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Scripta Philosophica

Zbigniew Pańpuch

Against Unconscious Motivations, Urges, and Instincts in Human Beings

The main purpose of this article is to explain why unconscious motivations, urges, and instincts do not take place in human beings. This is accomplished in two stages: 1) by discussing the problem of the relation between human soul and human body as to whether the latter is wholly influenced by the former, or there is something instinctive or unconscious in the body that effectively determines human conscious activity, and 2) by explaining the status of organic factors in the human body and their role in the human being's activity through the case study of sensual appetitive powers.



St. Thomas Aquinas thoroughly rethought and reformulated the Aristotelian concept of the human being. Aristotle clearly understood man as a substantial unity by way of applying the theory of being as a composite of form and matter: form (the soul) organizes matter to be a body and makes it both human and alive. Yet one can notice the lack of

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a powerful unifying factor which is the act of (*personal*) *existence* (within man), being discovered and appreciated only by St. Thomas. Aristotle proposed and elaborated upon the definition of the soul as the primary act of the body that has life in potentiality. Understood as *entelecheia*, the soul occurs at the end of the generative processes, led and steered by the generative faculty in every living being. Thus the image of man was built on the understanding of the human being as a *zoon* (a living being) with its specificity resulting from rationality that makes it distinct from all other living beings.¹

On account of his generally naturalistic understanding of man, Aristotle had difficulties with including his specific rational element (the intellect) in the ontic structure of the human being. The intellect, according to his own declaration, was separated from any matter and thus was immaterial.² According to such a view of man, after identifying internal and external senses as well as appetitive forces and other faculties (nutritive and generative) of the soul, it was (and still is) difficult to find their functional and ontological harmony. This remained after Aristotle's great teacher, Plato, who in a similar way presented the view that in the tripartite soul it is possible to achieve a certain state of harmony,³ provided the irrational part of the soul and its forces are or can be subordinated by the rational forces of the soul. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, however, Aristotle differentiated another part of the irrational soul, a part which one is not able to control. In all likelihood,

¹ For more about Aristotle's understanding of the human being, see Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, "Man in *The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy*," *Studia Gilsoniana* 7, no. 4 (October–December 2018): 603–625.

² Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima*, 429 a 13–22, trans. R. D. Hick (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2008).

³ In Plato's case this was achieved by the rule of the rational factor over the one responsible for courage and action, as also over the other factor which is responsible for carnal appetites and the desire for money and wealth.

Aristotle had in mind metabolic processes, for which the soul is also responsible.⁴

Of course, the whole metabolism of the organism is rational because it serves, in general, the three main goals of all living organisms: self-nutrition, growth (development), and reproduction in the environment. These three main activities are based on more fundamental activities such as self-repairing, self-sustainment in life, internal self-regulation, and the coordination of all biological sub-processes, self-defense against detrimental environmental factors, self-accommodation to changing external conditions, and other factors of a similar sort. The successful existence of the life of so many species in the flow of time shows the internal rationality of the structure and functions of all living organisms. With this said, these metabolic processes are beyond the reach of the conscious (and in this understanding—rational) part of the human soul and it seems impossible for this internal metabolic “rationality” to be directly influenced by the rational forces of the soul, which are generally able to cooperate with the intellect.

With such a naturalistic (let us call it even “zoological”) image of man, it has contributed to various speculations (with these most famous being those of Sigmund Freud) on the possibility of having something instinctive or unconscious in the structure of the human being which could exert a determinative influence on human actions and behavior. With this fundamental lack of a demonstration and justification in Aristotle’s writings, the ultimate ontological unity between the intellect and the material (natural, zoological) organism creates a situation where the

⁴ Aristotle’s argumentation for the unity of the human being is generally known. According to it, one soul performs three kinds of activities: metabolic, sensual, and rational. These functions are performed by using powers, which are themselves active potentialities. These powers are associated with particular organs which are necessary for the performing of those functions. Various subsequent commentators analyzed the nature of the relations between the soul, its powers, and corresponding organs, as was done in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas.

human being, in practical life, is compelled to fight against this *zoon* and its characteristic organic and instinctive determinations “in itself.” In short, there is a conflict between “animal” and “human” factors within the human being.

In Thomas Aquinas’s conception of man, we have obtained a re-interpretation of Aristotle’s understanding of the human being. The human soul is not a sub-ontic element in the same sense as it was in Aristotle’s philosophy—its primacy is based on the specific act of existence which transforms the soul into a kind of spiritual substance which is in no way an effect of the organization of matter. It is the act of existence that must then be given by the Absolute (the Pure Act of Infinite Existence) during the process (or event) of *creatio ex nihilo*.⁵

The specificity of the human soul in comparison to the pure spiritual being of angels lies in the human soul’s necessary relation or attribution to matter, which the human soul organizes into the human body. Without this relation, the human soul would be a *substantia incompleta*, an incomplete substance which is not able to perform its characteristic actions. As a spiritual principle, the human soul dominates and organizes matter in the human body and, so to say, compels it to cooperate with the main faculties of the soul, namely the intellect and the will. In this way, everything which occurs in the structure of the human being has this fundamental attribution to the faculties of the spiritual soul. The matter of the body is then, in a way, spiritualized.

Another fundamental function of a thus organized human body is to maintain the human being in “this world,” to enable interactions with other material beings, including other humans who are also partially material due to their possessing a body. In this way, for Thomists, the soul stops being only a form in the Aristotelian sense: it fulfills the func-

⁵ For more about *creatio ex nihilo*, see Andrzej Maryniarczyk, “Philosophical Creationism: Thomas Aquinas’ Metaphysics of *Creatio ex Nihilo*,” *Studia Gilsoniana* 5, no. 1 (January–March 2016): 217–268.

tions of the “old form,” but in itself it is a very different kind of “form”—a kind of spiritual substance, completed by its necessary relation to (organized) matter, i.e., the human body.

This new concept of a human being’s unity should compel thinkers oriented in a Thomistic way to rethink and reformulate the ways in which they think about all “sub-human” factors as well as their range and force in determining the free and rational actions of human beings. Let us look at one of the propositions of such a reinterpretation.

A classic problem of both the philosophy of morality and theology is to a certain degree the autonomous character of the sensual powers which have their “own life” and which constitute a difficulty in the moral life of the human being due to their being connected with the emergence of virtues and vices within the human being. Only if the sensual appetitive powers were subjected in a more perfect way to the superior spiritual power called “the will,” they would execute in a more perfect way the will’s acts. As it is sometimes explained in the realm of moral theology, the lack of subordination of the sensual powers to the actions of the will is the effect of original sin. It clearly suggests that the power of the soul to organize matter for itself became weakened after this sin, ultimately resulting in death. On the other hand, the theology of original sin finds its basis in philosophical anthropology that indicates the autonomy of the sensual powers in relation to the will manifesting itself in the independence to a certain degree of their reaction to the sensually cognized good and in their autonomous inclination aimed at the fulfillment of the desires thus created within them. The very emergence of these desires, in turn, seems to be a fact that reflects the primal acts of the will—the so-called “primal love”—which are reactions to what is cognized and presented to the will by the intellect as “the goodness of a being,” i.e., the transcendental good (*bonum*).

And yet if one considered the relative autonomy of the sensual cognitive powers, one could state that the sensual appetitive powers are

bound in their actions not only by the will, but also by the sensual cognitive powers. Hence desires in the sensual appetitive powers could occur as brought about not by acts of the will, but by sensual cognition alone. Thus created sensual desires would be an actual problem for the will, namely the will being forced to work with these desires as something “strange” to itself as well as “strange” in reference to its acts. It seems dubious, though. Such a scheme for reaction would mean the existence of *an animal* within the human being (or else an *animalistic* nature) which would additionally be “covered by a layer” of rational powers. This is not the way it is. The human being is a person and hence the unity of personal action requires the subordination of sensual powers to personal ones: for this is the sense of the organization of matter into a body by the soul—the latter as an immaterial subject is required for its excellence of existence and action to organize some appropriate body. Without the body, the soul as a spiritual subject could exist, to be sure, but the action of its spiritual powers—without corresponding somatic powers and adequate organs—would not be possible in relation to objects of the material world, among which the life of the human being takes place. The limitation of the subject’s activity would indicate some sort of imperfection of its existence—the subject would be in fact not substantial, but functional.

An additional question is whether the activity of spiritual powers is possible without corresponding and cooperating sensual (somatic) powers, both cognitive and appetitive. This issue is tackled by St. Thomas Aquinas in various parts of his works, especially in the hypothetical context of a “separated soul” after death which he generally understood as an effect of the “separation of the soul from the body.”⁶ This state being unnatural—for only the unity of the soul and the body is natu-

⁶ For instance, see *S.Th.*, I, q. 89, and *S.Th.*, I-II, q. 85, a. 6. Available online—see the section *References* for details.

ral—caused apprehensions that the disembodied soul is limited to the actions of the powers constituted only within the soul: the intellect and the will. But they could not act without corresponding sensual powers. And this thus would give another equally unnatural state of the soul consisting in possessing intellect and will but not acting upon them. In such a state the soul would continue to be “frozen” or else conserved or “intercepted” as in a movie frame and would be compelled to await the resurrection of the body which, according to the Christian revelation, takes place at “the end of times” or after “the end of the world.”

What shows how serious these apprehensions were is the fact that, for St. Thomas, there was enough unnaturalness in the state of a persisting “separated soul” and with this he did not want to accept the inaction of the soul’s powers, hence he referred to the grace and omnipotence of God. This is because it is God alone, as an infinite Spirit, who with His action can activate the spiritual powers of the soul and aid the soul with His light in conducting an evaluation of one’s life and one’s making of the “ultimate decision:” choosing either Him or a life in eternity without Him. Above and beyond this, there were no reasons for God, as the Creator of human nature, to somehow “tolerate” the unnatural being states that arise in consequence of human death which, as the Christian revelation teaches, was ultimately defeated by the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

From this point of view one must assume that since the soul organizes a body for itself from matter, then all the functions of this body, its organs and the powers that correspond to them, are ultimately subject to the activity of the spiritual powers of the soul in order to serve the fulfillment of the ultimate purpose of the human being’s existence. This makes one look at the issue of so-called inclinations (carnal, sensual) which, being somehow present within the human being, constitute an additional problem for the individual in regard to controlling them or making them subject to rationality. This sort of inclinations, sometimes

called “instincts,” is present in animals—although their activities are classically said to be directed by the power of sensual evaluation.

In the case of a human being, as Plato noted in his *Symposium*, human inclinations are directed to a purpose surpassing objects available to sensual cognition,⁷ with this sensual cognition being the first stage of awakening the urge/desire typical of a human being. Of course, one could stop at the level of sensual cognition which would undoubtedly result in a threat that the human person is made equal to animals and his actions become reminiscent of animal life and thus limited to the level of urges and instincts. It was clearly expressed by Aristotle when he stated that the human being who acts irrationally, and with disregard for human virtues, becomes worse than animals, for animals have their own natural regulators, i.e., instincts, that fully determine them.⁸ The human being, who is devoid of natural instincts and who fails to use his rationality to become virtuous, becomes worse than animals and greatly surpasses them in their bestiality, for his intellect and ability to act become servants of desires generated by sensual objects.

Ultimately, one must say that the aforementioned activity of the sensual appetitive powers must have as its motive adequate acts of will, connected with the reaction to the good of every being expressed in the primal love and the natural desire of the will directed to the good, but

⁷ Cf. Plato, *Symposium*, 211 c–d: “Beginning from obvious beauties he must for the sake of that highest beauty be ever climbing aloft, as on the rungs of a ladder, from one to two, and from two to all beautiful bodies; from personal beauty he proceeds to beautiful observances, from observance to beautiful learning, and from learning at last to that particular study which is concerned with the beautiful itself and that alone; so that in the end he comes to know the very essence of beauty. In that state of life above all others, my dear Socrates, said the Mantinean woman, a man finds it truly worth while to live, as he contemplates essential beauty.” In *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, vol. 9, trans. Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1925); available online—see the section *References* for details.

⁸ See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253 a 32, in *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, vol. 21, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1944); available online—see the section *References* for details.

specified by the recognition of the nature of the individual concrete good. However, this appetitive reaction substantially requires the evaluation of the intellect and the adequate relation to a given object after the initial assessment of this object from the point of view of the good of the object and its subsequent actions. Each appropriate decision is a source of action proportional to the nature of the object, situation, and the intentions of the subject. The so-called inclinations can only be spoken of in the context of objects specific to a given appetitive-organic power (because for the will any good is an appropriate good) which follows the general rule that any power of action cannot act without relation to its specific object. Therefore, in the presence of the object specific to a given power, a corresponding act has to occur.

Nevertheless, in the case of the human person his powers work in a specific way. Due to the unity of the personal being and the ontic subordination of sensual powers to spiritual ones (with this being the general sense in which matter is organized by the soul), organs associated with the appetitive powers serve action that begins with desire coming from the will. Nevertheless, organs and sensual powers serve only the execution of the will through action in relation to the object of desire. The sensual-organic appetitive powers, due to the aforementioned unity of the human being, cannot act (i.e., follow desires) in or of themselves without the causative participation of the will. Therefore, one cannot say that the sensual appetitive power is a source of inclinations or desires. It can only serve as a tool for the superior power (i.e., the will) to determine the ways of satisfying its desires. Namely, it determines the cooperation between an organ proper to deal with a specific object of desire and an action taken to address this object. However, the use of sensual appetitive powers and their organs to perform an action depends on the will and its decision. This means that already at the stage of cognitive contact with the object specific to a particular sensual appetitive power, there is a natural reaction of the will to the good that is

immediately translated into a reaction of that power and organs associated with it. Perhaps it is this very reaction that is called “urge” or “instinct.”

If one, however, necessarily wants to call this sort of reaction “instincts” (or “urges”), then surely it is not something that is a source of desires which indeed inclines or somehow compels to act in a particular way. It seems to be exactly the opposite: the sensual power and its proper organ are what simplify the execution of a desire of the will; they do it through a specific action by virtue of their distinct structure. When there is lack of a proper power or organ, the desires (or wishes) of the will become harder to execute or realize. In such cases, one must resort to the help of other organs, people, technologies, or even law. For example, when a tourist in a foreign country does not speak the local language, he can use his hands to produce communicative signs or ask someone to do translation for him or make use of translation capabilities of his smartphone or call his embassy for assistance in emergency situations.

In the case of animals, the activation of powers and organs is managed by instinct, i.e., a natural, biological “program” that reacts to stimuli (data) coming from the senses. In relation to its adequate object, the animal appetitive power is activated automatically by nature. In animal powers, there is even a double compulsion for action: one toward acquiring an adequate object when known and another toward searching for an adequate object when unknown. It particularly manifests itself in the case of reproductive action that is instinctively adapted to not only the animal’s nature, but also external conditions of living, e.g., the season of the year conducive to bearing and raising offspring (abundance of food, mild weather, etc.).⁹

⁹ These facts were known already to the ancients, one of the references to the behaviors of the natural world is the fragment from Plato’s *Symposium*, 207 a–b: “[Y]ou must have observed the strange state into which all the animals are thrown, whether going on

Against Unconscious Motivations, Urges, and Instincts in Human Beings

SUMMARY

The aim of this paper is to discuss the problem of the human body as to whether it is wholly and directly influenced by the rational forces of the soul, or it contains something instinctive or unconscious that can exert a determinative influence on human actions and behavior. Drawing on Thomistic anthropology, the author gives his interpretation of organic factors in the human body and their place in the free and rational actions of the human being through the case study of sensual appetitive powers. The latter, he concludes, are what simplify the execution of desires of the soul.

KEYWORDS

Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Thomistic anthropology, human body, human being, human person, human action, reason, will, soul, instinct, urge, desire, organism, sense, appetite.

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earth or winging the air, when they desire to beget: they are all sick and amorously disposed, first to have union one with another, and next to find food for the new-born; in whose behalf they are ready to fight hard battles, even the weakest against the strongest, and to sacrifice their lives; to be racked with starvation themselves if they can but nurture their young, and be put to any sort of shift.”

Dennis F. Polis

The Compatibility of Evolution and Classical Metaphysics

Recently, Fr. Michal Chaberek, O.P., defended the thesis that macroevolution, even theistic macroevolution, is incompatible with classical metaphysics,¹ *i.e.*, “the Aristotelian-Thomistic stream of Western philosophy.” Were this so, the cause of naturalism would be strengthened, for the evolution of species is almost universally accepted as sound science.

