dead. . . . There is no *structural* dam-
age to the neural substrate ....   For the same reasons a brainless
embryo is quite unlike a brainless adult, since the substantial form

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   [u] The actualist holds the person is nothing but his actual conscious states,
acts, etc.

   [1a] Ibid., p. 60.

   [u] Ibid.

   [u] Ibid., p. 66.

of the embryo makes its development always tend toward forming those brain structures essential for the human intellect. It is only a temporary absence of functioning, with as full a potential as that of the sleeping person.[16]

Shewmon's modified thesis is that the human essence is compatible with that which, because of its substantial form, will naturally tend to develop a tertiary cortex.

The above reasoning, however, amounts to a retraction of the thesis Shewmon has been defending throughout the paper. For Shewmon has said that some particular matter is necessary to render the body compatible with the human essence, and he has said that this matter is the tertiary cortex. Now he is saying that the tertiary cortex 'is not necessary to render the body compatible with the human essence. That particular matter does not have to exist actually at all; it can be absent and the human essence nonetheless present. This admission alone undermines Shewmon's main thesis. It appears at first sight to be a simple modification, until one realizes that it modifies Shewmon's claim in its most essential aspect, namely that the tertiary cortex is necessary and sufficient for the compatibility of the human essence with the body. By admitting an exception to this, that the embryo without a tertiary cortex is nevertheless a human person, he has admitted that the tertiary cortex is not necessary and, therefore, *a fortiori* not sufficient to render the body compatible with the human essence.

There are other problems raised by Shewmon's modification of his original claim, which, however, stem from his analysis of the sleeping and comatose cases and not from the case of the embryo. The evidence warranting this modification comes from the empirical fact that when a person's brain is temporarily unable to mediate the functions of the human intellect (say because of fatigue or a knock on the head), the person is not thereby lost; he is only asleep or in a coma. When such a person recovers, we see that he was never lost but only unable to function properly, and thus we

[16] Ibid., pp. 66-67. In the opening line we see Shewmon's implicit denial of actualism.

realize that his body was not rendered incompatible with the human essence. Shewmon points out that the structures of the brain, although incapacitated temporarily, never lost their potential to function again. All they required was the appropriate changes to revive and resume functioning. For these reasons Shewmon modifies his claim to this : if something has the potential to mediate intellect and will, then it is compatible with the human essence.

On the basis of this modification the question of the presence of the person in the brain dead patient opens up again. Granting for the moment the actualist's view, one can ask: Given the appropriate changes and causes, does the brain dead person have the potential to redevelop the brain structures needed to mediate intellectual life? Under the old thesis (that if the brain structures were not actually present the person was dead), it was easy to judge that the person was gone from the brain dead patient, for it was easy to ascertain if the brain structures were gone. But how is one to ascertain that the *potential* for brain structures is gone?

We can offer no evidence that the potential for brain structures is not gone, but could not someone like Shewmon argue that it is just a matter of time before science discovers the causes under which a brain dead person's body could regenerate brain cells? On the basis of this assumption and Shewmon's modified claim, a new thought-experiment could be conducted, one that showed that the brain dead person's body was all the while compatible with the human essence, even though it was lacking a tertiary cortex, because it had the *potential* to regenerate brain structures. Is there any more evidence that this is impossible than that a tertiary cortex floating in a nutrient bath will someday be the thinking, remembering, imagining, and wishing person he was before, when he was in possession of his whole body? But where would we be after the new thought-experiment was conducted and the new conclusions were reached? They are both for now unverified, unfalsified science-fiction type possibilities resting on the claims they are intended to establish. We would be not one whit closer to dealing with the practical problem of how *to* treat the brain dead. What we need is direct empirical evidence.

Shewmon considers the possibility of brain transplants and the reconstitution of a brain for the brain dead and in this way considers the possibility of a new thought-experiment. Nevertheless he maintains that :

Even if proper functional connections could be established for the redevelopment of human language and thought, nothing would remain of the original person's past experiences, personality, talents, etc.... In other words even if the destroyed brain could hypothetically be reconstituted, it would be no longer be the *same perso'lis* brain.[17]

Shewmon argues for this in two ways. The first argument involves the thesis that " our personality and lifetime of experiences are contained within the pattern of synaptic sensitivities and in our cerebral cortices." [18] Synapses are connections between nerve cells in the brain. These connections are profoundly affected by external stimuli during the development of the infant and during learning in general. If the neurons of the brain were new, as they would be in the revived brain dead patient, all the connections between the nerve cells would be different since they would develop from a clean slate, as it were, on the basis of what are certain to be different stimuli. Since a man's personality and experiences are contained within these connections, nothing of the original person would remain in the revived brain dead patient.

There are two problems with this argument of Shewmon's, however. First, even if it be granted that a man's personality and experiences are contained within the pattern of synaptic sensitivities of his cerebral cortices, it cannot be granted that the person himself is contained within these sensitivities, for it is not true that a person is equivalent to his personality, past experiences, and talents. This is a subspecies of actualism. The person is that which has a personality, has talents, and acquires experiences. The personality of a person, his experiences, and his talents could all be different without the person being someone else. A personality can be suppressed or nurtured, yet the person who suffers

[17] Ibid., p. 76.
[18] Ibid., p. 75.

or benefits thereby is the same person. The experiences of a person are extremely variable and clearly differ from the person who has them. And as for talents, they too can be destroyed without the person becoming someone else. Consider the effect of drugs or alcohol (or even tobacco) on talents. Thus it can be granted Shewmon that all that he mentions above is contained within the patterns of the cerebral cortices, and that all this would be forever lost to the person were these cortices destroyed and replaced. But it does not follow from this that the person would no longer be the same person, for the person is not the same as any one of these characteristics or all of them together.

Second, it is more than doubtful that the person's experiences, etc., are "contained" within the pattern of connections in the cerebral cortex. Experiences and the like are not of a material nature so as to be containable within a material thing. They may be related to it, but the nature of that relation is neither rendered nor clarified with the precision necessary for careful analysis by the concept "contained." And yet the exact nature of the relation is the issue at stake, for only on the basis of what the nature is can Shewmon claim that the personality, etc., would be lost forever. If they are really contained within, then he is right. But if these synaptic sensitivities are only a condition for the development of personality, of talents, and for the occurrence of experiences, while the actual seat of these is in the person himself, then he is wrong.

The second argument Shewmon makes is drawn from the thought-experiment.   He writes:

This [that the person with a reconstituted brain is not the same person he was] can be more clearly appreciated by reflection on our experimental room in which the person is kept alive through the isolated hemispheres. Suppose we now treat the vegetative cadaver with the hypothetical technique which will restore the brain. If the treatment is successful, it will be dear that there are now two people rather than one and that the original person is still with the original floating cerebral hemispheres.[19]

19 Ibid., p. 76.

But appeal to the old thought-experiment is of no use, if for no other reason than that the old thought-experiment rests on a contrary assumption, and one may not refute an argument by assuming the contrary.

In the meantime we have a practical problem to deal with, namely, what does one do with the brain dead? But now that we have answered the simpler question (how must Shewmon's claim be verified?), and now that we have seen how thought-experiments can be used either to " support " his claim or " refute " it, we can see the indispensable place of concrete empirical evidence. Such evidence we do not now have, but the answer to the question of what to do with the brain dead is nevertheless straightforward. We cannot now know whether the brain dead are living nonfunctional persons or not. If we knew that the person was no longer present in the brain dead patient, then we could remove the body from its life support, for we would run no risk of killing a person. But we do not have any way of knowing at the moment whether the person is present in the brain dead patient or not, because we do not know whether the brain is a necessary condition for the person or whether a person's extracerebral body is sufficient to support the human essence. Therefore we may not act on the basis of speculation as if we knew that the person was not present in the brain dead patient, as if we knew the brain was necessary, and as if we knew the extracerebral body was not enough. By removing such patients from their life support, because we do not know whether they are persons or not, we run the risk of killing a person. We are in essentially the same position as the hunter who sees something at a distance but does not know whether it is an animal or a man. If he does not know, he may not shoot at it even if it happens to be an animal, for he does not know that it is not a person, and he may not take the risk of killing a person.

In conclusion, let me be clear about what I have shown by the above considerations and what I have not shown. None of what I have said shows that the tertiary cortex is not the necessary and sufficient tissue mass in virtue of which the body is rendered com-

patible with the human essence. None of what I have said shows that the brain dead are more than vegetables. Therefore Shewmon may be right. What I have shown, however, is that Shewmon has not made his case and that he cannot make his case, that his claims are both unsubstantiated and (perhaps only for the time being, perhaps not) unsubstantiatable. The reason for this last has to do with how the question-How can Shewmon's claim that the tertiary cortex is the minimum part of the body required for the existence of the human essence in the body ?--can be answered. It can only be answered empirically, but it cannot be answered empirically at present. This being the case we must treat the brain dead as persons until we know they are not.

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL VISION **OF** CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

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VIEWED FROM the institutional, interpersonal, or religious standpoint, marriage is not a distinctively Christian phenomenon, but it is a human partnership with inherently religious symbolism. Consider the complexity of its dimensions : it is a personal bond that is consummated in a sexual relationship; yet its full human reality contains different levels of meaning which point to a transcendent mystery; it is secular and social and at the same time spiritual and personal. Philosophical anthropology and the phenomenology of religion explore these dimensions and stress the complexity of marriage. An entire range of questions stem from the nature and mystery of the conjugal bond as well as from the multiplicity of forms in which this human partnership has been realized in different historical periods and cultures.

Precisely because marriage actually takes place in a concrete historico-cultural context, theological reflection must recognize the complexity of this human experience, and this calls for interdisciplinary study. Theological anthropology sees a profound meaning in the created reality of marriage, for it recognizes therein the essential components of a community of love open toward God. An understanding of human values reveals how the experience of marriage touches the roots of people's lives; an understanding of redemption reveals how marriage belongs to both the order of creation and the order of redemption. An anthropological approach is essential. " In good theology one can no longer adopt the simplistic distinction between ' natural mar-

451

riage' and 'sacramental marriage .... '" ¹ Marriage is not only
a meaningful sign of an anthropological reality but also the ex-
pression of the human response toward transcendence.

Furthermore, the lived experience of marriage in modern so-
ciety makes us more and more conscious of human existential
needs, and theology has to interpret and respond to them in cor-
relation with the content of faith. Against the background of the
human sciences and our awareness of the present historical real-
ity, study of this complex experience that is marriage calls for
constructive reflection on its anthropological roots. That is where
the sacramental mystery is anchored. The crisis in the theologi-
cal understanding of marriage stems primarily from a crisis of
culture, and new anthropological perspectives can establish the
possibility of a more personal theology.

In fact, the underestimation of its human values or, more pre-
cisely, the lack of a personalist anthropology and of an adequate
theological consideration of sexuality has been at the root of the
weakness of the traditional approach to marriage.z As Theodore
Mackin puts it, " The marriage sacrament, like all sacraments,
has as its matrix a complex human experience. And there is no
understanding of the sacrament unless we first understand its

¹ W. Ernst, "Marriage as Institution and the Contemporary Challenge to
It," in *Contemporary Perspectives on Christian Marriage,* ed. R. Malone and
J. R. Connery (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1984), p. 69. The follow-
ing studies are especially valuable in terms of an anthropological approach to
Christian marriage: J. Ratzinger, "Zur Theologie der Ehe," in *Theologie der
Ehe,* ed. H. Greven (Regensburg 1972), pp. 81-115; H. Doms, "Zweigesch-
lechtlichkeit und Ehe," in *Mysterium Salutis,* ed. J. Feiner and M. Lohrer,
vol. 2, pp. *707-750;* T. Mackin, "How to Understand the Sacrament of Mar-
riage," in *-Commitment to Partnership; Explorations of the Theology of Mar-
riage,* ed. W. P. Roberts (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 34-60.

z Two major Catholic documents of the magisterium insist on the need for
further theological reflection in terms of the personalistic reason behind the
theology of marriage: John Paul II, *The Apostolic Exhortation on the Family*
(see *Origins,* 2 (1981): 438-467); *Gaudium et Spes,* 47-52 (ed. W. M.
Abbot, pp. 249-259). " The beginning, the subject and the goal of social institu-
tions is and must be the human person, which for its part and by its very
nature stands completely in need of social life" *(Gaudium et Spes,* 25; Abbott
ed., p. 224).

matrix-experience." ³ In theological terms, the covenant v1s1on governs the partnership reality, but that divine call without this created reality would be meaningless. While the present essay does not include all the bases of the reality of marriage, such as the biological, psychological, or philosophical data, it will consider some basic anthropological presuppositions concerning marriage from a Christian perspective.

The Anthropological Shift

In the last decades, the understanding of the content of faith against the background of human sciences, especially anthropology, has meant a shift in cultural presuppositions from external and abstract conceptions derived from philosophical principles to a more personalist and existential vision of humanity and its destiny. Even before the Council, theological investigation that was renewed through a return to the sources and a dialogue with modern sciences made a new theological anthropology possible.⁴

The mystery and contemplation of the person becomes a center of openness to the transcendent and a reflection of the divine; the body itself becomes a primordial symbol of wholeness in the sacramental reinterpretation of human experiences. If human sacramentality is a reality, our potential for a truly human, marital partnership is in itself a 'natural' sacrament because it is a meaningful sign of the human hunger for love, a hunger which points to God.

Theological anthropology seeks the full meaning of human existence, not in abstract metaphysical speculation, but in the concrete historical reality of the person open to transcendence. This fullness of meaning reaches its ultimate and most radical possibility in God becoming a person in the Incarnation. As the center of creation, the person lives in the mystery of the grace of God

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³ Mackin, " How to Understand ... ," p. 34.

⁴ Two examples of this anthropological shift in theology are: K. Rahner, " Allgemeine Grundlegung der Protologie und theologischen Anthropologie," in *Mysterium Salutis,* vol. 4, pp. 405-420; L. F. Ladaria, *Antropologia Teologica* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1987).

that urges him or her *to* full human potential and to transcendent
destiny in the radical newness of Christ.

Rooted in biblical models and symbols, especially those in
Genesis, this line of theological discourse opens up the possibility
for a more realistic understanding of the profound structure of
the human being. Christian vision draws inspiration from seeing
the person as the image of God in all his relationships but espe-
cially in his return to Him. This has always provided a founda-
tion and a coherence to Christian thinking, but today this vision
has to be critically yet decidedly sensitive to cultural anthro-
pology.

Early Christian writers drew inspiration from Hellenism: in
their critical discourse they focused on the person as an ineffable
mystery of openness to God. The "know-thyself" of Greek
humanism became incorporated into an emphasis on the image of
God as the mirror of human personhood. Later on, Augustine
contributed neoplatonic influences, and in the Middle Ages
Thomas Aquinas brought in Aristotle. The modern anthro-
pological shift has meant a change from speculation concerning
the static essence of human beings to a historical and dynamic per-
spective of the whole person, in the context of the Christocentric
and eschatological horizon of the new humanity. Consequently,
in the post-modern world, where all the efforts of theological and
even anthropological and socio-cultural reflection center around
the person and his/her crisis in present civilization, "all the path-
ways of the Church lead to man." [5]

This study of the person pursues three key aspects of the con-
crete and human reality of his/her salvation story: the person, the
body, and the image of God.

The person in the fullest sense of the word is a singular being
who chooses to be free (within the limitations of respect) in
every actualization of his/her relation to the other. Such a per-
son belongs to the new humanity as it is concretely realized in a

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[5] John Paul II, *Redemptoris hominis,* 14 (3-4-1979). Cf. Charles M. Mur-
phy, " The Church and Culture since Vatican **II** : On the Analogy of Faith
and Art," *Theological Studies* 48 (1987) : 317-331.

community and celebrates the mystery of grace whenever human life is lived authentically. With inalienable autonomy, dignity, and rights, one becomes a true person in choosing, in relating to the other, and in living in a community. There is no authentic person in social and individualistic alienation but only in the encounter of a love partnership within the context of a caring community.

The body is not an object but a singular unified being where the spirit is. The Christian conception of the embodied spirit reJects any type of dualism or any kind of devaluation of the body and sexuality. "The body," in the words of J. Comblin, "is the foundation of the community, because it is the human being manifesting and communicating with others in a community." [6] The sexual character of the body is an essential dimension of the invitation to relate to others.

The mark of the creator is on the human person, who is brought forth from the primordial chaos by God's liberating love and covenant. God is the foundation and continuing presence of that interpersonal relation, that community of two which is male and female. The two can never find a complete wellspring for their community of love in themselves but only in the original source of agape, in God.

In Christian terms, the total person in his/her inability to overcome the experience of endemic alienation, division, and death, finds a new liberation in humanity become God in Christ. Through the mystery of the Incarnation, the old reality is transformed into the new person, capable of living the full value of freedom and love in solidarity with the other. Christ is the total splendor of the person as image of God.

Personalist Theology

The most challenging question a person must think about is how to articulate the feeling one has about oneself. If the question

[8] In his creative approach to anthropology from the perspective of Liberation Theology, *Antropologia Crista* (Petr6polis, Brazil: Editora Vozes, 1985), p. 272.

is existentially the same, the answer is always complex and open-ended because it is rooted in the depth of the mystery of the person, a unique individual who nevertheless needs dialogue with others. The deeper and transcendent meaning of the person cannot be found through science alone or even through reason alone because it is fundamentally religious.

Among religions, anthropologies of individual or cosmic dualism are common. But biblical revelation rejects dualism and establishes the unconditional value of the total person as male and female, originating and intersecting in the creative act of divine agape (Genesis). Thus neither the individual persons nor even the couple can find a total validation in themselves but only with God. In the relationship between God's mystery and the person's quest, a story of passion or meaning develops which only the language of love partnership can adequately describe. This story is articulated in the prophetic covenant.

From this background of the prophetic covenant, the concept of the person develops even further within the community of the New Testament. But the socio-cultural context and the vision of the Church as institution, which has prevailed from the late Middle Ages, has prevented a deeper understanding of the personalist view of marriage in general and in ecclesial circles in particular. The search for the juridical essence of marriage predominated over the covenantal perspective found in Scripture and in the Patristic writers. As for Christian anthropology, classical theology did not go beyond Boethius's definition of a person at the beginning of the Middle Ages.[7]

The modern dialogue between theology and contemporary culture has made it possible to develop a theology which considers the concept and complexity of the individual person with the seriousness it deserves. The person comes to be and is essentially enriched by the other, opening to and communicating one with the other in the encounter made possible by word and love. Among modern approaches to the different aspects of the human being,

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[7] " An individual substance of rational nature," see Ch. Schutz, " Der Mensch als Person," in *Mysterium Salutis,* vol. 2, pp. 637-656.

two philosophers in particular are especially significant as antecedents to a more personalist theology and, consequently, to a more personalist understanding of marriage: Ebner and Buber.

Ebner's spiritual search led him to the conviction that personal fulfilment and authenticity are possible only in the word-and-love dialogue of communion between two people and their relationship with the personal God. Word and love are the keys to a relational understanding of the person and his/her mystery. A living word constitutes human spirituality and makes the deepest of human encounters possible. There is no truly living word except the one of love, which liberates a human being and opens him or her to transcendence and to participation in God's love.

In his mystical and philosophical thinking, Buber strove to counter individualistic and impersonal conceptions of the person. He insisted on the relation of dialogue and reciprocity, the "!-Thou," by which a person is constituted and is present to the other. The other level of relation, the "I-It", only produces alienation because it reduces the person to an object of manipulation. The interpersonal relation of mutual self-revelation stems from God's calling the human being to existence and to a relationship of dialogue with Him. " Extended, the lines of relationship intersect in the eternal You." [8]

Many other philosophers have provided breadth and depth of vision to a renewed horizon of the person; they have added a great variety of perspectives but have especially noted the importance of human freedom and love. E. Levinas, also inspired by biblical interpretation, voiced a strong reaction against modernity and its thirst for power. He insisted on the primacy of the relationship with the other and exhorted us to see in the symbolic epiphany of one's naked face both the indigent human condition and the transcendent divine.

From another point of view, G. Marcel spoke of the meaning of the human encounter made possible by fidelity and founded on a communion of love. Through the gift and interchange of love, one becomes existentially fulfilled in one's openness to the

• M. Buber, *I and Thou,* p. 123.

other. This love brjngs about union, not confusion. From an
existentialist perspective, L. Lavelle says, in the communion with
the other everyone receives the same life he/she tries to communi-
cate to the other. [9]

When this interpersonal understanding of the person is ap-
plied to conjugal communion and sexuality, its theological rele-
vance is obvious. It provides an intellectual grasp of human exist-
ence in the encounter with the other and in transcendence toward
God, and this echoes the biblical notion of covenant as the basis
of marriage. This also leads to a more profound understanding
and better appreciation of the conjugal partnership and its sexual
reality. It takes note of the totality of the human being, body
and spirit, for it is by giving and receiving in one's totality that a
person develops. In the words of Wilhelm Ernst, " the encounter
of husband and wife in the love of the couple is, in the eyes of
interpersonalism, the highest form of the I-Thou dialogue which
constitutes the human being." [10]

This philosophy of " existence as dialogue " has influenced
the anthropology of theologians like K. Barth and K. Rahner. It
grounds and provides insights for a more personalist and less ob-
jectivist interpretation of the sacraments. In the case of matri-
mony, it reaches back to the existential roots of a person's ex-
perience and brings out the nature and quality of the marriage
relationship. From the point of view of the person, we can draw
some major conclusions with regard to this relationship.

A person becomes truly such only in communion with the other
and for the other and thus is meant to attain his/her full com-
plementarity and requisite mutuality in the conjugal community.
With their solidarity in a common nature and basic needs, male
and female are called to intimate coexistence, and this becomes
a liberating and personalizing encounter. In fact, given the

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9 L. Lavelle, *L'erreur de Narcisse* (Paris, 1939), p. 161. With regard to
the phenomenological perspective of E. Levinas and its importance from the
liturgical point of view, see Jean-Francois Lavigne, "A Propos du statut de
la Liturgie dans la pensee d'Emmanuel Levinas," *Maison-Dieu* 169 (1987):
61-72.

10 Ernst, " Marriage as Institution ... ," p. 64.

existential needs of the human person, one's aspirations toward fulfillment cannot be achieved except through interpersonal relations. That is the important message of personalist philosophy that was so often neglected in classical anthropology. Other human sciences, like psychology, confirm the fact that the need for others is the center of gravity of all human needs.[11] Although the ideal of interpersonal communion and the human need for others goes beyond the conjugal sphere, it is here that the spouses reach an integral actualization. The following comment that J. van de Wiele made in reference to the human person has its full confirmation in marriage. "To be a subject means ... above all to come out of oneself in a movement without return, (and) that promotes the other, makes the other be, makes him/her to be personally creative." [12] This dynamic and personalist view has even greater importance in an age of rampant individualism, when only the individual is seen as " the basic building block of society." [18]

A person who is endowed with an inherent dignity and freedom is called to share his or her interiority and intimacy in a community of mutuality. Being equal but different, spouses are called to live within a relationship of freedom within and in relation to the other and to achieve a kind of balance therein.

Finally, the human person, this reality always new, this mystery in search of meaning, is called to a permanent commitment to fidelity. Here is where the greatness of personal freedom and of human frailty are most manifest. Every interpersonal relation shares the reality of death with the fears and ambiguities it creates in the present, and this challenges the mutual receiving and giving of commitment in marriage. The greatness of freedom is revealed because this freedom " is capable of overcoming

[11] Erik H. Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964).

[12] J. van de Wiele, "Intersubjectiviteit en zijnsparticipatie," *Tijdscrift 'tJoor filosofie* 27 (1965): 655, quoted by J. Gevaert, *El Problema del Hombre: Introduci6n a Antropologia Filos6fiea* (Salamanca: Sfgueme, 1981), p. 66.

[1a] John Naisbitt, *Megatrends* (New York: Warner Books), p. 261.

the obstacles, and of renouncing ... transitory values as needed to live in fidelity to one person." [14]

A dynamic view of the human person shows marriage as a journey with cycles or stages throughout life, stages which entail possible crises and make growth necessary. Psychological studies have increased our awareness in this regard, and rightly so, but overemphasis on developmental concepts, especially when borrowed from a competitive and pragmatic culture, can also devalue the dignity of the person. Because each person has absolute worth, he or she can never be viewed merely as the means for someone else's development. Marital growth is an essential part of life, yet it cannot be equated with success in all the qualities human beings may consider important. It is being faithful that constitutes a personal relationship, and in this sense marital growth also means growth in fidelity. In Christian terms, crises and challenges mean an opportunity of grace for the spouses journeying towards the agapic love design brought about by God's Presence.

The Sexual Person

Openness toward others, which is part of the essential make-up of the person, is made concrete and actual in the sexual relationship. As Merleau-Ponty points out, the person is a unified being characterized by a sexually differentiated body; throughout the course of life and in one's whole personality, he/she is a "sexed being." [15] Sexual attraction and sexual desire are an integral part of each person and an essential means of communication between persons. Personal attachment, empowered by the physical appeal, points towards a complete integration of the gift of male and female sexuality in a relationship of love and commitment. This relationship should not remain at the peripheral level because it is meant to be personal in the deepest sense; it can represent concrete communication at its highest level, the giving of self envisioned in Christ's call to unity.

[14] Gevaert, *El Problema del Hombre,* p. 226.

[15] P. Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception* (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), pp. 154-71.

Sexuality, as a core of the conjugal community, is a powerful reality with complex meanings which have to be learned and cultivated. They are learned in the human process of personalization and psychosexual development through affective relations with others, and they enable the person to achieve a sense of identity, self-worth, and love.

These complex meanings make sexuality a powerful symbol of the human community. Fulfilled in personal intercourse, the sexual encounter is meant to convey the meanings of total validation and openness to and acceptance of the other. It either has a profound human significance or else becomes deceptive. This is because its dynamism tends essentially to lock two human beings in an all-embracing relation. Sexual intercourse implies more than a matter-of-fact relationship remaining at a superficial level; sexuality configurates the person as embodied spirit in all his/her biological, psychological, and existential dimensions. Consequently, it is meant to move the person toward truthful and reciprocal acceptance and giving at the physical, emotional, and spiritual levels. Bernard Cooke states the link between the reality of human sacramentality-the   fact that we are a symbol in our very way of being and communicating-and   the profound importance of sexual honesty :

Our sexuality can reveal our relatedness to others, our acceptance or rejection of them as equal human persons, our concern for and our interest in them. . . . Sexuality can be a unique link between people; it can also be an immense barrier. It can communicate love or hatred; it can provide great security for persons, or it can be a key symbol of one's self-depreciation. It can be used to establish and enrich intimacy among persons, or it can be used as a refuge from and substitute for real personal intimacy.[16]

The symbolic reality of sexual intercourse makes possible that creative freedom which characterizes true interpersonal encounters. The corporeal condition is seen as no accident but something inseparable from the unity which is the person. Though

1e B. Cooke, *Sacraments and Sacramentality* (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third Publications, 1983), p. 52.

made possible by the flesh, sexuality depends more on a caring relation of male and female, both limited and gifted, than on functional capacity; sexuality is more something we are than something we have. Human sexuality is not simply biological or corporeal; its deep meaning and potential emerge mainly from an integral, personalist view of its erotic, genital, and spiritual dimensions. This integral vision rejects any spiritualistic or dualistic view of the person which denigrates the body or sexuality. Even more, it leads to the realization that only love can reveal the full meaning and value of sexuality.