A decade ago I published a paper² showing that evolutionary biology exemplifies providential teleology, not order emerging by mindless chance. So, naturally, I found Fr. Chaberek’s thesis a challenge to my own thinking. His thesis similarly challenges other Thomists who have found Darwin’s theory compatible with, and even dependent upon, Aquinas’ teaching. For example, Armand Maurer sees Darwin as making intentional use of the Thomistic concept of secondary causality, which he received via Francisco Suárez.³

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¹ Michal Chaberek, “Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution: Why Are They Incompatible?,” *Studia Gilsoniana* 8, no. 1 (January–March 2019): 47.

² Dennis F. Polis, “Evolution: Mind or Randomness?,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* XXII, no. 1/2 (2010): 32.

³ Armand Maurer, “Darwin, Thomists, and Secondary Causality,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 57, no. 3 (March 2004): 491.

Fr. Chaberek argues that only macroevolution is opposed to classical metaphysics. Modern authors generally define “macroevolution” to be the evolution of species, as opposed to microevolution as the evolution of intraspecific variations. Fr. Chaberek, however, uses “macroevolution” in an older sense as the evolution of genera and higher taxonomic groups. “[I]n the debate about origins we understand species as genera or families according to classical taxonomy.”⁴ It is unclear why he restricts his criticism to the evolution of higher taxonomic groups when his arguments seem to apply equally to all groups signified by *primae intentiones*—species as well as genera.

Beyond our substantive differences, we have methodological differences. I maintain, following Aquinas,⁵ that scientific theses ought to be judged by the canons of the relevant science. If those canons are inadequate, philosophical analysis should be directed to them. Fr. Chaberek uses metaphysics to attack a scientific thesis directly, asking “Is evolution (biological macroevolution) possible in light of classical metaphysics?”⁶

To further complicate the issue, we disagree on the structure of evolutionary theory. While we are both discussing Darwinian evolution, Fr. Chaberek claims “Biological macroevolution is a theory of origins that has a scientific, a philosophical and a theological layer.”⁷ I see evolution as a biological theory logically prior to its philosophical

⁴ *Ibid.*, 52. This makes zebras (*Equus quagga*), horses (*E. caballus*) and donkeys (*E. asinus*) into one species.

⁵ “Any particular science . . . will fall into error unless it proceeds from its own proper principles.” Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio super librum Boethii De Trinitate*, q. VI, a. 1, c, in *idem, The Division and Methods of the Sciences: Questions V and VI of His Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius*, trans. Armand Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986).

⁶ Chaberek, “Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution,” 54.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

or theological interpretations. Since the natural science and its interpretations have different canons, we must carefully distinguish them.

This article does not deal with every point of disagreement between our views. Instead, it addresses three principal issues: (1) the structure of evolutionary thought, including chance and necessity as principles; (2) the relation of natural science to classical metaphysics; and (3) Fr. Chaberek's philosophical arguments.

Nothing in this article should be taken to support the view that the human intellect evolved in a purely physical manner, for I hold that the intentional order is irreducible to the material order.

The Structure of Evolutionary Thought

To properly evaluate Fr. Chaberek's thesis, we need to understand evolution as the majority of biologists do—which is not as he describes. It is unfair to criticize those responding to a theory based on an alternate theory.⁸

The idea that species evolved over time—that those presently populating the earth differ from those of former eras—was scientifically accepted long before Darwin. Robert Hooke's microscopic examination of fossils revealed that many had the same cellular structure he observed in living organisms. Consequently, he rejected the hypothesis that fossils were *lapides sui generis* (purely inorganic in origin) and questioned the permanence of species. In lectures delivered to Royal Society of London (1667–1700), posthumously published as *Discourse of Earthquakes*, he asserts:

⁸ Chaberek writes, "In science, there is an idea of biological species. This, however, is not the understanding of species relevant in the debate over origins" (*ibid.*, 52). Darwin's theory of evolution, which Chaberek claims to oppose, deals with biological species. If Chaberek's species are not biological, he is not discussing Darwin's theory.

There have been many other Species of Creatures in former Ages, of which we can find none at present; and that 'tis not unlikely also but that there may be divers new kinds now, which have not been from the beginning.⁹

In response to a growing consensus about the impermanence of species, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck advanced a theory of evolution in his *Philosophie Zoologique* (1809). He hypothesized that environmental changes triggered species succession, and that acquired traits can be passed on to progeny, but failed to explain how this might occur. Astronomer and polymath John Herschel wrote in 1836 that the “mystery of mysteries” was “the replacement of extinct species by others,” and suggested that it might be due to secondary causality.¹⁰ In 1838, geologist Charles Lyell wrote to Darwin in a similar vein.¹¹

Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace jointly provided an explanation of species succession by means of secondary causality to the Linnean Society of London on July 1, 1858. Darwin published an extended treatment of the theory in *The Origin of Species* on November 24, 1859.¹² In its introduction Darwin lays down the four principles on which his theory is founded: (1) superfecundity or the generation of more offspring than can survive; (2) the existence of randomly variant descendants; (3) a selection mechanism favoring variations enhancing reproduction and survival; and (4) inheritability—the capacity to pass on variations.¹³ The rest of the book is “one long argument” justifying these principles and using them to explain a vast array of biological

⁹ Quoted by Ben Waggoner, “Robert Hooke (1635–1703).” Available online—see the section *References* for details.

¹⁰ Quoted by Ronald W. Clark, *The Survival of Charles Darwin: A Biography of a Man and an Idea* (London: Widenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), 41.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹² Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: John Murray, 1859), 11f.

¹³ These remain “the syllogistic core” of natural selection. Stephen J. Gould, *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 125f.

data. The theory embodies the Aristotelian-Thomistic idea of science as an explanation by causes.

Darwin makes no distinction between variations not crossing taxonomic boundaries and those that do. Instead, the entire thrust of his argument is that new species emerge as the cumulative result of small variations. Indeed, he conceives of species as merely “well-marked and permanent varieties.”¹⁴ Fr. Chaberek assumes, without biological argument, that micro- and macroevolution differ essentially. Distinguishing micro- and macroevolution without adequate biological discussion lays the foundation for a *petitio principii* by supposing a difference where it is critical to Darwin’s case that there is none.

Fr. Chaberek claims that universal common ancestry (UCA), to which he strongly objects, is one of Darwin’s “postulates.”¹⁵ We have seen that it is not. It first occurs in the final chapter of *The Origin of Species* where Darwin speculates:

I cannot doubt that the theory of descent with modification embraces all the members of the same class. I believe that animals have descended from at most only four or five progenitors, and plants from an equal or lesser number.

Analogy would lead me one step further, namely, to the belief that all animals and plants have descended from some one prototype. But analogy may be a deceitful guide. Nevertheless all living things have much in common, in their chemical composition, their germinal vesicles, their cellular structure, and their laws of growth and reproduction. . . . Therefore I should infer from analogy that probably all the organic beings which have ever lived on this earth have descended from some one primordial form, into which life was first breathed.¹⁶

So, instead of being a postulate, UCA is a hypothesis inferred from “a deceitful guide.” While Douglas L. Theobald calls it “a central

¹⁴ Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, 450.

¹⁵ Chaberek, “Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution,” 79.

¹⁶ Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, 420.

pillar of modern evolutionary theory,”¹⁷ the hypothesis is questioned by many biologists,¹⁸ and its supporting evidence is seen as relatively scant.¹⁹ None of this precludes asking whether UCA is compatible with Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics. Still, the answer must depend on the more fundamental question of whether species (or genera) can evolve from one another, which is Fr. Chaberek’s central question.

He further asserts,

[T]he problems of Darwinism have their source not so much in stretching the Darwinian theory beyond biology (to ethics and philosophy), but in the very fact that the Darwinian biological theory assumes a mistaken metaphysics (philosophy) and a false theory of nature.²⁰

He explains, “I am not talking about science as such, but about one theory in science which was contrived from the beginning to exclude teleology and design from nature.”²¹

The supposed exclusion is only partially true of Darwin, and wholly false of Wallace. In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin writes of “the laws impressed on matter by the Creator,” which he explicitly sees as secondary causes.²² In 1860 he wrote to Asa Gray: “I am inclined to look at everything as resulting from *designed laws* [emphasis mine], with the details, whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance.”²³ The rest of the letter shows that Darwin’s diffi-

¹⁷ Douglas L. Theobald, “A Formal Test of the Theory of Universal Common Ancestry,” *Nature* 465 (May 13, 2010): 219.

¹⁸ For a discussion, see Theobald, “A Formal Test of the Theory of Universal Common Ancestry,” for citations.

¹⁹ Elliot Sober, *Evidence and Evolution: The Logic Behind The Science* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 264. The biology of UCA is complex. Sober spends all of chapter 4 discussing its meaning and relevant evidence.

²⁰ Chaberek, “Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution,” 49.

²¹ Michal Chaberek, private communication, May 8, 2020.

²² Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, 359.

²³ *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 8, ed. Charles Burkhardt *et al.* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 224.

culty with providence was the suffering he perceived in nature, *i.e.*, the problem of evil. Indeed, Darwin may have abandoned Christianity because of the death of his daughter Annie in 1851 at age 10.²⁴

Wallace is even less guilty of excluding design. For him, evolution is intrinsically teleological:

[A]ll life development—all organic life forces—are due to mind-action, we must postulate not forces, but guidance; not only self-acting agencies as are involved in natural selection and adaptation through survival of the fittest, but that far higher mentality which foresees all possible results of our cosmos. That constitution, in all its complexity of structure and of duly coordinated forces acting continuously through eons of time, has culminated in the foreseen result.²⁵

Thus, Fr. Chaberek mischaracterizes the assumptions and motivation of evolution. Yet, he is correct in one regard. As can be seen in his letter to Asa Gray, Darwin believed, if Wallace did not, that the consequences of the “designed laws” of nature were “left to the working out of what we may call chance.” Let us turn, then, to chance or randomness in evolution.

Randomness

Fr. Chaberek writes:

[T]heistic evolution encounters a difficulty—an incompatibility between, on the one hand, the Christian belief in creation according to the divine will and plan, and, on the other, the biological claims about the complete randomness of evolutionary processes.²⁶

²⁴ John Van Wyhe and Mark J. Pallen, “The ‘Annie Hypothesis’: Did the Death of His Daughter Cause Darwin to ‘Give Up Christianity’?,” *Centaurus* 54, no. 2 (2012): 105–123.

²⁵ Alfred Russel Wallace, *World of Life: A Manifestation of Creative Power, Directive Mind, and Ultimate Purpose* (New York: Moffat, Yard, and Co., 1911), 212.

²⁶ Chaberek, “Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution,” 69.

The province of biology includes neither the mathematical nature of randomness nor the physics of basic processes. Biology can only use randomness as a concept received from mathematics or physics.

“Randomness” is an analogous term with four relevant meanings: (1) indeterminate *in se* (ontologically random), (2) mindless or unintended, (3) unknowable or unpredictable, and (4) not directed to an end. Of these, the first two are clearly incompatible with classical theism, the third is not, and the fourth requires further reflection. We must ask, then, in what sense evolution’s variant genotypes are “randomly” produced.

Nineteenth century science was strongly committed to physical determinism, paradigmatically formulated by Pierre Simon Laplace in 1820:

An intelligence knowing, at a given instant of time, all forces acting in nature, as well as the momentary positions of all things of which the universe consists, would be able to comprehend the motions of the largest bodies of the world and those of the smallest atoms in one single formula, provided it were sufficiently powerful to subject all data to analysis; to it nothing would be uncertain, both future and past would be present before its eyes.²⁷

Thus, Darwin worked in a milieu of unquestioned physical determinism. We have already seen that he believed that nature was causal and deterministic, subject to “designed laws.” Hence, the “randomness” of Darwinian evolution is not ontological.

Some might object that, with the advent of quantum theory, physical determinism has been abandoned, so that contemporary science is committed to ontological randomness. Without going into the competing interpretations, quantum randomness, whatever its exact nature, is irrelevant to evolutionary mutations. This is because quantum theory distinguishes two kinds of processes: (1) observations and (2)

²⁷ Quoted by Robert Bruce Lindsay and Henry Margenau, *Foundations of Physics* (New York: Wiley, 1936), 517.

unobserved time development. It restricts chance to observations. Thus, *physical states, even quantum ones, evolve deterministically between observations.*²⁸ Quantum mechanics' equations of motion transform any state into a single, well-defined state at any subsequent time. Since there were no observations prior to the advent of man, physics continues to see virtually the entire history of evolution as deterministic—preprogrammed, as it were, in the big bang. We shall see that this view is entirely consistent with Aquinas' exegesis of *Genesis* 1.

With respect to the second meaning, Darwin believed, and Wallace did not, that the consequences of the laws of nature were unintended. Since Darwin and Wallace co-founded evolution, we must conclude that the theory is indifferent with respect to intentionality—leaving “randomness” in sense 2 an open question, not an essential postulate. This is altogether proper, as it is beyond the competence of natural science to resolve metaphysical issues.

The third sense is that in which the roll of a die is “random”—it is determined by the relevant physics, but “random” because we can't predict the outcome. Clearly, biological variations are unpredictable. Aside from the impracticability of gathering the required data, quantum indeterminism precludes acquiring such data, even in theory. This is hardly discordant with classical metaphysics, for our limited intellect and knowledge is commonplace of Thomism. On reflection, the predictability of evolutionary variations is irrelevant both to the dynamics of evolution and to its interpretation. Our knowledge cannot change the ontology of biological variation. The theory only requires variation, however produced—and variations in offspring are an indubitable fact.

The real threat, if there is one, is in the fourth meaning of “random,” *i.e.*, that the causes of evolution are not directed to the development of new species as an end. In his autobiography Darwin wrote,

²⁸ Paul A. M. Dirac, *Quantum Mechanics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 108.

“There seems to be no more design in the variability of organic beings and in the action of natural selection, than in the course which the wind blows.”²⁹ Charles F. Baer observes that evolutionary mutations “do not occur based on the potential future effect on fitness.”³⁰ Evolution assumes that mutations are “random” in the sense that many are “wasted”—not being progenitors of the resulting species. Doesn’t this kind of randomness conflict the basic premise of the fifth way: “whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence”³¹?

Consider the evolution of a succulent in response to increasing aridity. Say its adaptive feature is thicker leaves able to store more water given the same surface area. Some variant descendants will have the same or thinner leaves. They will dry out first and be prone to die in arid climes. Variants with thicker leaves will take longer to desiccate, and be more likely to survive. Because the thinner-leaved variants are not in the ancestral line of the thicker-leaved species, it seems that the process is not teleological, but random—that variants failing to survive serve no purpose.

An immediate response is to point to the basic insight on which Darwin bases his theory: the analogy between intentional breeding and natural selection. As the offspring selected by a breeder reflect her goals, so those selected by nature reflect its Author’s ends. While arguments by analogy lack the cogency of strict deductions, they can motivate us to look deeper. Natural selection is just an operational mode of natural laws. If those laws are intentional, surely their operation, which is their actuality, is as well.

²⁹ *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin*, ed. Nora Barlow (New York: Norton, 1958), 57.

³⁰ Charles F. Baer, “Mutation,” in *The Princeton Guide to Evolution*, ed. Jonathan B. Losos *et al.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 317.

³¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 2, a. 3, c. Hereafter cited as *S.Th.*

The problem with arguing that random variations are not directed to an end is that it it fixes on an abstract subprocess to the neglect of the whole—instantiating Alfred North Whitehead’s “fallacy of misplaced concreteness” (confusing an abstraction with concrete reality).³² The generation of non-ancestral variations is directed to end of a new species in the same way as Michelangelo’s production of marble chips was directed to the sculpting of David. If we fix our attention on the production of chips in abstraction from sculpting, it seems a pointless waste of marble.

Evolution uses a problem solving strategy widely mimicked in artificial intelligence, where it is called “generate and test.”³³ In it, one subprocess generates possible solutions while another tests them for viability. In human thought this is the hypothetico-deductive or scientific method. In evolution, genetic diversity and mutagenesis generate variant individuals, while the environment tests them for viability. Both subprocesses are guided by the laws of nature, which, as I will show, are intrinsically intentional. Rather than being mindless, evolution’s generate and test process, as well as the laws guiding it, show mind in action. By taking such a holistic view, Wallace saw that evolution is the result of “that far higher mentality which foresees all possible results of our cosmos.”

The presence of intentionality is shown by the existence of pre-defined targets in evolution. My earlier paper³⁴ argues in three ways that evolution has such targets. First, convergent evolution (homoplasy) shows that certain morphologies are implicit in the laws of nature. Second, the existence and refractory nature of toolkit genes shows that

³² Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1925), 11.

³³ Avron Barr and Edward A. Feigenbaum, *Handbook of Artificial Intelligence*, vol. 1 (Los Altos, Calif.: William Kaufman, Inc., 1981), 30.

³⁴ Polis, “Evolution: Mind or Randomness?”

means required by new species are prepared in advance of need. Finally, the evolutionary stasis underpinning the theory of punctuated equilibrium shows that evolution does not progress aimlessly, but toward a *telos* responsive to extant environmental conditions. Indeed, if evolution lacked predetermined targets, “survival of the fittest” would be tautological, reducing to the thesis that whatever survives is fit because it survived.

Together with routine biological observations, these arguments show that evolution confirms Aristotle’s falsifiable claims for a teleological process. (a) Means-ends relationships exist in nature³⁵—confirmed whenever behavior is a means to an end such as communication, propagation, or nutrition; (b) there are target forms³⁶—verified by convergent evolution, the stability of toolkit genes, and evolutionary stasis in stable environments; and (c) means are prepared in advance of need³⁷—confirmed by the history of toolkit genes.

In sum, no relevant definition of evolutionary “randomness” poses a metaphysical threat either to teleology or to theism. Of course, there is a long tradition of naturalist argument using evolutionary “randomness” to attack providential intentionality. The proper response to such attacks is to show that they are fallacious, not to deny the science on which they are based.

“Necessity” or the Laws of Nature

In addition to chance, Fr. Chaberek sees another principle in evolution, *i.e.*, necessity, which he identifies with the laws of nature.³⁸ He does not recognize the hand of God in these laws, for he believes that theistic supporters of evolution must add divine guidance to evolution’s

³⁵ Aristotle, *Physics* II, 8, 199^a8ff.

³⁶ *Ibid.* II, 8, 199^b15–18.

³⁷ *Ibid.* II, 8, 199^a10ff.

³⁸ Chaberek, “Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution,” 47.

chance and necessity.³⁹ Indeed, supporters of “Intelligent Design” do so—typically by positing evolutionary gaps where “irreducible complexity” must be bridged by divine intervention.⁴⁰

The idea of fixed laws of nature first occurs in the Western tradition in *Jeremiah*, a generation before Thales of Miletus brought it to the Greek world.

Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—the Lord of hosts is his name: “If this fixed order departs from before me, says the Lord, then shall the descendants of Israel cease from being a nation before me for ever.”⁴¹

And, again:

Thus says the Lord: If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the ordinances of heaven and earth, then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant . . .⁴²

Considering the cosmic order in relation to God, we conclude with Aquinas that “it is necessary that the type of the order of things towards their end should preexist in the divine mind: and the type of things ordered towards an end is, properly speaking, providence.”⁴³ Thus, the order or “necessity” underpinning evolution is not some godless fate, but “ordinances of heaven and earth” ordained by God—the expression of divine providence.

Reflecting on *Jeremiah*, we see that fixed laws are not presented as a novel revelation, but as so uncontroversial as to aid in grasping God’s faithfulness to Israel. This elevates the laws of nature from an empirical finding to a sign of covenant. For Jeremiah, doubting their

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁰ For example, Michael J. Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001).

⁴¹ *Jeremiah* 31:35–36 (*RSV Catholic Edition*).

⁴² *Ibid.*, 33:25–26.

⁴³ *S.Th.* I, q. 22, a. 1, c.

fixity questions God's faithfulness. Yet, "Intelligent Design" advocates see God as creating gaps that He must bridge by diddling with His own laws—as if God were incapable of devising uniform laws to effect His will.

These thinkers only see the hand of God in supernatural intervention. Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Aquinas, however, saw God as the ultimate Necessity and the source of necessity in a contingent world. Even Darwin recognized that the laws of nature were "designed" or intentional. Thomists see nature "acting always, or nearly always, in the same way,"⁴⁴ as compelling evidence of divine providence. Indeed, the more frequent interventions were, the less cogent the fifth way would be.

Finally, "Intelligent Design" attacks the integrity of creation, whose secondary causality is the reality through which we come to understand divine causality. It makes nature a heterogeneous affair in which the primary causality of God, which is only analogous to secondary causality, is mixed willy-nilly with it. This reduces primary and secondary causality—the action of Infinite Being and finite being—to the same level.

My earlier paper demonstrates that the laws of nature are immaterial and intentional. First, the ontology of physics includes not only the material menagerie of elementary quanta, but also immaterial laws guiding that menagerie's behavior. To ask what the laws are made of is a blatant category error. Second, just as the conservation of physical quantities requires the on-going operation conservation laws, so the continuing operation of the laws of nature requires the on-going operation of a sustaining reality—God. Third, the laws of nature belong to the genus of "Logical Propagators," for only they and committed human intentions allow us to draw sound conclusions about future states

⁴⁴ *S.Th.* I, q. 2, a. 3, c.

from a knowledge of present states—propagating information in time. Consequently, the laws of nature are generically similar to human acts of will. Finally, the laws exhibit the essential characteristic of intentionality identified by Franz Brentano in his *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte* (1874), viz. “aboutness.” Just as my intention to go to the store is *about* me arriving at the store, so the laws of nature are *about* the succession of states into which physical states develop under their guidance.

Thus, the necessity in evolution, the laws of nature, needs no additional divine guidance, for it *is* God’s providential will.

Methodological Considerations

While natural science can not prove philosophical or theological theses, it is the charism of scientists to study the book of nature, in which God reveals Himself. As Giuseppe Tanzella-Nitti, notes:

The proposal of a philosophical path to recognize a provident Creator starting from the observation of his works, and the view that through these works he speaks to us, are ideas which belong to the entire history of human culture, from the very beginning up until today.⁴⁵

Romans 1:20 tells us, “Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely, His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.”

The metaphor of nature as a revelatory book along side Scripture begins with Anthony the Abbot in the third century. Subsequently, the doctrine of two books occurs widely in both the patristics (St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Augustine, John Cassian, St. John Chrysostom, St. Ephrem the Syrian, and Maximus the Confessor)⁴⁶ and the Scholas-

⁴⁵ Giuseppe Tanzella-Nitti, “The Two Books Prior to the Scientific Revolution,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 57, no. 3 (September 2005): 237.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 237.

tics (St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugh of St. Victor, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas Aquinas, Thomas of Chobham, Dante Alighieri, Thomas of Kempis and Raymond of Sebond).⁴⁷ Further, as James Hannam details in *The Genesis of Science: How the Christian Middle Ages Launched the Scientific Revolution*,⁴⁸ the notion of the two books motivated ecclesiastical support for natural science, leading to the Scientific Revolution.

The two books might seem far removed from the present question had not Darwin quoted Francis Bacon opposite the title page of *The Origin of Species*:

“To conclude, therefore, let no man out of a weak conceit of sobriety, or an ill-applied moderation, think or maintain, that a man can search too far or be too well studied in the book of God’s word, or in the book of God’s works; divinity or philosophy; but rather let men endeavour an endless progress or proficiencie in both.” Bacon: *Advancement of Learning*.

Of course, reading the book of nature is not the same as interpreting it. Scientific findings can only provide grist for philosophic and theological reflection. As Thomists, we take God’s existence as a proven fact, and rightly hold that no sound interpretation of sound science can conflict with theism. This brings us to the heart of the methodological issue, whether sound natural science can be overturned by philosophy or theology.

Aquinas teaches that each science must follow its own canons.⁴⁹ If those canons are defective, philosophy may show why they are inadequate, but is not the role of, nor is it within the power of, philosophy to directly criticize scientific findings conforming to the relevant canons. Why is this?

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁴⁸ Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2011.

⁴⁹ Aquinas, *Expositio*, q. VI, a. 1, c.

In his *Expositio super librum Boethii De Trinitate*, Aquinas considers the division of the speculative sciences. Boethius,⁵⁰ following Aristotle,⁵¹ had divided these sciences into “physics,”⁵² mathematics and theology/metaphysics based on the kind of being considered. Aquinas’ innovation was to focus on the intellectual acts required by these sciences,⁵³ each of which moves further from what is more intelligible to us (matter and motion) to what is more intelligible in itself.⁵⁴ “Physics” requires us to consider being *qua* mutable, and hence material, while metaphysics demands that we focus on being *qua* being, separate from matter. While natural science is not the philosophy of nature, Aristotle included both in his definition of “physics.” They share a common material object, mobile being, whose study requires the same degree of abstraction. Their difference is formal, lying in the kind explanation sought and a corresponding difference in method.

Since abstraction fixes on certain notes of intelligibility to the exclusion of others, it prescind from data outside of a science’s sphere of study. Natural science does not treat essence and existence *per se*. Similarly, metaphysics does not study the dynamics of natural processes, because it abstracts from matter and motion. The objects of “physics” “depend on matter both for their being, and for their being understood,” while those of metaphysics/theology “do not depend on matter for their being.”⁵⁵ In *In Metaphysica*, Aquinas states that “it belongs to the same science to investigate the proper causes of any genus and the

⁵⁰ Boethius, *De Trinitate*, 2.

⁵¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VI, 1, 1026^a18; XI, 7, 1064^b1–6.

⁵² The scare quotes distinguish Aristotle and Aquinas’ “physics” (the general study of nature) from modern mathematical physics.

⁵³ Marvin E. Kanne, “Saint Thomas Aquinas’ Division of the Sciences,” *Transactions of the Nebraska Academy of Sciences* VII (1979): 145f.

⁵⁴ For a detailed discussion, see Jacques Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite or the Degrees of Knowledge* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 37ff.

⁵⁵ Aquinas, *Expositio*, q. V, a. 1, c.

genus itself, as for example natural philosophy investigates the principles of natural bodies,”⁵⁶ while metaphysics is concerned solely with being in general (*ens commune*). Investigating the proper causes of species and genera is precisely what the theory of evolution attempts to do.

Thus, metaphysics lacks any evidentiary basis for judging evolution, which addresses a certain kind of change. As Aquinas notes, “the sciences of sensible reality are not based upon the knowledge of certain substances separated from the sense world.”⁵⁷ Instead, evolution must be judged based on its adequacy in explaining the data it addresses, *viz.* the fossil record and its relation to present biological populations.

Fr. Chaberek asserts that evolution and metaphysics share common ground involving randomness and species. I have already discussed randomness, so let us consider species.

What Is a Species?

Most of Fr. Chaberek’s argument hinges upon the nature of species, beginning with Darwin’s problematic use of “species.”

The first specifically biological definition of “species” may have been that of John Ray in 1686.

In order that an inventory of plants may be begun and a classification (*divisio*) of them correctly established, we must try to discover criteria of some sort for distinguishing what are called “species”. After long and considerable investigation, no surer criterion for determining species has occurred to me than the distinguishing features that perpetuate themselves in propagation from seed. Thus, no matter what variations occur in the individuals or the species, if they spring from the seed of one and the same plant, they are accidental variations and not such as to distinguish a species . . . Animals likewise that differ specifically preserve

⁵⁶ In *Metaphysica* Promoemium, in Armand Maurer, *Thomas Aquinas: The Division and Method of the Sciences* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1986), 98.

⁵⁷ Aquinas, *Expositio*, q. V, a. 2., c.

their distinct species permanently; one species never springs from the seed of another nor vice versa.⁵⁸

Ray's assumption of essential invariance—that "like begets like"—conforms with Aristotelian and Scholastic thought on biological generation,⁵⁹ while being incompatible with the evolution of species. Still, we need to remember that this is an empirical generalization, not a metaphysical principle.

The incompatibility of evolution with the species concept is one of Fr. Chaberek's cardinal points:

Darwin got caught in a paradox—to introduce evolution he had to deny the stability or the real existence of species, but to claim that he found the explanation to the origin of species he had to reintroduce the notion of species after destroying it at the first step.⁶⁰

This is a fair criticism. While Fr. Chaberek provides no citations,⁶¹ modern biologists and philosophers have struggled with the "species problem" for years—unable to agree on a univocal definition. The problem has continued so long that its very persistence is grist for the philosophic mill.⁶² John S. Wilkins enumerates twenty-six definitions of biological species, which he has classed into

seven "basic" species concepts: *agamospecies* (asexuals), *biospecies* (reproductively isolated sexual species), *ecospecies* (eco-

⁵⁸ *Historia Plantarum Generalis* (1686), Tome I, Libr. I: 40. Quoted by Ernst Mayr, *The Growth of Biological Thought: Diversity, Evolution, and Inheritance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1982), 256.

⁵⁹ E.g., Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Z, 8, 1033^b30ff, where it is presented as an empirical fact, rather than a philosophical conclusion. An exception to the rule is St. Thomas' understanding of spontaneous generation, to which I shall return.

⁶⁰ Chaberek, "Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution," 51.

⁶¹ The source of his definition of a biological species (Ernst Mayr, *Systematics and the Origin of Species from the Viewpoint of a Zoologist* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1942]) is out of date—antedating the discovery of DNA and the consequent development of the new evolutionary synthesis.

⁶² Yuichi Amitani, "The Persistence Question of the Species Problem" (PhD diss., The University of British Columbia, 2010).

logical niche occupiers), *evolutionary species* (evolving lineages), *genetic species* (common gene pool), morphospecies (species defined by their form, or phenotypes), and *taxonomic species* (whatever a taxonomist calls a species).⁶³

His “basic” species concepts hint at the complexity of the problem. Morphology may not distinguish populations that cannot fruitfully interbreed. The fruitful interbreeding criterion is inapplicable to organisms reproducing asexually—and so on.

Despite these difficulties, the term “species” is a *sine qua non* of biological work—required to communicate what has been studied. As Ray noted, to do biological work “we must try to discover criteria of some sort for distinguishing what are called ‘species.’” Thus, biologists use “species” to practice their profession, generally deferring to the authority of taxonomists.⁶⁴ Darwin’s project, then, was not to defend a definition, but to show how what biologists call “species” originated.

The frequent lack of sharp species demarcations is of special interest. In addition to the slow temporal changes addressed by evolution, some populations have spatial variations precluding sharp species boundaries. Anthony Preus explains,

[S]ome parts of the living world present synchronic polytypical continuities, called “clines,” in which variations are subspecific from each local population to the next, but types removed at some distance are judged, by any standard, to be of different species.⁶⁵

⁶³ John S. Wilkins, “Philosophically Speaking, How Many Species Concepts are There?,” *Zootaxa* 2765, no. 1 (2011): 58.

⁶⁴ I asked Fr. Chaberek for a definition, or at least an example, of “natural species.” He responded “Each natural species (currently about 20 k extant) is the example.” I found this unhelpful as recent estimates give 8.7 ± 1.3 million species. See Camilo Mora *et al.*, “How Many Species Are There on Earth and in the Ocean?,” *PLoS Biology* 9, no. 8 (August 2011): e1001127.

⁶⁵ Anthony Preus, “*Eidos* as a Norm in Aristotle’s Biology,” in *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, vol. II, ed. John P. Anton and Anthony Preus (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 341.

For example, gray squirrels in the eastern United States can fruitfully interbred with adjacent populations, and so on across the country, but east coast squirrels cannot successfully interbred with west coast squirrels.⁶⁶ The lack of sharp demarcations is not a new insight, but was noted by Aristotle:

Nature passes in a continuous gradation from lifeless things to animals, and on the way there are living things which are not actually animals, with the result that one class is so close to the next that the difference seems infinitesimal.⁶⁷

For our purposes, it is sufficient to think of species as classifying populations of similar organisms in light of observable characteristics.

In *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle reflects that “Our discussion will be adequate if it has as much clearness as the subject-matter admits of, for precision is not to be sought for alike in all discussions, any more than in all the products of the crafts.”⁶⁸ Since demarcations between natural kinds are often ill-defined, it is foolish to demand a precise definition of biological species.

As this imprecision results in alternate taxonomies, Fr. Chaberek asserts, “To believe in macroevolution one needs to adopt nominalism.”⁶⁹ This is not so. Nominalism maintains that universals are mere names, reflecting no underlying reality. Each alternative species definition has an empirical foundation in reality. So, allowing alternate taxonomies with different species demarcations is compatible with moderate realism as long as their definitions are adequately founded.

Let us turn to a philosophical discussion of species. Classical metaphysics follows Aristotle’s definitions of substance and species in the *Categories*.