Perhaps the greatest challenge the person faces is the interpersonal relationship which the sexual dimension of heterosexual love calls for. Such an interaction is challenging because it is marked by the paradoxical and complex need of total openness, and this can make the continuing and dynamic journey with the other and for the other humanizing and meaningful. The complex existential meaning of human sexuality calls for the appreciation of all its dimensions.

In the aftermath of the sexual revolution, modern society experiences a crisis in the meaning of human sexuality. The symbolic and meaningful language of erotic energy is a powerful yet vulnerable reality. Its very vulnerability points to how important it is to have a liberating and integrated representation of the full meaning of sexuality, how it can advance the process of personalization and socialization. Though progress has been made by the human sciences in the understanding of the phenomenon of sex, this has not been accompanied by a personalist view of the human mystery and the total context of sexuality. For this reason, sex has been reduced, especially in the popular media, to genitality, a mere commodity in a consumeristic society. This presents a real challenge for the Church, called, as herald and servant, to celebrate the mystery of the whole person in marriage.

In regard to marriage, the most important task for the Church is to integrate all human values and especially the full meaning of sexuality into a more personal theology. A personalist and existentialist theology will acknowledge marriage as a sacrament and

recognize the importance of pastoral care. To be a welcoming and supportive environment of growth for couples, especially for newlyweds, the Church must first have a positive view of sexuality. This will enable the Church to serve as a model of intimate caring, a credible witness in the face of the emptiness created by post-modern culture. A positive view which embodies Christian ideals must be founded on the anthropological-biblical perspective. As J. Gevaert has rightly stated, Genesis provides " an acceptable and modern anthropology." [17] Being created " in the image of God " reveals the interpersonal nature of the man-woman structure. The archetypes presented by Genesis can still enlighten a modern person in search of authenticity and true freedom. Genesis illuminates two major foundational dimensions in particular : the meaning of sex and body and the meaning of the conjugal relation betwen the two sexes.

The Bible witnesses in a unique way to the quality and transcendence of human origins. The person is "the other," different from and yet in complete dependence on the Creator; the only human answer to the challenge of life lies in liberating dialogue with God. God-created action is an action of covenant and liberation from the primeval chaos. There is union, fidelity, and communion in this created flow of life and goodness from the source, divine agape. Humanity created in sexually differentiated bodies is a reflection and mirror of God's goodness ; we image God in our very being as male and female. This prophetic vision leads to an open and positive appreciation of the body and sexuality; they are good because creation " was very good " (Genesis 1 :27-31). The whole of creation-including sexuality-is seen as sacred, but it is not sacralized to the point of idolization.[18] It

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[11] Gevaert, *El Problema del Hombre,* p. 114.

[1a] By "sacred" we mean that the whole of God's creation is holy by reason of its source. We affirm what E. Schillebeeckx says about the secular value marriage is given in the Old Testament; this stands in contrast with the rituals of the fertility gods, which attribute sexuality to the sphere of the divine. "Faith in Yahweh in effect 'desacralized,' or secularized, marriage-took it out of a purely religious sphere and set it squarely in the human, secular sphere" *(Marriage, Human Reality and Saving Mystery,* New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965, pp. 12-13).

is also transcendent, but it is never exalted to the point of euphoric naivete. While sexuality is sacred and transcendent in that the dynamic interpersonal relation of the couple manifests the divine source, it is also only human and fragile because sexuality and mortality are linked together. Sexuality is thus seen as a gift from God in the service of love to form community between man and woman. Even after sin darkens the capacity for love, the radical goodness of the gift remains the same (Genesis 3).

Symbolic dynamics that are involved and what they imply about the interpersonal relationship of the couple are expressed in the biblical parable of the woman's origin. This simple Yahwist account (Genesis 2 :18-25) presents an answer to the human person's solitary loneliness; the foundation of the conjugal unity is seen in the two complementary poles of unerasable sexuality. Adam welcomes Eve as man's rib, as the answer to his innermost needs and desires. This has been rightly called " the first song of love." The relationship that is established is as important as the two differentiated sexes themselves. The two of them, individually and together, are God's image (Genesis 1 :26) and consequently of equal dignity in their mutual complementarity. They can only fully discover their individual identity in dialogue with the other and for the other. This is a differentiation of communion and togetherness, not of a dualistic brokenness and hostility, and therefore it rules out any dominance of one over the other.[19] But this joyful encounter becomes ambiguous when the male's supremacy is established (Genesis 4 :19-24). Despite the constant influence of biblical revelation, marriage tends towards sacralization, and some ambiguous attitudes toward sex prevail.

The Song of Song celebrates human eroticism and love as a parable of the intimate love of God for his people. The couple image God's liberating creation and covenant in their faithful and

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[19] Two important articles from the theological and biblical point of view respectively: L. Eoff, "Visao ontol6gico-teol6gico do masculino e do feminino," *Convergencia* 7 (1974) ; P. Grelot, "The Institution of Marriage: Its Evolution in the Old Testament," *Concilium* 55 (1970) : 39-50.

creative love.[20] A sexual relationship of this sort is both human-
izing and truly fulfilling.

Marriage " in the Lord " is a Christian sacrament. But here
we speak not just in the narrow sense of the marriage ceremony
but in the broader sense of the whole of conjugal life. This can
only be properly understood from the order of creation. In the
dynamic reality of conjugal love, the other person is embraced
and the infinite human longing is fulfilled so that love conquers
the fear and fact of death. But to speak more precisely, this ful-
fillment occurs "already, but not yet." In the perspective of
Christian faith, there is an eschatological meaning to marriage,
based on the salvific reality of natural marriage. As G. van der
Leeuw wrote from the point of view of the phenomenology of
religion: " The old primitive world knew marriage as a sacra-
ment in the literal sense of the word. This implies that in some
ways the end of marriage is not mutual comfort or procreation,
but salvation to be found through it." [21]

The husband-wife relation, like the divine-human self-com-
munication, can only exist in a relationship which corresponds to
the archetype of original love presented by Genesis and character-
ized by true freedom, profound intimacy, and fidelity.

Freedom. The first characteristic which identifies conjugal love
is freedom. A person is free because he has the power to choose
and shape his life. In creating the meaning of one's life, one should
choose love because love best expresses those human values which
are inseparably linked to human freedom and, in the process, de-
livers a person from loneliness. Conjugal love must be more than
an escape; it requires mature emotional growth towards that

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[20] For a critique of the theological evolution of marriage in Scripture, see
the important research of J. Cottiaux, *La Sacralisation du Marriage: De la
Genese aux incises Mattheennes* (Paris: Cerf, 1982).

[21] G. van der Leeuw, *Sakramentales Denken* (Kassel, 1959), p. 152. The fol-
lowing statement of Pope Leo XIII is relevant in this respect : " Since mar-
riage is a divine institution, and, in a certain sense, was since the beginning
a prefiguration of the Incarnation of Christ, a religious quality is an ingredient
in it, a quality which is not adventitious, but inborn, not bestowed upon it by
human beings, but built-in" *Arcanum divinae,* in *AAS* 12 (1879) : 392.

authentic love which can be found in autonomous and stable re-
lationships.   Too often social conditioning, family dependency,
and unconscious fears, originating from emotional scars or past
and present anxiety, cripple the freedom of personal love. The
challenge of conjugal love calls for personal decision; it presup-
poses a personality which is trying to be open to self-understand-
ing and to understanding others.

    Love is something we are called to be and to experience deeply.
It is an actualization of the most important reality of our being
and the heart of the conjugal encounter which seeks the sharing
of the other, is concerned for the well-being of the other, and
promotes the growth of the other.[22] This kind of love is human-
izing because it joins the two persons in a total relationship, an
affective and effective union that results in mutual validation and
meaning. Human love is never completely free and unconditional.
Secondary and individualistic ends are inevitably part of the
human experience of love, but they cannot be the main motiva-
tion if an authentic conjugal relationship is to develop. Love and
freedom are inseparable in human experience, particularly in the
most challenging of all, marriage. In fact, as J. Gevaert states,
" love is the sacrament of freedom," [23] because love is at the same
time a " sign " of mature freedom and the place where freedom
can grow.

    In contrast with this vision of a true life-giving love in freedom,
romanticized and idealistic love reduces a relationship to the senti-
ment of unrealistic expectations. It is a false " sign " because it
prevents that true freedom which can only come from an all-em-
bracing acceptance of the real person in an intimate and inter-
dependent relationship.

    The experience of freedom and love points to the mystery of
the inviolability and openness of the person and reveals both the
greatness and fragility of human love. The personal journey that
is marriage leads us to experience this at the deepest level. The
greatness of human love stems from the potentiality for growth

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22 Eric Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956).
23 Gevaert, *El Problema del Hombre,* p. 214.

that it provides, for courage and generosity are engendered in an encounter of two freedoms won by love and fostered by love. To be authentically human, an encounter has to be free because, as Simone de Beavoir says, " authentic love should be founded on the reciprocal knowledge of two freedoms." 24 However, if freedom is the seal of authentic love, it is also the potential of its fragility. Awesome and ineffable though it might be, love is only human. Human unpredictability creates a positive tension to keep a relationship alive; love demands a continuing attitude of vigilance. Intimacy implies the total " nakedness " of two free people to one another; it creates the highest degree of personal vulnerability. This means love must be more than an occasional conquest; it can only be a life-time process, a process of self-giving. It is, in fact, a paradoxical dialectical process that makes both the individual freedom of each spouse and the positive dynamic of an intimate partnership possible.

Understanding the conjugal journey as an act of freedom makes love both a gift and a challenge and calls for a lifelong celebration, in Christian terms, a " marriage in the Lord ". In fact, if marriage celebration has to respect and build upon the foundational insights of a personalist view, the theology of this celebration must also incorporate the human experience of love and interpret its natural sacramentality in the light of the covenantal view of Scripture. Both the personalist and the biblical views converge in the mystery of the plenitude of freedom and love for which " Christ has set us free." (Gal. 5:1)

Intimacy. An integral view of the person shows us the depth and complexity of genuine intimacy. Our being is, in all reality, sexual; but intimacy cannot be reduced to sexual desire. Intimacy in marriage is meant to be the expression of love in the complete sense. It involves the physical and the passionate, but it also implies an attitude of unconditional love (agape) and the caring of friendship (philia). Consequently, conjugal intimacy is

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24 Simone de Beauvoir, *Le deuxihne sex,* Vol. 2, *L'exp/:rience vecue* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. *505,* quoted by P. E. Charbonneau, *Amore liberdade* (Sao Paulo: Herder, 1968).

sexualized love reflecting the whole of a relationship, both of the flesh and of the spirit, pleasurable and responsible, communicative and creative.

The terms love and intimacy are ambiguous because their meaning is so often narrowed to only one of the components of the committed partnership: the physical, the affective, or the spiritual. Sexuality becomes a truthful symbolic language and a ritual of love only when love-making establishes an intimate bond in a meaningful manner. The sharing of the total self in the whole of a relationship culminates and is celebrated in the spontaneous way of corporeal communion through the irreducible power of eros. Rollo May's holistic view of eros is that "eros seeks union with the other person in delight and passion, and the procreating of new dimensions of experience which broaden and deepen the being of both persons." [25] This calls for not only physical but also emotional and spiritual nakedness. Committed couples describe this as "allowing themselves *to* be vulnerable." But they thereby validate one another's existence and bring bonding and intimacy to their relationship. [26] (And "risking the loss of self" by sharing the innermost self also holds true in our relationship with God.)

Nevertheless, spiritual love cannot always remove the barriers *to* intimate closeness because there is fear. Fear is a deception which can block one's ability *to* allow oneself to be wholly and deeply touched by the other. It takes different forms in different people; it may involve dependencies or even idealization. But each of us does have innate capabilities for intimacy, and these can be developed through sharing, through mutual openness and trust, through personal reassurance. One needs a searching heart committed *to* a process of self-actualization by means of the two-fold obligation in marriage : *to* accept and to give. The richness of conjugal love and its potential for growth are rooted precisely in this existential self-giving; as Teilhard de Chardin wrote: " Only those who are driven by passion love adequately, those

[25] Rollo May, *Love and Will* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), p. 74.
[26] T. J. Tyrrell, "Intimacy, Sexuality and Infatuation," in *Intimacy,* ed. A. Polcino (Whitinsville, Mass. : Affirmation Books, 1978), pp. 55-70.

who are led one by the other to a higher possession of their be-ing." [21] This kind of loving self-gift, of self-sacrifice in the true Christian sense, is in itself an openness to transcendence.

Our understanding of intimate sexual love would be incomplete without the inclusion of another essential dimension, namely, fruitfulness as an intrinsic gift and fulfillment of the sexual con-dition of the spouses. Love-making in the mutual self-giving and total possession of the union of intercourse is in itself a creative action which, by its natural meaning and dynamism, is oriented toward mutual enrichment and perpetuation in a third being. Anthropologists and psychologists have acknowledged this pro-creative component of the erotic state and order of being. As John F. Crosby points out, " Eros is the drive to create, to pro-create, to communicate to another person in the most intimate way possible." [28]

Love, freedom, and intimacy are not only inseparable as an in-timate partnership; they are also essentially linked to a sense of ethical responsibility toward the other and indeed toward all other human beings. Consequently, this option of love calls not only for fidelity to the other spouse but also for care of one's children, a vocation to life and generativity in general, and finally service geared towards the future of the community. The vocation of parenthood requires a real decision of personal conscience. As Vatican II says, in reflecting on the equally important unitive and procreative meanings of marriage: " The parents themselves should ultimately make this judgment in the sight of God." [89]

Fidelity. An intimate interpersonal relationship necessarily in-cludes the dimension of fidelity. Freedom, intimacy, and fidelity are inseparable characteristics of a committed choice; they estab-lish the two persons in one love, yet preserve the dignity of each inviolate. As a person cannot renounce his/her own dignity, a spouse cannot renounce commitment to a free, intimate, and faith-ful love without compromising the relationship.

[21] P. Teilhard de Chardin, *L'energie humaine* (Paris: Seuil, 1962), p. 82.

[28] John F. Crosby, *Illusion and Disillusion: The Self in Love and Marriage* (Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth, 1985), p. 71.

[2e] *Gaudium et Spes,* 50, see also 48 (ed. W. M. Abbott, pp. 250-255).

Without fidelity, love is not an option of commitment to one another but only an unengaging action of affability or a simple transaction for a utilitarian purpose of common interest. Further- more, faithful love demands commitment to a person-not   to an idea, to a life style, or even to certain values. It is in fact a choice of loyalty, truthfulness, and concern for the sake of an inter-per- sonal community.   From   a philosophical perspective, Gabriel Marcel described this kind of fidelity as the perpetuity of a crea- tive testimony in the historical process, a creative fidelity which is required by the inexhaustible being of the person. Every ego- tistical retrenchment leads to a retrenchment of being both in the selfish one and in the other. so

Consequently faithful love is an essential part of being human. It is an expression of our being which involves an open-ended process of radical commitment, always open to the mystery of an unpredictable person. It is a life-long journey of hope, because only when we hope can we love. In this sense, fidelity and love require each other and support each other-not in any forced sense but as essential parts of a process and a choice. In the many loving acts of ordinary conjugal interaction, fidelity and love are, in fact, dynamic and creative in the unfolding human pilgrimage. This orientation towards the future entails two qualities which are at the core of fidelity: unconditional love and a life-long com- mitment. Both are intrinsic demands of the conjugal covenant. As John Paul II states: "The total physical self-giving would be a lie if it were not the sign and fruit of a total personal self-giv- ing in which the whole person, including the personal dimension, is present : if the person were to withhold something or reserve the possibility of deciding otherwise in the future, by this very fact he or she would not be giving totally." 31

Such emphasis on the total commitment that fidelity implies is even more important in our own time, when marriages are fail- ing at a very disturbing rate. Our contemporary culture is char- acterized by rapid social change, high mobility, and longer life

Bo G. Marcel, *Etre et Avoir* (Paris, 1935), pp. 139 ff.

a1 John Paul II, *The Apostolic Exhortation on the Family: Familiaris Con- sortia (Origins* 2 (1981): 441-442).

expectancy.   The   many   sociological   factors   that   have   fostered   di-
vorce   are   beyond   the   scope   of   this   study.   Here   we   can   only   point
out   once   again   the   greatness   and   fragility   of   human   freedom.   But
the   Christian   of   the   modern   world   has   to   live   the   ideal   of   faith-
fulness   that   the   Kingdom   calls   for.   This   ideal   demands   even   more
creative   ways   of   maintaining   integral   fidelity   and   stability.
Sexual   exclusivity,   meaningful   communication,   and   an   attitude   of
flexibility   and   adaptation   are,   of   course,   imperative.   But   even   be-
yond   these,   there   must   be   a   process   of   realistic   growth,   of   " many
marriages   within   a   marriage,"   to   achieve   life-time   fidelity   today. [82]
Furthermore,   stability,   the   fruit   of   fidelity,   is   needed   in   order   to
accomplish   the   task   of   raising   a   family   successfully,   especially   the
challenge   of   forming   a   community   of   persons   who   are   able   to   love
and   serve.   This   kind   of   faithful   love   has   a   transcendent   dimen-
sion   because,   more   than   any   other   expression   of   love,   it   images
the   unconditional   love   of   divine   agape: a   love   that   endures   what-
ever   comes,   and   does   not   come   to   an   end   (1 Cor.   13 :7-8).

Conclusion

This   essay   has   attempted   to   elaborate   on   the   new   understand-
ing   of   the   person   that   Vatican   II   has   provided   and   to   show   how
this   has   resulted   in   a   paradigm   shift   in   the   Christian   vision   of
marriage.   This   new   vision   stresses   the   covenant   significance   of
matrimony.   It   sees   the   essence   of   marriage   as   an   intimate   part-
nership   from   the   center   of   love;   it   presents   a   positive   view   of
sexuality,   and   stresses   the   dignity   and   freedom   of   the   human   per-
son.   The   rational,   juridical,   and   biological   view   of   the   past   cen-
turies   needs   to   be   balanced   with   a   deeper   personalist   understand-
ing   of   the   whole   of   the   marital   and   intimate   life,   now   envisioned

[82] For   a   deepened   understanding   of   the   sacramental   experience   of   marriage
as   process,   see   Bernard   Cooke,   " Indissolubility: Building   Ideal   or   Existential
Reality?",   in   *Commitment   to   Partnership,*   pp.   64-75.   From   the   sacramental
point   of   view,   John   Meyendorff   calls   marriage   a   " passage "   and   an   "open
door,"   in   *Marriage,   An   Orthodox   Perspective*   (New   York: St.   Vladimir's
Seminary   Press,   1984),   p.   20.   Concerning   the   ritual   perspective   of   "passage,"
see   Kenneth   W.   Stevenson,   *To   Join   Together: The   Rite   of   Marriage*   (New
York: Pueblo,   1987).

as a community of persons. And with this balance the couple and the family will be better able to realize their vision within the larger community.

A man and a woman in love are called to be a sign of the on-going manifestation of God to his people, and so the conjugal community is to be understood primarily as being ordered to human sharing in the divine goodness. A community of genuine mutual giving is a creative force. It not only provides the appropriate context for intimacy and reveals both the human and divine mystery; authentic marriage is also a living sign of salvation. It has human sacramentality at its very core and is a call to realize the saving mystery of Christ in our lives.

A more personalist approach to the complex and dynamic reality of this graced relationship will only enrich our current understanding of marriage. The human values we are called upon to actualize today in faith and the existential context of our times point to the grounds for a modern theological synthesis of marriage. Our approach has to start from a biblical and genuinely anthropological understanding of the person as the place of the theophany of God. This reveals to us the deep transcendent mystery of marriage embedded in today's historical reality. The human person is at the heart and center of it all. Precisely because marriage is a human reality and a natural sacrament with such various dimensions and complex intersecting meanings, our theological approach has to be interdisciplinary. Our method will involve critical interaction between biblical anthropology and Christian tradition; it will see marriage in the light of human sciences and the complex human experience of the couple. Such a personalist theology leads to a personalist sacramental vision of community; it sees us called (and gifted by that very calling) to live in" faith that makes its power felt through love." (Gal. 5 :6)

BRUCE MARSHALL'S READING OF AQUINAS

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N AN ARTICLE published by *The Thomist,* [1] Bruce D. Marshall argues that Aquinas should be viewed as a ' postliberal theologian,' that is to say, as propounding basically the same account of truth as the one put forward by George A. Lindbeck. [2] In the same issue of *The Thomist,* [3] Lindbeck not only approves Marshall's interpretation of his book but goes so far as to write: "My 'cultural-linguistic' account of religious belief is in part a clumsy rendition in modern philosophical and sociological idioms of what Aquinas often said more fully and more precisely long ago " (405). [4] And he adds : " Thus by showing how St. Thomas can be understood in a way consistent with *Nature of Doctrine,* Bruce Marshall has explained the view of truth which I had in mind better than I explained it myself " (406).

In order to keep this note relatively short, I shall bypass the question of whether Marshall's presentation of Lindbeck's thought is merely a clarification or an actual revision of it. Let us simply note the fact that Lindbeck has praised Marshall's rendering without any reservation.

[1] " Aquinas as Postliberal Theologian," *The Thomist* 53 (1989) : 352-402.

[2] *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984).

[3] " Response to Bruce Marshall," 403-406.

[4] This acknowledgment should not be taken lightly, given the remarkable acquaintance with the thought of Aquinas that Lindbeck has shown for many years. See his article, " The *A Priori* in St. Thomas' Theory of Knowledge " in *The Heritage of Christian Thought,* ed. Robert E. Cushman and Egil Grislis (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 41-63.

The question I should like to raise bears on the accuracy of
Marshall's representation of Aquinas. Marshall is undoubtedly a
fine analyst of Thomas's writings. His selection of texts evinces
a mastery of Thomas's corpus. He convincingly shows that there
is a great similarity between Aquinas's and Lindbeck's views re-
garding the paramount role of faith in the access to truth. Mar-
shall's piece may even have suggested to some readers that, in
this respect, Aquinas could be closer to a confessionalist like
Lindbeck than to a revisionist like Tracy. I shall return to this
hypothesis in my conclusion. Therefore, if Marshall's reading
of Thomas is sound, it should be a valuable contribution to a re-
cent debate among some confessionalists, Thomists, and re-
visionists. G

1. Marshall wants to test Aquinas on some distinctions drawn
from Lindbeck. He begins by acknowledging that Aquinas has a
correspondence theory of truth. He adds that, in matters of
faith, it is impossible to verify whether one's beliefs correspond
or not with what is the reality. Far from demonstrating their
tenets, believers simply hold as true what has been revealed by
God. So far as truths that go beyond the capacity of human rea-
son are concerned, Thomas repeatedly asserts that no one can
prove them.

Given the impossibility of showing that doctrines correspond
with the reality of God, the question arises: How can Christians
sort out which doctrines are true? In answer to this question,
Marshall introduces a distinction between the theory of truth
(namely, correspondence) and the criteria by which people can
justify the truth of their assertions, especially in matters which
are not susceptible of proof. There are two such criteria : linguistic

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G These three positions are represented in the articles written by William C.
Placher, Colman E. O'Neill, James J. Buckley, and David Tracy for the "Re-
view Symposium" of Lindbeck's book, published by *The Thomist* 49 (1985):
392-472. Marshall's piece, which I shall discuss here, is a reply to O'Neill. In
order not to make things too complicated, I will not refer to O'Neill's article,
since Marshall's treatment of Aquinas is clear in itself, regardless of his dis-
agreement with O'Neill.

coherence and practical coherence. Marshall claims that both of them are operative in the thought of Aquinas. [6]

Let us recall the question: How are we to find out whether a particular doctrine is true? The first part of Marshall's answer is that any singular tenet is a genuinely Christian one if it accords with revelation as expressed in Scripture and the creeds. This is linguistic coherence. If we look at Thomas's actual performance as a theologian, we can see that he appeals to Scripture and the creeds when he wants to ground the truth of particular proposi-tions. Marshall gives interesting examples of such practice in his article (375, n.47) as well as in a section of a book he wrote on Christology. [7] Those instances show that for Thomas any single affirmation must cohere with the wider web of Christian belief.

Marshall remarks that there seems to be an exception to this economy of faith. For Aquinas a person cannot at the same time have both *fides* and *scientia* regarding the same object. As is well known, many Thomists have taken advantage of this principle to ground the legitimacy, for Catholic philosophers, of engaging in natural theology (or philosophical theology). According to this view, the progress of the believers in the field of natural rea-son would entail a shrinking of the domain belonging to faith. Marshall is right in claiming that such a reading of Thomas is in-accurate. To be sure, so far as the intellectual act is concerned, a particular object cannot be simultaneously believed and fully grasped. But this by no means entails the removal of that par-ticular doctrine from the world of faith. For Aquinas, the tian's assent to that tenet remains within the general willingness to believe everything that has been revealed by God because it participates in the First Truth. And nothing less than such will-ingness, inspired by charity, is meritorious.

6 In section II of his article, Marshall introduces Lindbeck's three senses of truth: the ontological, the categorial, and the intrasystematic. In sections III and IV, where he examines Aquinas's thought, he presents only the ontological and the intrasystematic truth. The latter's criteria are linguistic and practical coherence.

7 " Thomas Aquinas's Logico-Semantic Explication of 'This man is God'," in *Christology in Conflict: The Identity of a Saviour in Rahner and Barth* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 176-189.

2. However, Marshall draws a dubious conclusion from that position. He states that, in the case of non-Christians, belief in God does not mean the same thing as in the case of Christian believers. To support his view, he adduces a few considerations.

To make his point, Marshall judiciously outlines the distinction between the formal and the material object of faith. To believe God (*credere Deo)* and to believe in God (*credere Deum)* are respectively the formal and the material aspect of faith. But when he writes that " people without Christian faith . . . do not in fact believe that God exists " (380), his statement is ambiguous. On the one hand, it is obvious that they do not *believe God;* but when they affirm that God exists, they make a correct judgment and in so doing they do *believe in God.* In other words, they really know *that* ' God ' exists (even though both Christians and non-Christians do not know *what* God is).