⁶⁶ Gary A. Polis, private communication.

⁶⁷ Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals* IV, 5, 681^a12–15.

⁶⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 3.

⁶⁹ Chaberek, “Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution,” 52.

A substance—that which is called a substance most strictly, primarily, and most of all—is that which is neither said of a subject nor in a subject, e.g. the individual man or the individual horse. The species in which the things primarily called substances are, are called secondary substances, as also are the genera of these species. For example, the individual man belongs in a species [*eidos*⁷⁰], man, and animal is a genus of the species; so these—both man and animal—are called secondary substances.⁷¹

So substances are primarily ostensible unities (*tode ti* = this something) like Socrates or Bucephalus, and, secondarily, species and genera, not because they are ostensible unities, but because of the grammatical fact that they also serve as subjects of predication.⁷²

Aquinas is equally clear that species are not primary substances:

[I]t cannot be said that the notion of genus or species applies to human nature insofar as it exists in individuals; for in the individuals human nature does not have the sort of unity according to which it is some single thing pertaining to all, which the notion of universals requires.

It remains, therefore, that the notion of species applies to human nature insofar as it exists in the intellect.⁷³

A species, then, is not an *ens reale*, but an *ens rationis*.

Consequently, species cannot change in the proper sense, because they lack a material principle to serve as a principle of continuity; nonetheless, biological species can evolve. This is possible because the evolution of species does not mean that an *ens rationis* changes, but that a biological population instantiating to one species concept is succeeded by a population no longer instantiating that concept. Rather, the

⁷⁰ The same word, but with a different meaning, is translated “form.” Here *eidos* has a taxonomic sense, while as “form” it is the principle of actuality correlative to *hyle* (“matter”) as the principle of potency. Species, as classifications, are abstracted from the actuality of their instances; nevertheless, species are not the actuality of instances because they are found in the mind rather than in their instances.

⁷¹ Aristotle, *Categories* V, 2^a13–18.

⁷² *Ibid.*, V, 2^b8–22.

⁷³ Aquinas, *De Entia and Essentia*, ch. 4.

new population is the *fundamentum in re* for a new concept—the evolved species.

This view is compatible not only with Aristotle’s treatment of ideogenesis in *De Anima* III, 7, but with Aquinas’ position in the *Summa Theologiae*.

[B]esides the intellectual light which is in us, intelligible species, which are derived from things, are required in order for us to have knowledge of material things. . . . Wherefore Augustine says (*De Trin.* iv, 16): “Although the philosophers prove by convincing arguments that all things occur in time according to the eternal types, were they able to see in the eternal types, or to find out from them how many kinds of animals there are and the origin of each? Did they not seek for this information from the story of times and places?”⁷⁴

Intelligible species are derived from sensible species,⁷⁵ which derive from sensible accidents. So, species are known via accidents. We may conclude, then, that a sufficient difference in accidents will engender a different species concept.

This might seem to the end of the matter, but Fr. Chaberek distinguishes not only biological and philosophical species, but also logical and natural species.

Philosophically, natural species are those forms of life that possess the same substantial form. In philosophy we can also distinguish a logical understanding of species. In this sense, species is just a category projected by a mind on a group of objects.⁷⁶

This seems to conceive of logical species nominalistically. While moderate realism sees a species concept as actualizing of the intelligibility of its instances, his logical species is “a category projected by a mind on a group of objects”—a nominalist, or perhaps Kantian, notion for-

⁷⁴ *S.Th.* I, q. 84, a. 5, c.

⁷⁵ *S.Th.* I, q. 84, a. 6. In “sensible species” and “intelligible species,” “species” means representation, not a taxonomic group.

⁷⁶ Chaberek, “Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution,” 52.

eign to Thomistic material logic. This leaves us with “natural species” as the Aristotelian concept we have already discussed.

There is one more point, *i.e.*, Fr. Chaberek’s claim that individuals of the same species have “the same substantial form.” What is the meaning of this? How can we know when one substantial form is the same as another, given ubiquitous accidental variations? Finally, how does this accord with Aquinas’ position, quoted above, that “in the individuals human nature does not have the sort of unity according to which it is some single thing pertaining to all”?

Corporeal essences can be logically decomposed into matter and substantial form. Further, essences are the foundation in reality of substantial definitions.⁷⁷ As Aristotle explains in *De Anima* III, 7, there are no actual concepts in material beings. Rather, they have notes of intelligibility that must be actualized by the agent intellect to engender concepts. In other words, individuals have the same substantial form if their intelligibility can elicit the same defining concept. Thus, to be a member of a species is to have the notes of intelligibility defining that species. Each individual also has other notes of intelligibility which are *accidental with respect to that species definition*.

Nothing in this analysis prohibits alternative classification schemes apportioning individuals among species in different ways. In an alternative scheme, some notes essential in the original scheme are accidental and vice versa. For example, one might use a morphological perspective to say that all gray squirrels are one species, or the fruitful interbreeding criterion to say that west coast squirrels and east coast squirrels are different species. Again, as long as each taxonomic scheme is adequately founded in reality, this is a moderate realist, not a nominalist, position.

⁷⁷ “The term quiddity, surely, is taken from the fact that this is what is signified by the definition. But the same thing is called essence because the being has existence through it and in it.” Aquinas, *De Ente et Essentia*, ch. 1.

Species and Exemplar Ideas

Fr. Chaberek argues as though a species were an *ens reale* instead of an *ens rationis*. For example, “if species exist as natural kinds, they are permanent elements of the universe.”⁷⁸ Again, “This approach stems from the very impossibility of talking about nature (and any reality for that matter) without having abstract notions that are derived from unchangeable elements of the universe.”⁷⁹ With the possible exception of fixed laws of nature, there are no “unchangeable elements of the universe.” Corporeal being is mobile being, and intrinsically impermanent.

Since species are *entia rationis*, they depend for their existence on human minds, and cannot be “permanent elements of the universe.” As human populations grew and migrated, new flora and fauna were encountered, and new species concepts formed. Not long after the last woolly mammoth died, humans forgot their species until its fossil remains were discovered. So species concepts come to be and pass away. Any permanence they have is potential rather than actual.

A possible ground for permanence might be neoplatonic exemplar ideas, *e.g.*, Augustine’s eternal types encountered earlier. This seems to be what Fr. Chaberek has in mind, for he says, “even if all chickens in the world were destroyed, there still exists the idea of a chicken in the divine intellect . . .”⁸⁰ Of course, this is not a moderate realist position, but some version of neoplatonic extreme realism.

While St. Thomas affirms divine types, his position does not support a univocal “idea of a chicken in the divine intellect.” Univocal predication is critical here. Primarily, “species” refers to an *ens rationis* in the human mind. If that is not univocally what is in God’s mind, we

⁷⁸ Chaberek, “Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution,” 51.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

can not unqualifiedly say that there “exists the idea of a chicken in the divine intellect.” Since we can only speak of God analogically,⁸¹ His exemplar “ideas” are only analogous to human ideas.

God has “ideas” only insofar as He creates beings intentionally.

In all things not generated by chance, the form must be the end of any generation whatsoever. But an agent does not act on account of the form, except in so far as the likeness of the form is in the agent, . . . by God acting by His intellect, as will appear later, there must exist in the divine mind a form to the likeness of which the world was made. And in this the notion of an idea consists.⁸²

Again, “So far as the idea is the principle of the making of things, it may be called an ‘exemplar’ . . .”⁸³ While it may seem from this that there are distinct ideas for each species in God’s mind, that is impossible, for there are no distinctions in God. Rather, “God is the similitude of all things according to His essence; therefore an idea in God is identical with His essence.”⁸⁴ Of course, God’s essence is His existence and absolutely simple.

Whether God were to create ensembles of identical creatures, or make each organism *sui generis*, He would fully intend each creation and so have exemplar ideas in Aquinas’ sense. Thus, the Angelic Doctor’s position on types or exemplar ideas provides neither support for universal ideas in God, nor an objection to the evolution of species.

Why Do We Have Species Concepts?

Before replying to Fr. Chaberek’s specific objections to evolution, let us consider one final question. Why do we even have universal concepts, such as species? Aristotle and Aquinas agree that to have a

⁸¹ *S.Th.* I, q. 13, a. 5, c.

⁸² *S.Th.* I, q. 15, a. 1, c.

⁸³ *S.Th.* I, q. 15, a. 3, c.

⁸⁴ *S.Th.* I, q. 15, a. 1, ad. 3.

concept, we need to reflect on a phantasm, which, as sensory image, is a neural representation. Psychological studies have shown that we can only maintain 5–9 “chunks” of information in our working memories.⁸⁵ This means that our phantasms cannot represent perceived objects, or even our sensations, exhaustively. So, in abstraction, we fix on some notes of intelligibility to the exclusion of others. In other words, we have universal concepts, such as species and genera, to scale the complexity of nature down to our limited representational capacity. God’s knowledge is completely different, for He, numbering the hairs on our heads (*Luke 12:7*), has no need to reduce complexity.

All knowledge is a subject-object relation, requiring both a knowing subject and a known object. Consequently, we cannot understand concepts, such as species, independently of the subject. While objects bring intelligibility to the relation, subjects choose which notes of intelligibility to attend to—and so determine which will become actualized as concepts.

To the extent that individuals choose to fix upon different aspects of being, they will have different, equally objective, conceptual spaces. Wilkins’ twenty-six proposed species definitions is an example. While alternative conceptual spaces may be equally objective, none are exhaustive, because each leaves innumerable notes of intelligibility unactualized. This suggests that we broaden our thinking by including as many perspectives as possible. Aristotle’s discovery of alternate modes of explanation (his four causes) in the work of his predecessors is a familiar example.

⁸⁵ D. A. Broadbent, “The Magical Number Seven after Fifteen Years,” in *Studies in Long-Term Memory*, ed. Alan Kennedy and Alan Wilkes (New York: Wiley, 1975), 3–18.

Reply to Objections

In section “A” of his paper, Fr. Chaberek offers five metaphysical objections to theistic evolution. I reply to them here.

Objection 1: “The first is that no effect can exceed the power of its cause.” The substance of this argument is that “generation cannot create new design. Hence, the combined working of material causes is not sufficient to produce new species.”⁸⁶

It is tautological and so unquestionable that no effect can exceed the power of its causes. The power of causes is revealed in their effects, as we cannot know potencies directly, but only via their actualization. Thus, we must look at actual effects rather than *a priori* estimates to determine the power God has imbued causes with. Once we know an effect, we can try to determine the role of various causal factors. This is exactly what the new synthesis in evolutionary theory seeks to do. The problem with this objection, then, is not in its principle, but in its application.

Clearly, insensate parents cannot form designs, novel or otherwise. Still, it is the fallacy of misplaced concreteness to think that parents are the sole cause of their offspring. Rather, offspring are joint effect the parents and mutagenic factors in their environment, *i.e.*, the state of nature immanent in the initial state of the universe and its laws.

This is the position St. Thomas takes in discussing the work of the seven days:

Species, also, that are new, if any such appear, existed beforehand in various active powers; so that animals, and perhaps even new species of animals, are produced by putrefaction by the power which the stars and elements received at the beginning.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Chaberek, “Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution,” 56.

⁸⁷ *S.Th.* I, q. 73, a. 1, ad 3.

Of course, the mechanism of evolution is not putrefaction, but the metaphysics is the same. New species are immanent in “the power [laws of nature] which the stars and elements received at the beginning.”

The Angelic Doctor received the problem of spontaneous generation from the Arabs. As Dag Hasse explains, Ibn Sina held that spontaneous generation required the direct action of his unary Active Intellect as the “giver of forms.”

Thomas Aquinas argues that there is no need to assume the existence of an Avicennian giver of forms to explain spontaneous generation, since the celestial power suffices for producing ordinary animals from matter. More complex beings, however, such as horses and human beings, cannot be produced by the celestial power alone without the formative power of the semen (*Quaest. de potentia*, q. 3, a. 8, 9, 11). Thomas’ position was called the *media via* by later authors, that is, the middle way between Avicenna and Averroes, since Thomas rejected Avicenna’s theory, but also modified Averroes’ position in treating spontaneous generation as a natural, and not a miraculous phenomenon.⁸⁸

In other words, St. Thomas had no problem with abiogenesis (life being derived from inanimate matter) as the actualization of potencies created at the beginning of time. While Darwinian evolution does not address the origins of life, new species being generated from inanimate matter is a far greater change than one living species evolving into another.

There is a deeper correspondence between Aquinas’ position and evolutionary biology. Both see the generation of organisms as the combined result of two similar factors: (1) genetic inheritance/seed and (2) the operation of the laws of nature (mutagenic factors/celestial power).

My position also conforms with the texts Fr. Chaberek cites in support of his objection: “Every imperfect thing is caused by one per-

⁸⁸ Dag Nikolaus Hasse, “Influence of Arabic and Islamic Philosophy on the Latin West,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta. Available online—see the section *References* for details.

fect”⁸⁹ and “The perfection of the effect demonstrates the perfection of the cause, for a greater power brings about a more perfect effect.”⁹⁰ God is the author of each creature’s form, which is immanent in “the power which the stars and elements received at the beginning,” *viz.*, the laws of nature. As argued earlier, those laws are immaterial and intentional.

Objection 2: “The second reason theistic evolution is impossible stems from the division of being into substance and accidents. . . . In short, accidental change cannot produce substantial change.”⁹¹

This argument misunderstands the nature of both change and Darwinian evolution. Substantial changes occur when an organism is generated or dies. Everything that happens to it between generation and death is an accidental change, for its substance persists. If a change that would normally be accidental terminates in death, it is, by definition, a substantial change.

While Lamarck’s theory envisioned acquired traits (accidental changes) being inherited by the next generation, Darwin’s theory does not. Rather, all of the differences which cumulatively lead to a new species occur in the generation of offspring (a substantial change).

More fundamentally, no changes *can* happen to species or natures, which are immaterial *entia rationis* and so immutable. Secondary substances (genera and species), as concepts, do not change. Only primary substances (individual material beings) can change.⁹² The differences between offspring and parents, which cumulatively lead to new

⁸⁹ *S.Th.* I, q. 44, a. 2, ad 2.

⁹⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* III, 69, 15.

⁹¹ Chaberek, “Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution,” 57.

⁹² “Forms are called invariable, forasmuch as they cannot be subjects of variation; but they are subject to variation because by them their subject is variable. Hence it is clear that they vary in so far as they are; for they are not called beings as though they were the subject of being, but because through them something has being.” *S.Th.* I, q. 9, a. 2, ad 3.

species, are neither substantial nor accidental changes, for they are not the actualization of potency in one being.

In sum, since the evolution of species is not the change of a being, the distinction between accidental and substantial changes is irrelevant.

Objection 3: “The third reason is that according to classical metaphysics no perfect being is the cause of its own nature.”⁹³

Evolution does not suggest that any being causes its own nature, only that the nature of descendants may differ from that of their forebears. This difference involves the generation of each being by its forebears, not the impossibility of self-generation. Neither are the differences caused by forebears alone, but in conjunction with the laws of nature, which are the vehicle of divine providence.

Objection 4: “The fourth reason is that theistic evolution reduces the four Aristotelian causes to just two. In the evolutionary scenario new species are supposed to appear owing to the power of generation combined with random changes in matter. Hence, in theistic evolution the efficient cause is reduced down to material cause. . . . [E]very living being tends to be something else and thus it does not embody its own nature: an amphibian tends to become a reptile, a reptile tends to become a bird or a mammal. Hence formal cause is reduced *up* to final cause.”⁹⁴

There is no reduction of efficient to material causality. Material causes bring the potential for actualization to a process while efficient causes actualize that potential. Evolution does not deny, but affirms, both. The potential for change is of the very essence of material being, which is always mobile being. That potential is actualized in each variant offspring by the joint operation of its forebears and mutagenic fac-

⁹³ Chaberek, “Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution,” 57.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

tors operating according to the providential laws of nature—not ontological randomness.

Formal causality consists in each being operating according to its own actuality or nature. Evolution posits no unnatural activity. Instead, the activity of each being is the second actualization of its own form. The tendency to evolve new species does not occur in individuals, but in the response of populations to environmental challenges. Variant offspring are produced whether or not the environment changes, but, if it does change, the mix of variants most likely to reproduce successfully will change if possible (survival of the fittest), adapting to the new conditions. This adaptation is determined providentially, for it is by the laws of nature that populations are guided to the end of being a well-adapted species. Thus, there is no confusion of formal and final causality in evolution.