Marshall also affirms that Christians and people without Christian faith do not *mean* the same thing when they talk about God. Again the ambiguity noted above recurs. Against Marshall, I would say that they can very well mean the same thing in so far as they restrict themselves to stating that there is an unknown first cause of the universe.[8] But they part company at the moment they try to say more about God. And here Marshall correctly and very appositely refers to important texts (382-384). Thomas cites as an example those who think of God as a bodily reality. He adds that, in contrast to bodily beings, one cannot be *partly* right in one's knowledge of spiritual beings (God and the angels). In the case of composite beings, one may, for example, get the genus right and the species wrong. But as regards simple

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[8] Marshall writes, " even when they use the same words, philosophy and *sacra doctn'.na* are not saying the same thing" (393, n.93). Inasmuch as natural truths are concerned, this assertion contradicts Aquinas's explicit statements about philosophy, such as the following : " The study of philosophy is in itself lawful and commendable, on account of the truth which the philosophers acquired through God revealing it to them, as stated in Rom 1:19." (II-II, q. 167, a 1, ad 3) Since the criterion of 'practical coherence' applies here, Marshall's assertion also fails to match Aquinas's actual philosophical practice as a disciple of Aristotle.

beings, one grasps either the totality of their essence or none of it.

Thomas applies this principle of all or nothing to the intellectual plight of heretics, in II-II, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3, a text which Marshall discusses. The text reads :

Credere Deum non convenit infidelibus sub ea ratione qua ponitur adus fi.dei. *Non enim credunt Deum esse sub his conditionibus quas fides determinat.* Et ideo non vere Deum credunt, quia ut Philosophus <licit, in simplicibus defectus cognitionis est solum in non attingendo totaliter.

The difference which lies in the formal approach to belief is inadequately translated in the Blackfriars volume, which renders the italicized sentence as: " In their belief God's existence does not have the same meaning as it does in faith." Hence the ambiguity about ' meaning,' which can wrongly be seen as referring to the material object, whereas it actually refers to the formal object. The translation made by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province is more literal: "For they do not believe that God exists under the conditions that faith determines." Marshall quotes the latter but fails to take advantage of it, presumably because on this point he follows Lindbeck, who seems to have been confused by the Blackfriars translation. [9]

As a point of fact, Marshall does not clearly distinguish the formal and the material object of faith. He does not realize that in 11-11, q. 1, a. 2, Thomas considers not the formal but the material object of faith. Hence he blurs the line when he mistakenly states that "Thomas first argues that the *formal* object of faith must be linguistic in character " (374; emphasis mine). Having made that slip, he becomes more explicit as he talks of "faith's formal object, namely the language of Scripture and the creeds understood as the self-communication of God, the *prima veritas"* (376).

o See Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine,* 48 and 70, n. 3; Marshall, 361, 384, and 393, n. 93. As he indicates in n. 3 and n. 26. Lindbeck's stance on this point has been influenced by Victor Preller, whose interpretation of Aquinas is, to my mind, unreliable.

3. One of the reasons that could account for this collapse of
the formal into the material can be found in Marshall's tendency
to envision concepts rather than assents as central to belief. In
the wake of Lindbeck, he is primarily concerned with " concepts
and categories " (361), which seem to possess an *intrinsic*
cognitional quality as parts of a religious discourse (359).
Hence his conceptualistic reading of Aquinas :

My proposal then is that for Thomas, Christianity is a complex and
variegated network or web of belief, in which the truth of any one
aspect is measured by its coherence with the others (377).

The obvious question to be asked here is : With what measuring
aspect (among " the others ") shall we begin? Such a choice re-
quires a series of correct judgments, made by intelligent believers
who can assess what is primary and what is secondary among the
many biblical assertions.

Surely coherence with the whole of *sacra doctrina* is important
for Aquinas, but his emphasis lies elsewhere. He lays the em-
phasis on something that Marshall mentions-first   truth-but
leaves unexplained. For Thomas, first truth, as partially com-
municated to humans, is the very light that allows them to *see*
(*videre)* that the revealing God must be believed.[10] This formal
side of assent always links up with the material side to elicit in-
tellectual acts of judgment, expressed in propositions. Therefore,
both from the formal and from the material viewpoints, assents
are more than the relating of categories according to logical
rules.

To complete our interpretation of the disputed article, I would
contend that in the phrase *nee vere Deum credunt* the emphasis
falls on *vere.* The phrase does not mean that the unbelievers can-
not really believe (=know) that God exists, which is one of the
two senses that Marshall suggests. It means that they do not
truly believe, that is to say, they do not assent from the formal
viewpoint of the first truth. In the case of heretics, as Aquinas
states, even though such people can *credere Deum,* they will not

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[10] II-II, q. 1, a. 4, ad 2-3. In his long passage on first truth, Marshall never
mentions intellectual light, which is central for Aquinas.

credere Deo. But here Marshall does not bring to light the fact that, whereas Thomas writes that *heretics* refuse to believe God, he never says that *pre-Christian philosophers* were unwilling to believe God. Despite the countless opportunities he had to make such a statement, he refrains from doing so, undoubtedly because of the plain fact that the philosophers were not confronted with the Jewish, let alone by the Christian, revelation. Unfortunately, Marshall suggests that the " pre-Christian philosopher " (380) is in the same situation as the *infidelis.* For Aquinas, the latter's situation is worse than the pre-Christian unbeliever's. The articles Marshall quotes [11] do not warrant his contention that today's unbelievers, many of whom are in the same position as the Greek philosophers, cannot believe in God.

4. So far, we have considered only the criterion of linguistic coherence. In point of fact, Marshall's discussion of Aquinas depends almost entirely on this criterion. He devotes hardly more than a couple of pages (384-386) to his second criterion, practical coherence. In footnote 76 (385-6), he makes a perceptive distinction between heretics and sinners. The former simply have no faith; the latter can have faith, albeit unformed by charity. But again, unless one identifies present-day unbelievers with heretics, this distinction in no way supports the conclusion that non-Christians cannot really believe in God.

Moreover, Aquinas's thinking about faith unformed by charity, although correctly expounded by Marshall in that footnote, corresponds with the principle of practical coherence only in a very restricted sense. It means that, since they have faith, Christian sinners grasp the connection between their beliefs and practices. It does not mean that they are willing to implement that connection. But such a (correct) reading of Aquinas by Marshall in his footnote contradicts the (incorrect) reading he gives in the body of his text, which is summed up in this sentence:

[11] II-II, q. 5, a. 3, and q. 10, a. 3. Unfortunately, he does not refer to q. 10, a. 1, in which Thomas distinguishes between unbelief as absence of faith and unbelief as opposition to faith.

So for Thomas the faith by which the intellect is conformed to reality is impossible without the disposition to act in ways appropriate to what is believed (385).

This description fits only faith formed by charity; it excludes unformed faith. Therefore Marshall's principle of practical coherence corresponds with Aquinas's general concept of faith solely in the weak sense one finds in the footnote.

In conclusion, I offer these critical remarks on Marshall's article simply in order partially to revise his rich and perceptive study of Aquinas. His study makes it clear that in some respects Lindbeck's and Marshall's view of theology is closer to Aquinas's than Tracy's is.[12] On the other hand, I have adumbrated only one of the difficult epistemological problems Marshall has inherited from Lindbeck. Such epistemological and methodological issues might drive a larger wedge between Lindbeck and Aquinas than Marshall is willing to acknowledge.[13]

[12] Compare with David Tracy: *"Fundamental* theologies in fact ordinarily share that commitment [to either a particular religious tradition or a particular praxis movement bearing religious significance] but in principle will abstract themselves from all religious 'faith commitments' for the legitimate purposes of critical analysis of all religious and theological claims" *(The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism.* New York: Crossroad, 1981, 57; see 57-58 and 62-64). When not mere tensions but even plain contradictions inevitably arise between fundamental and systematic theology (as Tracy understands those two types of theology; see also 64-65), will they always be resolved in favor of faith, as Thomas thinks they should (e.g., *Summa Contra Gentiles,* I, chaps. 2-9)?

[13] See the excellent review of *The Nature of Doctrine* by Charles C. Hefling, Jr., in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 3 (1985): 51-69.

RECONSIDERING AQUINAS AS POSTLIBERAL THEOLOGIAN

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I N A RECENT issue of this journal [1] Bruce Marshall argued that the position of Thomas Aquinas on faith and reason-in particular on the meaning of assertions about God-can be read as fundamentally convergent with that of the contemporary theologian, George Lindbeck. The claim is striking because, as Marshall acknowledges, the traditional reading of Aquinas is quite different. Traditionally-Gilson is Marshall's example-it has been thought that the conclusion of a demonstration of God's existence or unity could be true, could correspond to reality, quite independently of the religious doctrines concerning the revealed mysteries of the Godhead. But Marshall argues that, in fact, the texts of Aquinas explicitly deny that the non-believer is really succeeding in talking about God at all.

The claim is a challenging one, and one from which there seems much to learn, because it is not only bold-and so promises a significant shift in the traditional understanding of Aquinas's meaning-but confronts many of the texts which seem to warrant that traditional understanding. Even if his reading is wrong, which I believe it is, there is benefit in thinking through the reasons why it is wrong and in clarifying not only what Aquinas taught but also what is at issue.

I propose to do three things: first, to state the interpretation which Marshall, enlarging on Lindbeck, wants to give of the

[1] Bruce D. Marshall, "Aquinas as Postliberal Theologian," *The Thomist* 53 (July 89) : 353-402. The article is followed by George Lindbeck, "Response to Bruce Marshall," 403-406.

position of Aquinas on the possibility of natural knowledge of
God; second, to examine several instances of Marshall's reading
which are integral to his arguments but which I think are wrong,
i.e., misconstrue the texts he is dealing with; third, to reflect
briefly on one of the larger issues which seem to me involved in
the questions here discussed, namely the commensurability of the
teachings of the major religious traditions.

I

In Lindbeck's view,[2] the propositions about God (or "the Ulti-
mate Mystery") which religious doctrines assert can have
" ontological truth " or correspond to reality only if the cate-
gories in terms of which those propositions are formulated are
adequate to express that reality. This condition may be called
the " categorial truth " of the doctrine, and " can thus be de-
scribed as potential ontological truth, ... a religion has this kind
of truth when its ' categories ' are *capable* of being used to de-
scribe what is ultimately real" (359). [3] The categorial truth of
religious doctrine is thus a necessary condition for its teachings
to be "ontologically true," i.e., to correspond to what is.

But it is not a sufficient condition. The categories employed by
the teachings must be used in the proper way: the composing and
dividing of the categories (e.g., "Father," "person," "nature")
must be a composing and dividing which asserts what, according
to the religious doctrine, really is combined and separated. But
for the utterances [4] of a believer to be ontologically true, they

[2] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a
Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984).

[3] Page numbers without other citation will be to Marshall's article; see
note 1.

[4] Lindbeck also seems to make it a necessary condition of " ontological truth"
that the utterance be performative in J. L. Austin's sense. *The Nature of
Doctrine,* p. 68 *et pass.* Since Marshall does not dwell on this in his article,
I only note it here. For a brief but incisive criticism of this condition, see Paul
Griffiths, "An Apology for Apologetics," *Faith and Philosophy* 5 (Oct. 1988) :
409-11. It may be that Lindbeck was led to stress utterances as the locus of
truth, curious though that seems, because the alternative is to make what is
uttered true, and that would be independent of the person's practice in a way
that utterance seems not to be.

must also be consistent or cohere with the paradigmatic proposi-
tions of the religion, with its revealed texts or its dogmatic ar-
ticles or its orthodox tradition, etc. And furthermore, they must
cohere not only with paradigmatic linguistic instances, but also
with the practices which are integral to being a member of that
religion, e.g., in the case of Christianity, loving and caring for
one's neighbor in need. Lindbeck calls this joint cultural-lin-
guistic condition, " intrasystematic truth." "Religious utterances
have intrasystematic truth, not only when they fit with the lin-
guistic paradigms by which the religion indicates how its cate-
gories should be combined, but also when they are made in the
contexts of practices which the religion sees as appropriate to
[congruent with] that kind of utterance " (362). 5

Together, categorial truth and intrasystematic truth are nec-
essary and sufficient conditions for ontological truth (366). It
should be clear-and Marshall is careful to stress this-that Lind-
beck has not redefined [what he calls "ontological "] truth: it
still means correspondence with reality or the *adaequatio mentis
ad rem.* What Lindbeck is bringing into salience are the condi-
tions under which one can utter such statements so that they will
be true of the divine reality (Ultimate Mystery), i.e., so that
there truly is an *adaequatio* of the mind to the reality.

To state the thesis baldly, then, if the terms (categories and
use) of isolated assertions about the divine do not have the mean-
ing which those terms have in the complex network of interrelated
statements of normative doctrine (scriptures, councils, tradition,
etc.) and if the uttering of them is not congruent with ortho-
praxis, the assertions will not be, indeed cannot possibly be, true.

Now there certainly seems to be something correct about this

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5 It is the practical aspect of intrasystematic truth which leads Lindbeck to
the paradoxical claim that a crusader who cries *Christus est Dominus* as he
beheads an infidel is not making an ontologically true utterance. See *The Na-
ture of Doctrine,* p. 64. In the background of this claim is Wittgenstein's
teaching that the meaning of a word is its use and that the use is embedded
in a "form of life". (The sentence quoted in the text above, incidentally,
clearly means to state a both/and condition, although its syntax is that of
either/or.)

when it is applied to statements of revealed truths, to the doctrinal assertions of Christians.   That is, there is indeed something stated in the Scriptures and the teachings of the Church which is regulative of the language which we can properly use about the God of Jesus Christ, something like rules of grammar for belief-utterances.6 In speaking of the *occultum divinitatis,1* we cannot be guided simply by the natural or worldly meanings of the words : we have to be instructed on how, e.g., 'Father' and 'Son' are to be differently related.

That this is the position of Aquinas seems clear from texts like the following :

The unity of the divine essence, such as it is affirmed *(ponitur)* by the faithful, namely with omnipotence and providence over all things, and similar properties ... constitutes the article [of faith] 8

When the faithful affirm, in reciting the Creed, the unity of God ("I believe in one God ... ") that unity is understood as not just compatible with a Trinity of Persons but as imbricated with it, affirmed together with it.

But if this is the only possible way to utter true statements about the divine, then it implies that a philosopher like Aristotle, for example, could not have made any true statements about the God of Jesus. It's not just that he in fact failed to do so, but that he couldn't have done so if a necessary condition for such a true statement is the intrasystematic truth of its terms.   And this is indeed Marshall's (and Lindbeck's) interpretation of Thomas Aquinas: that he intended to make just such a claim.

Thomas Aquinas also maintains that utterances of Christian belief are ontologically true only if they cohere with specific linguistic and practical paradigms internal to the religion itself, and indeed that this coherence is an adequate justification of their ontological truth (357).

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6 I don't think that Aquinas would hold that congruence with practice is a necessary condition for the truth of religious assertions.

7 *Summa theologiae (ST)* II-II, q. 1, a. 8.

8 *De veritate* q. 14, a. 3, ad 8: Sed unitas divinae essentiae talis qualis ponitur a fidelibus, scilicet cum omnipotentia et omnium providentia, et aliis huiusmodi, quae probari non possunt, articulum constituit.

My proposal then is that for Thomas, Christianity is a complex and variegated network or web of belief, in which the truth of any one aspect is measured by its coherence with others. The unit of correspondence would thus not be the isolated proposition, but the whole web of belief . . . (377).

The person whose discourse does not cohere with the broader norms of Christian belief is not even talking about God, and so cannot possibly know or refer to him (379-80).

Now it is certainly true that Aquinas refuses to dissect the matters of faith, the *credibilia,* into parts such that some can be affirmed while others are rejected. The content of faith is indeed articulated into articles (by the Church), but they are jointly proposed for our belief: " Someone who is an unbeliever with regard to one article does not have faith with regard to the others, but a kind of opinion in accordance with his own will." " It cannot be that someone who has a false opinion about God knows (*cognoscat)* him in any respect at all *(quantum ad quid),* because what he or she thereby imagines (*opinatur)* is not God." [11] Marshall glosses this last text of Aquinas by the statement quoted above, viz., "The person [e.g., Aristotle] whose discourse does not cohere with the broader norms of Christian belief is not even talking about God, and so cannot possibly know or refer to him." But it seems fair to observe that Aquinas' statement is about someone having a *falsam opinionem,* which is not the same as a true demonstration. It seems possible that, in Aquinas's terms, a philosopher having a true demonstration of the existence or unity of God might never have heard of the " broader norm:s of Christian belief "-but that need not prevent his conclusion from being true, i.e., from corresponding to reality.

However, this is exactly Marshall's interpretation. The three statements of his position quoted above are argued to have been applied by Aquinas not only to propositions about revealed truth, i.e., the articles of faith, but to any "isolated" propositions about God including those of philosophers.

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[9] *ST* II-II q. 5, a. 3 and q. 10, a. 3. (378A) [A page number followed by an ' A' means I am following Marshall's citation and translation.]

II

In this section, I want to examine several points of interpretation in Marshall's reading of Aquinas which are integral to his argument; I shall try to show that they are, in fact, misreadings of the latter.

1) The first issue is fundamental to the reading which Marshall wants to make of Aquinas. He proposes it himself as a counter-example to his interpretation : in several places, Aquinas " considers the case of the person who affirms certain statements about God which Christians also hold, not because these statements cohere with the description of God articulated in Scripture and the creeds, but because they are justified by a demonstrative argument" (*379).* Isn't there (or at least couldn't there be) a correspondence of mind to reality here?

Marshall's response proceeds in two steps. First, he re-defines the issue : " the question for present purposes concerns the epistemic status of a person (such as a pre-Christian philosopher) who holds beliefs about God (in particular, the belief that there is a God) on the basis of a demonstrative argument but without reference to Scripture and creed" (380). It may not be immediately clear that this formulation redefines the issue, and Marshall apparently does not think that it does, in the sense of asking a fundamentally different question. The shift involves something that almost goes without saying for us moderns, namely that someone who knows something can also be said to believe what he knows.

Marshall notes the shift, but does not think that it makes any significant difference in the formulation of the question:

Thomas does not refer specifically to the unbeliever who has a demonstrative argument for God's existence, but simply to the *infidelis* in general. However, parallel discussions in Thomas of the three-fold act of faith indicate that it is precisely the claim to demonstrate God's existence which is Thomas's primary concern when he considers *credere Deum* outside of faith (380).

He gives two citations to warrant this very strong claim (" primary concern "), neither of which appears to do so. One of the

citations is an Objection from the *Commentary on the Sentences* which states " That God exists is proven demonstratively by philosophers. Therefore to believe that God exists is not part of the act of faith." 10 I take the relevance for Marshall of this text to be that it can be read as implying something like : philosophers believe on the basis of demonstration that God exists, so that God exists is not distinctively part of the act of faith.

But of course the Objection can be read just as simply (and more in conformity with what Aquinas says frequently elsewhere) as : if God's existence has been proven by philosophers, one doesn't have to believe it, i.e., it is not essential to faith. And this is just what the reply to this objection confirms:

although that God exists can be demonstrated, yet that God is three and one, and similar [truths] which faith in God holds *(credit)* cannot be demonstrated, and it is in this sense that the act of faith believes things about God (*credere Deum*) .11

It isn't the simple existence of divinity which is affirmed in faith but God's existence together with the other aspects of His unity as revealed. So Thomas is not opposing the belief of the philosopher in God's existence to the belief of the Christian but rather the knowledge (*scientia)* of the philosopher about the mere existence of God to the belief of the Christian in the existence of God as One and Three, etc.

Where Thomas holds apart demonstrated knowledge and belief, Marshall runs them together :

... sometimes unbelievers have good reasons, in the form of demonstrative arguments, for believing that God exists. But Thomas rejects this whole line of reasoning, because it is based on a false as-

lo *In III Sent.* 23, 2, 2, ii, ob 2. (380A)

11 Marshall quotes this reply subsequently, in a context we will return to (381 n). As he rightly notes (379n57), *Credere Deum* is not always-I would say not often-properly translated. Since it refers to the material object of faith, it extends to a wide range of items, not just the existence of God. The Blackfriars translation (like most others) regularly mistranslates it. Mark Jordan's new translation of the Treatise on Faith from the *Summa theologiae* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990) is alert to the problem and takes it consistently as "to believe about God". I would even prefer "to believe something about God".

sumption. Unbelievers, even those with demonstrative arguments, do not in fact believe that God exists, or hold any other beliefs about God which Christians hold . . . (380).

By attributing believing to those who know (have demonstrative arguments), Marshall relegates the non-Christian philosopher to the category of unbeliever. That may sound paradoxical, but as the last sentence of the quote suggests, unbelievers can be said to believe things about God, although not in the sense which ' believe ' has for Christians : hence in a more fundamental and specific sense, they do not believe--they are 'unbelievers". (We will return to this below.) And, Marshall supposes, if philosophers who hold conclusions on the basis of demonstration can be said to " believe " those conclusions and if they do not hold all the other Christian beliefs by believing God, then they can be said to be unbelievers.

This assumption is crucial to his reading of Aquinas's texts. It is incorrect, I think, because Aquinas does not use the term ' believer ' to describe a person who knows by means of demonstration, and because he does not think of Aristotle as an " unbeliever." It is possible to classify the preChristian philosophers as " unbelievers " only if the term is taken in a large and improper sense, i.e., as meaning simply non-believers. But that negatively-formed category places together those who never heard of Christianity with those who are properly called *infidelis,* namely those who are *opposed* to Christian teaching, either never having accepted what they heard (and so disbelieving all revelation) or accepting part of it (and so dissenting from the rest) .[12]

For the moment I want to resist the assimilation of knowers to believers. It is a consistent position of Aquinas that these are distinct:

. . . faith *cannot* be about something that is seen. . . . nor can we convert what belongs to faith to what can be seen by demonstration.[13]

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[12] *ST* II-II q. 10, a. 1 and 5.

[13] *In III Sent.* 24, 1, 2a (my emphasis) : ... et secundum hoc patet quod fides non potest esse de visis : . . . nee iterum ea quae sunt fidei ad principia visa reducere possumus demonstrando.

Whatever things we know with scientific knowledge properly so called we know by reducing them to first principles which are naturally present to the understanding. In this way, all scientific knowledge terminates in the sight of a thing which is present. Hence, it is impossible to have faith and scientific knowledge about the same thing.[14]

Marshall is, of course, not unaware of such statements. His interpretation is that if what the philosopher holds is not intrasystematically true, then he falls into the same category as the *infidelis,* i.e., one who may be said to believe some things about God but not in the Christian sense of ' believe ' (to believe everything revealed because spoken by God). In this case there can be no *adequatio mentis ad rem.* But none of the texts which are cited to support this claim show Aquinas allocating demonstrated knowledge to the category of belief or unbelief.

The second citation which Marshall gives to support his claim that Aquinas's "primary concern" is with the philosopher as unbeliever is the following :

If someone believes that God exists by various human reasons and natural indications (*signa),* he or she is not yet said to have faith....
(380A) [15]

But " human reasons and natural signs " are not demonstrations. Rather, they refer to probable grounds for holding an opinion, grounds which do not exclude the possibility of being wrong. But to see that a conclusion is demonstrated is, for Aquinas, to see that it necessarily follows. Hence he continues the last-quoted text:

... [to have faith] in the sense that we are speaking of it, but only when he believes for this reason, that it is spoken by God; which is what is meant by speaking of believing God: for this is what specifies faith, just as any cognitive habit derives its species from the reasons for which it assents to something. So one having the habit of science

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[14] *De ver.* q. 14, a. 9: Quaecumque autem sciuntur, proprie accepta scientia, cognoscuntur per resolutionem in prima principia, quae per se praesto sunt intellectui; et sic omnis scientia in visione rei praesentis perficitur. Unde impossibile est quod eadem sit fides et scientia.

[15] *In 4 Rom.* 1.: ... si aliquis credat Deum esse per aliquas rationes humanas et naturalia signa, nondum dicitur fidem habere ...

is led to assent for a different reason [than that it is spoken by God], namely by demonstration, and one having the habit of opinion for a still different reason, namely by dialectical syllogism![16]

This makes clear, I think, that Aquinas considers one who believes (for human reasons [17] and natural signs) as having an opinion based on probable grounds, and that this is specifically different not only from the Christian sense of ' believe ' but also from the assent which is based on seeing, i.e., demonstration.

One can, of course, think of belief/opinion and knowledge as both being distinguished from faith in the specific sense and so as forming a kind of abstract category : something like " the non-faith forms of cognoscitive habits ". But one will then have to be careful in reading Aquinas when he talks about " unbelievers " to be aware that he is not referring to all those who, without believing God (*credere Deo),* assent to propositions about God.

2) A second line of argument which Marshall develops puts great weight on a single text.

Unbelievers, even those with demonstrative arguments, do not in fact believe that God exists, or hold any other beliefs about God which Christians hold: *"ne·c vere Deum credat"* .... Unbelievers do not really (*vere)* believe that God exists, or whatever else they may say about God, precisely because " they do not believe that God exists under those conditions which faith determines *(determinet)* " (380-81).

The text which he has in view is *ST* II-II q. 2, a. 2, ad 3, and the whole reply is this :

. . . to believe something about God is not proper to unbelievers in the same sense in which it is posited in the act of faith. For they

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[16] --- de qua loquimur, sed solum quando ex hac ratione credit, quod est a Deo dictum; quod designatur per hoc quod dicitur credere Deo: ex hoc fides specificatur, sicut et quilibet cognoscitivus habitus speciem habet ex ratione per quam assentitur in aliquid. Alia ratione inclinatur ad assentiendum habens habitum scientiae, scilicet per demonstrationem, et alia ratione habens habitum opinionis, scilicet per syllogismum dialecticum. Ibid.

[17] Among the " human reasons ", for example, would be believing someone because of merely human authority : " assent in the believer is caused by the authority of the speaker, since even in dialectical matters there is an argument from authority." *De. ver.* q. 14, a. 2, ad 9.

do not believe God to be under the conditions which faith determines; and thus they do not truly believe about God; since, as the Philosopher says, " in simple things a defect in cognition means not grasping them at all ".[18]

Marshall reads a strong thesis into this text:

The relation between coherence and correspondence in Thomas's account of religious truth is particularly clear at this point. At least with regard to God, correspondence is the result of coherence; a given utterance about God (e.g., "God exists") only engenders an *adaequatio mentis ad rem* when the person who makes it holds a number of other specifically·Christian beliefs about God (381).

So the believer and the unbeliever (i.e., one who believes things about God to be so, but *not* because God says so, not by faith) do "not mean the same thing " (384) when they believe that there is a God.