Objection 5: “The fifth reason is that according to classical metaphysics nature consists of parts that fit each other and work for the perfection of the whole. . . . Thus, an amphibian is perfect as an amphibian and changing it into a reptile does not make it more perfect, but rather diminishes the perfectness of the simultaneous existence of amphibians and reptiles.”⁹⁵

Again, this misunderstands evolution. It does not suggest that an amphibian ever becomes a reptile. Rather some descendants of amphibians may be slightly more reptilian in form and some less. Which variation, if any, will be more advantageous depends on the environment. If the present population is well adapted and the environment stable, then variations will confer no systematic advantage, and the species will be stable (the “equilibrium” in the theory of punctuated equilibrium). However, if the environment changes (the “punctuation” in punctuated equilibrium), some inheritable variations may prove advantageous. If

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 61f.

so, the population will tend toward a new form, signified by a new species concept.

There is no claim that parts of an organism are not ordered to the good of the whole. However, it is an empirical fact that some genetic mutations result in physically defective, and even monstrous, offspring. Further, the kind of part best ordered to the good of the whole organism is not an absolute, but is relative to the organism's environment.

Conclusion

Fr. Chaberek addresses a series of questions in his paper:

Is evolution (biological macroevolution) possible in light of classical metaphysics? This one general question breaks down to a few more particular: Can the process of generation be the efficient cause of creating new natural species? Is transformation of species (natural species) possible due to an accumulation of accidental changes over time? Is Aquinas's positive teaching on the origin of species (natural species) compatible with theistic evolution?⁹⁶

I have argued that macroevolution presents no philosophical difficulties for Thomists, and that many of his subsidiary questions are ill-conceived. Generation cannot cause species, which are *primae intentiones* whose efficient cause is the agent intellect. It can, in conjunction with environmental factors, cause individual progeny (*tode ti*) which differ from their progenitors. Since species are intentional beings (*entia rationis*), they are immaterial and so immutable. However, biological populations instantiating a species can have descendant populations that no longer instantiate the ancestral species concept. That, and not changes to *primae intentiones*, is what is meant by the evolution of species. St. Thomas agrees that new species can originate as the result of natural

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

powers the cosmos was endowed with at the beginning of time, *viz.*, the laws of nature.

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The Compatibility of Evolution and Classical Metaphysics

SUMMARY

The compatibility of evolution with Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics is defended in response to Fr. Michal Chaberek's thesis of incompatibility. The motivation and structure of Darwin's theory are reviewed, including the roles of secondary causality, randomness and necessity. "Randomness" is an analogous term whose evolutionary use, while challenging, is fully compatible with theism. Evolution's necessity derives from the laws of nature, which are intentional realities, the vehicle of divine providence. Methodological analysis shows that metaphysics lacks the evidentiary basis to judge biological theories. Species are *entia rationis* whose immutability does not conflict with the evolutionary succession of biological populations. While Darwin's theory was unknown to Aquinas, he endorses the possibility of new species immanent in the initial state of the universe, nor does his understanding of exemplar ideas offer ground for objection. Finally, five arguments given by Fr. Chaberek are answered.

KEYWORDS

Aristotelianism, Thomism, evolution, randomness, teleology, necessity, laws of nature, philosophy of science, species problem, intelligent design, problem of universals, abstraction, exemplar ideas, theism.

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Miscellanea

Mark Herrbach

Goethe and the Christian Religion

It is commonly recognized that Goethe’s notion of the Christian religion was complex and ambiguous, characterized by apparent contradiction and instances of oracle-like inscrutability, especially when considered in relation to his early conception of *natural religion*, a religion of the heart or feeling, as opposed to revealed, positive religions such as Christianity—a relationship that he initially did not attempt to develop in a coherent fashion. Less well known is that after his first Italian journey, Goethe began to consider their bearing on each other, while seeking to resolve a number of apparent inconsistencies in his concept of natural religion. But multiple difficulties in understanding his notion of Christianity itself remain, despite his life-long effort to come to terms with it. There are a number of reasons for this. First, as Goethe was primarily an author, he tended to voice his religious thinking in his poems, plays and novels. Second, as he was reluctant to offend the religious sensitivities of those around him, he expressed his views in the latter part of his life in isolated, apodictic statements of belief in such works as *Poetry and Truth*, the *Theory of Color*, short essays of a few pages in length, or in easily overlooked letters and conversations, his journal and a considerable number of cryptic aphorisms. Third, the successive stages of the development of his religious thinking unfolded in association

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with the stages of his overall development in relation to the culture of his times, as influenced by Pietism, Herder, the storm and stress movement, its cult of the genius, his metamorphological understanding of the sciences of anatomy, botany, mineralogy and optics, humanistic and enlightenment beliefs, Lessing, Kant, Schiller, German idealism, the Jena romantics and their ideal of a world of literature, among other influences.

This essay nevertheless seeks to demonstrate that the multiplicity of Goethe's religious utterances constitutes an intelligible whole of thought, or the stages of the development of his religious thinking to have culminated in a coherent conception of the Christian religion. The beginning will be made by first reviewing his concept of natural religion, and will then attempt to show how he sought to resolve the evident inconsistencies of that earlier belief by developing a notion of the relation of natural religion to positive revealed religions generally. Afterwards, that general notion will be seen to govern his understanding of Christianity, and that understanding, in turn, to be concretely reflected in his understanding of Catholicism and Protestantism. Or in other words, the essay, in conceiving the whole of Goethe's religious thought, will consider both his general and more concrete religious beliefs as body of thought in which none of his earlier beliefs are abandoned, but all are amalgamated with each other. The stages of Goethe's religious development are then mirrored in the separate sections of this essay. In the end, however, the essay will argue that Goethe, confronted with what he took to be unresolvable contradictions and ambiguities in Christian dogmas and beliefs, augmented his notion of natural religion with a selected number of Christian beliefs compatible with the former in developing a theory of creative activity in relation to an ideal world of culture embracing all forms of human activity (including religious activity) in relation to that ideal world.



In a reply to Gretchen's question concerning his religious beliefs in the first of the Faust dramas, perhaps the clearest statement of Goethe's natural religion of the heart, Faust answers that God, the divine or highest being, as "All-embracer" and "All-preserver," encompasses and maintains all things, and is that in terms of which

everything presses forward
To your head and heart
And weaves together in eternal secrecy
Invisibly-visible next to you.¹

Imploring Gretchen to "fill (her) heart" with the divine being, "however large it is,"² Faust maintains that this belief is universal, "all hearts speak of it / In every place . . . / Each in its own language"³—and yet it is ultimately incomprehensible. For the highest being in its existence and manifestations in nature as a whole, and more specifically in human nature, is "invisibly-visible" in the sense that all rationally posited conceptions or beliefs concerning it, hence all revealed or positive religions, including Christianity, fail to fully comprehend it:

¹ *Faust I* (5 250–251).

For the most part, the author's translations of the Goethe statements cited in this essay are based on the Artemis edition of his works: J. W. Goethe, *Artemis Gedenkausgabe der Werke, Briefe, und Gespräche*, vol. I–XXIV, ed. Ernst Beutler (Zürich 1948–1954). A number of quotations are based on other sources: (1) *Goethe-Briefe*, ed. Philipp Stein (Berlin 1924); (2) *Goethes Sämtliche Werke. Jubiläums-Ausgabe*, vol. I–XL, ed. Eduard von der Hellen (Stuttgart und Berlin 1902–1912); (3) *Goethe-Tagebücher*, Ergänzungsband 2 zur Artemis-Gedenkausgabe (Zürich, 1964)—sources referred to as "Stein," "JA" and "Erg Bd 2" respectively. In each case, the statements are cited according to volume and page number, with 5 250–251 here referring to volume 5, pages 250–251 of the Artemis edition and Stein 3 280, volume 3, page 280 of the Stein edition of Goethe's letters.

Further, it is to be noted that conversations are cited by the name of the person who recorded them and that all ellipses, italics and parenthetical emendations in the quotations are the author's.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

And when you are whole in blissful feeling,
 Call it then what you will:
 Call it Happiness! Heart! Love! God!
 I have no names
 For it! Feeling is everything;
 Names are sounds and smoke
 Clouding over the splendor of heaven.⁴

But, it might be asked, if natural religion is universal, why doesn't Gretchen already share Faust's belief, why hasn't she already experienced the "blissful feeling" of the highest being, why does he exhort her to "fill (her) heart" with it, "however large it is"? How can Gretchen not have "filled (her) heart" with the feeling of the divinity and in what way are some hearts larger and therefore apparently capable of being one with the highest being to a greater extent than others? Or more generally, if natural religion is universal, why do some individuals experience this incomprehensible conscious oneness with the divine being and others not? How can those who do not know it come to an experience of it, if not on the basis of positive teachings or recounted experiences of others? And how do those who do have this experience receive or develop their understanding of it, and how is their experience and are their hearts greater than others? For that matter, if natural religion is universal, why do positive or revealed religions exist? How can their relation to natural religion be conceived? It is as if Goethe in his later religious reflections felt compelled to answer Gretchen's objection following Faust's enthusiastic musing over natural religion, "then you have no Christianity in you."⁵

In a late aphorism, Goethe notes that "religion begins in feeling, but must be developed to reasonableness."⁶ A closer look at his last conversation with Eckermann can form the starting point of an understand-

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Aphorisms and Fragments* (17 779).

ing of what he means by “reasonable” (*vernünftig*), as well as what purity (*Reinheit*) means in this connection. For in that conversation, Goethe develops natural religion further as *primal religion* (*Urreligion*) and distinguishes between primal religion and the churches of revealed religions (he is referring specifically to Christianity here, but the context of the statement shows that it applies to all manifestations of primal religion in revealed religions): “There is the point of view of a kind of primal religion, that of pure nature . . . Then there is the standpoint of the church, which is more human.”⁷ Primal religion is universal in the sense that it exists prior to and forms the foundation of its manifestations in the churches of revealed religions, churches existing in the real or empirical world, the sphere of external conditioning circumstances and limitation. But while primal religion “is of divine origin . . . and will always remain the same,”⁸ the positive belief (*Glaube*) of those churches is *humanly* formulated and only strives to comprehend the highest being experienced as feeling in the hearts of the believers of primal religion:

[U]niversal, natural religion requires no belief, strictly speaking. For the conviction that a great, productive, ordering and governing being hides itself, as it were, in nature, in order to make itself tangible to us, forces itself on everyone. . . . Entirely different is the case of particular religions proclaiming that the supreme being has decidedly adopted one particular tribe, people or locality above all others. These religions are founded on . . . belief . . .⁹

Later, while referring generally to every element of the legacy of culture (*Überlieferung*) that individuals are confronted with in their development, but as applicable in context to revealed religion specifically, Goethe asserts that

⁷ Eckermann, March 11, 1832 (24 769).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Poetry and Truth* (10 154).

what matters is its foundation, its inner nature, its meaning and direction; here lies its original, divine, effective, inviolable, indestructible nature, and no time, no external influence or condition can harm this original quality. . . . (These influences and conditions), while closely related to (its) inner nature . . . , expose (it) to deterioration and corruption . . . on account of differences in times and locations, (and) especially the difference in human powers and manners of thinking . . .¹⁰

Similarly, again referring to assimilation of elements of the legacy of culture in general, but applicable in particular to the reception of the beliefs and doctrines of revealed religion, he holds that “man,” given his experience of the divine being of primal religion,

by relating everything to himself, is forced to ascribe to everything an inner determination directed outwardly . . . (This) perfect inner organization is . . . most pure . . . (and can only exist) under certain outward conditions . . .¹¹

Thus Goethe observes that “the history of churches . . . becomes . . . confused because the main idea”—i.e., their fundamental inner nature as manifestations of primal religion—“is obscured, disputed and diverted by the moment, the age, by localities and other particulars.”¹² It follows that primal religion in relation to established revealed religion is “invisibly-visible” like the highest being itself: “in every land the multitude of true believers, thinking people, will always remain an invisible church.”¹³

Goethe stresses, however, that the relation of primal religion to revealed religion *can* be comprehended by “true believers” of that invisible church:

[I]t is everyone’s duty to explore the inner, true nature of (revealed religion) . . . Everything external . . . one should leave to criticism, which, even if it is able to break up the whole into

¹⁰ *Ibid.* (10 558).

¹¹ “Essay on a universal Theory of Comparison” (17 228).

¹² Letter to E. H. F. Meyer, April 23, 1829 (21 849).

¹³ “On the Worth of some German Poets” (JA 36 9).

pieces, will never be able to rob us of the true foundation that we hold fast to . . .¹⁴

Only they are able to understand the positive content of revealed religions *purely* (rein), in relation to the primal religion underlying them:

If only people . . . would not alter and darken what is right and proper after it has been found, I would be satisfied; for a positive tradition delivered from generation to generation is essential to mankind . . . In this regard, I should be happy if men understood it purely . . .¹⁵

But primal religion as an invisible church is “only for chosen ones,” “divinely gifted beings” or “thinking people” whose hearts and capacity to experience the highest being are greater than others and who are therefore capable of distinguishing primal religion from its positive real or empirical manifestations in the world and whose greater awareness of the highest being is essentially inborn:

There is the point of view of primal religion, that of pure nature and reason, which is of divine origin. This will always remain the same and will last and hold true as long as divinely gifted beings exist. But it is only for chosen ones and is much too high and noble to become universal.¹⁶

Conversely, while “the light of undiminished divine revelation is much too pure and brilliant to be suitable and bearable of weak and needy humankind,” the churches of revealed religions are “more human” and not restricted to “divinely gifted” understanding of the highest being. They “enter() as . . . charitable mediator(s) to shade and reduce (the light of divine revelation), in order that all are helped and many are in good spirits.”¹⁷ Such churches “will last as long as there are weak human beings.”¹⁸ In this respect, the positive belief of revealed

¹⁴ *Poetry and Truth* (10 558).

¹⁵ Eckermann, Feb. 1, 1827 (24 238–239).

¹⁶ Eckermann, March 11, 1832 (24 769).

¹⁷ *Ibid.* (24 769–770).

¹⁸ *Ibid.* (24 769).

religions is also universal, as indispensable for the welfare of mankind as a whole.



It follows for Goethe that the history of revealed religions and their associated churches is characterized by perpetual transformation of their positive beliefs. For only a minority of their members are “thinking people,” “divinely gifted” “chosen ones” capable of understanding the relation of those beliefs purely in relation to their foundation in primal religion. Thus the churches of revealed religion are “exposed to deterioration and corruption,” especially because of the “difference in human powers and manners of thinking.”¹⁹ Or in other words, the history of the churches of revealed religions is “confused, because the main idea, which may accompany its course in the world most purely and clearly, is obscured, disrupted and diverted,” not only “by the moment, the age . . . (and) localities,” but by “other particulars”²⁰—that is to say, the particular positive beliefs of those churches. From the standpoint of their congregations generally, that of “weak and needy humankind,” their beliefs are “fragile, changeable and changing” over time:

[T]here is the standpoint of the church, which is more human. It is fragile, changeable and changing. In perpetual transformation, it too will last as long as there are weak human beings.²¹

Goethe expresses many of the same ideas, if in slightly altered terminology, in his discussion of the Bible, not as sacred book exclusive to the Jewish and Christian churches, but as

¹⁹ *Poetry and Truth* (10 558).

²⁰ Letter to E. H. F. Meyer, April 23, 1829 (21 849).

²¹ Eckermann, March 22, 1823 (24 769).

book of all peoples, because it makes the destiny of one people the symbol of all others, relates its history to the creation of the world and develops it to the furthest regions of final eternal verities by means of a succession of earthly and spiritual stages, necessary and accidental events.²²

But the Bible, apart from the comprehension of its beliefs by “thinking people” or “chosen ones,” those capable of conceiving it purely in relation to primal religion, is incomprehensible to the “weak and needy” nature of mankind generally, and the sacred texts of any given revealed religion will be just as incommensurable as the Bible has been to Jews and Christians. For their sacred texts also “brought no standard in terms of which the self-containment, wonderful originality, many-sidedness, totality and incommensurability of (their) contents could be measured.”²³ That standard had to be applied from without, and so arose a chorus of

Jews and Christians, heathens and saints, church fathers and heretics, . . . reformers and their opponents, all of them . . . wanting to interpret and explain, link together or supplement, understand or apply the Scriptures.²⁴

Consequently the churches of all revealed religions contemplating the Bible or other sacred texts in a manner symbolized by the Bible, as destiny of all peoples,

split into an infinite number of opinions concerning it. Thus we find that men worked, not so much with the Bible, as *on* the Bible, and quarreled over conflicting manners of interpretation that they could apply to the text, could substitute for the text or with which they could cover it up.²⁵

Hence Goethe argues, with specific reference to the Bible, but applicable as well to the sacred texts of all revealed religions, that “the reason

²² *Theory of Color* (16 344–345).

²³ *Ibid.* (16 347).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.* (16 346).

the Bible is an eternally influential book is that as long as the world exists, no one will come forward and say: I comprehend it as a whole and understand it in its details.”²⁶

[I]f only people . . . would not alter and darken what is right and proper after it has been found, I would be satisfied; for a positive tradition delivered from generation to generation is essential to mankind, and it would be good if this positivity were simultaneously right and true. In this regard, I should be happy if men understood it purely and then continued in what is right, without becoming transcendent again, after everything had been done with respect to what is comprehensible. But people cannot keep still, and before one knows it, confusion is dominant once again.²⁷

More particularly, in a letter to Zelter using Biblical terminology, Goethe holds the Old and New Testaments to be a symbol of the “perpetually repeating essence of the world” in which he finds

there the law that strives towards love, here the love that strives back towards the law and fulfills it, not by means of its own power and strength, but rather by belief . . .²⁸

In the context of the preceding pages it can be said with respect to the “perpetually repeating essence of the world,” as manifested in all revealed religions symbolized by Bible, that the Old Testament or its law comprises positive belief, the New Testament of love, the fulfillment of the law in experience of the divinity, that experience giving rise to further positive beliefs as law to others, and so on, for ever.



In his novel *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, Goethe attempts a broad classification of revealed religions in terms of their fundamental positive beliefs and finds them to exhibit this same cycle of perpetual

²⁶ *Maxims and Reflections* (9 534).

²⁷ Eckermann, Feb 1, 1827 (24 238).

²⁸ Letter to Zelter, Nov. 14, 1816 (21 196).

transformation in themselves and in their relation to each other. These forms, though alluded to at times throughout the novel, are not taken up and coherently developed there or in his other writings and conversations. For us, their primary significance is the manner in which they conform to the argument of the preceding pages.

As explained to Wilhelm by the overseers of the Pedagogical Province where he takes his son to learn at, there are three forms of revealed religion associated with a three-fold reverence (*Ehrfurcht*) determining the positive direction of their worship: reverence for that which is “above us,”²⁹ reverence for that which is “below us,”³⁰ and reverence for that which is “like us.”³¹ Though set forth as the Province’s educational ideal, the several forms of reverence and the religions founded on them are considered to be “inborn in a higher sense . . . in especially favored individuals, who have always therefore been held to be holy or gods”³² in founding one of the three forms of revealed religions.

The overseers term religion based on that which is above us the *ethnic* (*ethnische*) religion. It is “the religion of all peoples and the first successful separation from base fear.”³³ Worshipping the highest being as incommensurable power embracing and sustaining all things, it is comparable to Goethe’s original natural religion. The relation based on reverence for that which is below us is termed the *Christian religion*. This manner of thinking, while present in other revealed religions, is “most clearly revealed in (the Christian religion).”³⁴ It seeks to raise up the individual by concrete experience of the highest being in the real or

²⁹ *Years of Wandering* (§ 169).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.* (§ 171).

³² *Ibid.* (§ 170–171).

³³ *Ibid.* (§ 171).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

empirical world in such a way that “every appearance of Christ”—as well as that of the god-like appearance of the founders of similar religions—“serves to make the higher life tangible.”³⁵ The third religion based on reverence for that which is like us is termed the *philosophical religion*. The philosopher seeks to “pull down everything higher” and “raise up everything lower to himself” in the sense that he conceives both the positive beliefs of the ethnic religions and the Christian religions purely in relation to their true foundation in primal religion. For “by clearly understanding his relation to people like himself and thus to the whole of mankind, his relation to all earthly surroundings,” he “lives in a cosmic sense in truth.”³⁶ The proponents of this third form of religion are, in short, the “thinking people,” the “divinely favored beings” of the primal religion’s invisible church. But the founders of particular branches of philosophical religion are themselves limited or conditioned in their actual existence in the world and their writings or collections of sayings, while inwardly pure, are outwardly positive and ultimately incommensurable for the majority of ‘non-thinking people’ contemplating their works. The god-like founders of philosophical religions can only hope to inspire or encourage followers by the example of their lives to become “thinking people” in the reception of their works.

When Wilhelm asks the overseers which of these three forms they profess, they answer, “all three . . . only together do they bring forth the true religion.”³⁷ For “out of the three there arises the highest form of reverence, reverence for oneself.”³⁸ With it, they say,

man achieves the highest that he is capable of, namely, that he may hold himself to be the best that God and nature have created,

³⁵ Letter to Zelter, Nov. 9, 1830 (21 946).

³⁶ *Years of Wandering* (8 171).

³⁷ *Ibid.* (8 172).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

and yes, that he may linger at this height without being pulled down again into the lower sphere by arrogance and self-centeredness.³⁹

The overseers, however, do not explain how or why the god-like founders of each of the three forms of revealed religion limit themselves to a conception of the divine being in apparent one-sidedness with respect to only one of the three forms of revealed religion. It may be due to their particular individualities, the individualities of those about them, or the positive outer conditions in the world they faced together. Nor do the overseers explain how or why out of the fourth form of reverence and unity of those three forms the latter “develop themselves again”⁴⁰ in perpetual alternation of positivity and its reconciliation with the divine being. It is only clear that the three forms of revealed religion are essentially or ideally one, yet repeatedly split and only momentarily united again in the empirical world—a unity, separation of that unity and its resumption that the overseers find expressed in a credo “pronounced by a large segment of the world, however unconsciously,” in which “three divine beings” or persons are united in “the highest unity,” in one God, with the first person of that credo being “ethnic and belonging to all peoples; the second being Christian, struggling along with those who suffer and are glorified in suffering; the third . . . teaching an imagined community of holy beings, that is to say, who are good and wise to the highest degree.”⁴¹ Expressed in terms of the three divine Persons of the Christian Credo, this means:

THE FATHER (as divine being underlying the religions of all lands and peoples):

“belonging to all peoples;”

THE SON (the concrete embodiment of the Father in the real or

“struggling along with those who suffer and those who are glorified

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

empirical world):

THE HOLY SPIRIT (the community of thinking people belonging to an invisible church):

in suffering;”

“existing in the inspired community of holy beings . . . , that is to say, who are good and wise to the highest degree.”⁴²

Goethe does not refer to the Trinity elsewhere in the *Years of Wandering*, nor does he attempt to deal with the well-nigh infinite range of its perceived manifestations in Christian sacred writings and experience, but it can be thought to be implicit in the argument of the preceding pages—in the cycle of law, positivity, fulfillment of the law and renewed positivity, or the union of the “true believers” of primal religion with the “weak and needy” believers of revealed religions as constituting a whole of benefit to all of mankind.



Having examined Goethe’s conception of all revealed religions and their associated churches, as well as their second form “most clearly revealed” in Christianity, it is possible to progressively develop his notion of the unique nature of the Christian religion as actually existing religion and reflecting in its history the manner in which its main or underlying idea becomes “confused,” “obscured, disrupted and diverted” in the real or empirical world, “split into an infinite number of opinions” in embodying the “perpetual repeating essence of the world,” the continual cycle of experience of the divine being, formulation of that experience in terms of positive belief or law and reconciliation of that belief with its divine foundation, and continued positivity on that basis.

It was already seen that Goethe observes that soon after the books of the Old Testament and New Testament were combined, there arose a “chorus of Jews and Christians, heathens and saints, church fathers and

⁴² *Ibid.*

heretics, councils and popes, reformers and their opponents” seeking to “interpret and explain, link together or supplement, understand or apply the Scriptures.”⁴³ Similarly, he notes that “soon after its emergence and propagation, the Christian religion suffered from both thoughtful and nonsensical heresies, and lost its original purity.”⁴⁴ Only a few of its believers were able, as “thinking people,” members of Goethe’s invisible church, to comprehend the positivity of the Christian religion purely. This was not confined for him to the chronologically first form of the Christian religion, Catholicism, but is exemplified in Protestantism as well. For the Protestant church is similarly characterized by a “tiresome . . . sectarian divisiveness”⁴⁵ and its reformation history he finds to be a “sad spectacle of boundless confusion, error struggling against error, self-interest with self-interest, truth only heaving a sigh here and there.”⁴⁶ Even with regard to the Lutheran religion of his upbringing he notes that its “main notion . . . is based on the decided opposition between Law and Gospel, and then on the mediation between these extremes,”⁴⁷ i.e., their dialectical development throughout its history.

Thus Goethe observes that the Christian church (i.e., as including both Catholicism and Protestantism, at least in the latter’s early history) is “a very great power,” because it “can free man from the weight of sin.” The positive law engenders an awareness of sin, human failure in observing the law, and consequent awareness of estrangement from the divine being. But the reconciliation with the divinity takes place, not in the believer as “thinking person,” but through the mediation of the church in its beliefs and practices—and for the Catholic church in particular, by means of its doctrine of the forgiveness of sin by the clergy:

⁴³ *Theory of Color* (16 347).

⁴⁴ Letter to Zelter, Nov. 14, 1816 (21 198).

⁴⁵ Eckermann, March 11, 1832 (24 772).

⁴⁶ *Journal*, Nov. 26, 1826 (Erg Bd 2 466).

⁴⁷ Letter to Zelter, Nov. 14, 1816 (21 195–196).

Because the belief is present in the Christian church that . . . it can free man from the weight of sin, it is a very great power. And it is the primary aim of the Christian priesthood to preserve this power and so protect the edifice of the church. . . .

There is so much that is foolish in the statutes of the church. But it wants to rule, and for this it requires a mass of dense people who cower before it and let themselves be ruled. The high, richly endowed clergy fears nothing more than the enlightenment of the masses.⁴⁸

Hence in the *Italian Journey* Goethe remarks that the activity of the Jesuits in their outer works was intended, not to enlighten the Christian congregation, but to maintain its status in front of a “mass of dense people who cower” before the church:

[C]hurches, towers and other edifices (which) are designed to have something grand and perfect about them that unconsciously fills everyone with awe. . . . Here and there some tastelessness is also not lacking, so that human nature is placated and attracted.⁴⁹

Implied in this context are the substantially similar efforts that can be observed throughout the history of the Protestant church. Finally, Goethe somewhat ambiguously observes in a conversation with Riemer:

The characteristic features of the Christian religion, as developed in the particular existence of the Roman Catholic church, reveal themselves to be preformed, so to speak, in the characters of the individual apostles: love in John, belief in Jacob, fanaticism and persecuting frenzy in Peter, doubt in Thomas, and the greed of Judas Iscariot—owing to which the church, like Judas, was undone. For it was principally the greed of the Roman clergy that was the last straw for the Reformation.⁵⁰

It would not be difficult to find instances of love, belief, fanaticism and persecuting fury and greed in the “sad spectacle of boundless confusion, error struggling against error, self-interest with self-interest, truth

⁴⁸ Eckermann, March 11, 1832 (24 770).

⁴⁹ *Italian Journey* (11 11–12).

⁵⁰ Riemer, March 10, 1809 (22 544).

only heaving a sigh here and there” in the “particular existence” of the Reformation and the Protestant church in general.

The Christian religion in its historical development, in short, apart from its comprehension by “thinking people,” “chosen ones,” is “much too pure and brilliant for it to be suitable and bearable for weak and needy humankind”⁵¹ and is ultimately incommensurable in Goethe’s view for both Catholic and Protestant believers:

[T]he myth of Christ is the reason that the world can stand for 10,000 years and no one will come to his senses, because it requires just as much power of knowledge, understanding and comprehension to defend it as it does to dispute it.⁵²

Concerning history generally, and especially that of . . . religion, it occurs to us that poor, narrow-minded individuals find it not unworthy to project their darkest, subjective feelings, their apprehension of restricted circumstances, onto their contemplation of the universe and its higher appearances.⁵³

Scepticism . . . could only arise out of the religious sects of Protestantism, where each claimed he was right and that the other was wrong, without knowing that they all were only judging subjectively.⁵⁴

In this connection, Goethe’s mention in his discussion of the Bible in the *Theory of Color* that “if one inserted before John’s Revelation a summary of the pure Christian teaching of the New Testament,” it would “unravel and clarify the confused manner of teaching of the Epistles”⁵⁵—and by implication, the other books of the New Testament, as not achieving together a clarification for him, at least, of pure Christian teaching.

⁵¹ Eckermann (24 769).

⁵² Letter to Herder, Sept. 4, 1788 (Stein 3 280).

⁵³ *Aphorismen und Fragmente* (17 776–777).

⁵⁴ Riemer, undated (22 544).

⁵⁵ *Theory of Color* (16 345).

This is not to say, however, that Goethe does not differentiate between Catholicism and Protestantism. For the former coming chronologically first betrays a tendency towards enforced all-inclusiveness of its church on the basis of positive belief; the latter, emerging later, a tendency towards reform, if only momentarily, in its focus on the true belief of the individual. Though it can be said that both churches have been in conflict with individuals, “who (they strive) to gather all together in (themselves),”⁵⁶ and although they have both sought to confront their congregations outwardly with “something grand and perfect . . . that unconsciously fills everyone with awe” and that “some tastelessness is also not lacking, so that human nature is placated and attracted,” this was in particular the case for Goethe with respect to the Catholic church, coming as it did after the fall of the Roman Empire and attempting to impart its teaching and communal order to the “brutal and base-minded characters” of the north, where “crude means were necessary.”⁵⁷ “This,” says Goethe, “is in general the genius of the external form of Catholic service to God”⁵⁸ and the reason why “the Roman church succeeded the most in making religion popular.”⁵⁹

To paraphrase Goethe, however, the ‘*internal* genius of the Catholic form of service to God,’ i.e., that pertaining to the direct relation of the Catholic congregation to the divine being, can most particularly be found in its sacrament of the Eucharist, its notion of the concrete incarnation of God in the real or empirical world. For as developed by Goethe in *Poetry and Truth*, “in the Eucharist, earthly lips are held to receive an incarnated divine being and are granted heavenly nourishment in the form of earthly nourishment.”⁶⁰ The meaning of the Eucharist “is

⁵⁶ *Poetry and Truth* (10 518).

⁵⁷ Letter to Zelter, Nov. 14, 1816 (21 198).

⁵⁸ *Italian Journey* (11 11–12).

⁵⁹ “Folk Songs” (14 426).

⁶⁰ *Poetry and Truth* (10 318).

in all Christian churches one and the same, regardless whether it is received with more or less reverence for its mystery, more or less accommodation to what is comprehensible.”⁶¹ But, he adds, the sacrament of the Eucharist must not stand alone:

No Christian can enjoy it with the true joy for which it is given, if the symbolic or sacramental sense has not been nourished in him. He must become accustomed to regarding the inner religion of the heart and the outer religion of the church as identical, as one great universal sacrament that divides itself into the several sacraments and that conveys its holiness, indestructibility and eternal nature through those divisions.⁶²

Catholic divine worship holds six sacraments to be authentic in addition to the Eucharist, with Baptism, Marriage, Confirmation, Confession and Penance, Extreme Unction and Ordination encompassing the life of the believer from birth to death in relation to the Christian community about him, and tends to succeed in this way in holding the Christian community together. Protestant divine worship “has too little fullness and consequence to hold the congregation together,” for it has only the sacrament of Eucharist where the Christian “shows himself to be active.”⁶³ Consequently Goethe exclaims, “How has (the) truly spiritual relation (of Catholic sacramental belief) not been torn apart in Protestantism!”⁶⁴

Conversely, the Protestant religion has for Goethe a pronounced tendency to reform of the Christian religion on the basis of Christ’s pure “teaching of love:”⁶⁵

[T]he spirit sought to free itself in the Reformation. Enlightenment with respect to Greek and Roman antiquity brought forth the wish, the longing, for a freer, more decent and tasteful life. It

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.* (10 317–318).

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* (10 321).