This reading seems to me wrong on two grounds. First, even if it were correct about the unbeliever, it would not (as has already been noted) apply to the philosopher who has a demonstration. But second, this construal of the text is not only not the more obvious reading, it seems to be contrary to what Aquinas usually says elsewhere.

To paraphrase what appears to be the meaning of the objection and reply. Objection: all sorts of people believe God to be, so that's not a distinctive component of faith. Response: there is an (improper) sense of ' believe ' in which the observation is true. But God is the object of faith not just because someone believes something about Him (e.g., that He is) but because one believes God. So although the observation in the objection is true, those people don't truly believe.

There are two necessary conditions for believing, taken as the act of (Christian) faith : not only to believe something about God,

18 Loe. cit.: . . . credere Deum non convenit infidelibus sub ea ratione qua ponitur actus fidei. Non enim credunt Deum esse sub his conditionibus quas fides determinat; et ideo nee vere Deum credunt; quia, ut Philosophus <licit, "in simplicibus defectus cognitionis est solum in non attingendo totaliter." On the virtue of faith as a simple thing, see *ST* I-II q. 67, a. 5, sed contra: • • • fides est quidam habitus simplex. Simplex autem vel totum tolliter vel totum remanent.

but also to believe that just because God says so. The people re-
ferred to in the objection meet the first condition but not the sec-
ond. So it's not that they (necessarily) mean something differ-
ent in believing something about God, but that they don't hold
that to be so " under the conditions which faith determines," i.e.,
by believing God. And that means that there is a defect in their
mode of knowing: they do not have the certainty that whatever
they believe is true. For one who believes God, it is impossible
to believe anything false.[19]

In other words the theological virtue of faith comes into con-
tact with God (by believing we reach God, *Deum attingimus)* [20]
through hearing and believing Him. But believing about Him in
the unbeliever's sense of "believe" lacks that necessary condi-
tion, and so 1) is not truly believing and thus 2) does not reach
God. So far as I can see, nothing in this (traditional) construal
requires or implies that the believer and the unbeliever-to say
nothing of the philosopher-mean something different by the as-
sertion that God exists.[21]

Moreover this seems to be what Aquinas says in other places
about the difference between the believer and unbeliever, e.g.,
"God is the object of faith not only inasmuch as we be-
lieve something about God but inasmuch as we believe God." [22]
And although the epistemic situations of the heretic and believer
are different, Aquinas seems to think that they can hold some of
the same things: the heretic, he says, "holds the things that are
of faith in some other way than by faith"; and "a heretic does
not hold the other articles of faith, *about which he does not err,*

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[19] *Summa Contra Gentiles* (SCG) III, c. 118, 3; *ST* II-II q. 1, a. 3; etc.
There are, for Aquinas, two and only two cognoscitive habits which yield the
certitude of knowledge regarding God: *fides* and *scientia.*

[20] *ST* II-II q. 81, a. 5.

[21] This is not at variance with what has been said about the regulative or
normative character of the language of Scripture and tradition; the next sec-
tion will take this up.

[22] *ST* II-II q. 81, a. 5: Deus est fidei objectum, non solum inquantum credi-
mus Deum sed inquantum credimus Deo. Cf. *De ver.* 14. 1 & 8, etc.

in the way that the believer does.... " 23 It is hard to see how the claim that the believer and unbeliever mean different things by their assertions is compatible with this.

Marshall cites several texts in which Aquinas does indeed say that someone holding a *false* belief about God doesn't know God in any way at all, since God is " maximally simple " (378, 384), but this does not seem to entail that demonstrated knowledge is not truly knowledge of God. In fact a text such as *ST* II-II q. 10, a. 3 (378A) ("It cannot be that someone who has a false opinion about God knows him in any respect at all because what he or she thereby imagines is not God ") would not seem to make sense unless it were possible to have a true opinion about God, i.e., to hold a statement which in fact is true but which is held on grounds which do not certify its truth, as in the case of the text quoted above about the heretic not being completely in error. 24

In sum, contrary to Marshall's interpretation, a traditional reading seems to be more consistent with what Aquinas says else-where, and much that is said elsewhere appears inconsistent with his interpretation.

3) The third part of Marshall's argument that is proble-matic is his account of the distinctions which Aquinas makes be-tween *fides* and *scientia.* Since in his view, as we have seen, " only the believer means by ' God ' what one must mean in order to refer to God at all" (392), it follows that Aquinas's distinc-tion " does not imply that *scientia* regarding God is possible in-dependently of faith, that is, apart from conditions of coherence

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23 *ST* II-II q. 5, a. 3: ... ea quae sunt fidei alio modo tenet quam per fidem; ad 1: . . . alios articulos fidei, de quibus haereticus non errat, non tenet eodem modo sicut tenet eos fidelis. My emphasis.

24 Marshall's reading of Aquinas would seem to entail that there can be neither knowledge nor true opinion about God, independently of faith. But Aquinas speaks of true opinion about God: "... vera opinio de uno principio debilitatur si cultus divinus pluribus exhibeatur." *SCG* III, c. 120. On the whole question, see Peter Geach, " On Worshipping the Right God" in *God and the Soul* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969). Geach remarks that we simply don't know when a description of God is sufficiently far off to fail in reference.

defined by faith " (393) .²⁵ Of course, there are many texts where
Aquinas seems to say that there can be demonstrated knowledge
and faith about the same thing.   Marshall tries to accommodate
such texts to his interpretation by pointing to the distinction be-
tween the *scientia* of the philosopher and philosophical *scientia* as
acquired by the Christian believer, i.e., between *scientia* before
and after faith.

The reason why genuine *scientia* regarding God can only come after
faith is **...** [that] only the believer means by "God" what one
must mean in order to refer to God at all. Thus Thomas insists . . .
that the unity of God must be reckoned among the articles of faith,
even though it has repeatedly been demonstrated by philosophers.
Faith defines the " conditions under which " one can " truly believe "
that God is one.²⁶

   Here again are woven together a number of premises which
have already been called into question: that what philosophers
demonstrate they can be said to "believe," and that faith deter-
mines the conditions under which the term 'God' has categorial
truth (i.e., has the meaning necessary for *adaequatio).*   But a new
consequence of these premises appears: that articles of faith can
be demonstrated by philosophers.

   Marshall is here attempting to come to terms with the many
texts where Aquinas says that the philosophers have demon-
strated certain truths about God, e.g., that God is one, while also
saying:

We hold many beliefs about God by faith which philosophers are not
able to investigate by natural reason, for example concerning his

²⁵ The way in which his different construals weave together is exhibited in
a statement from this section of Marshall's article: "The Christian and the
philosopher both say ' God is one,' but because they do so under different ' con-
ditions' [a reference to the text just analysed, II-II, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3], they in
fact hold different beliefs" [the assumption that *scientia* is a form of belief]
(392).

²⁶ Cf. " When the believer acquires *scientia* at one or another point within
the web of belief, even at that point she or he continues to hold the belief in
question only *insofar* as it coheres with the wider network of belief, including
much which cannot be demonstrated.   Only in this way does any sentence [sic]
have a definite meaning in virtue of which any *adaequatio mentis ad rem* is
possible " (400).

providence and omnipotence, and that he alone is to be worshipped. But all these things are included under the article concerning God's unity.[21]

So **if** philosophers "demonstrate" God's unity, it must be that they mean **by** " God's unity" something different from what faith understands that unity to mean. And then it follows that there is no *adaequatio* for them, despite their demonstration. [28]

But why not say that what the philosophers understand in demonstrating God's existence and unity and incoporeality is other than what faith understands not in the sense of simply diverse but in the sense of less ? This appears to be what Aquinas has in view in insisting (contrary to Marshall) that articles of faith *cannot* be demonstrated.

. . . that God is one, insofar as it is demonstrated, is not said to be an article of faith, but presupposed to the articles. . . . But the unity of the divine essence such as it is affirmed by the faithful, namely as including omnipotence and providence over all things, and other things of this kind, which cannot be proved, constitutes the article.[29]

So it is not the case that even a believer can have " a demonstration of one of the articles " (393). What both believer and non-believing philosopher can have is a demonstration of those truths about God which are presupposed to the articles, i.e., which are not per se part of the content of revelation. There is an irreducible differe_!lce between the *proposition* affirming the oneness of God and the *article* of the creed on God's unity: the latter does

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[21] *ST* II-II q. 1, a. 8 ad 1. (392A)

[2s] I shall argue that articles cannot be demonstrated, but I find it puzzling to claim that "... while the philosopher's demonstration outside of faith is formally valid, in the philosopher's own hands it is incapable of yielding any *adaequatio mentis ad rem* with regard to God" (393). A formally valid argument in which one of the terms is, in effect, a variable is not a demonstration.

[29] *De. ver.* q. 14, a. 9, ad 8: quod Deum esse unum prout demonstratum, non dicitur articulus fidei, sed praesuppositum ad articulos. . . . Sed unitas divinae essentiae talis qualis ponitur a fidelibus, scilicet cum omnipotentia et omnium providentia, et aliis huiusmodi, quae probari non possunt, articulum constituit. Cf. ibid., ad 9: that God exists is not an article of faith " because it can be proven by demonstration." *SCG* III, c. 39 gives a list of such demonstrable truths about God, noting that since they are negations, although they are properly knowledge, they do not yield a bowledge of what God is.

indeed include, for the faithful, God's providence, omnipotence, Trinity, etc. That God is one, i.e., undivided, can be known by demonstration and is therefore *not* among the articles of faith. But the article on God's unity or oneness (" I believe in one God ... ") includes *only* those truths about God which are both revealed and indemonstrable.

This does not mean that one person cannot hold by *scientia* what another holds by faith. [30] Since the existence of God is presupposed by the articles, it too can be accepted by the faith which affirms the articles, just because, as presupposed, it is entailed by the articles. But that does not make the existence of God, thus affirmed, belong essentially to faith and so does not make it subject to the coherency test for correspondence. The articles are of what can *only* be held by faith, what belongs *per se* to faith; [31] the existence of God belongs to faith only *secundum quid:*

... something is an article of faith not *simpliciter* but in some respect ... when it does not exceed the capacity of all men but only of some, as is what we can know about God by demonstration, e.g., that God is one or incorporeal, and other things of this kind.[32]

So if the distinction between what can be demonstrated and the articles is kept clear, we will not be tempted to deny the possibility of *adaequatio* to the former knowledge on the grounds that the meaning of its terms must cohere with that of the articles.

III

Two issues may be noted in the above discussion. One has been how Thomas Aquinas understood the relation between reason and faith in terms of the possible access of the former (i.e., natural or ungraced reason) to knowledge of the reality of God. Marshall interprets Aquinas in a coherentist way: the very meaning of the term ' God ' is internal to the Christian scheme so that

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[30] *ST* II-II q. 1, a. 5, ad 3.

[31] *ST* II-II q. 1, a. 8.

[32] *De ver.* q. 14, a. 9. On the credibilia as both including and excluding (in different senses) demonstrable conclusions, see *ST* II-II q. 2, a. 10, ad 1 and ad2.

someone outside the faith may indeed use the term, but his meaning will be different and-since God is maximally simple-he will not in fact succeed in referring to that which Christians understand. Whether such a coherentist view of all utterances about God is correct or not, it does not seem to be the view of Aquinas. Nor is it that of the tradition before him. In book seven of the *Confessions,* Augustine identifies the One whose existence he has come to know through reading the Platonists with the God of Christianity.

I should like to acknowledge the qualifications which Marshall modestly adds to his argument : the texts relevant to these issues, he notes, are numerous and not obviously uniform, and a fully convincing reading would have to be tested against a larger set (402). With similar reserve, my argument has been that the testing thus far does not yield sufficient probability to make further inquiry promising. Nevertheless, I learned much from his article.

The second issue is not about what Aquinas taught, nor whether a coherentist view of religious belief is the only viable one, but about the consequences of accepting it.

The comprehensive character of Christian belief implies that there is no external standard of truth, no independent vantage point, from which the truth or falsity of the Christian scheme as a whole could be decisively assessed (401).

The " post-liberal " or " post-modern " position commends itself to many persons today because the modern enterprise of a rationalist metaphysics has come to be seen as dubious, not to say illusory. "Metaphysics" has come to mean, for many, any assertion of a truth which purports to transcend its linguistic formulation, its historical form of expression.

One might suppose that for religionists, such a foreclosing of the possibility of unconditional truths would be resisted. How is one to proclaim to the cultured and uncultured despisers of religion, or to those adherents of other religious beliefs to whom the good news is to be announced, the revealed Truth? But if " metaphysics " is swampy ground to be abandoned, it turns out (as Montaigne noted long ago) that there may be some advant-

ages to abandoning it, so long as no one else can claim it. For if unqualified (non-confessional) assertions about God are impossible for everyone, who is to say that our religious beliefs are wrong? There is thus an apparent invulnerability of the coherentist position which can come to seem mightily attractive.

Moreover, it would still be possible to announce the "good news," but it would be more like catechesis than apologetics, more like teaching the language and practices than exhibiting its revelatory illumination. [33] And in confronting other strong religious traditions,

[g]iven the irreducible particularity ingredient in their categorial schemes, different religions may be fundamentally incommensurable ... (361).

Of course, as Lindbeck notes, it is logically possible that only one religion has categorial truth (361), but, given the coherentist position, it is difficult to see how that could ever be known. And if that is so, ecumenical dialogue between religious traditions can only be either the polite exchange of incommensurable views or, failing a common universe of discourse, trying to persuade others to share our perspective. But we would be in principle incapable of giving them any demonstrable reasons for the claims that God (or the "Ultimate Mystery") *is* at all as our kerygma describes him.

Perhaps some post-modern thinkers would find it puzzling that these observations should seem to anyone to raise difficulties rather than to acknowledge the obvious, or what almost everyone concedes today. Nonetheless, at a time when alternative conceptions to current views tend to recede from view or to be occluded by the salience of the obvious, it seems to me particularly important to make every effort to keep alternative understandings from being assimilated to those current views. If we cannot keep the alternatives in view, our situation is graver than it seemed.

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[33] Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine,* p. 132. See also Thomas Kuhn's analysis of scientific revolution, and compare Wittgenstein, *On Certainty* #262: "We would be trying to give him our picture of the world. This would happen through a kind of persuasion."

THOMAS, THOMISMS, AND **TRUTH**

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I

HE GREAT, as Hegel's dictum has it, condemn the rest f us to the task of understanding them. We take our evenge upon the great, especialy upon great thinkers, by enlisting them for our own purposes, as our supporters and defenders in conflicts perhaps quite different from those in which they themselves were engaged. Thomas Aquinas was a master, virtually without peer, at the intellectual enlistment of the great, and he himself has been perhaps as widely and variously recruited as any of those to whom he devoted his own attentions. When we enlist Thomas for our own purposes with some consistency and success, the result is a " Thomism," of which there have been many, sometimes quite conflicting varieties. My article " Aquinas as Postliberal Theologian " does not propose anything so developed as a Thomism, but perhaps at most a fragment of one.[1] In their responses to it, Frederick **J.** Crosson and Louis

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[1] *The Thomist* 53 (1989) : 353-402. The interpretation of Thomas proposed there bears a family resemblance to that of some recent Thomisms and so is not wholly without precedent. Cf. Michel Corbin, *Le chemin de la theologie chez Thomas D'Aquin* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1974); Otto Herman Pesch, *Die Theologie der Rechtfertigung bei Martin Luther und Thomas von Aquin* (Mainz: Matthias-Grunewald-Verlag, 1967) ; idem, *Thomas von Aquin: Grenze und Grosse mittelalterlichen Theologie,* 2nd ed. (Mainz: Matthias-Grunewald-Verlag, 1989); Gerhard Ludwig Muller, "Hebt das Sola-Fide-Prinzip die Moglichkeit einer naturlichen Theologie auf? Eine Ruckfrage bei Thomas von Aquin," *Catholica* 40 (1986) : 59-96; Victor Preller, *Divine Science and the Science of God* (Princeton: University Press, 1967). Reference to these Thomisms should not, of course, be taken to constitute agreement with any *particular* claim one of them may make.

Roy, O.P., argue that as a piece of Thomism-as the enlistment
of Thomas in defense and support of a particular contemporary
view of truth, meaning, and epistemic justification-it is at best
unpromising. In so doing, they indicate, at least in part, what
views on these matters they think Thomas can plausibly be en-
listed to support, that is, the sort of Thomism they find more
convincing.

Great thinkers are not, however, defenseless against our efforts
to recruit them for our ends. Especially in the case of one whose
thought is as ramified, precise, and historically distant as is that
of Thomas Aquinas, these efforts are likely to meet with some
resistance. (Indeed, we will be inclined to distrust them if they
claim not to.) We may even find ourselves compelled to refash-
ion our own ends in order not to forgo plausible appeal to his
precedent and support. Sometimes different Thomisms will no
doubt include purposes distant enough from Thomas' s own (as
best we can grasp them) that it may be impossible to adjudicate
conflicts between them by appeal to his texts. But in many cases
it ought to be possible to decide reasonably between competing
Thomisms (that is, to decide which more plausibly enlists
Thomas for its own purposes) by assessing the amount and type
of resistance each meets from the text of Thomas (of course this
includes the possibility that competition between Thomisms re-
flects unresolved conflict within Thomas' s own thought). In the
present case the prospect of reasonable adjudication seems much
increased by the fact that the large issues with which it is con-
cerned-truth, meaning, and justification-tend to coalesce
around what seems to be a straightforward matter of fact:
whether Thomas taught that persons without Christian faith, and
especially pre-Christian philosophers, knew, or were even able to
know, God.

Crosson and Roy both argue that the implausibility of my in-
terpretation of Aquinas on these larger issues-the linking of a
comprehensively coherentist account of justification a con-
textualist account of meaning to Thomas's correspondence notion
of truth-is especially clear in its attribution to Thomas of a posi-

tion he manifestly rejects: that a pre-Christian philosopher like Aristotle did not, and indeed could not, know God. This seems obvious to most modern Thomisms, which, however else they differ, are united in their acknowledgement that genuine if limited philosophical knowledge of God is possible apart from Christian faith. Thomas frequently says, they point out, that the ancient philosophers reached various conclusions about God by demonstrative arguments, and to the extent that they did so, they knew God. " That there is one God ... was known even by the philosophers, and is not a part of faith." [2]

But Thomas also denies explicitly that the philosophers knew God, or were even in an epistemic position from which they could do so. Their ignorance of God, moreover, was not partial but total. For example, interpreting Jn. 17:25 ("O righteous Father, the world has not known you"), Thomas observes that Jesus' prayer seems to contradict what scripture elsewhere teaches, namely in Rom. 1:19 ("What has been known about God has been manifest to them . . . from the things which have been made ")-the text to which Thomas himself consistently appeals when he speaks of the philosophers knowing God. He replies to this objection as follows.

It should be noted that knowledge is twofold, speculative and affective, and in neither way has the world perfectly known God. For while some of the Gentiles knew God with respect to certain things which were knowable by reason, nevertheless they did not know him insofar as he is the Father of the only-begotten and consubstantial Son, and it is about this knowledge that the Lord speaks. It is on account of this that the apostle speaks of "that which has been known" (Rom. 1:19), that is, what is knowable, about God. But even if they knew something about God by speculative knowledge, this was with the admixture of many errors . . . On account of this they are said not to know God. For while it is possible for composite things to be known in part and to be unknown in part, if simple things are not grasped completely, they are not known *(non attingunter totaliter, ignorantur).* Hence even if they erred in the

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2 *In Heb.* 11, 2 (#577): "Quod est unus Deus ... notum est etiam ipsis philosophis, et non cadit sub fide." For further texts see "Aquinas as Post-liberal Theologian," p. 389, n. 82 (full reference to the editions of Thomas I am using may also be found in that article).

smallest way regarding the knowledge of God, they are said to be completely ignorant of him. Therefore, not knowing the singular excellence of God, they are said to be ignorant of him: Rom. 1:21.[8]

Thomas explicitly numbers Aristotle, his favorite of the pre-Christian philosophers, among those who have erred about God. " All the errors of the heretics and the philosophers," Thomas argues, " are manifestly destroyed " by the four propositions into which he divides Jn. 1:1-2; Aristotle's error was to posit "that the world was co-eternal " with God, but "against this is what the evangelist says: 'This one, i.e., the Word alone, was in the beginning with God.' " [4]

These passages from the *Lectura super Ioannem* make more explicit what is, it seems to me, already clear from the text in the *Summa theologiae* (II-II, 2, *2,* ad 3) which was the point of departure for .my analysis of Aquinas. Thomas argues there, as in the *Lectura* on John, that since God is simple, with regard to God " a defect of knowledge can only be a total lack of knowl-

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[8] *In Ioannem* 17, 6 (#2265) : " Dicendum, quad duplex est cognitio: una speculativa, et alia affectiva: et neutra mundus Deum cognovit perfecte. Licet enim aliqui Gentilium Deum quantum ad aliqua quae per rationem cognoscibilia erant, cognoverunt; ipsum tamen secundum quad est Pater Filii unigeniti et consubstantialis, non cognoverunt: de qua cognitione loquitur Dominus. Et inde est quad Apostolus dicit, ' Quad notum est' (Rom. 1:19), idest cognoscibile Dei. Sed et si quid speculativa cognitione de Dea cognoscebant, hoc erat cum admixtione multorum errorum ... Unde dicuntur Deum ignorare. Licet enim in compositis possit partim sciri et partim ignorari ; in simplicibus tamen dum non attinguntur totaliter, ignorantur. Unde etsi in minima aliqui errent circa Dei cognitionem, dicuntur eum totaliter ignorare. Isti ergo non cognoscentes singularem Dei excellentiam, ignorare dicuntur ; Rom. 1:21."

[4] *In Ioannem* 1, 1 (#64-5) : "Si quis recte consideret has quatuor propositiones, inveniet evidenter per eas destrui omnes haereticorum et philosophorum errores ... Aristoteles ... posuit mundum coaeternum [Dea] fuisse. Et contra hoc est quod Evangelista dicit: Hoc, scilicet Verbum solum, erat in principio apud Deum." Cf. *Expositio Primae Decretalis* II (#1163) : "Aristotle indeed proposed that all things had been made by God, but he erred in maintaining that this happened from eternity, and that there was no beginning of time. Against this is written in Gen. 1:1, 'In the beginning .. .'" (" Alius error fuit Aristotelis ponentis quidem omnia a Deo producta esse, sed ab aeterno, et nullum fuisse principium temporis, cum tamen scriptum sit Gen. 1, 1: In principio .• .") Cf. also *In Symbolum Apostolorum Expositio (=Symb.)* 1 (#880).

edge (*defectus cognitionis est solum in non attingendo totaliter)";* the basic idea about the knowledge of " simples " is drawn from Aristotle's *Metaphysics.* [5] The "defect" in question is the absence of Christian faith, that is, of adherence, rooted in love for the revealer and reliance on his absolute veracity, to what God has revealed-the articles of the creed understood as a summary of the whole of scripture (with allowances for Israel's access to the articles under the conditions of the Old Testament). Whatever their epistemic situation in other respects, those who seek knowledge of God in the absence, as Thomas puts it, " of the conditions which faith defines " *(non . . . sub his conditionibus quas fides determinat),* for example, without faith in "the only-begotten and consubstantial Son of the Father" (as in the *Lectura* on John) or faith that " God is three and one and other things of this kind " [6] will *fail-totaliter-to* know God. They will not " reach " or " grasp" God at all *(non attingendo totaliter)* ; in the absence of Christian faith there is, with regard to God, no *adaequatio mentis ad rem,* and so no knowledge.

The *Lectura* on John simply draws explicitly the inference required by the logic of *defectus cognitionis est solum in non attingendo totaliter:* since pre-Christian philosophers did not, and indeed could not (insofar as membership in Israel, unlike in the later church, was not open to the Gentiles), meet the decisive condition Thomas stipulates for knowledge of God, on his account they did not, and could not, know God. They labored unavoidably under a *defectus cognitionis* which even their best

ments could not, in principle, overcome. There are, to be sure, important differences between the epistemic situations of, say, those whose claims about God are mere arbitrary conjecture and those whose claims are made as the conclusions of syllogistic arguments *(per rationem,* in the language of the *Lectura).* But the degree or type of *defectus* seems not to affect the outcome; error even *in minima* precludes the knowledge of God *totaliter*

[5] See "Aquinas as Postliberal Theologian," pp. 379-84, for further texts (in particular *Summa contra Gentiles* III, 118 [#2904] and analysis.

[6] *Jn III Sent.* 23, 2, 2, ii, ad 2 (#151); cf." Aquinas as Postliberal Theologian," p. 381, n. 64.

(again in the language of the *Lectura).*   The logic of these texts
-absence of Christian faith entails ignorance of God *totaliter-*
suggests that Thomas holds a coherentist view of epistemic justi-
fication with regard to talk of God; for our talk of God to be
true, it must be held true (that is, believed) in adequate coherence
with the wider web of Christian belief and practice, a coherence
of which one minimal condition is, for Thomas, assent to all the
articles of the creed.

II

Crosson in particular attends in some detail to II-II, 2, 2, ad
3 ; both he and Roy read Aquinas as exempting the philosopher
(the person with a demonstrative argument for, e.g., God's exist-
ence or unity) from the logic of *defectus cognitionis est solum in
non attingendo totaliter.* They make several points in support of
this interpretation.

1) The person whose belief that God exists is under discus-
sion in II-II, 2, 2, ad 3 is the *infidelis,* and Aquinas does not
classify the pre-Christian philosophers among the *infideles* (cf.
Crosson: Aquinas " does not think of Aristotle as an ' un-
believer.' ").

Aquinas, however, plainly treats *infidelitas* as a genus of which
there are three species; one of these is the *infidelitas paganorum
sive gentilium* (compare *aliqui Gentilium* in the *Lectura* on John),
which " resists the faith not yet received," another is that of the
heretic, which " resists the Christian faith received ... in the
very manifestation of the truth." [7] The pre-Christian philosopher
and the heretic are equally, though of course differently, species
of *infidelis.* Crosson and Roy suggest that I misleadingly assimi-
late the epistemic situation of the pre-Christian philosopher to
that of the person within the Christian community who explicitly
rejects central Christian beliefs, but the article clearly distin-
guishes the two cases and treats them separately. [8] Since each in-
volves a *defectus cognitionis* regarding God, they have the same

[7] II-II, 10, 5, c: "renititur fidei nondum susceptae"; "renititur fidei Chri-
tianae susceptae ... in ipsa manifestatione veritatis."

[8] See " Aquinas as Postliberal Theologian," pp. 377, 379.

epistemic outcome: *est in non attingendo totaliter;* the *defectus* in each case is different in species, but the same in genus *(infidelitas,* viz., absence of Christian faith).

2) Thomas's claim that those without Christian faith *nee vere Deum credunt* ("do not really believe something about God," in Crosson's rendering, and specifically do not really "believe that God exists" *[credunt Deum esse])* cannot plausibly be taken to mean that the philosopher without Christian faith, but with a demonstrative argument, holds a different belief from the Christian (e.g., when each asserts that God exists), a difference which helps explain the philosopher's failure (*totaliter)* to know God. There are two arguments here.

a) The claim that those without Christian faith " nee vere Deum credunt" simply means that they do not " believe things about God" in the specifically Christian manner, viz., by relying upon the absolute veracity of God in his self-revelation. From this nothing follows about the meaning or interpretation, and thereby about the truth, of the beliefs they do hold about God; when the Christian and the *infidelis* assert, " God exists," they make the same assertion.

If this were Thomas's view, however, he would have said" nee vere *Deo* credunt." Both the objection and the reply take it to be obvious that the *infidelis* does not *credit Deo;* that is simply the definition of *infidelis.* The point of the reply is to specify the epistemic status of the unbeliever's *credere Deum,* and in particular of her *credere Deum esse,* given that it takes place in the absence of *credere Deo.* And the claim seems to be that the unbeliever's *credere Deum (esse)* is a different *credere Deum* (*esse)* from that of the believer; despite initial appearances, the former does not really (*vere)* make the same assertion as the latter. Indeed radically so: the believer's *credere Deum* (*esse)* is true (it reaches God); the unbeliever's is so different that it is false (it does not reach God) (see #4, below).

b) Even if the argument of the previous paragraph is correct, it has no bearing on the epistemic status of a philosopher with a demonstrative argument for (e.g.) God's existence, since in

Thomas's lexicon such a person is (as Crosson stresses) a
" knower " and not a " believer " ; insofar as we know something
by demonstration, *credere* is simply inapplicable to our epistemic
situation.

Were this observation about Thomas's lexical habits true, it
would still not rescue the philosopher without Christian faith
from failure *(totaliter)* to know God. The *Lectura super loan-*
nem ascribes this failure specifically to the philosophers on the
same ground that II-II, 2, 2, ad 3 ascribes it to the *infidelis* in
general: the self-revealing God in whom the church believes is not
the sort of being who can be " known *(sciri)* in part and un-
known *(ignorari)* in part"; 9 partial knowledge, even in the
strongest sense *(sciri),* in this case reduces to total ignorance.

I do not, however, think the lexical observation is true. Like
the previous objection (2a), it turns on what seems to be an
oversimplification of the way Thomas uses *credere.* One sense of
" to believe " is "to hold true," and in that sense it seems plau-
sible to render *credere Deum* as " to hold sentences true about
God." On Thomas's account one can hold sentences true by a
number of different means, one by tying them with logical neces-
sity to self-evident or indubitable principles (which, as a habit, is
scientia), another by believing, now in the different sense of rely-
ing on someone's testimony (when the testimony is God's, this is
Thomas's *credere Deo,* which, as a habit, is *fides).* It seems quite
straightforward to attribute *credere Deum* to anyone who (by
whatever epistemic means) holds sentences about God true, with-
out thereby having to attribute to her *credere Deo* (and thus the
habitus fidei) .10 The way Thomas distinguishes the senses of
credere allows him both to make his characteristic distinction be-
tween the habits of faith and of knowledge, and to say that people

9 Cf. above, note 3.

10 The texts Crosson cites in support of a universal disjunction in Thomas
between "believing" and "knowing" *(de Ver.* 14, 9, c; *In III Sent.* 24, 2,
i, c (#51) describe, as Thomas often does, the epistemic difference between the
habits of */ides* and *scientia.* The habit of faith embraces three senses of *credere*
(cf. II-II, 2, 2, c), only one of which *(credere Dea)* is the act that grasps
the formal object by which the habit is defined. This does not keep *credere*
Deum from being involved in other cognitive habits.

believe what they know-as when he speaks about "the person who wants to believe only those things which he knows." [11]

3) Texts in which Thomas says that someone who holds a false belief about God does not know God at all need not apply to philosophers without Christian faith, since the body of sentences they hold true about God-some on the basis of demonstrative arguments-may   not include any which are erroneous or false, but may simply be incomplete (compared with the content of revelation).

There are, of course, errors of omission as well as errors of commission, and either one is sufficient to constitute the *defectus,* the failure to meet "the conditions which faith defines," by which knowledge of God is precluded *totaliter.*   Even " demonstrated knowledge " of God, when it labors under this *defectus,* turns out to be total ignorance: " even if they [who knew God *per rationem]* erred in the smallest way regarding the knowledge of God, they are said to be completely ignorant of him." [12]   And as we have seen, aside from the logic of his position, Thomas in fact ascribes error of commission regarding God   all the ancient philosophers, including Aristotle.

4) The claim that the unbeliever and the believer mean different things by " Deus " when they assert that " Deus est " or " Deus est unus " lacks textual support in Thomas, and so cannot be the basis of an argument that the philosopher who makes

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[11] *Symb.,* pro. (#866) : "Si homo nollet credere nisi ea quae cognosceret ... " In the same sense : " If our intellect is so weak, would it not be foolish to be willing to believe about God only those things which a person can know by his own resources?" ("Si ergo intellectus noster est ita debilis, nonne stultum est nolle credere de Deo [=credere Deum], nisi illa tantum quae homo potest cognoscere per se?" *Symb.,* pro., #864.) As Thomas's use of the relevant terms does not radically disjoin "believing" from "knowing," neither does it disjoin "knowing" from "believing": "None of the philosophers before the coming of Christ were able, with all their effort, to know as much about God and the things which are necessary for eternal life as, after the coming of Christ, any old woman knows by faith." (" Nullus philosophorum ante adventum Christi cum toto conatu suo potuit tantum scire de Deo et de necessariis ad vitam aeternam, quantum post adventum Christi scit (!) una vetula per fidem." *Symb.,* pro., =862.)

[12] Cf. above, note 3.

these assertions without Christian faith does not know, at least
in a limited way, the God in whom Christians believe.

   As we have seen, Thomas makes an important claim about the
truth of certain sentences, spoken under certain conditions : when
the unbeliever asserts " Deus est," the assertion is false; it totally
fails to reach God, that is, it engenders no *adaequatio mentis ad
rem.* Since the same sentence is asserted truly by believers, it
seems reasonable to propose by way of explanation that what
makes the sentence false in one context and true in another is that
it means different things in the two contexts (just as if we had
occasion to judge that someone's assertion " Snow is white"
was false, this would entail that "snow," "is," or "white"
must have meant something different in that particular context
than they do when the sentence is asserted truly). Thus the sug-
gestion that for Thomas " Deus est " may have different mean-
ings in different contexts presupposes that Thomas claims the
sentence, as spoken, is sometimes false, and is not (as the objec-
tion supposes) offered as grounds for holding that he makes the
claim.[13] Thomas is manifestly aware that the same term (and
therefore the sentence in which the term is used) can mean dif-
ferent things in different contexts; his way of making this point
is to distinguish (following the philosophical grammar of his
day) the " supposition " of a term from its " signification." [14]
When it comes to talk about God difference of meaning is, to be
sure, only a partial explanation of why the same sentence is true
on one set of lips and false on another. " By assent faith ... joins

   [13] This suggestion is supported to some extent by Thomas's remark that un-
believers do not hold beliefs about God *(credere Deum (esse))* "in the sense
in which" *(sub ea ratione qua)* believers do (II-II, 2, 2, ad 3).

   [14] On supposition, cf. *In III Sent.* 6, 1, 3, c & ad 3; I, 39, 3-4; III, 16, 1.
It is particularly important to note that the truth value of a sentence must be
assessed by attending to the supposition, and not only the signification, of its
terms: " A proposition is not made true by reason of its signification, but by
reason of its supposition" (" Propositio autem non verificatur ratione sig-
nificati, sed ratione suppositi," *In III Sent. 7,* 1, 1, ad 5[#38]). For the back-
ground in medieval logic and philosophical grammar, see Jan Pinborg, *Logik
und Semantik im Mittelalter: Bin Oberblick* (Stuttgart: Fromman-Holzboog,
1972), especialy pp. 58-66, 92-100.

the human being to God's own knowing"; this is what makes
the sentences to which faith assents true, and is obviously a
matter not only of meaning the right thing by them, but of being
the subjects of God's gracious free action in the world and in our
own minds and hearts. [15]

III

To be sure, none of this yet explains how Thomas can ascribe
knowledge of God to philosophers without Christian faith and
then go on to deny such knowledge to them (sometimes in the
same breath, as in the *Lectura* on John). Following the pattern
of many Thomisms, Crosson explains the ascription and denial by
saying that the philosophers's knowledge of God is related to that
which Christians have by faith as less to more, as incomplete to
complete. This way of handling the problem is appealingly sim-
ple and has clearly served the apologetic purposes which have
driven a number of modern Thomisms (about which more be-
low). But it is plainly inconsistent with what Thomas actually
says. For Thomas it is not possible to know God *partim;* he in-
deed ascribes partial knowledge of God to the philosophers, only
to take it away and conclude that they did not know God at all:
dicuntur eum [Deum] totaliter ignorare (so the *Lectura* on
John). The ascription and denial create a more complex prob-
lem than most Thomisms have wanted to acknowledge.

It is important to bear in mind that for Thomas the pattern of
thought which first ascribes, then denies knowledge of God to the
sapientes gentilium [16] is not his own but Scripture's; in moving
from the one to the other he is simply following the logic of Rom.
1:18-32. (For example, the argument from the *Lectura* on John
at which we have been looking begins with an objection based on
Rom. 1:19, which ascribes knowledge of God to the Gentiles, and
concludes by appealing to Rom. 1:21, which denies it.) This
suggests that an adequate account of the way this movement from
ascription to denial coheres for Thomas would usefully begin with

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[15] *De Ver.* v4, 8, c (" Fides .•. hominem divinae cognitioni coniungit per
assensum.").

[16] In the phrase of *In Rom.* 1, 6 (#113).

an analysis of his *Lectura* on Romans 1 and of other NT passages
which follow the same sequence of thought.   Here I will only be
able to make a couple of observations. [17]

As Aquinas reads Romans 1, Paul attributes knowledge of God
to the *sapientes gentilium* precisely in order to deny it. The rea-
son for denying to the philosophers a knowledge previously as-
cribed, rather than simply denying it, is to give an account of
why their ignorance of God is culpable and therefore subject to
the wrath of God: it is culpable because voluntary, and so ignor-
ance of what ought to be known, as distinguished   from mere
nescience. [18] What needs to be explained, in other words, is how
the Gentiles can be said to have "held the truth about God cap-
tive in unrighteousness"   (Rom. 1:18).   **"I** have rightly said that
they [the *sapientes gentilium]* held captive the truth about God,"
Thomas interprets Paul to argue, " since there was in them, in
some respect, a true knowledge of God." [19] This knowledge of
God given to the Gentiles is itself, as Roy points out (citing II-
II, *167,* 1, ad 3), a gift of God, his active self-revelation and self-
manifestation to them (cf. Rom. 1:20).   " God manifests some-
thing to the human being in two ways: by infusing the interior
light, by which a human being knows ... [and] by putting for-
ward exterior signs of his wisdom, namely sensible creatures." [20]
Thomas develops an account of the knowledge given to the Gen-

[17] For a more detailed discussion, see Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., "A Theologi-
cal Procedure in Thomas Aquinas" (Ph.D. Diss., Yale University, 1992),
which devotes most of its length to an interpretation of the first chapter of
Thomas's commentary on Romans.

[18] For Thomas's deployment of the distinction between *ignorantia* and *nes-
cientia,* cf. I-II, 76, 2, c. To lack knowledge of what one is naturally suited
to know (*eorum quae aptus natus est scire)* is *ignorantia,* of which there are
two types: ignorance of what one is held responsible for knowing *(scire
tenetur)* and ignorance of what one is not held responsible for knowing. Ignor-
ance of the self-revealing God in whom the church believes is of the former
type: " all in common are responsible for knowing those things which are
of faith " (*omnes tenentur scire communiter ea quae sunt fidei).*

[19] *In Rom.* I, 6 (#114) : "Recte dico quod veritatem Dei detinuerunt, fuit
enim in eis, quantum ad aliquid, vera Dei cognitio."

[20] *In Rom.* I, 6 (#116) : "Deus autem dupliciter aliquid homini manifestat.
Uno modo, infundendo lumen interius, per quod homo cognoscit ... Alio modo,
proponendo suae sapientiae signa exteriora, scilicet sensibiles creaturas."

tiles by an interpretation of the Pseudo-Dionysian *via triplex,*
which is here presented as a sequence of (demonstrative) argu-
ments by which " human thought (*cognitio),* beginning from
those things which are connatural to it, that is, from creation
known through the senses (a *sensibilibus creaturis)*," moves
first to knowledge that God is, then to knowledge "that he is
above all things," and finally to knowledge that " God is im-
mutable and infinite, and whatever else is said of this kind." [21]

It is this very knowledge of himself that God has given to the
Gentiles which they have corrupted by sin, in such a way as to
end up in ignorance *(totaliter)* of God. For this reason their
failure to know God is culpable, leaving them without excuse
(Rom. 1:20); "when [Paul] says 'but they have become vain,'
he shows that the ignorance which has come upon them is their
own fault." [22] The sin which transforms the Gentiles' knowledge
of God into ignorance is called by the Paul of Thomas's Vulgate
impietas; its primary cause is the " vanity " in which " the human
mind ... having omitted God, relies upon some sort of creature,"
the vanity in which human beings " place their trust in them-
selves, and not in God." [23] Vanity issues in ignorance of God, the
ignorance of which the *Lectura* on John speaks; " their foolish
heart has been darkened " (Rom. 1:21).[24] Thomas comments:
" ' Their heart ' has been made ' foolish ' ; it has been deprived of
the light of wisdom by which a human being truly knows God." [25]

[21] *In Rom.* 1, 6 (#114-15). Cf. #117, where the knowledge of God gen-
erated by the *via triplex* is ordered as (i) knowledge "through various like-
nesses found in creatures," (ii) knowledge of God's power, "insofar as things
proceed from him as from their source *(principio)*," and (iii) knowledge of
God as " the final end, to which all things tend."

[22] *In Rom.* 1, 6 (#128): "Cum <licit 'Sed evanuerunt,' ostendit quod in eis
ex culpa est ignorantia subsecuta."

[2a] *In Rom.* 1, 6 (#129): "Mens humana ... praetermisso Deo, innititur
cuicumque creaturae ... in seipsis, et non in Deo fiduciam habebant"

[24] Note Thomas's citation of this passage, above, note 3.

[25] *In Rom.* 1, 7 (#130) : "Factum est 'cor eorum insipiens,' id est lumine
sapientiae privatum, per quam homo vere Deum cognoscit" (cf. II-II, 2, 2,
ad 3: "vere Deum credunt"). Cf. *Tn Eph.* 4, 6 (#233-4), citing Rom. 1:21:
"They [the Gentiles] do not share in the divine light, or in the divine law
which illuminates and gnides, on account of which [Paul] adds 'alienated from

God still attests himself through " exterior signs of his wisdom,"
but as a penalty of sin he has withdrawn the light (which, in any
case, is not owed to the creature) by which he could be known
through these signs.[26] The sin of *impietas,* rooted in vanity,
which elicits this penalty is idolatry in its various forms. Thomas
numbers among these the idolatry of the *sapientes gentilium,* and
specifically of the philosophers. In this passage, Thomas observes,
Paul " deals with a threefold theology "-that is, idolatry-" of
the Gentiles " : the civil cult, the theology of the poets, and " the
natural theology which the philosophers practiced in the world,
worshipping parts of the world, and it is with regard to them that
Paul says, 'they worshiped and served the creature rather than
the creator ' " (Rom. 1 :25).[27]

   As Thomas reads Paul, then, the error (and specifically the
idolatry) of the Gentiles overrides the knowledge of himself
which God has given to them " from creation known through the
senses "; in consequence the further possibility of this knowledge
 (the *lumen interius)* is withdrawn by God. With regard to the
Gentiles, including their *sapientes-the* philosophers with demon-
strative arguments-the   denial of knowledge overrides the initial
ascription of it. Commenting on I Cor. 1:21 ("It has pleased
God to save, by the foolishness of preaching, those who believe "),
Thomas observes, " The world, that is, the worldly, have not
known God through the wisdom derived from the things of the
world-and this in the wisdom of God."[28] Neither the ascription

the life of God' (Eph. 4 :18) ... He specifies the way in which they are
alienated, namely by ignorance ... of the divine nature." ("Tales non sunt
participes divini luminis, seu legis divinae illuminantis et regulantis; propter
quod subdit ' alienati a vita Dei ' . . . Modum autem huius alienationis tangit,
scilicet per ignorantiam ... naturae divinae.")

[26] Thus the *infidelitas* "of those who have heard nothing of the faith" *(in
illis qui nihil audierunt de fide)* is more *poena* than *peccatum;* cf. II-II, 10, 1, r.

[27] *In Rome.* l, 7 (#14S): "Videtur autem Apostolus triplicem theologiam
tangere gentilium . . . Tertio theologiam naturalem, quam observaverunt
philosophi in mundo, partes mundi colentes; et quantum ad hoc <licit: 'Et
coluerunt et servierunt creaturae potius quam creatori.' " Thomas gives basic-
ally the same list of idolatries in II-II, 94, 1, c, where he speaks of "physicam
theologiam," and uses the same examples (Varro and "the Platonists ").

[28] *In I Cor.* 1, *3* (#SS): "Mundus, id est mundani, non cognoverunt Deum
per sapientiam ex rebus mundi acceptam, et hoc in Dei sapientia."

nor the denial can rightly be understood in abstraction from the other, or from the unavoidable and irreversible sequence in which the Gentiles wind up in ignorance, not knowledge of God. Specifically: whenever Thomas attributes knowledge of God to philosophers without Christian faith (as, *inter alia,* in the remark from the *Lectura* on Hebrews cited at the outset), this attribution cannot be interpreted adequately in abstraction from Thomas's equally clear insistence that just this knowledge must be denied to them. "Human beings were able to attain knowledge of the wisdom of God by attending to the creatures which he has made, according to Rom. 1:20 . . . But human beings, because of the vanity of their hearts, have turned away from the right knowledge of God." [29] They cannot extricate or disentangle their knowledge of God from their culpable ignorance; "therefore God has led the faithful to the saving knowledge of himself through other means, which are not found in the natures of created things themselves ... The texts of the faith are such a means. It is as if a teacher, seeing that the meaning of his words is not grasped by his hearers, strives to use other words, by which he can make manifest what he has in his heart." [30]

This suggests that knowledge of God *per creaturas* can be recovered only by faith; there is no movement back to the knowledge of God which has been lost (to a knowledge *per creaturas* abstracted from its subsequent denial) but only a movement forward into the saving knowledge of faith, in which the divine interior light again shines (now superabundantly, compared to the initial gift) and so, among other things, enables the *signa exteriora* of God in the world to be seen as such. Claims about the knowledge of God *per creaturas* cannot, in other words, be ab-

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[29] Ibid.: "Homo poterat ad cognoscendum Dei sapientiam per creaturas ab ipso factas inspiciendo pervenire, secundum illud Rom 1:20 . . . Sed homo propter sui cordis vanitatem a rectitudine divinae cognitionis deviavit."

[30] Ibid. : " Et ideo Deus per quaedam alia ad sui cognitionem salutiferam fideles adduxit, quae in ipsis rationibus creaturarum non inveniuntur ... Et huiusmodi sunt fidei documenta. Et est simile, sicut si aliquis magister considerans sensum suum ab auditoribus non accipi, per verba quae protulit, studet aliis verbis uti, per quae possit manifestare quae habet in corde."

stracted from the irreversible scriptural narrative of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation, in which all human beings are implicated, and within the context of which all of their capacities and achievements must be understood. " The human mind is freed from vanity only when it relies upon God " ; even Adam and Eve in paradise, though for them more about God was *manifeste scita* than there can be for us, knew God at all only because they had faith in him. " The faith which clings to the first truth is common to all who have knowledge of God, and have not yet reached the future blessedness." [31] *A fortiori* there can be *scientia* regarding God for fallen human beings (as I argued in "Aquinas as Postliberal Theologian ") only after faith. Apart from the knower's reliance on God as the self-manifesting *prima veritas,* it seems that there is no knowledge of God *per creaturas;* creation by itself is incapable of yielding knowledge of God. In fact Thomas makes a yet stronger point: there is only one self-manifestation of God sufficient for us to be able to know him: the incarnation of the eternal Word. " Creatures were insufficient to lead to knowledge of the creator, hence ' the world was made through him, and knew him not' [Jn. 1:10]. Therefore it was necessary that the creator himself come into the world in the flesh and be known through himself *(per seipsum).* And this is what the Apostle says in I Car. 1:21." [32] There is indeed a

[31] *In Rom.* 1, 7 (#129) : "Solum mens humana est a vanitate libera quando Deo innititur" (cf. "credere Deo ") ; II-II, 5, 1, c: "Communiter fides est in omnibus habentibus cognitionem de Deo, futura beatitudine nondum adepta, inhaerendo primae veritati."

[32] *In Ioannem* 1, 5 (#141) : "Nam creaturae insufficiens erant ad ducendum in cognitionem creatoris; uncle 'mundus per ipsum factus est, et ipsum non cognovit.' Uncle necessarium erat ut ipse creator per carnem in mundum veniret, et per seipsum cognosceretur : et hoc est quod Apostolus <licit, I Cor. 1:21." It should be noted that in this passage the failure of human beings to know God from creatures is attributed simply to a " defect of creatures " (*creaturarum defectum),* who are by themselves incapable of generating this knowledge, and not to the darkness of the human mind induced by sin. These are two different reasons, explicitly distinguished by Aquinas, " why God willed to become incarnate" (*quare Deus voluit incarnari).* This seems, to be sure, inharmonious with Thomas's well known endorsement of the view that God would not have become incarnate had there been no sin (cf. III, 1, 3). There

knowledge of God *per creaturas* (that is, through *suae sapientiae signa exteriora),* but it is incapable of standing on its own; it can exist at all only insofar as it is integrated into the knowledge of God *per seipsum.* The latter is, in general, faith's reliant apprehension of the self-revealing *prima veritas* which God is, and in particular, faith's knowledge of God's incarnation in Jesus Christ, who is not a *signum exteriorum* of God's wisdom but himself the eternal wisdom of God, by the apprehension of whom we know God *per seipsum.*

If for Thomas faith's assent to what God reveals cannot be conceived as a quantitative increment upon a knowledge of God independently available *per creaturas,* neither can the articles of faith be conceived as added on to a self-contained group of propositions about God for which demonstrations are possible. As Crosson observes, Thomas does on occasion speak of propositions which are subject to demonstration *per creaturas* as "presupposed to" the articles of faith (e.g., that God is one). [33] But Thomas explicitly blocks Crosson's inference from this that the articles of faith include " *only* those truths about God which are both revealed and indemonstrable," and with it the further inference that the believer who cannot master the demonstrations assents to the demonstrable propositions not because they are revealed by God (and so included within the articles of faith) but because they are logically entailed by the articles. " It was necessary that human beings be instructed by divine reve!ation even with regard to those things about God which can be investigated

is no room to sort out the issues here, but it is worth bearing in mind that Thomas regards questions about what God *might* have done as relatively fruitless : " This question does not have great authority . . . we do not know what [God] would have ordained, if he had not foreknown sin." (" Haec quaestio non est magnae auctoritatis . . . nescimus quid ordinasset, si non praescivisset peccatum." *In I Tim.* 1, 4, [#40]) God's actual incarnation in Jesus Christ is a basic *datum* in terms of which theology must seek to answer the questions put to it, and behind which it is not possible informatively to inquire; speculations about what God might have done are not to be taken as the interpretive key to what he actually has done.

as *De Ver.* 14, 9, ad 8.

by human reason." [34] Not only is a demonstrable proposition like
the existence of God included among the *credibilia,* it is first
among them: " Many things are contained in faith which are
ordered to the faith by which we believe that God exists, which
is the first and chief thing among all those which are to be be-
lieved." [35] Thus Crosson has the entailment (or, more broadly,
inclusionary) relationship backwards; the (demonstrable) exist-
ence of God is not entailed by the indemonstrable *credibilia* but
itself includes or entails them. " All the articles are implicitly con-
tained in certain primary credibles," namely God's existence and
providence ; " for in the divine existence are included all those
things which we believe exist in God eternally, in which our
blessedness consists." [36] Thomas does indeed distinguish between
propositions about God which cannot be demonstrated and those
which can, but this is a distinction within the contents of the ar-
ticles of faith (between what belongs to faith *simpliciter* and
secundum quid), [37] not a distinction between the articles of faith
and an independently accessible body of knowledge.

When Aquinas speaks of faith in the articles " presupposing "
what is demonstrable *per creaturas,* he regularly indicates how he
thinks this should be conceived, namely as an instance of the re-
lation of grace to nature: "the knowledge of faith presupposes
natural knowledge, just as grace presupposes nature." [88] The

[84] I, 1, 1, c: "Ad ea etiam quae de Deo ratione humana investigari possunt,
necessarium fuit hominem instrui revelatione divina."

[35] II-II, 16, 1, c: "In fide multa continentur ordinata ad fidem qua credimus
Deum esse, quod est primum et principale inter omnia credibilia." Indeed, it
would be manifestly inconsistent for Thomas to speak of an *article* on the
(demonstrable) divine existence or unity if, as Crosson proposes, the *credibilia*
(viz., the articles) and the demonstrables formed two mutually exclusive
classes.

[36] II-II, 1, 7, c: " Omnes articuli implicite continentur in aliquibus primis
credibilibus . . . In esse enim divino includuntur omnia quae credimus in Deo
aeternaliter existere, in quibus nostra beatitudo consistit."