⁶⁵ Eckermann, Jan. 4, 1824 (24 551).

was not less favored by the fact that the heart aspired to return to a certain simple natural condition and the imagination, to concentrate itself.⁶⁶

Thus towards the end of his final conversation with Eckermann, he also observes:

We have no idea of all that we must be grateful to Luther and the Reformation for. We have become free of the chains of spiritual narrow-mindedness . . .⁶⁷

It would be a mistake to conclude that Goethe believed that the reformist character of Protestantism was realized all at once, however. Rather, it was evidenced for him in successive reformist acts throughout its history in relation to Catholicism and then within the various sectarian branches of the Protestant religion. And the Catholic religion, too, had to deal with various reformist tendencies at the outset and over the course of its history—and in time, in response to Protestant reforms:

If there is . . . a real need for a great reform in a people, God is with it and that reform succeeds. This was evident with Christ and His first disciples, for the appearance of the new teaching of love was needed by the peoples. It was similarly evident with Luther, for purification of the teaching disfigured by the priesthood was not less of a need.⁶⁸

But in Goethe's view the majority of those reforms were brought about by the "weak and needy" congregations of both Christian denominations. Only "divinely gifted," "chosen individuals" were able to comprehend the "eternal verities" of Christian belief purely in relation to primal religion (at least at this point in Goethe's religious development).

Goethe is, however, just as much aware of two related negative characteristics of the Protestant religion progressively revealed in its

⁶⁶ *Maxims and Reflections* (9 588).

⁶⁷ Eckermann, March 11, 1832 (24 771).

⁶⁸ Eckermann, Jan. 4, 1824 (24 550–551).

history: first, as was seen, that it tends to be unable to hold its congregation together, then, that it focuses on the morality of the individual with respect to every day domestic life: “Protestantism focuses on the moral development of the individual, thus the virtue that affects earthly, domestic life is its beginning and end.”⁶⁹ As a result, while freeing the individual, the Protestant religion “(gives) the single individual too much to bear.” Formerly, “the weight of conscience could be alleviated by others” through the forgiveness of sins and penance, “now an affected conscience must endure it alone and loses thereby the power to attain harmony again”⁷⁰—that is to say, harmony within himself, the world and ultimately with the divine being. Losing the feeling of this harmony, the natural feeling of primal religion, alone, weighed down by conscience, the Protestant tends to replace it with the lesser feelings of self-centered sentimentality: “With Protestants, as soon as good works and what is meritorious in them cease, sentimentality immediately arises and takes their place.”⁷¹

Thus Catholicism

gives its special attention to assuring man of his immortality, and more precisely, assuring good men of a happy afterlife . . . On account of smaller or greater failings, it also posits a middle condition, purgatory, which we can have an effect on while on earth by means of pious good works. Here God . . . stands in the background, as the glory of subordinate gods, coequal and similar to each other, in such a way that heaven is wholly full of riches.⁷²

“God stands in the background” in the sense that while the feeling of immediate oneness with or feeling of the highest being may be lost for Catholic believers who are not “thinking people” or “chosen ones,” its belief gives rise to a relatively large multiplicity of positive conceptions

⁶⁹ *Journal*, Sept. 7, 1807 (Erg Bd 2 282).

⁷⁰ H. Voss, Feb. 8, 1805 (22 365).

⁷¹ *Maxims and Reflections* (9 532).

⁷² *Journal*, Sept. 7, 1805 (Erg Bd 2 282).

“suitable for weak and needy humankind” and suggesting harmony with the world and with the divine being, as the latter’s imagined “glory.” Conversely, in Protestantism, given that it “focuses on the moral development of the individual” and that “earthly domestic life is its beginning and end,” God also stands in the background for non-thinking people, but in such a way that “heaven is empty,” less rich in positive belief, “and immortality is only spoken about problematically.”⁷³



In the end, Goethe concluded that the beliefs of the Christian religion were “confused” and “unclear,” incommensurable in themselves and in relation to each other and in need of a conceptual “unraveling”—*even for the “thinking people” of his invisible church*. As a result, as is argued in the following pages, Goethe revised his conception of natural or primal religion by amalgamating selected Christian articles of belief that appeared compatible with it.

The *Years of Wandering* is particularly important for an understanding this metamorphose of Goethe’s late religious thought. In the second chapter of its second book dealing with Wilhelm’s visit to the gallery of paintings of the Pedagogical Province depicting Jewish history and the Old Testament, Wilhelm remarks to his guide that “there is a gap in this history.” For they have portrayed the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jewish people, “without presenting the divine Man who shortly before was still teaching there and who they didn’t want to listen to.”⁷⁴ His guide replies that this would have been a mistake, for “the life of this divine Man . . . stands in no relation to the

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Years of Wandering* (§ 176).

history of his time. It was a private life, His teaching, a teaching for individuals.”⁷⁵ In this vein, his guide continues:

What publicly happens to masses of peoples and their members belongs to world history and world religion . . . What happens inwardly to the individual belongs to . . . the religion of the wise: such was the religion that Christ taught and practiced, as long as He wandered about on earth.⁷⁶

But, it can be objected, Christianity was and is a revealed world religion. And the teaching of Jesus did stand in relation to the history of His age. After all, if Jesus hadn’t adapted His teaching to the circumstances of His times; if He hadn’t acquiesced to the worldly authority of Roman rule uniting the peoples of the known world; if He hadn’t sought to fulfill the positive prophecies and law of the Jewish religion with His teaching of peace and love, the Kingdom of Heaven and the forgiveness of sins; if He hadn’t attempted to heal the sick and bring salvation to the unrighteous and outcast—not just of the Jewish nation, but all of mankind, we wouldn’t know roughly 2000 years later what He taught. True, subsequent “thinking people” could understand that teaching in its positive nature purely in relation to primal religion, *if* they could somehow come to know it, but on the whole that teaching was transmitted over time by masses of Christian congregations lacking pure understanding, without which His teaching would have remained, if at all, an “invisible church” wholly detached from world history. And yet, Goethe himself writes that “the original worth of every religion can be judged only after the course of centuries by its consequences.”⁷⁷

Later, when Wilhelm visits the second gallery of paintings treating the New Testament and asks why it ends with the Last Supper and

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ “Divan Notes and Essays” (3 438).

Jesus' departure from His disciples, his guide replies that the Pedagogical Province distinguishes between the life of Jesus and His end:

In life, He appears as a true philosopher, . . . as wise in the highest sense. He stands His ground firmly; He goes His way without deviation and, by raising lower things up to Himself, by letting the ignorant, the poor, the sick, take part in His wisdom, His inner riches, His power, thereby seeming to make Himself their equals, He does not on the other hand deny His divine origin. He dares to declare Himself the equal of God, even to be Himself God. In this way, he amazes those about Him from youth onwards, wins some of them over to Himself, excites others to oppose Him . . . Thus His life is even more instructive and fruitful for the noble part of mankind than His death.⁷⁸

It is evident that Goethe, at this point—still conceiving Christianity from the standpoint of his invisible church of “divinely gifted” individuals, has not grasped the significance of the death of Jesus on the Cross and the essence of Christianity as actually existing revealed religion. For with His death Jesus gave up His life out of love for others in positing a new religion, one in which the believers of His church would similarly give up their lives out of love for others—if not physically, as the early and later martyrs of the church, then morally in the sense that individuals, mindful previously only of their this-worldly, empirical interests and aspirations, would care for others, in particular, “the ignorant, the poor, the sick,” in realizing the Kingdom of God, an ideal kingdom in which all would live in Jesus and have eternal life. And yet Jesus knew full well that in founding *one* church for the whole world and maintaining that no one could come to the Father except by Him, He would divide mankind, “excite others to oppose him”—not just the Jews, but the believers of other religions as well. But how can Christianity truly be a religion of peace and love, if that peace and love is restricted to His church, while exciting opposition and even hatred from unbelievers? What is clear is that Jesus, while claiming to have brought

⁷⁸ *Years of Wandering* (8 178).

peace to the world, also declared many times that He did not come to bring peace, but a sword, division and judgement (even when He also said that those who lived by the sword would die by the sword). For not only would many outside His church react to the doctrines of the new religion with rejection and hatred, but many even within it would present themselves as believers to Jesus at the Last Judgement, having prophesied and done works in His name, and would hear those fateful words, “Depart from me, you workers of evil; I never knew you.” It is also not clear what the life of the Kingdom of God consists of, as a kind of devotional redemption of the sacrifice of Jesus and His followers in making the Kingdom’s realization possible, or a spiritual life engendered by the Holy Spirit in the Christian community throughout its history. And what of the unbelievers? Are they simply thrown into hell and purgatory, and how then has the Kingdom of peace and love truly encompassed the world? Is the meaning of the incarnation of Jesus celebrated in the Eucharist that He will be with Christians to the end of the age also a devotional remembrance of what He intended to accomplish with His death, or do His believers physically feel their oneness with Him—and if so, is that oneness with Jesus identity with a distinct, actually existing person, or with a spiritual principle that He embodied in His life and teaching?

A particularly consequential instance of the anomalies and contradictions pertaining to the positive beliefs of the Christian religion concerns the interpretation of the death of Jesus in relation to the “perpetually repeating essence of the world—the cycle of positive belief, its reform and the affirmation of new belief, or law, awareness of failures in observing the law and resulting sense of sinful estrangement from the divine being followed by eventual reconciliation with the divine being and subsequent promulgation of new positive law. For “weak and needy” Catholic and later Protestant congregations, soon after Christianity’s emergence and throughout its subsequent history, the Savior’s death is not held to exclusively involve physical death or moral sacrifice out of

love for others, but also spiritual death, perhaps even sinfulness in taking up the sins of the world in positing a new religion and new positive law encompassing that world (as would seem to be indicated by His final words on the Cross, where He appears to feel Himself forsaken by God, or the scriptural declaration that God sent His Son into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh). For Jesus Himself maintained that if He hadn't done the works that no one else did, men would not have sin, but now in seeing Him, they have hated both Him and the Father. According to this understanding of the death of Jesus, God sent His son in the likeness of sinful flesh in order to condemn man's sensual, real or empirical, unspiritual nature, with the result that the death of His followers consists of an ascetic resolve to weaken or mortify the sinful body, with their inevitable failures in this regard being repeatedly forgiven by the church (but without true reconciliation with the divine being until the resurrection of the dead).

On the other hand, for the "divinely gifted" believers, the "chosen ones" of both the Catholic and Protestant denominations, especially in the latter's early years, the denial or mortification of the inner sensual nature of the individual in complete negation of all previous experience of the outer world, is a consequent extension of the in-body experience of the Eucharist, where prophecies, articles of belief and the practices and visual structures of the church are symbols or metaphors, "eternal verities," expressing the stages of the believer's incommensurable journey towards complete union with the highest being in love, a path in which he is guided only by faith. Confronted with the "confused" and "unclear" anomalies and contradictions of Christian belief, Goethe, however, in a fashion reflective of his religious upbringing and the schools of enlightened, humanistic thought and other cultural factors of his time, affirmed the entire multiplicity of an individual's inner life and previous experience in the outer, real or empirical world in relation to the divine being in his final religious reflections, as resulting in

concrete manifestations of the divinity in the form of an individual's created works and eternal truths or verities in connection with the individual's creative life in relation to the unending life of the legacy of culture, as consisting of all such works, if always only in a manner ultimately incommensurable to rational understanding—whereby then the verities of both the Catholic and Protestant religions are comprehended by Goethe as one, united with each other in what might be termed alternating “catholic” and “protestant” moments of the inner life of every individual and of all religions and cultures in the “perpetually repeating essence of the world,” but in a sense in which the notion of sin effectively disappears from consideration.



In subsequently developing his religious thought, Goethe thus came to believe that “we are all . . . moving from a Christianity of word and belief to a Christianity of character and action” in which man's “God-given human nature” courageously “stand(s) fast on God's earth,” the outer ‘God-given’ empirical world, as itself manifestation of the highest being. For after Luther and the Reformation,

We have become free of the chains of spiritual narrowness and able, owing to our ever-growing culture, to return to the source and conceive Christianity in its (original) purity. We have once again the courage to stand fast on God's earth and feel ourselves in our God-given human nature.⁷⁹

The more industriously . . . we Protestants lead the way in noble-minded development, the sooner the Catholics will follow. As soon as the feel themselves touched by the ever-expanding enlightenment of the times, they will follow . . . In the end, all will be one.

For as soon as one has comprehended and become accustomed to the pure teaching and love of Christ as it is, one will feel oneself

⁷⁹ Eckermann, March 11, 1832 (24 771).

great and free as a human being, and will not attach so much importance to a little more or less in external forms of worship.

We all are also gradually moving from a Christianity of word and belief to a Christianity of character and action.⁸⁰

The mention of character and action in these two statements, combined with “ever-growing culture,” “ever-expanding enlightenment,” and resulting pure understanding of the Christian religion, is indicative of the course that Goethe’s final religious reflections took. Character (*Gesinnung*) for him “expresses itself in the capacity to be active;”⁸¹ enlightenment signifies freedom of belief from unexamined, uncomprehended positivity; and culture, the positive material the creative individual selects from the legacy of culture and makes use of or “comprehends” in his works, traditions, conventions, techniques, thoughts and beliefs, along with seminal works such as Homer, Plato and Aristotle or the Bible—views that are then reflected in Goethe’s transformation of the Christian dogma of incarnation and its belief in the Kingdom of God.

Thus, first of all, Eckermann’s last conversation closes with these paragraphs which, given their importance in determining Goethe’s religious thought in relation to Christianity, I will quote in full:

[Eckermann:] The conversation turned to great individuals who lived before Christ in China, India, Persia and Greece and in whom God’s power was just as efficacious as in many great Jews of the Old Testament. Then we came to the question: what can be said with regard to God’s effectiveness in exceptional individuals of our present day world?

[Goethe] . . . In religious and moral matters, men still concede the possibility at least of divine influence, but with respect to the works of science and the arts, they believe that those works are nothing but earthly things and only the products of human powers.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* (24 772).

⁸¹ “Draft of a Book of Peoples” (14 464).

But let someone try to create something with human determination and human powers that can stand beside the creations that bear the name of Mozart, Raffael or Shakespeare. I know very well that these three noble individuals are not the only ones and that in every branch of art there is a host of excellent spirits that have been active and created works that are as perfect and good as those three. But if they were as great as those individuals, they towered over common human nature to the same extent and were just as godlike as they were.

. . . God did not rest after the imagined six days of creation, but rather He has continued to be as active as He was on the first day. Constructing this unformed world out of simple material elements and setting it in motion year after year under the rays of the sun would certainly not have caused Him much enjoyment, if He hadn't had a plan to establish a plantation for the cultivation of spirits on that material foundation. In this way, He is continually efficacious in higher natures, in order to raise up the lower ones.⁸²

That elevation (*Erhebung*) of one individual by another individual transpires for Goethe by means of the latter's creative actions, his actions or works (*Taten, Werken*) raising others from the common level of existence and estrangement from the highest being, as was seen earlier to be the significance of Christ's actions in "(making) the higher life tangible."⁸³

Hence, in this otherwise enigmatic aphorism expressed in a letter to Schubarth, Goethe writes:

On
 belief love hope
 rests for the divinely favored individual
 religion art science
 these nourish and satisfy
 the need
 to pray to create to behold
 all three are one
 from first to last
 though separated in the middle.⁸⁴

⁸² Eckermann, March 11, 1832 (24 772–773).

⁸³ Letter to Zelter, Nov. 14, 1816 (21 196).

⁸⁴ Letter to K. E. Schubarth, April 21, 1819 (21 329).

“All three are one” refers simultaneously to religion, art and science; belief, love and hope; and pray, create and behold—meaning that each of these three must be understood as essentially one and forming together a whole (as seeming manifestations of the Trinity, like the three forms of revealed religion), though “separated in the middle,” that is to say, though differing in their concrete positive forms. In this context, Goethe’s remark in a late letter to Boisserée, where he observes that he had striven to be a Hypsistarian (*Hypsistariet*) all his life, can be understood:

I have learned in my old age of a sect called the Hypsistarians, who, wedged in between heathens, Jews and Christians, professed to treasure, admire, honor and, in so far as it stood in close connection with the divine, worship, the best and most perfect in all that they became aware of. There thus arose for me a joyous light out of the dark past, for I sensed that I had striven all my life to qualify myself as a Hypsistarian.⁸⁵

In religious works, artistic works, in scientific works—indeed, in all works represented in the legacy of culture, the creative individual acts in terms of a feeling in his heart or soul in which the highest being is physically or as it were eucharistically embodied in his breast:

Continue in uninterrupted observation of the duty of the day and examine thereby the purity of your heart . . . When you then draw a deep breath in a free moment and find room to elevate yourselves, you will most certainly also assume a proper position in relation to the highest being, which we must reverentially devote ourselves to by every means possible . . .⁸⁶

. . . the pure and quiet wink of the heart . . .