[87] Cf. *De Ver.* 14, 9, c; I, 2, 2, ad 1; II-II, 1, 5, c, ad 3, and ad 4. When
Thomas suggests that the proposition concerning (e.g.) God's unity "is not a
part of faith," (cf. above, note 2), this should, it seems, be taken as an ab-
breviation for "is not a part of faith *simpliciter."*

[as] *De Ver.* 14, 9, ad 8: "Cognitio enim fidei praesupponit cognitionem
naturalem, sicut et gratia naturam."

grace of faith " presupposes " some knowing on the part of crea-
tures; it is to humans specifically as knowers that the gift of faith
is freely (i.e., graciously) given. But grace is not simply added
to nature, leaving the latter unaffected; it transforms and per-
fects nature, enabling nature to do and attain what it otherwise
could not. Human knowing-precisely at its highest levels of
attainment-is as much in need of transformation and perfection
by grace as any other aspect of human being and activity. This
transformation is effected by the process of reinterpreting and re-
assessing all human claims to knowledge in light of the articles of
faith. " Since grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it,
natural reason must be subservient to faith" ; this is not a mat-
ter of building on or adding to the arguments of the philosophers,
but (following II Cor. 10:5) of aggressively "taking them cap-
tive " and making them obey Christ. 39 In this sense (according
to the order of nature rather than the order of time, to use
Thomas' s standard distinction) the relationship of " presupposi-
tion " is reversed; that person rightly uses the wisdom of the
world " who, presupposing the foundations of the true faith,
takes anything true she may find in the teachings of the philos-
ophers into the obedience of faith." 40 The grace of faith trans-
forms the arguments of the philosophers about God (or, more
precisely, the persons who seek knowledge by means of these
arguments) by liberating them from the " straits " (*angustiae)*
in which they must otherwise unavoidably labor and so enabling
them to reach the goal at which they aim but by themselves (that
is, in the hands of those without Christian faith) cannot reach-
demonstrated knowledge *(scientia)* of God.41 One aspect of this

39 I, 1, 8, ad 2: " Cum enim gratia non tollat naturam, sed perficiat, oportet
quod naturalis ratio subserviat fidei ... Unde et Apostolus dicit, II Cor. 10:5,
' in captivitatem redigentes omnem intellectum in obsequium Christi.' " Cf. also
I, 2, 2, ad 1.

4o *Jn I Cor.* 1, 3, (#43): "Utitur autem sapientia verbi, qui suppositis verae
fidei fundamentis, si qua vera in doctrinis philosophorum inveniat, in obsequium
fidei assumit." This is a paraphrase of Augustine *(De Doctrina Christiana* II,
40), who speaks of taking the arguments of the philosophers away from those
who have no right to possess them. Cf. also II-II, 167, 1, ob 3.

41 As suggested by *SCG* III, 48 (#2261).

transformation, as I have argued, is that the sentences and terms of the arguments have, when drawn into the context of assent to the articles of faith, a sense (or propositional content) which they otherwise lack and in virtue of which they are true. [42]

IV

For some time now, many Thomisms have rejected or deeply qualified earlier interpretations which attributed to Aquinas a " two-story " view of the relation of nature and grace, in which grace is a quantitative increment to a nature which would be com- plete without grace and which is in itself virtually unaffected by what is added to it. The considerations we have made suggest that a two-story view is particularly ill suited to characterizing the relationship between faith and reason, between what we hold true by revelation and the rest of what we think we know. Its persistence in Thomist accounts of faith and reason (if not of other aspects of the relationship between nature and grace) is likely due in part, perhaps in large part, to the sort of apologetic considerations sketched by Crosson at the end of his essay. Those convictions for which we have demonstrative arguments are not, he argues, "subject to the coherency test for correspondence" ; only what belongs to faith in the strict sense (what we believe because God says it) is subject to this condition. This means, I take it, that beliefs we hold because we think we have compelling reasons for them need not be tested for their coherence (at mini- mum, their consistency) with the articles of faith in order to as-

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[42] Crosson rightly argues that " a formally valid argument in which one of the terms is, in effect, a variable is not a demonstration" (his note 28). But that is just the point: the arguments of the pre-Christian philosophers are formally valid, but outside the context Christian faith their terms (especially " God") cannot attain that fixity and specificity of sense which would make them demonstrations, i.e., arguments which would yield knowledge *(adaequatio mentis)* of God (a point partially obscured when I spoke of "the philosopher's demonstration").   Thomas does, of course, attribute demonstrative knowledge of God to the philosophers, but this attribution must, I have suggested, be in- terpreted in light of its subsequent denial ; in this context the attribution is traceable to the formal validity of the arguments, the denial to the diversity of sense.

sess their truth. Correlatively, he suggests, it will not be possible *to* display the plausibility of Christian beliefs (e.g., in interreligious dialogue) except by showing how they agree (minimally, are consistent with) beliefs shared on a wide scale--at best, by all rational persons-and in particular those for which compelling or demonstrative reasons are available. Otherwise, " we would be in principle incapable of giving [adherents of other religions] any demonstrable reasons for the claims that God . . . *is* at all as our kerygma describes him," i.e., that Christian beliefs are true.

That Christian beliefs may be justified (though not, properly speaking, demonstrated) only if they rest on a foundation of beliefs shared by or obligatory for all rational persons is not, I think, necessary in order to avoid relativism about truth and knowledge in theology, nor to account for the possibility of significant interreligious dialogue (including the possibility that these involved in the dialogue might reasonably be led to change their own beliefs). [43] For present purposes the salient point is that such an account inverts the view of epistemic justification explicitly proposed by Aquinas. For Aquinas, *everything* is subject to "the coherency test for correspondence." That is, all interpreted sentences must at least be consistent with the creedally articulated heart of the Christian faith in order to be held true, and this is the primary (that is, ultimately decisive) test of their truth (though it will of course not usually be the only test). It is not the business of theology *(sacra doctrina)* " to prove the principles of other sciences, but only to judge them: for whatever is found in other sciences which is inconsistent with the truth of [theology] is *to*

[43] There is no room to go into these issues here. On truth and knowledge, see my essay, "Absorbing the World: Christianity and the Universe of Truths," in *Theology and Dialogue: Essays in Conversation With George Lindbeck,* ed. Bruce D. Marshall (Notre Dame: University Press, 1990), pp. 69-102, and William C. Placher, *Unapologetic Theology* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989); on interreligious dialogue, see J. A. DiNoia, O.P., "Varieties of Religious Aims: Beyond Exclusivism, Inclusivism, and Pluralism," in *Theology and Dialogue,* pp. 249-274, and Bruce D. Marshall, " Truth Claims and the Possibility of Jewish-Christian Dialogue," *Modern Theology* (forthcoming).

be totally rejected as false, as is said in II Cor. 10." [0]   This is
because the primary principles of theology are the articles of
faith, and these are the verbal embodiment of the self-revealing
prima veritas, who is, as such, the measure of all truth.   Philos-
ophy's power to seduce and deceive. Thomas argues (following
Col. 2 :8), lies in the way it urges us to reverse this relationship
and measure the truth of the articles of faith by some other
standard-especially   when the articles seem to meet this stand-
ard.   This is " the innovation of reason, which happens when
someone wants to measure the things of faith according to the
principles of [created] reality and not according to divine wis-
dom " ; the " elements of the world " deceive us when we " meas-
ure the truth of faith according to the truth of creatures." [45] The
primary criteria of truth for anything we say about God and
creatures (i.e., for all our discourse) are not those propositions
which are most widely shared, but those which are most particu-
larly Christian, not those which are demonstrable (nor the
naturally accessible principles which we employ in demonstra-
tions), but ones which are beyond demonstration.

   The epistemic inversion characteristic of many Thomisms is
reinforced by a tendency to read Thomas as though the formal
object of faith, namely God as the self-disclosing *prima veritas,*
were beyond any linguistically statable content. So Roy holds that
when Aquinas speaks of the *obiectum fidei* (from the point of
view of believers) as " something complex, in the form of a state-
ment," this should be taken to refer to the material, not the
formal, object of faith, and suggests that viewing what Chris-
tians assent to in faith as actual sentences constitutes an illicit

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44 I, 1, 6, ad 2: " Non pertinet ad earn probare principia aliarum scientiarum,
sed solum iudicare de eis; quidquid enim in aliis scientiis invenitur veritati
huius scientiae repugnans, totum condemnatur ut falsum; unde dicitur II Cor.
10 .•. " On the equivalence of "sacra doctrina" and "theologia," cf. I, 1, 7,
sc.

45 *In Col.* 2, 2 (#92, 94) : "Aliud [seducens] est adinventio rationis, quando
scilicet aliquis vult metiri ea quae sunt fidei, secundum principia rerum et non
secundum sapientiam divinam ... mensurando scilicet veritatem fidei secundum
veritatem creaturarum."

" conceptualist " reading of Aquinas. [46] **If** the material and formal objects of faith were thus distinguished as words and things, then for Aquinas one could assent to God as self-revealing *prima veritas* without regarding the sentences one holds true in faith (viz., the articles) as the primary criteria of truth; one would be assenting, as it were, directly to the reality itself, without thereby committing oneself regarding the epistemic status of any sentences, including those which make up the articles of faith.

Thomas, however, rejects any purely supra-linguistic conception of the formal object which defines faith. " The formal object of faith is the first truth, insofar as it is manifested in the holy scriptures and the doctrine of the church. Thus one who does not cleave to the doctrine of the church, as to the infallible and divine rule which comes from the first truth made manifest in the holy scriptures, does not have the habit of faith." [47] The formal object of faith is, to be sure, God himself under the aspect of self-revealing measure an<l criterion of all truth, that is, God as *prima veritas.* But God, precisely as *prima veritas,* is accessible to us only through his own testimony to himself; apart from this the *prima veritas* has no content for us. For Aquinas the self-testimony of the *prima veritas* has a specific linguistic, textual, and communal-historical shape; we can only assent to and thereby know God as *prima veritas* by sharing in a highly ramified web of judgments (i.e., by holding true an interconnected body of sentences under specific interpretations) which constitute the

[46] II-II, 1, 2, c: "Ex parte credentis ... obiectum fidei est aliquid complexum per modum enuntiabilis."

[47] II-II, 5, 3, c: "Formale autem obiectum fidei est veritas prima secundum quod manifestatur in Scripturis sacris et doctrinae Ecclesiae. Unde quicumque non inhaeret, sicut infallibili et divinae regulae, doctrinae Ecclesiae, quae procedit ex veritate prima in Scripturis sacris manifestata, ille non habet habitum fidei" (cf. also ad 2). Cf. *De Spe* 1, c: "Faith is not a virtue except insofar as it clings to the testimony of the first truth, in such a way that it believes what is made manifest by him" (" Fides autem non habet rationem virtutis, nisi in quantum inhaeret testimonio veritatis primae, ut ei credat quod ab ea manifestatur "). For more extensive discussion and further references, see Pesch, *Theologie der Rechtfertigung,* pp. 725-8, and "Aquinas as Postliberal Theologian," pp. 373-7.

identity of a particular historical community, namely the church.
One might, of course, assent to the sentences in scripture and
creed for many reasons; perhaps because they seem not only con-
sistent with, but plausible when measured by the standard of,
sentences or beliefs which seem as though they should be self-evi-
dent to any rational person, or those the truth of which seems to
have been demonstrated.   But to regard such reasons as primary
or decisive is incompatible with having Christian faith, for which
one assents to scripture and creed simply because it is the self-
testimony of the self-revealing *prima veritas* (an assent which, as
noted above, is possible only in virtue of an interior action of di-
vine grace upon the will).   To hold the testimony of scripture and
creed true because it coheres with other beliefs is *eo ipso* to regard
those beliefs as epistemically primary with regard to scripture and
creed, and so to regard them, and the God whose linguistic self-
manifestation they are, as (at best) the *secunda,* not the *prima,*
veritas. Thus Thomas's very notion of faith, and specifically of
faith's formal object as the divine *prima veritas* precisely in his
verbal self-manifestation, necessarily entails that communally (and
specifically creedally) interpreted scripture is the primary criterion
of truth, with which all other claims to truth must cohere.

For Thomas the articles of faith through which the *prima*
veritas testifies to himself are not a random collection but are
ordered around a christological center.   " The chief teaching of
the Christian faith is the salvation accomplished by the cross of
Christ." [48] Scripture interpreted according to the church's creed
is the primary criterion of truth specifically because Jesus Christ
is its center, who bears witness to himself through it; the final
test of any claim to truth is whether it coheres with the testimony
of scripture and creed to him.   " Whatever is not in agreement
with Christ is to be entirely rejected.   But what makes Christ so
great that for his sake we ought to reject everything? ... **[It** is]
because he is God. Therefore we must conform to him more than

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[48] *In I Cor.* 1, 3 (#45) : "Principale autem in doctrina fidei Christianae est
salus per crucem Christi facta."

to all others." [49] Thus for Thomas "first truth" is a christological, and hence trinitarian, notion. Jesus Christ " is through his own essence the uncreated and eternal truth, which is not made, but begotten of the Father." [50] He is the uncreated truth because he is the eternal Word of God, who " expresses the total being of the Father " and so is " truth itself." [51] Since Jesus Christ is the eternally begotten wisdom of God and so *ipsa veritas,* " the outcome of the sending of precisely this one is that human beings become sharers in the divine wisdom and knowers of the truth." The mission of the Son as *ipsa veritas* is, moreover, inextricable from the mission of the Spirit; " the Son teaches us, since he is the Word, but the Holy Spirit makes us capable of being taught by him." [52]

So for Aquinas the *prima veritas* has a human name, and we apprehend the *prima veritas* precisely by apprehending the particular flesh and blood of Jesus of Nazareth. It is primarily by coherence with the testimony of scripture and creed to this human being that all other claims are true, and so it is on the knowledge of this human being that our knowledge of truth ultimately depends. " The Word of God is the truth itself. And because no one can know the truth unless he clings to the truth, it is necessary that all who desire to know the truth cling to this Word." [a] This high claim is not made for an anonymous *Verbum extra carnem,* to be given content by whatever we find true on other

'9 *In Col.* 2, 2 (#95-6) : "Quidquid non est secundum Christum, respuendum est. Sed numquid est Christus tantus, ut pro eo omnia respui debeant? . . • quia ipse est Deus. Unde plus est ei standum quam omnibus."

50 *In Ioannem* 1, 10 (#207) : " Christus ... est per suam essentiam veritas increata; quae aeterna est, et non facta, sed a patre est genita."

51 *In Ioannem* 1, 1 (#29) : "Verbum in divinis ... sit perfectum, et totius esse Patris expressivum "; *In Ioannem* 14, 2 (#1869): "Veritas enim convenit [Christo] per se quia ipse est Verbum ..• Verbum Dei est ipsa veritas."

52 *In Ioannem,* 14, 6 (#1958) : "Effectus missionis huiusmodi est ut faciat homines participes divinae sapientiae, et cognitores veritatis. Filius ergo tradit nobis doctrinam, cum sit Verbum ; sed Spiritus sanctus doctrinae eius nos capaces facit."

53 *In Ioannem* 14, 2 (#1869) : "Verbum Dei est ipsa veritas. Et quia nullus potest veritatem cognoscere nisi adhaereat veritati, oportet omnem qui veritatem cognoscere desiderat, huic Verbo adhaerere."

grounds. Here too, at the trinitarian and christological heart of
the matter, Thomas resists the epistemic inversion sometimes
favored by Thomisms; the *prima veritas* is the *Verbum incar-
natum* : " This human being is divine truth itself. Other human
beings share in the truth in many ways, insofar as the first truth
shines in their minds through manifold similitudes-but   Christ
is this truth." [54]

For the fragment of a Thomism outlined in" Aquinas as Post-
liberal Theology " and elaborated here, the primary criterion of
truth for all our discourse is a network of beliefs which are not
self-evident, cannot be demonstrated, and are not held on an
especially wide scale. A loss of confidence in metaphysics, insou-
ciant relativism, or a desire to insulate one's beliefs from criticism
need not be taken as the motivation for proposing such a view.
One might propose this sort of Thomism because one held, with
Thomas, that Jesus Christ is divine truth itself.

[54] *In Ioannem* 1, 8 (#188) : "Ille homo esset ipsa divina veritas: in aliis
enim hominibus sunt multae veritates participatae, secundum quod ipsa veritas
prima per multas similitudines in mentibus eorum relucet, sed Christus est
ipsa veritas."

BOOK REVIEWS

Good and Evil: Interpreting a Human Condition. By EDWARD FARLEY. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1990. Pp. xxi ✛ 295.

The Evils of Theodicy. By TERRENCE W. TILLEY. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990. Pp. xii ✛ 277.

The Co-Existence of God and Evil. By JANE MARY TRAU. New York, N.Y.: Peter Lang, 1991. Pp. 109.

Evil is deeply and endlessly fascinating to the religious mind. On the one hand, it challenges religion. The existence of the evils within our ken poses a threat to the rationality of central tenets of theism; the presence of overwhelming evils within our lives can threaten the viabil·ity of our religious attitudes and practices. On the other hand, religions typically offer strategies for coping with evil. They propose explana-tions of its origins that may aid us in understanding it, and they con·tain salvific practices that are meant to lead to redemption from sin or the cessation of suffering. So religious responses to evil are bound to be complex, and this complexity will inevitably be reflected in the treatment of evil in academic discourses. In addition, the present academic division of labor results in religion being studied in many disciplines. Each of them has its own traditions and agendas, and this often leads to a diversity of approaches that gives interdisciplinary dis·cussion of religious responses to evil something of the air of conversa·tion after Babel. The three books under review here, which represent the disciplines of philosophy, religious studies, and theology, illustrate nicely both the complexity and the diversity.

Jane Mary Trau, who is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Barry University, has written a short essay in analytic philosophy of religion proposing a solution to the logical problem of evil. The problem arises from the fact that there are arguments purporting to show that the proposition that God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnibenevolent is inconsistent with the proposition that evil exists. One way to solve the problem would be to find a possibly true proposition such that it is consistent with the proposition ·that God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnibenevolent and together with that proposition entails that evil exists. Alvin Plantinga's celebrated free-will defense offers a solution of this sort. Trau's alternative solution is a version of the familiar greater-goods defense.

Trau's main claim is that it is possible that evil has positive value. An evil has positive value if it is logically necessary for some greater

good, and it certainly seems to he possible that some evils have posi-
tive value. Thus, for example, suppose God creates nothing other than
two angels, A and B. Nothing interrupts the felicity of either hut a
mild pang of sorrow felt by A, to which B responds with compassion.
A's sorrow is logically necessary for the greater good of B's compas-
sionate response to A's sorrow. Hence A's sorrow is an evil that has
positive value. Moreover, the proposition that evils with positive value
exist is consistent with the proposition that God is omniscient, omni-
potent, and omnihenevolent. So the existence of evil is consistent with
the existence of an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnihenevolent deity.
In other words, Trau's version of the greater-goods defense does seem
to provide a solution to the logical problem of evil.

But that is not to say that all the evils there actually are or even all
those we know about do or could have positive value. Thus it does not
follow, without further assumptions, that the existence of all the evils
there actually are is consistent with the existence of an omniscient,
omnipotent, and omnihenevolent deity. In a discussion of natural evil
near the end of her hook, Trau acknowledges the need for such addi-
tional assumptions. She says: "Four assumptions underlie the claim
that natural evils have positive value: (1) The material universe has
positive value. (2) The material universe must function in a way that
requires the occurrence of natural evils as secondary effects. (3) The
material universe is either the best or the only possible universe. (4)
If the universe as we know it did not function the way it does, it sim-
ply would not exist, and that would he bad" (p. 99). On the face of
it, though, these assumptions taken together are not very plausible, and
the claim that the material universe is either the best or the only pos-
sible universe is by itself quite implausible. Trau does what she can to
argue for them in her final pages, but she devotes slightly less than
three pages to this project, and that is simply not enough space to build
a convincing case for these controversial assumptions. So it must he
concluded that Trau has not shown that the existence of all the natural
evils there actually are is consistent with the existence of an omniscient,
omnipotent, and omnihenevolent deity.

Terrence W. Tilley, who is Associate Professor of Religion at Florida
State University, devotes the hulk of his substantial hook to analyzing
the treatment of evil in five important texts. After three introductory
chapters in which he outlines a speech act theory he proposes to em-
ploy in his analysis, Tilley turns his attention to the Hebrew Bible's
Job, Augustine's *Enchiridion,* Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy,*
Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion,* and George Eliot's
Adam Bede. As he reads it, *Job* is a text that admonishes; it warns
against silencing the sufferer's voice, against joining the company of
Job's comforters, and against religious sadomasochism. He takes the

Enchiridion to he an instruction by Augustine, the bishop, in which a statement of faith is made and a defense of its coherence with the existence of evil is conducted. He interprets the *Consolation* as a text addressed to readers who suffer from misfortune in order to re-form them, as they act it out, into readers who embrace their fate because they realize it is good for them. The enduring significance of Hume's *Dialogues,* he argues, lies in its critique of the Enlightenment theodicy project and design argument. And Eliot's fine novel *Adam Bede,* as he sees it, teaches by example how declarations of confession, which remake the self, and of forgiveness, which restore relationships, are counteractions to moral evils that cannot he undone. Tilley's readings of these texts are ingenious and stimulating; they appear to he plausible, even though they are not always completely persuasive.

Like Trau, Tilley finds merit in the project of responding to evil with a defense, that is, an argument for the coherence of the existence of God with the existence of evil. He finds elements of a defense not only in Augustine hut also in Boethius and Hume. But he has nothing good to say for theodicy, the project of specifying divine morally sufficient reasons for permitting evil. He discerns no successful theodicy in any of the texts he discusses. What is more, he concludes the hook with a chapter that mounts a passionate attack on the practice of theodicy. It is, he contends, itself a source of evil and ought to he abandoned. Here, however, the argument goes off the rails.

Tilley's charge is that theodicies are evil because they must ignore or even obscure real evils. "To write a theodicy," he claims, "is to perform an assertive declaration that is a falsifying declaration which effaces genuine evils " (p. 235) . Those evils are primarily social. They consist of "structures or practices of evil, visible to Hume and to contemporary feminists, Marxists, and poststructuralist literary critics, hut invisible to the practitioners of theodicy because the practice of theodicy necessarily effaces them as evils" (p. 238). But Tilley offers little by way of evidence to support this remarkable accusation. He merely notes that some theodicists do not include distinctively social evils among the examples of evil they mention in formulating the prob·lem of evil. This may indicate that theodicists have in fact overlooked social evils; it does nothing to support the strong modal thesis that the practice of theodicy *necessarily* effaces them.

Holists and individualists disagree about whether or not there exist irreducible social evils above and beyond the evil done and suffered by individuals who participate in oppressive structures or practices. Tilley gives no argument to support the holistic side in this dispute. But suppose for the sake of argument that there are irreducible social evils. All that follows is that a complete theodicy would have to specify morally sufficient divine reasons for permitting them. Tilley's reason for think-

ing that theodicy is bound to fail in this enterprise appears only in
the penultimate paragraph of the book. There he claims that " a tra·
ditional theodicy which dealt with social evil would be a justification
of the human status quo, not of God" (p. 251). However, from the
assumption that God has morally sufficient reasons for permitting cer·
tain social evils it does not follow that humans have morally sufficient
reasons for permitting those evils. Nor does it follow that humans have
no obligation to eradicate such evils or that they are obliged to refrain
from eradicating them. After all, we and not God may be under the
obligation to clean up some of the messes we make here on earth. In
short, Tilley has provided no reason to think that a theodicy that dealt
with irreducible social evil would wind up justifying the status quo.
So his argument that the practice of theodicy is itself evil fails.

Edward Farley, who is Buffington Professor of Theology at Vander-
bilt Divinity School, stands in a tradition of liberal Protestant thought
that stretches back through Tillich to Schleiermacher. The first part
of his large treatise on good and evil performs an analysis of human
reality into three spheres. The interhuman sphere is the domain of
face-to-face interaction, and the social sphere is the larger world of so-
cial and cultural systems. The sphere of individual agency is sub·
divided into the realms of personal being, biological being, and ele-
mental passions. Farley's description of the human condition displays
a great deal of erudition; he ably synthesizes material from the social
sciences, philosophy, and theology.

The second part of the book presents what Farley calls the " Chris·
tian paradigm " of moral evil and redemption; it goes on to trace out
the manifestations of the dynamics of moral evil and redemption in the
characteristic corruptions (vices) and freedoms (virtues) of the three
spheres of human reality. Human evil, according to Farley, is not sim-
ply our tragic vulnerability and our suffering because it is mainly a
way of responding to these things. The negative side of this response
is a refusal or denial of vulnerability; its positive side is an insistence
on ultimate security. The result of directing this insistence toward
mundane goods that cannot deliver ultimate security is a kind of
idolatry. As Farley sees it, freedom is not liberty of choice but "the
power by which agents are able to actualize themselves toward their
well-being " (p. 136). Idolatry produces a loss of this power and so
diminishes freedom in this sense. Hence Farley's account of human evil
is at bottom, as he aptly puts it by borrowing a phrase from Luther, " a
theology of the bondage of the will" (p. 121).

The remedy for freedom lost is freedom regained. Liberation from
the power of the dynamics of evil involves acquiring " .the power to
live in the condition of tragic vulnerability without insisting on being
secured by goods at hand" (p. 143). This power is acquired in what

Farley calls "the moment of being-founded." He tells us that heing-founded occurs in " the presencing of the sacred, that is, the creative ground of things" (p. 144). It is associated with an experience of freedom because it displaces the refusal of vulnerability and the insistence on security and thereby liberates one to exist as fragile and vulnerable amidst the tragedies and sufferings of the world. Existing in this way requires courage. Thus, developing a Tillichian line of thought, Farley claims that " it is courage, not submission, belief, obedience, or partaking of acquittal, that constitutes the primordial moment of agential redemption" (p. 146). But, Farley goes on to say, being-founded "is not simply a securing presencing of the sacred hut a forgiving presencing of the violated (disbelieved, mistrusted, disobeyed) God" (p. 152). And faithfulness or worshipful dependence is the proper response to this forgiving sacred presence. Like Tilley, then, Farley highlights the power of forgiveness to restore relationships disrupted by the dynamics of moral evil.

Farley's account of being-founded seems to me to capture some important elements of a theistic view of liberation from the powers of moral evil. However, I doubt that it adequately expresses the Christian paradigm. In traditional Christianity, it is worth recalling, both liberation from bondage to evil and divine forgiveness are mediated by Christ, and Farley says nothing about such mediation. Instead he draws a sharp distinction between the broad structure of the Christian paradigm and a cosmic narrative of divine acts, and he bases on this distinction a decision not to " explicate or even presuppose the cosmic narrative (Christology, Holy Spirit)" (p. 140). The predictable result of this decision is that there is nothing distinctively Christian in Farley's account of redemption from moral evil. But, as I see it, any distinction between the structure of the Christian paradigm and its cosmic narrative is untenable. The cosmic narrative creates and is essential to the structure of the Christian paradigm; what remains when one ignores or abstracts from it is not Christianity in any full-blooded sense hut at most a kind of generic theism that is only a pale reflection of Christianity. It is therefore a mistake to think that there could he a genuinely Christian theology of redemption from moral evil that does not rest on a Christology. So I judge that Farley's treatise has very little to contribute to the enterprise of fashioning a specifically Christian response to the problem of liberation from the powers of moral evil.

In this brief review I have not had space to give more than a sketch of the topics covered by the three hooks under consideration. But even this sketch should suffice to make it clear that evil, both natural and moral, evokes a great variety of responses from academic professionals concerned with the study of religion. As my remarks have indicated,

I think none of these books contains a wholly satisfactory treatment of the particular issues it takes up. Taken together, however, they do show that evil presents not just one but many problems to reflective religious minds. In addition, they make it perfectly evident that not just one but many academic disciplines continue to have helpful things to say in response to these gripping perplexities.

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Di,alogue with the Other: The Inter-religious Dialogue. By DAVID TRACY. Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs, 1. Louvain: Peeters; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990. Pp. 123. $12.95.

With this book David Tracy continues the hermeneutical project he launched in the *Analogical Imagination:* a concern to converse with the classics and to encounter the ' other '. However, here the ' other ' is extended beyond the traditional Western classics to the religions of the world and the often neglected archaic traditions. Tracy is surely correct when he says: " I believe that we are fast approaching the day when it will not be possible to attempt Christian systematic theology except in serious conversation with the other great ways" (p. xi). Here he follows a pioneering line drawn in Chicago by Tillich, Eliade and Kitagawa. Tracy brings to this venerable tradition his particular concern with hermeneutics and his experience with Jewish-Christian and Buddhist-Christian dialogue. The essays are further united by Tracy's desire to restore the unity between the mystical and prophetic within the Christian tradition.

Employing Kenneth Burke's analysis of rhetoric, Chapter one shows that Freud and Lacan can be interpreted in terms of a clash of prophetic and mystical rhetorics respectively. Both are concerned with the ' other ', Freud more instrumentally and didactically and Lacan more subversively and anarchically but not nihilistically or in the way of Zen. In this chapter Tracy has a tendency towards overdetermination. Still, the brunt of his argument is that all discourse has concealed foundations, the archaeology of which will help illuminate the opera· tive rhetoric. Furthermore, the mystical/ prophetic typology used in religion can illuminate secular issues, viz., the debate between Freud and Lacan. However, Tracy does not pay full attention to the nature of the 'other', but too easily assimilates it. For instance, is Freud's attention to the subconscious analogous to religious rhetoric's regarding the otherness of God? And does it really serve Tracy's purpose to start

the book by remammg within such very western waters despite the brave navigational direction he charted in the introduction?

Chapter two revisits the classics: he uses the writings of William James to throw light on the criteria for interreligious dialogue. These criteria are used to affirm the authenticity of religions; these are not intended to " replace the dialogue but, at best, heuristically to inform **it"** (p. 27). Tracy offers a good and sensitive appreciation of James (despite his anachronistic elements) , but his conclusions are somewhat thinly related to James's work and relate more closely to Tracy's own hermeneutical approach. The three criteria that he advances are: first, the notion of " immediate luminousness," understood as manifestation in a Heideggerian sense (and in keeping with von Balthasar) ; second, the necessity of coherence, understood as the compatibility of religious belief with science, art, and other humanistic traditions; and third, an ethical-pragmatic criterion related to James's notion of "fruits." With regard to the second, Tracy is aware of the problem of assuming a neutral form of "reason" in adjudicating such coherence. Still, his study would have been more helpful with specific examples to highlight some of the intractable problems in such a task. For instance, autonomy has been granted to the sciences by most western Christians but has not been by some other religious traditions in certain parts of the world, and so the notion of coherence begs the question. Tracy needs to grapple with the issues raised by Macintyre and Winch (among others) to move beyond the potentially sterile dichotomy implied in his notion of coherence. With regard to the third criterion there is question begging, too. Would Abraham have passed this test in his willingness to kill his son? Or would Job, for that matter, considering the way he puts up with such appalling devastation? Furthermore, Tracy implicitly accepts a notion of ethics which is detachable from the narrative that informs and shapes it and this allows his own secular modernity and that of James to hold too much sway. He would have done well to consider Hauerwas's conception of ethics. It would also have been better to apply the criteria to a concrete situation rather than expound it at the level of generality found here.

Chapter three is a superb and sympathetic reading of Eliade. It makes two main points: first, in contrast to that of Hegel and Schleiermacher, Eliade's work draws attention to the widest reaches of the history of the Spirit, even to the archaic traditions, and does not focus exclusively on the big five (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism) ; Second, Eliade prophetically transcends Romantic hermeneutics because his fascination with the ' other ' moves out of the traditional western ambit. Eliade's genius is to exemplify a post-Romantic hermeneutics as described by Gadamer and Ricoeur, viz., meeting the 'other ' in conversation. Mentioning Eliade at this point

also becomes an excuse for Tracy to repeat the arguments he put forward in *Plurality and Ambiguity;* I would draw the readers' attention to the penetrating criticism of that latter book, especially regarding Tracy's theology of religions, by Gerard Loughlin in *Modern Theology.*

Chapter four is the most engaging: here we finally see Tracy in conversation with non-Western traditions and intellectuals. Tracy is illuminating in his attempt to show the affinities and differences between Nagarjuna's Mahayana and the works of Derrida and Deleuze. The relation between these thinkers is profound, and this helps in part to explain the attraction that certain forms of Buddhism exert on the postmodernist mind. (This reminds me of the way the nineteenth-century European flirted with forms of Hinduism.) Tracy then carefully shows some of the "recoveries" or " retrievals " made possible within Christianity in dialogue with Buddhism; for example, the critique of possessive individualism leads beyond nihilism and anthropocentricism towards ecology and, of course, apophatic mysticism. He finally shifts gear in a way that reflects his own incorporation of materials from elsewhere. He suggests that Meister Eckhart takes us very close to the heart of Buddhist apophatic mysticism but then also goes on to offer criticisms of both Eckhart and Buddhism in the light of his reading of Ruysbroeck; he stresses the importance of self-manifestation as the mirror side of apophatic negation. This is a very searching part of the chapter. At times, however, it is difficult to see the flow of the argument, and readers would find it helpful to read Masao Abe's essay "Kenotic God and Dynamic Sunyata" (in *The Emptying God: A Buddhist-!ewish-Christwn Conversation,* ed. John В. Cobb, Jr. and Christopher Ives [Orbis, 1990], pp. 3-69) and Tracy's response to Abe's essay. That response is here edited and integrated into this chapter, not altogether successfully.

In the final chapter Tracy tries to tie up the loose ends of the book, trying to shape what is disparate into a coherent whole. The five chapters are partly based on the Dondeyne Lectures Tracy delivered at the University of Louvain. But as put together with some variously published and unpublished works, they do not coalesce to form the kind of cogent argument Tracy would like to claim. Tracy also has a tendency to list bibliographies in the notes again and again without interacting in a consistent or close manner with the texts cited. For all that, Tracy's observations are always nuanced, stimulating, suggestive, and creative, and this book represents an imaginative and timely addressing of issues quite central to the development of Christian theology.

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*Le Cristologie contemporanee e le loro posizioni fondamentali al vaglio
    della dottrina di S. Tommaso.* By DANIEL 0Ls, O.P., Studi Tomi·
    stici, 39. Citta Del Vaticano: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1991.
    Pp. 198 ✝ 13. 25,000 Lire.

The author's purpose in this compact but highly informative volume
is to confront some of the more fundamental positions of current chris·
tology with the christology of Aquinas, with the further intention of
deepening our appreciation of St. Thomas's thought (pp. 6 and 193).
Ols is aware that, in speaking generically of " contemporary chris-
tology," he is entering into discussion with a large number of authors
whose viewpoints often differ significantly from one another. He cites
writers as diverse as Rahner, Schillebeeckx, Sobrino, and Duquoc, for
example. Cognizant of the differences among them, he nonetheless sees
points of convergence. There is, he says, a certain " negative unity "
among them in that each holds himself at a certain distance from the
doctrine of Chalcedon and from the " christology from above " which
traditionally has been taken as proceeding from the Chalcedonian defi·
nition of faith. (One of the reasons for using St. Thomas as inter-
locutor with the modern christologies is Aquinas's own development of
such a "christology from above.") Along with this negative unity,
there is another aspect that links the disparate modern christologies.
Ols is aware that, in speaking generically of " contemporary christ-
tain anthropological focus which sees as normative " not the revealed
message, but the ones to whom the message is directed" (p. 8).

In developing his thesis, Ols in fact leaves to one side most of the
major modern writers on christology and limits himself to a systematic
analysis of the christologies of Rahner (especially as found in *Founda-
tions of Christian Faith* and in *A New Christology,* which Rahner wrote
with William Thiising) and Schillebeeckx. In five chapters (pp. 15-76)
Ols examines the relevant points of the theology of each man and then
separately contrasts the results with the theology of Aquinas.

The examination of Rahner's thought is done not without a certain
sympathy. Ols notes points of convergence between the transcendental
Thomism of Rahner and the actual thought of Aquinas. There is a
certain *a priori* methodology in both men, and there are similarities
between Rahner's transcendental approach and Thomas's thought on the
" natural desire" for the Beatific Vision. The harmonies, however, are
often more apparent than real, says Ols; this is especially so in a point
central to the Rahnerian anthropology: Rahner's *a priori* definition of
man as the being capable of union with the deity. This capability
Rahner equates with the Scholastic notion of *potentia obedientalis.* In
fact, claims Ols, Rahncr is using the terminology in an equivocal sense

and means something quite different from what Aquinas meant by it. For Rahner, the obediential potency "is objectively identical with the essence of man" (p. 30, quoting from Rahner's *Foundations);*   for Aquinas the obediential potency is nature's openness to being used by the Creator as He wills. As a result of the differences, the Incarnation, for Rahner, can be deduced as a possibility from the very nature of man; for Thomas, even the possibility can only be known retrospectively once the Incarnation has happened. The different starting points reflect different epistemologies: the one starts from man's potentialities and moves out toward the world and God; the other works from the world and God to understand man's possibilities. Thus, for the Thomist " a posteriori reflection on the convenience " of the Incarnation there   is substituted the Rahnerian " a priori reflection on the deducibility of the Incarnation " (p. 53) . Without going deeply into a philosophical critique of Rahner-Cornelio Fabro has already done that-Ols con· tends that this difference is due to the fact that Rahner's theology " is radically dependent on an idealistic thought-pattern which represents a mortal danger for theology" (p. 56).

E. Schillebeeckx's thought likewise suffers, says Ols, from the influence of philosophical idealism. What is central to Schillebeeckx's christology is the " concrete experience of the primitive Christian community" (p. 71, quoting Schillebeeckx's *Jesus).* Consequently, what we find in Scripture is not Jesus Himself, but a testimony about Jesus. Jesus Himself becomes a kind of *noumenon,* not accessible in himself except through the *phenomena* of the evangelical testimony. But such an approach is no more than the application of the Kantian philosophy to the Scripture (p. 80) . Traditional theologians, like Aquinas, were aware of the subjective factors in knowledge, aware too that knowledge is mediated, but fully convinced that the real is able to be grasped; we can, in fact, know Christ, not merely the testimony given about Him.

In chapter six of his work, Fr. Ols turns to Rahner's famous essay "Current Problems in Christology" *(Theological Investigations,* I, pp. 149 ff; an essay originally entitled "Chalcedon: End or Beginning"). It raised the specter of latent monophysitism in some of the classical or traditional christologies. That essay, now almost forty years old, pre· saged the marked Antiochean approaches to christological writing in the intervening years; it seems to have cleared the path for the various " christologies from below." Ols recognizes the monophysite dangers in the classical tendency to develop a " christology from above " but remarks that what has been substituted for it often falls into the op· posite danger of adoptionism (p. 104). This section of Ols's work would have benefitted greatly from more recent studies on the ecumenical councils of Constantinople II and III. Especially valuable in this regard would be Grillmeier's *Christ in Christian Tradition* (the

second English volume), Ratzinger's *Behold the Prerced One* (pp. 13-45), and W. Kasper's *Theology and Church* (pp. 94-108; Kasper says simply, "Rahner's characterization of neo-Chalcedonianism is historicaly inaccurate," p. 214, note 18). As it is, Ols's treatment reminds us that Rahner's own writings, which overlooked the later Councils of Constantinople, presume that Chalcedon had been the end of a development in Christology; this inaccurate presumption has dominated too much of the writing which has followed Rahner's essay.

Ols returns to this problem of " latent monophysitism " in some classical christologies in the final chapters of his work (VIII-XI). With a careful examination of the christology of Aquinas, the author skillfully demonstrates the rich development of Christ's true humanity that is possible within the classical approach; he deals specifically with the topics of Christ's knowledge, his sinlessness, and the concept of person. (It is interesting to note that, like Rahner and others before and after, Ols thinks that the word "person" is not particularly felicitous and would prefer simply the word *hypostasis* or subsistence [p. 187]. His wish is likely to have no more success than previous suggestions in this regard.)

Although limited in its intent, this hook is rich in many ways. Ols's knowledge of St. Thomas is deep, and he uses that knowledge well. His critique of Rahner and Schilleheeckx may he forceful in its negative assertions, hut I believe it is accurate in pointing out the philosophical idealism that underlies much of their christological writings. This idealism is too often overlooked and needs the corrective of what we might call "Mediterranean realism." Although his criticism may he incisive, it is never unfair or strident, and he is aware of the positive insights that these men have contributed to our continuing reflections on the Lord. By intent, Ols's work is essentially one of evaluation and criticism. Nevertheless, the chapters that reflect on (and develop) Aquinas's teaching and give a positive presentation of the real human·ity of the Lord lead one to hope that the author will follow this study with a fully elaborated christology.

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Kant's System of Rights. By LESLIE A. MULHOLLAND. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. Pp. xvii **✛** 434. $49.00.

Several good hooks on Kant's political philosophy have appeared in the past decade, hut the literature on Kant's political philosophy is still both slimmer and weaker than on any other aspect of his thought.

Though we still await a definitive study of the topic, this book goes a long way toward filling some important gaps. Even the best books on Kant's political philosophy tend to treat only the broad outlines of Kant's position, shying away from detailed exposition of Kant's theories of individual right and external possession and of the political theory based on them. Mulholland's is not only the most detailed but also the most persuasive account of these matters which has yet been presented in English.

The book's first four chapters attempt to lay the foundations for Kant's political philosophy through a general discussion of his ethical theory. The main function of these (somewhat overlong) introductory chapters is to argue for a tension between the law of nature formula (which Mulholland prefers as a guide to Kant's theory of right) and the formula of humanity as end in itself. According to Mulholland, the law of nature formula leads to a theory of rights and political obliga· tion which places Kant in the natural law tradition, whereas the formula of humanity commits him to what Mulholland calls the " deed prin- ciple ": that acquired rights can come about only through a deed on the part of those having the duties corresponding to the rights through which these duties have been assumed. Mulholland argues that if we take the deed principle strictly, then we must base political obligation on consent and thus on a social contract. The burden of Mulholland's argument throughout the book is that Kant cannot sustain the deed principle, and it is therefore the law of nature formula rather than the formula of humanity as end in itself which provides the basis for the only defensible reading of Kant's theory of rights.

Chapters 5 through 8 deal with Kant's conception of right, based on the principle that an action is right if it is compatible with the freedom of everyone according to a universal law. What is most in need of illumination here is the relationship of this principle to the funda· mental principle of morality, and Kant's puzzling claim that the prin· ciple of right is analytic. Mulholland does discuss the latter claim, but his discussion rests mainly on another puzzling Kantian claim, drawn from the *Foundations,* which is assumed rather than explained: name· ly, the claim that if freedom of the will were presupposed then the principle of morality would be analytic. But what we really need to understand here is Kant's apparent intention to give the theory of right a foundation which is entirely *independent* of morality. (Fichte at- tempted this quite explicitly two years earlier than Kant's *Rechtslehre* in his *Foundations of Natural Right* [1796]; but Kant hints that the principle of right is analytic given the concept of external freedom al- ready in the " Theory and Practice " essay of 1793.) Mulholland may be right in thinking that such an attempt cannot succeed within the framework of a Kantian practical philosophy, but we still need to know

more about what Kant's attempt amounts to and what motivates it be-
fore we can be sure about this.

In Chapter 7 Mulholland takes up Kant's account of the innate right
to freedom; in Chapter 8, Kant's theory of acquired rights; in Chapter
9, Kant's theory of the general will and the foundations of political
obligation. All these chapters make important original contributions
to our understanding of Kant's theory of rights. The innate right to
freedom includes the right over what I " empirically " possess (to that
over which I presently have physical control), but all "intelligible"
possession-rights of ownership over objects I do not presently con·
trol physically-must be acquired. Mulholland here argues persuasive·
ly that Kant's account of acquired rights cannot be squared with the
deed principle, because when I acquire intelligible possession over ob-
jects, it is not based on any deed on the part of others (all of whom
nevertheless have a duty not to interfere with my use of these objects) .
Further, Mulholland shows that on Kant's theory, intelligible possession
itself is founded on the existence of a civil condition in which right-
holders are subject to laws given by a general will. Kant's theory of
political obligation, like Locke's, is founded on the property rights.
But whereas for Locke the state is necessary only to determine and en·
force pre-existing property rights, Kant's theory holds that in the ab·
sence of a civil condition all intelligible possession is merely " provi·
sional," that is, hypothetical, and becomes an actual or " peremptory "
right only through the laws of the state.

Chapter 10 deals with Kant's political theory proper; Chapter 11
with his theory of international law and the right of nations. Chapter
12 sums up the argument in favor of a natural law interpretation of
Kant and against a consent or contract interpretation; it also compares
Kant's theory with the more recent theories of Nozick and Rawls, con-
trasting Kant's theory favorably with both but especially with Nozick's.
There are illuminating discussions here of such things as Kant's re·
publican theory of the state and his infamous view that there is no
right of revolution.

I am in agreement with the main thesis of this book: that Kant's
theory of rights cannot be successfully based on the deed principle and
hence is not a social contract theory. But several points in relation to
this thesis seem to me either unconvincing or unclear. I briefly men·
tion three. First, it is not clear that the deed principle follows from
the formula of humanity as an end in itself. Clearly Kant does think
that under many circumstances treating humanity as an end in itself
does involve a duty not to act in ways which affect others without their
consent. But Mulholland's attempt to argue that this implies the deed
principle (pp. 135-138) is not convincing. Second, I question whether
there is a serious tension in Kant caused by his adherence to the deed

principle. It is a familiar (if occasionaily disputed) point that Kant's
use of the idea of a social contract does not amount to a true contract
theory of the state, and that passages in Kant which sound contractarian
must not he taken too literally if they are to cohere with his official
views. I would go further: it is not clear that Kant himself ever actual-
ly relies on the deed principle. Indeed, MulhoIIand himself admits that
Kant does not explicitly use the principle at all in the *Rechtslehre* (p.
216).

   Finally, it remains unclear what Mulholland means when he contrasts
the contractarian strand in Kant (based on the deed principle and al-
legedly rooted in the formula of humanity) with the natural law strand
(based on the idea of a general will and allegedly rooted in the formula
of the law of nature).   Sometimes it seems as if all Mulholland means
in calling Kant a " natural law " theorist of the state is that his theory
of the state is based on the formula of the law of nature. I would say
that even this is not clear, since it is not clear how (or even that) Kant
intends the principle of right to he derived from the formula of the
law of nature. But at other points MulhoIIand seems to mean some·
thing that goes far beyond this: that Kant's political philosophy should
he seen as falling within the natural law tradition. Thus he sometimes
says that in Kant's theory rights are founded not on consent hut on
"what is *given* by nature, i.e., elements of the human condition and of
human nature in that condition" (p. 385) . But it remains obscure
how rights are supposed to have such a foundation. Kant's official posi·
tion seems rather to he that rights are based on laws " according to
which it is alone possible to establish a state in accordance with pure
rational principles" ("Theory and Practice" essay, quoted p. 310).
This makes it sound as if rights are based solely on the idea of a free
being and pure rational principles and are entirely independent of con·
tingent facts about the human condition as it is constituted by nature.
Now I am inclined to agree with MulhoIIand that Kant's practical
philosophy is actually much more dependent on his empirical theory of
human nature than his official formulations often acknowledge. But I
would hesitate to characterize that dependence by placing Kant within
the natural law tradition. I could he much surer where I want to agree
with Mulholland and where I would disagree with him if he had done
more to spell out specifically the ways in which Kant's theory of rights
is dependent on his theory of human nature and the human condition.

   In several respects Mulholland's interpretation of Kant's theory of
the state is novel, revisionist, and convincing. In closing, I will briefly
discuss what I think is the most important of these. Kant is widely
thought of as a classical liberal in political theory, grounding the state
solely on individual right, especially the right of private property, and
sanctioning only a minimal or " night watchman " state, one without

any welfare or redistributive powers and responsibilities. {Where Kant does explicitly argue that the state has the right to tax the wealthy to provide for the poor, he is commonly regarded as departing from both the letter and the spirit of his own theory.) By showing that for Kant even the right of property itself is founded on a civil condition of law made by a general will, Mulholland grounds a thoroughgoing rejection of any such interpretation. He points out that Kant's theory is quite consistent with a system of collective ownership {as Kant him-self explicitly acknowledges in the case of landed property). Moreover, he shows that for Kant, the entry into a civil state involves the loss of our natural capacity to survive through the physical appropriation of natural objects, since it allows that the objects we may need may turn out to be someone else's property; in return, therefore, the general will must include the right of each citizen to the means of life at the dis-posal of the community. A Kantian state therefore has both the right and the responsibility to redistribute property to the extent necessary to provide for the needy. Indeed, he argues, if Kant's account of these responsibilities is inconsistent with his own theory, then it is so in the opposite direction from the one commonly supposed. Since the innate right to freedom involves the independence of each citizen, the state should have the duty to redistribute property to the extent necessary to give every citizen the independent economic status required {as Kant argues) for active political participation. Kant refuses the im-plications of his own theory when he grants only a " passive " citizen-ship (exclusion from voting and other political functions) to those who lack economic independence (women, servants, wage-laborers, appren-tices, tenant farmers). To be consistent with his own theory, Kant should not only have advocated the extension of active citizenship to these classes of people, but he ought to have charged the state with abolishing the various forms of economic dependence which are the ground for this political exclusion. Here again Mulholland would have benefited from greater familiarity with Fichte's political theory, which is highly egalitarian in spirit and in which Kantian grounds are used to argue that the state has strong redistributive rights and responsi-bilities.

In Chapter 11, however, Mulholland contrasts Kant not only with a utilitarian theorist of the state, but also with an egalitarian, who would insist on an equal distribution of resources among all citizens. Here Mulholland should have made more explicit the fact that {on his in-terpretation) Kant rejects egalitarianism only to the extent that equal distribution is taken as an end replacing principles of right and car-ried out in defiance of the principles of a republican constitution. He is certainly correct that Kant is no egalitarian if one is speaking only of egalitarians who " proceed as if their principle may be imposed

automatically without requiring the intervention of human beings who are convinced of its validity" (p. 356). If, however, a representative legislature, acting according to proper constitutional procedures, should decide to effect a strict egalitarian redistribution of property, then on Kant's theory this decision of the general will would be perfectly right-ful and legitimate. The wealthy could not complain that their rightful property was being taken from them because their actual or peremptory right to any property whatever is conditional on submitting themselves to the general will and to whatever laws of distribution it might choose to give. The state's only responsibility here would be to make sure that each citizen's right to freedom, equality, and independence is pro· tected; and Kant was even aware to some extent (if not as much as he might have been) that under a genuinely republican system, it is al-ways the unequal distribution of property in society which poses the most serious threat to these rights. In spirit, therefore, Kant's theory is at the very opposite end of the political spectrum from theories of the minimal or nightwatchman state.

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History Making History: The New Historicism in American Religious Thought. By WILLIAM DEAN. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988. Pp. xiv **+** 175. $57.50 (hardcover) ; $18.95 (paper).

This hook sets out to explicate, not historicism generally, hut a par-ticular local and American variety thereof. Indeed one of Dean's major points concerns the importance of " local knowledge." He is addressing readers located, for better or worse, in American institutions, in a time and space shaped by American experience. These, he argues, need to cultivate a distinctively American way of knowing in philosophy and religion, a way of knowing that will be historicist, pragmatic, and empirical in character; adopting it would require important revisions in how we conceive and practice theology.

Like all good historicists, Dean presents his argument by telling a story, creating a narrative context for the understanding of ideas. The story is most immediately about a group of contemporary thinkers that includes secular philosophers (Richard Bernstein, Nelson Goodman, Hilary Putnam, Richard Rorty), philosophers of religion and ethics (Jeffrey Stout, Corne! West), theologians (Gordon Kaufman, Mark C. Taylor), and a lone literary critic, Frank Lentriccia. By treating these writers together as " the new American historicists," Dean hopes to

show that they exemplify a distinctive style of thought that is both locally valid (because rooted in American traditions and practices) and religiously interesting. At the same time, the new historicists suffer from an ironic case of intellectual amnesia. While they consistently stress the inevitability of tradition and context in shaping thought, these writers often seem oblivious to the uniquely American tradition in which they stand. Thus Dean reaches back to recover elements of an older American historicism with roots in pragmatism, religious naturalism, and the liberal Protestantism of the prewar " Chicago School." The thought of these illustrious precursors, he argues, can help save today's historicists from the formalism that is their constant temptation.

But what is historicism? Dean makes an emphatic distinction between the historicism that grows out of the German idealist tradition and the historicism that " can be traced to the classical era in Ameri· can philosophy," e.g., to the thought of the pragmatists (p. 2). When Dean speaks of the older, idealist-influenced historicism he does not mean simply Ernst Troeltsch's famous proposal for a form of cultural and religious relativism; he is painting with a much broader brush. " Continental " historicism means for him something more like the idealist conviction concerning the " historicity " of the subject. After Kant, we do not simply apprehend the world, we construe it; and ever since Kant we have become more and more aware that we do so from particular, contingent perspectives. " Historicism" in this wide sense might be taken as a thesis about the inevitability of hermeneutics.

But belief in the necessity of interpretation or hermeneutics is com· patible with affirming the reality of certain universal anthropological structures, e.g., of "reason" or "subjectivity" or "understanding". It is just such structures, Dean argues, that the American historicists deny. This is an aspect of their American tough-mindedness, of their willingness to do without what Rorty calls " metaphysical comfort." They come much closer than European historicist thinkers (their allies in many respects) to abandoning the characteristically modern quest for a surefire " method ":

> The new historicist denial of universal realities amounts to a denial of the standard forms of foundationalism, of realism, and of the transcendentalized subject. One experiences only what can be experienced within historical time and space: (1) not foundations beyond history; (2) not realities that can be known, without bias, as objective correlatives; and (3) not universal subjective characteristics, inherent in all persons. (p. 6)

Two further corollaries to these denials are an acceptance of pluralism (there is no privileged scheme for drawing together particulars) and of a pragmatist test of truth (pp. 6-7).

American historicism is therefore radical historicism.   Its adherents
" accept only historical references and deny all extrahistorical refer-
ences," affirming " that historical reality is created through interpre-
tations of the historical subject-that it is history that makes history"
 (p. ix). The first two chapters of the book are devoted to establishing
the uniquely American flavor of the new historicism, contrasting Rorty,
for example, with hermeneutical writers such as Gadamer, and to draw-
ing connections between historicism and recent social and literary ap-
proaches to the Bible.

The book's central chapters are a narrative devoted to recovering the
moral and religious roots of American historicism. The heart of this
project of recovery is Dean's description (in chapter 3) of the "Chi-
cago School" of theology, which flourished at the University of Chicago
from about 1900 to the time of the Second World War. The Chicago
School was characterized by its insistence on interpreting religion in
concrete terms of social function and historical effect. As liberal
modernists they demythologized (albeit somewhat inconsistently) reli-
gious references to the eternal and absolute; religion was to be viewed
as part of a society's evolving reinterpretation of its past in light of
present needs (p. 46). Thus Shailer Mathews, perhaps the most famous
member of the Chicago School, argued that Christianity had in fact al-
ways been a form of "transcendentalized politics "-a series of prac-
tical social arrangements justified on metaphysical grounds. Far from
being naive historical optimists, as the neo-orthodox theologians
charged, Dean argues that the Chicago liberals were soberly realistic in
their refusal to seek escape from history (p. 65).

Dean is not interested in repristinating the Chicago writers' social-
gospel liberalism as such-that would be to treat them unhistorically-
but rather seeks to affirm the concreteness and ethical passion that
marked their work. The Chicago liberals were not just historicists but
historians, critically sifting the Christian past for its enduring achieve-
ments. They not only commended pragmatism but told us which ends
to pursue, which practices to cultivate. This willingnesi to take risks
made them far more publicly effective than the " new historicists " are
today.

In chapters 4 and 5, Dean broadens his quest for antecedents. Once
again the search is motivated in part by the shortcomings of today's
historicists. Writers like Rorty and Stout, for example, tell us *that*
values are embedded in traditions but are hesitant to tell us whence
they derive their own normative commitments. Their pragmatism is a
"floating," i.e., a historyless pragmatism (p. 81 ff.). Dean finds a
counter-example in the work of the late Joseph Haroutunian, the theo-
logian and Calvin scholar whose pragmatism was deeply rooted in a
specific practice of " empirical piety " (that of the Reformed tradition) .

Such a " valuational empiricism " is needed to give pragmatism a con·tent, a past, a set of commitments, without which the pragmatist (Rich·ard Rorty's name appears especially often in these chapters) falls prey to the modern myth of self-invention.

Contemporary historicists' lingering obsession with questions of method runs quite deep. They have become so entranced with the reality-making power of language ("words, signs, 'worlds', human interpretations") that they "tend to ignore the world of nature and to collapse natural history into human literary history " (p. 45). Here again, Dean sees the pernicious influence of the Europeans with their incurable orientation to the subject. Unlike James and Dewey, today's historicists lack a robust sense of the constraints the *world* imposes on inquiry. The concluding pages of chapter 4 are an eloquent plea for attention to the world in all its ambiguity, contingency, and concreteness and for a knowledge which is " not simply an invention of the self" (p. 97).

Dean then seeks to push religious historicists " beyond method " (chapter 6). They need to press on to actual constructive theology, and nowhere is this more urgent than in the doctrine of God itself. While Gordon Kaufman and Mark C. Taylor have recently made intriguing proposals on this score-Kaufman as a chastened Kantian and Taylor from a deconstructionist perspective-Dean believes their concepts of God remain merely formal, still oddly subject-oriented. A completely different starting point is needed. Dean finds such a starting point, first of all, in the pluralism of James and Dewey and, secondly, in the tradition of American naturalist and empirical theology-especially Bernard Meland and Bernard Loomer. For these writers the God-question is not a function of spirit, transcendence, or consciousness (alienating notions all) but emerges from our encounter with our environment, with particulars. The American approach to God is one that tells us, in a very real sense, to get "back to nature."

This is an extremely ambitious book. Considering the number of philosophical "isms" Dean is discussing, the style is energetic, at times even graceful. Dean has brought together an engaging group of con·temporary thinkers and given them a local habitation and a name. The major historical service he renders, in my estimate, is his discus·sion of the Chicago School: writers like Shailer Mathews and Shirley Jackson Case are familiar names, but one wonders how often they are read; Gerald Birney Smith and George Burman Foster are simply un·known. Dean provides a good sense of the " flavor " of this influential subgroup of the social gospel. Nor are these the book's only virtues. D'an's empirical instincts make for a strong sense of the sheer contingency and materiality of the world; this sensibility would enrich many a Christian theological account of creation. At several points I

was reminded of Walker Percy's wonderful essay "The Loss of the Creature," which evokes a similar sensibility-though   Percy was certainly no historicist.

Critically speaking, the proliferation of " isms " did worry me at times. "Historicism,"   "pragmatism,"   "pluralism,"   "empiricism," "naturalism,"   etc., are big terms. I often found myself wishing they had been more closely defined, the relations between them spelled out more clearly. Even "historicism " remains somewhat vague. I was troubled by the apparent lack of a middle ground between the European, hermeneutical historicists (foundationalists who nevertheless take historical and cultural location seriously) and the assorted Americans (not only non-foundationalist but also, as Dean sees it, non-realists). There are echoes, here, of the argumentative pattern " if not ' a ', then necessarily 'b'" which Dean rejects (p. 20). The possibility that one might be a non-foundationalist or holist with respect to justification and at the same time a realist with respect to truth seems not to be considered. To be sure, there are times when Dean briefly seems to entertain the possibility of a form of moderate realism (p. 141?). But he clearly sees no need to develop the idea himself. This is unfortunate, since so much of the book holds out for a strongly " realistic " sense of nature and the public world.

But it was as a sketch for a theological proposal that I found this hook to be at its most problematic. One could cite many difficulties, including what looks like a reappearance at several points of Harnack's distinction between a " Hebraic " gospel and " Hellenic " ecclesiastical dogma. But I will confine myself to Dean's attempt to interpret Christianity in a specifically American context. He sets out in chapter 2 to show that the new historicism is both authentically American and, at least in potential, fully " religious." It is authentically American because Americans have always understood truth more as achieving goals than as perceiving order (see p. 76 ff.). It is authentically religious because religion in America has always been conceived as a practical manner, an affair of the heart, or of society, or both. The European religious tradition with its deference to authority and dogma is not the only way; we have a tradition of " empirical piety " that corres·ponds much better to American needs and aspirations.

There are two problems with this argument. First, it ignores the account that nearly all Christian communities in American history would give *of themselves.* Even if it is true that American Protestants-given Dean's emphasis on the pluralism of the American experience, it seems odd that Catholics are hardly even referred to in this book-have been characterized by an emphasis on "empirical piety," that piety has been understood as a response to God's gracious prior reality as testified in scripture. Jonathan Edwards, and for that matter Joseph

Haroutunian, would have balked at the notion that their " empiricism " could be abstracted from the christological and trinitarian confession 0£ the church. In general, it would seem that a genuinely " empirical" approach would seek to engage the actual truth claims of religious com· munities on their own terms-even   when those claims conflict with historicist suppositions.

Second, in so far as Dean thinks there is a uniquely American reli· gious experience or style of thought, privileging that style seems a dangerous move indeed. Dean is not unaware of the dangers. He specifically denies that he is engaging in any form of " American ex· ceptionalism " (p. 25) ; it is simply that an " appropriately American historicism, centering on American culture, would have a greater chance of suggesting practices that work for and are true for America " (p. 24) . But I am skeptical that such disclaimers address the real problem. Near the very end of the book, Dean suggests that a modi· fied naturalism might lead to " a notion of God that was more genuinely American than anything earlier," culminating in the recognition that " American thought about God is really the thought of a national com· munity" (p. 144). Descriptively that may well be the case; but then the Christian theologian must seek norms elsewhere.

History Making History does not show us how historicist might be incorporated into ecumenical, trinitarian theology, but that does not mean the attempt will prove unfruitful. Meanwhile, this bit of philosophical tale-telling will hold the interest of readers theological and otherwise.

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Medical Ethics: Sources of Catholic Teaching. By KEVIN D. O'ROURKE, O.P. and PHILIP BOYLE, O.P. St. Louis: Catholic Health Associa· tion, 1989.

Medical Ethics: Common Ground for Understanding. By KEVIN D. O'RouRKE, O.P. and DENNIS BRODEUR. St. Louis: Catholic Health Association, 1989.

Healthcare Ethics: A Theological Analysis. By KEVIN D. O'RouRKE, O.P. and BENEDICT ASHLEY, O.P. 3rd ed. St. Louis: Catholic Health Association, 1989.

Sources of Catholic Teaching is a compendium of recent "official" statements by Roman Catholic ecclesiastical bodies on issues concern· ing medical ethics. Arranged alphabetically according to topics, this col-

lection of statements from the papacy, the Roman Congregations, and the conferences of Catholic bishops could prove to he a very helpful reference tool. It contains a brief introduction which seeks to explain the role of these statements in the Catholic moral theology and Catholic medical ethics, a table of contents of the statements included, and then the statements themselves. In most instances it does not contain the entire document or statement hut only excerpts therefrom.

There are some weaknesses in this work. First, these statements are not self-explanatory; they are in need of interpretation and explanation in many instances. But the authors present only the bald text and do not offer any explanatory comments. They apparently presume that these statements are pellucid to the reader, hut this is an unwarranted pre‐sumption. For example, clarifying comments should have been added to the statement from the *Declaration on Euthanasia* because the allocu‐tion of Pius XII about giving lethal doses of analgesia is not entirely clear.

A second difficulty with this work is the brief and somewhat insub‐stantial introduction on conscience and the role these statements should play in the formation of conscience. This sort of work invites a substantial and extended commentary on the nature of moral judg‐ments, the relationship of conscience to the natural law, and the author‐ity of these statements. The authors note that not all of the official statements issued by various organs of the Church are of equal au‐thority, hut they do not try to identify the specific authoritative status of the various statements they include in their work. The reader is thus left to his or her own devices to determine, for example, the relative weight of statements of the administrative hoard of the NCCB versus statements of state episcopal conferences. A still further problem is that some of the statements are of virtually no significant authority for Catholics. For example, the statement of the administrative hoard of the NCCB on AIDS is of questionable authority, for it is not at all clear that the statement was issued by any bishop whatsoever.

The authors present an introductory chapter which supposedly ex‐plains the " values " underlying the official statements of the Church, and this is the most controversial aspect of the hook. O'Rourke and Boyle may deny that these official statements are a " list of rules " for the practice of Catholic medicine, hut it is quite likely that the bodies which promulgated these statements intended them precisely to he rules to he strictly observed by Catholic health facilities.

They also contend that the:

> reciprocity between these levels of need and function of the human per‐
> sonality are ordered hierarchically so that spiritual activities are the
> deepest, most central and most integrating, biological activities are the
> least unified and the most peripheral; and psychological and social activi‐

ties have intermediate positions. . . . The good of the whole person re·
quires that all the basic aspects of human personality be simultaneously
respected, even when it is necessary to subordinate or even sacrifice in
some measure a lower to a higher function.

This principle needs more clarification, because it has been interpreted
by O'Rourke to mean that the biological functions can he deliberately
suppressed through denial of food and water when " spiritual " func-
tions are lost. It is regrettable that the authors expressed the values
underlying these statements in the way they did, for such declarations
will make readers wonder if they are endorsing moral consequentialism
and utilitarianism.

One last point. This hook may not last on your shelves for very long.
The copy I had came apart as I was reading it. This should not hap-
pen in a paperback hook that costs $33.00.

The second hook, *Common Ground for Understanding,* is a collection
of brief articles written by Brodeur and O'Rourke for the St. Louis Uni-
versity Medical School. This work gives new meaning to James Gus-
tafson's claim that "an ethicist is a former theologian who does not
have the professional credentials of a moral philosopher." The most
serious problem with these articles is that they are so brief that they
cannot give adequate consideration to the complexities of the issues
involved. Their approach is decidedly modern as it grounds moral
obligations upon the dignity of the person. But the notion of dignity
they present is so ambiguous it will give only limited satisfaction to
readers of critical abilities. The articles are seldom more than a couple
of pages long; about all they provide are *obiter dicta* on contemporary
issues of medical care.

At times this hook seems like the AMA at prayer; there is hardly a
word critical of the positions adopted by the AMA. The authors claim
that moral methodology should rest on "reasoned analysis," hut one
must ask what happened to a natural law methodology? Is this "rea-
soned analysis " a Catholic version of rationalist positivism? How does
this differ from just plain old moral rationalism? Are they aware of
the difficulties involved in determining what truly is " reasoned anal-
ysis " ? How does one come to a consensus as to what constitutes rea-
son in a pluralistic community?

Their essay on the limits of patient autonomy indicates that they ac-
cept quality-of-life judgments for administering treatment and that the
CHA is now safely in the pocket of AMA. They cite without objection·
the claim that treatments are extraordinary if they do not save or pro-
mote a person's life, if they save physiological life hut produce an un-
acceptable quality of life, or if they save a physiological life that is al-
ready unacceptable. It is one thing for a Catholic theologian to pro-
these principles, hut to publish them under the auspices of the

agency which establishes ethical standards for more than 600 Catholic hospitals in our nation is quite another matter. Does the Church in this country truly want to espouse these standards after they have been em· ployed to justify abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia? It is remark· able that the CHA would endorse these quality-of-life standards even after the United States Civil Rights Commission attributed medical dis- crimination against handicapped newborns to these principles (see their September 1989 report on this issue).

The authors present a very " thin " theory of the person, which holds that a person is a being who responds to felt needs. But this sort of superficial understanding of the person cannot be taken seriously.

The critique of investor-owned hospitals is quite fine and is prob- ably the best essay in the book. It offers many helpful remarks for re- vising our health care practices more in accord with Catholic teachings.

Numerous articles on the issue of providing artificial hydration are interspersed throughout the book. The authors do not seem to be able to stop talking about this issue, even if it means being redundant. They proclaim themselves to be exponents of the Catholic position, but their position is closer to that of Richard McCormick (whom O'Rourke has rightly criticized as a voluntarist), Daniel Maguire, *The Society for the Right to Die,* and *The Hemwck Society* than to the majority of epis- copal and official statements on this issue.

They do not adequately confront the view of William E. May, et al., that assisted feeding is required when provided by routine nursing measures; they elide these views with those who hold that feeding must always and everywhere be given, and this enables them reject it out of hand. Brodeur and O'Rourke know well that their strongest opponents do not hold this view, and yet they continue to attribute it to them be- cause it can be readily, if not adequately, repudiated.

Furthermore, they assert that when assisted feeding is removed from a medically stable patient, even when feeding is provided by normal nursing care, that it is not the withdrawal of food and water that causes death but the underlying pathology. But one must ask if this is the case when we withhold insulin from a diabetic? This view is illogical and inconsistent with their other positions, e.g., they hold that when the kidneys of an anencephalic newborn are removed this action is the cause of death, and death does not result from the absence of the brain. How can they make this claim but also assert that the removal of food and water is not the cause of death when it is withdrawn from a medi- cally stable but comatose patient? They assert that with the comatose only " comfort care " need be given, but they will not he specific about what constitutes "comfort care." They appear to hold that comfort care is maintenance of room temperature and sanitary care, but I sus· pect it consists of those things which make a medical and nursing staff

"comfortable" with a patient who is slowly dehydrating or starving to death.

Brodeur and O'Rourke endorse durable power of attorney proposals, despite the fact that these measures were initially developed to promote voluntary suicide and euthanasia. In endorsing these proposals, they do not require them to distinguish ordinary from extraordinary treat·ments. Without specific limitations DPA could be given unfettered power, which could be quite hazardous to the medically vulnerable.

Their criteria for providing or withdrawing treatment assert that psychic as well as physical pain can be a burden which would justify withdrawal of care and treatment. Do these psychic burdens include a psychic experience that life is meaningless {a la Bouvia)? If psychic pain is a condition allowing removal, what objective standards can be established for it? They also define burdensomeness in relation to the ability to pursue the goals of life {read: spiritual goals). One must ask how this differs from McCormick's relationality potentiality prin·ciple. They are probably not aware of it, but they are very close to establishing a moral ground for social euthanasia, and their standards for the withdrawal of treatment are no different from those proposed by the Society for the Right to Die.

They object to the Baby Doe regulations because they would circum·vent the process of proxy decision·making. But if these regulations would require morally obligatory treatments, would it be more im·portant to protect the decision-making process than to obtain just and legitimate care for the child? They claim that the sanctity of life prin·ciple used to defend the Baby Doe regulations should be balanced {read: qualified) by "quality of life" judgments, for failure to do this will lead to vitalism. Doesn't this sound more like Joseph Fletcher than like classical Catholic medical ethics?

Despite the fact that many articles and resources are cited in the book, there is a significant lack of awareness of contemporary con·ceptual developments in brain death theory. They presume that those with permanent loss of brain function are dead, even though more and more questions are being raised about the validity of the concept of brain death. Mark Siegler has raised questions about whether those without brain function can be assumed to be dead when, for example, some certainly brain dead pregnant women have shown the ability to gestate a late-term fetus with minimal care. A safer definition of death would define it as the loss of spontaneous and integrated functioning of the major organ systems, even with the provision of minimal and ordinary care, such as the provision of food and water, antibiotics, and the like.

They wish to keep such cases as the Nancy Cruzan case out of the courts and exclude them from the domain of law. But if the courts

can point out that certain medical decisions would mean culpable death of the innocent, should not the courts be involved? The same principle that applies to disabled infants should also be applied to disabled adults: where there is a chance that they will be subjected to discriminatory medical care, the courts should intervene.

They argue enthusiastically in favor of fetal tissue transplantation, without understanding all of the issues in the debate. They display ignorance, typical in the medical profession, of the advances made in pharmacological and animal science research. Human fetal tissue trans·plantation is not new. As Shoulson and Sladek have admirably shown, it has a history plagued with disasters and failures; researchers have been unable to achieve any long-lasting results with these transplants. O'Rourke and Brodeur apparently do not realize that human fetal tissue transplants can be quite dangerous because tissue byproducts can be controlled only with great difficulty. They wrongly assert that fetal tissue is more adaptable than other tissue; autografts are more adaptable than fetal tissue. They also do not appear cognizant of the numerous pharmacological alternatives that have been developed within the past year, alternatives that hold out greater promise than do human fetal tissue transplants. If any long term success is gained, it will only come after much patient scientific research. Human fetal tissue trans·plants are not the panacea they are believed to be. Even if there are some short-term and minor successes with fetal transplants, new developments in drug research will probably make them medically obsolete procedures.

Finally, this book should have been edited further before being published in its present form. The arguments need more elaboration to be effective, there is much redundancy, and the ordering of the articles is confused.

Healthcare Ethics: A Theological Analysis is a new edition of the book first done by Ashley and O'Rourke in 1978. While it is somewhat improved, some flaws do remain. Let me begin with two small hut irritating points. The term " health care " has become one word " healthcare," which I consider ungrammatical. Second, on the cover the printer has changed the STM degrees that both O'Rourke and Ashley received a few years ago to STL degrees. The STM is a degree of honor, while the STL is a basic theology degree. This is a blunder which should be rectified in future printings.

O'Rourke and Ashley now refer to the " sacred " right to privacy. This is astounding, as this right has been the strongest conceptual weapon to be employed by advocates of euthanasia, infanticide, and abortion in the past two decades. If the authors are going to refer to privacy in this manner, they should he prepared to argue long and hard for it, for the right to privacy has become obnoxious to many in

the Catholic tradition. The concept of a constitutional " right to privacy " may have had some legitimacy twenty years ago, hut after twenty three million abortions, it has been discredited; it has carved out a haven for all sorts of activity prohibited by the common law and the classical moral tradition. The domain of privacy has become an anarchic sphere where there are no laws or moral norms. In this domain, each autonomous individual is free to do as he or she pleases, and there are no objective norms of justice, morality or truth. As this jurisprudential domain has developed in recent decades, it has become profoundly anti-democratic, in that it has ruled out objective norms of justice and truth to which rational agents must adhere. Furthermore, the domain of privacy is unstable and expanding, growing into other areas of life without any plan or rational organization. All this makes the domain of privacy an issue of great concern to many.

There are some aspects of the book which are enlightening and informative. As in their other works, the authors are quite good in the revised sections on investor owned hospitals. They argue forcefully against the moral legitimacy of these institutions. Health care institutions are to he dedicated to preserving the health and well-being of the sick. Now it is often the case that these people are quite poor. To make restoring the health of the poor a means of gaining profit is to betray the very mission of the hospital, for it takes money away from care and research.

The authors also show a rather broad familiarity with contemporary controversies and offer opinions on virtually all contemporary issues. But this is precisely what is wrong with the hook. They give adequate summaries of the theories opposing their own, but they do not argue at sufficient length either against these theories or in defense of their own views. Readers will he searching for strong reasons to support Ashley's and O'Rourke's views, hut the arguments are often lacking. Because they cover so many topics and issues, the authors sometimes offer judgments on issues about which they know very little. This is best seen in their endorsement of fetal tissue transplants. They stand far from the pro-life movement on this issue, as does the CHA, which is regrettable.

Conspicuously absent are references to Thomas, to Thomistic sources, and especially to contemporary Thomistic virtue theory. The authors seem somewhat out of touch with contemporary moral theory. All across the landscape of moral philosophy there is a movement to recover the role of virtue and the classical notion of natural law. This edition could have been the occasion when they abandoned their " thin " theory of prudential personalism and opted for the full Thomistic theory of virtue as the basis for health care ethics, for this seems to he what contemporary moral philosophy is now demanding. Instead, they repeat

their " prudential personalism " assertions and do nol: argue any better
for it than they did in earlier editions. In the past decade and a half,
this moral methodology has hardly swept the medical ethics field by
storm, probably because serious moral philosophers view it as a mere
assertion rather than a product of full argumentation.

  Furthermore, they have not made explicit enough the natural law
basis for medical ethics. They complain that others criticize Catholics
for basing medical ethics on natural law, but they themselves don't
argue well from natural law principles. They have suppressed the meta-
physical, natural philosophical, and full-virtue aspects of their theory.
This is regrettable because medical ethical debates are now often ir-
resolvable: the positions posited do not derive from principles of na-
ture in any intelligible and well-argued manner, and all we see is a
clash of opinions. Debate then becomes a war in which words are used
in a Nietzschean manner.

  Their principles for providing care and treatment are on a collision
course with one another. In dealing with comatose or badly brain-
damaged patients, they insist that providing artificial feeding is not
necessary if the patient can no longer pursue spiritual goals. But else-
where they insist that the nature of the treatments must be primary in
determining **if** they are required or not. They cannot have it both ways.
They insist that treatments are extraordinary if the agent is not able
to pursue spiritual goals, but they never define precisely what the
spiritual goals are that are so crucial.

  Regrettably, in this edition they stand by their earlier proposal for
pastoral practice on contraception. They argue that a confessor should
exercize toleration toward those who practice it because of the subjec-
tive and societal factors which limit the freedom and knowledge of
couples contemplating its use. This is regrettable because this argument
can lead to worse. The same social pressures that have forced them to
make these concessions in the case of contraception are now operating
with abortion. One wonders **if** they will use this same approach to take
a permissive approach l:o abortion in the not too distant future. **If** we
have to accept a dichotomy between our moral judgments and our
pastoral practice on contraception, we might soon find ourselves hav-
ing to accept similar concessions with abortion.

  They argue vigorously against dualism in their definition of the
human person, but then they say that a person who cannot strive after
spiritual goals does not deserve even food and water. This makes it ap-
pear that while they may not be promoting dualism speculatively, they
are certainly doing so at the level of practice, treating these individuals
as **if** they were in fact dead. While they might speculatively consider
them to be persons, they only require vaguely defined "comfort care,"
and this may have no life-sustaining capability.

It is regrettable that they did not devote more time to the issue of cooperation in sterilizations in Catholic hospitals. There is reason to believe that this is becoming a growing problem as some Catholics become more tolerant of abortion. It seems that some Catholic hospitals are permitting " uterine isolations " to he performed, a euphemism for sterilizations. This issue should have been addressed more fully.

O'Rourke and Ashley wonder why every sexual sin involves grave moral matter, and their failure to see this clearly represents a serious handicap on their part. Unconvincingly, they try to ground the grave immorality of all sexual sins on a slippery slope argument. This sidesteps the classical Catholic teaching that only in marriage can human sexuality he expressed in a manner that is authentically human and Christian. Catholic teaching has held that the separation of the two ends of marriage opens one up to some grave harms that only sexual sins can inflict on an individual.

That sexual sins which separate the ends of marriage bring great harm should he more evident now than ever before: we have an epidemic of AIDS, we see more venereal disease now, and the scourge of divorce ,affiicts even the Catholic community-all   this in the decades since contraception began to he widely employed. It is difficult at this time to name a sexual sin that does not hear the capacity to inflict profound harm and chaos on a person's life. The collapse of the family, certainly in the American lower class and to a lesser extent in the middle class, has resulted in large part from the shattering of previous restraints on sexual morality. It is small wonder that the Church would say that all sexual sins involve grave matter. There seem to he few other sorts of actions which have this potentiality to wound us as deeply as do sexual sins. This is why Augustine took such a harsh view of sexual sins and not because he was opposed to sexuality as such. He saw that, while sexuality could lead to deep communion between man and woman, it also had the power to inflict harm and chaos in our lives in a way that no other sort of action could.

On the issue of organ transplants, the authors contend that organs should he donated by individuals and attempts to harvest organs without donor consent should he resisted. They emphasize that the charitable character of organ donations should he maintained, and organs should not he harvested without the full consent of the donor. But then they reverse themselves and assert that removing organs after death for transplantation is permissible because of the debt the individual owes to the common good. This is a hailing contradiction of their previous doctrine; it seems to he in response to pressure of physicians, hospitals, and organizations promoting transplants.

A welcome addition is their acknowledgement that the omission of certain forms of medical treatment can he passive euthanasia. In their

earlier editions, the authors did not manifest a deep understanding of
intentionality. Now that they seem to have a fuller grasp of it, one
wonders when they will grasp the logical consequences of this insight.
Though they recognize the existence of passive euthanasia they do not
apply the term consistently, e.g., they would deny that removal of
readily providable, non-painful, inexpensive food and water from a
medically stable comatose person is passive euthanasia or euthanasia
by omission.

   With this book the authors have made a number of additions to
their thought. But one wonders if these additions were worth an en-
tirely new edition. This work will be of value to those seeking an in-
troduction to Catholic thought, but it is not the comprehensive and
authoritative Catholic medical ethics text that many have been hoping
for in recent years.

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