Wholly silently, a god speaks in our breast . . .

Wholly silently, but distinctly, we are shown

What is to be taken hold of and what to be fled.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Letter to Boisserée, March 22, 1831 (21 976).

⁸⁶ *Years of Wandering* (8 457).

⁸⁷ *Torquato Tasso* (6 261–262).

You will never miss the right path
If you act according to feeling and conscience.⁸⁸

In acting as a whole in accord with the feeling of the divine principle in his breast, the individual acts *unconsciously* as a whole, asserts the full multiplicity of his inner life and previous experience and knowledge of the legacy of culture and creates a whole, a whole that is ultimately incommensurable to himself and others:

O, that we forget so much to follow
The pure and quiet wink of the heart.
Wholly silently, a god speaks in our breast . . .⁸⁹

. . . (creative individuals) are wont to pull . . . everything that approaches them into their circle and transform it into something that belongs to them. They continue this process until the small or greater world, whose intention lies spiritually within them, also appears outwardly in bodily form.⁹⁰

. . . when men . . . construct a whole . . . that is beyond all demonstration and understanding, . . . they are neither able to discover clearly how they reached the conviction they have done so, nor what the precise basis of that conviction is . . .⁹¹

. . . the beginning and end of all writing, the reproduction of the world without by the inner world, which takes hold of everything, connects, rearranges, molds it, and displays it outwardly again in an individual form or manner, . . . remains eternally a secret.⁹²

When the healthy nature of man is active as a whole, when he feels himself in the world as in a great, beautiful, worthy and dear whole, . . . then the universe, if it were able to be aware of itself, would shout with joy as having reached its goal and admire the

⁸⁸ *Tame Xenien* (2 388).

⁸⁹ *Torquato Tasso* (6 261–262).

⁹⁰ J. D. Falk, Jan. 25, 1813 (22 673–674).

⁹¹ “Study after Spinoza” (16 843).

⁹² Letter to F. H. Jacobi, Aug. 21, 1774 (18 237).

summit of its becoming and being. For what use is the expenditure of suns and planets and moons, of stars and galaxies, of comets and nebulas, if in the end a fortunate human being does not delight in his existence unconsciously?⁹³

The legacy of culture, on the other hand, as consisting of the positive material shared by all works of individuals who have acted in accord with the feeling of the divinity in producing their works, constitutes for Goethe an ideal *world or whole of culture (Kulturwelt)* immanent in the real or empirical world—an apparent restoration of the harmony within the individual himself, with the world and with the divine being that Goethe found lost in Protestantism and for the most part only imagined as its positive glory in Catholicism:

When the healthy nature of man is active . . . , when he feels himself in the world as in a great, beautiful, worthy and dear whole, . . . then the universe, if it were able to be aware of itself, would shout with joy as having reached its goal and admire the summit of its becoming and being.⁹⁴

As their development progresses, all good men feel that they have a double role to play, a real and an ideal role, and the foundation of all that is superior is to be sought in this feeling.⁹⁵

We live in a time where we feel ourselves stimulated daily to recognize the two worlds that we belong to, the upper and lower, as interrelated, acknowledging thereby the ideal in the real, and thus soothe our momentary discomfort with finite things by elevation into the infinite sphere.⁹⁶

Man, however the earth attracts him with its thousands and thousands of appearances, raises his gaze questioningly and longingly to heaven, . . . because he feels deeply and clearly in himself that he is a citizen of that spiritual kingdom, the belief in which we are able neither to deny nor give up.⁹⁷

⁹³ “Winckelmann and his Century” (13 417).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* (13 417).

⁹⁵ *Poetry and Truth* (10 507–508).

⁹⁶ *Aphorisms and Fragments* (17 696).

⁹⁷ F. von Müller, April 29, 1818 (23 32).

This ideal world or whole of culture has then eternal life:

Mankind's song of praise, that it so pleases the divinity to hear, is never silent, and we . . . feel a divine good fortune when we apprehend the harmony emanating from all times and places.⁹⁸

—in so far as the positivity of the world of culture is assimilated and reformed or recreated by particular, actually existing empirical individuals in their concrete works, works that then stimulate or inspire future individuals with the capacity for creative activity to act in similar fashion—or that at least leave those who are not “divinely gifted,” “thinking people,” “creative individuals,” “helped and in good spirits,” just as Goethe believed that the positivity of all revealed religions, even when not understood purely, is beneficial to mankind generally:

The main virtue of mankind rests . . . on its ability to deal with and master the material of the legacy of culture. . . .

We continuously struggle with the legacy of culture . . . And yet the individual who has been given the capacity for original activity feels the calling to personally stand the test of this . . . struggle . . . For in the end, it is always only the individual, who is destined to confront the legacy of culture with heart and mind.⁹⁹

What was written and done shrivels up and only becomes something again when it is raised to life once more, when it is felt, thought and acted upon again.¹⁰⁰

What history offers, that gives life,
He willingly takes it up at once:
His soul collects what is widely scattered
And his feeling breathes life into what is unanimated.¹⁰¹

Whatever great, beautiful or meaningful object we encounter . . . must . . . weave itself with our inner life right from the start, become one with it, give birth to a new and better self in us, and so live on in us and be creatively active without end. There is only

⁹⁸ *Theory of Color* (16 340).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* (16 342–343).

¹⁰⁰ Letter to Zelter, June 1, 1809 (19 582).

¹⁰¹ *Torquato Tasso* (6 218).

an eternal newness that forms itself out of extensive elements of the past . . .¹⁰²

Positivity in this sense loses all connection for Goethe to estrangement from the divine being and the law, breaks the cycle of love—positivity—and law, or positivity—fulfillment or reconciliation with the divine being and renewed positivity:

I honor and love positivity and rest upon it myself, in so far as it has been increasingly put into action from the earliest times and serves us as the true foundation of life and activity.¹⁰³

The inextricably related human ages and times force us to acknowledge a legacy of culture . . .—all the more so, since the merits of the human race rest on the possibility of this legacy.¹⁰⁴

Or, as expressed in two of Goethe's late poems:

Truth was found already long ago,
It united a noble community;
Ancient truth, seize hold of it!

.....

*The past is lasting then,
The future living in advance,
The moment is eternity.*

And if you are finally successful,
And full of the feeling:
Only what is fruitful is true . . .

.....¹⁰⁵
Join the smallest company . . .

World soul, come and fill us!

.....

Good spirits taking part and guiding,
Highest masters gently leading
To Him, who creates and has created all.

¹⁰² F. von Müller, Nov. 5, 1823 (23 315).

¹⁰³ Letter to Zelter, Jan. 2, 1829 (21 825).

¹⁰⁴ *Theory of Color* (16 342).

¹⁰⁵ "Testament" (1 515).

And unending, living activity works
 To recreate what was created,
 In order that it does not become lifeless.
 And what hasn't been, now it wants to become
 Pure suns, colorful earths;
 In no case may it rest.

It shall move itself, act creatively,
 First form itself, then transform itself;
 It only seems for moments still.
 The eternal is ceaselessly active in them all . . .¹⁰⁶

It follows that positivity, so construed, lacks any necessary relation to an awareness of sin for Goethe. And indeed, Goethe rarely mentions sin in his writings and conversations and deals with it, as far as the author is aware, in only one brief, but noteworthy passage:

[T]hat evil something that separates us from the being that we owe life to, the being in terms of which all that should be termed living is to be enjoyed, that something called sin, I haven't known at all.¹⁰⁷

In this way, Goethe's hopes that a "morally universal world community" might be realized one day "(when people) unite and recognize each other . . . with heart and spirit, with understanding and love,"¹⁰⁸ are expressed in his notion of the unending life of the world of culture as ideal world immanent in the empirical world, kingdom of the higher being or God, a concrete, actually existing "richly filled" heaven for mankind, or as his invisible church, but now as *visibly* invisible:

Heavenly and earthly things constitute such an extensive kingdom that only the organs of all beings together can grasp it.¹⁰⁹



¹⁰⁶ "One and All" (1 514).

¹⁰⁷ "Confessions of a Beautiful Soul," *Years of Apprenticeship* (7 419).

¹⁰⁸ *Aphorisms and Fragments* (17 771–772).

¹⁰⁹ Letter to F. H. Jacobi, Jan. 6, 1813 (16 689).

Goethe and the Christian Religion

SUMMARY

Over the course of his life Goethe felt constantly challenged to determine the relation of his own religious and philosophical beliefs to those of the Christian revealed religion. The resulting reflections, expressed in many of his works, letters and conversations, fall into distinct periods or phases that this article will attempt to analyze. Towards the end of his life, however, Goethe came to the conclusion that the Christian religion, owing to numerous apparent anomalies and contradictions in its beliefs and doctrines, can never be rationally comprehended, though it can be known to reflect incommensurable eternal verities of the spiritual life of every individual and community of individuals. Upon this basis, Goethe will be shown to have developed a philosophy of an actually existing ideal Kingdom of God embracing all cultures and their associated revealed religions.

KEYWORDS

Christianity, Catholicism, Protestantism, revealed religion, invisible church, natural religion, primal religion, positivity of religion, true or divinely gifted chosen believers, pure understanding, three/four fold reverence, the highest being, God, belief vs. oneness with the divine being, perpetually repeating essence of the world, sin and the law.

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Peter A. Redpath

14 Evident Truths from the Organizational Genius of St. Thomas Aquinas: How “Born Again Thomism” Can Help Save the West from Cultural Suicide

The Problem and the First 3 Evident Truths

Evident to many Westerners today is that contemporary Western culture exists within a condition of severe identity crisis, the West appears to be internally imploding from a lack of sound leadership generated by centuries of consistent application within Western culture, and especially within institutions of higher education and politics, of irrational principles of induction and reasoning. Because we cannot preserve the identity of any being, including that of ourselves, without first admitting that identities other than ourselves exist independently of us, the rational starting point for anyone seeking to solve this problem must consist in admitting three evident truths recognized centuries ago as part of the organizational genius of St. Thomas Aquinas: 1) beings other than ourselves (real natures) exist independently of the human mind; 2) like us, the identity of such beings consists in being organizational wholes (wholes made up of parts); and 3) organizational unity exists in and through the harmonious relationship of the parts of an organiza-

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tional whole to each other and to some chief aim, or act, the organization chiefly seeks to generate or cause that most human beings can know (like building a house, extinguishing a fire, fighting crime or disease, or fostering psychological perfection).

Ever since the modern world began in the seventeenth century, and especially since the inception of the falsely-so-called “Enlightenment,” leading “philosophers” and “scientists” falsely-so-called (like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sir Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant) have celebrated the modern: 1) discovery of an oxymoronic “nominalistic science,” and 2) denial of the reality of what, following Aristotle, St. Thomas referred to as “ends” or “aims” in things.

Since 1) science studies the natures of organizational wholes and organizational wholes cannot exist without the *universal* and unequal *relation* of all their parts to numerically-one, chief aim or end (a single act *universally* transforming a previously-disparate *multitude* into *parts* of a real whole), and 2) *nominalism denies the reality of all universals, including universal relations and causes*, and only affirms the existence of individuals, the idea of a nominalistic science is conceptually incoherent.

Further, since denial of the reality of real aims, or ends, in things denies the existence of a necessary condition for transforming multitudes into parts of a whole, for centuries, leading Enlightenment intellectuals have denied, and continue to deny, a necessary condition for the existence of science and the exercise of real leadership: organizational wholes.

Starting with the eighteenth century, in addition to the existence of the reality of aims, ends, in things, leading Western “philosophers” and “scientists” falsely-so-called have inclined to parade around like peacocks celebrating as philosophically and scientifically evident that what Aristotle and St. Thomas called “forms,” or “natures” (intrinsic

principles of unity and action within things), do not exist. For the most part, they have tended to replace such forms, natures, with external “mathematical laws,” “feelings,” or “blind chance.” (Kant, for example, relegated such forms to principles of systematic logic located in pure reason, while Hume placed them in “feelings of association” in something he nominalistically considered to be a “mind.”)

As anyone who has ever run, or belonged to, a business organization, served in a military unit, or participated in a team activity knows, organizational wholes grow out of harmonious exercise and cooperation of internal parts. They are not proximately generated by external, mental, feelings of association, laws mathematically or logically externally constraining them, or blind chance internally unifying them.

Like such individuals, Aristotle and St. Thomas understood forms, natures, existing within organizational wholes (substances) to be intrinsic causes of unity and action that, through generation of harmonious and unequal relation of organizational parts to numerically-one chief aim, or end, transform a disparate plurality into a parts of a whole.

Evident Truths 4 through 7 and Some of Their Evident Consequences

More. According to St. Thomas (and Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle before him), a *fourth evident truth* is that the knower and the thing known constitute essential parts of the same genus, or organizational whole.

And because the knower and the thing known comprise essential parts of the same genus, or organizational whole, leadership and the thing, or person, led *unequally, but proportionately in power, ability*, belong to the same genus or organizational whole. (Neither can be qualitatively too strong nor too weak in power, ability, to co-exist within the same organization.)

He maintained that the qualities of leadership and being led (having *inequality of abilities, habits, talents, virtues*) only exist within organizational wholes (or what St. Thomas called a real “genus”). Consequently, he also understood what Enlightenment intellectuals tend not to be able to comprehend: Deny the reality of organizational aims and/or wholes and you have to deny the reality of leadership and the ability to be led.

Because leadership in its fully-developed form is a kind of conscious directing activity, and in human beings, in its highest form, is not a chance event, because human reason is its chief directing faculty, human leadership is a kind of knowing and doing (an act of commanding and controlling). More. In its highest form, human leadership consists in a kind of philosophical/scientific way of knowing and commanding and controlling.

As a kind of knowing, leadership is chiefly a specific organizational habit existing within the highest part, faculty, of organizational knowers through which a leader is able, better than any other organizational part, to communicate a chief organizational aim to the other parts of an organization. *Leadership, in short, is chiefly a communications activity*, an ability to communicate to another or others (in a way that need not initially be verbal or totally rational) specific superiority in command and control (exceeding other organizational parts in organizational strength, through which a leader is able to convey to other parts of an organization: 1) organizational superiority of the leader to the other parts of the organization and 2) the chief aim of the organization as an organization).

Evidently, as St. Thomas well understood, a leader and the beings led belong to the same organization, or genus. Leadership is not an abstraction. It is an essential part of a real relation. As a knowing activity, the leader belongs to the same organizational whole, or genus, that the leader leads. Fire chiefs *belong to (are internal parts of)* fire depart-

ments, police chiefs to police departments, and so on. Abstractly considered, leaders as leaders do not exist.

Nor does an art or science of anything as a generic whole exist apart from its species. Arts and sciences exist in and through their species. Hence, the art of medicine as a real genus did not come into existence and then the art of curing this or that disease. The art of curing this or that disease first arose, imperfectly encompassing the entire genus of medicine.

Strictly considered, experience, art, philosophy, science are not bodies of generically new knowledge added to something a leader already knows. They are qualitatively more or less perfect, or maturely-developed, habits, ways of possessing knowledge a leader already has about some operational, organizational whole a leader leads and what are doable deeds for it, including for the leader.

Experienced leaders *grow out of* knowledgeable leaders familiar with the organizational composition of essentially different, necessary, part/whole relationships, and activities, their intrinsic powers and abilities, and faculties. *By induction*, experienced leaders recognize the external signs of organizational existence, health, and disease. This is because of the evident truth of *principle five*: The way a thing (organizational whole) acts reflects, is a sign of, a relationship of organizational wholeness (unity) existing among parts of a multitude, which possess this wholeness through unequal relation of each part to each other through unequal relation to a leading part through which a common organizational aim is chiefly communicated to all the parts.

The art of leadership (like that of orchestra conducting) essentially grows out of the experienced leadership of different organizational parts (leaders) *inducing* the essential and necessary operational abilities and relationships that, to operate harmoniously (healthily), these or those parts must have to each other and to a chief organizational aim. The philosophy, or science, of leadership essentially grows out of the

art of leadership of different organizational parts increasingly more-precisely *inducing* the specific organizational principles that guide organizational, operational principles in relation to a chief organizational aim.

Put more simply in contemporary business and military terms, experienced leaders: 1) know that this or that is a doable deed that needs to be done at this or that time, under this or that circumstance or condition; and 2) can, when necessary, overcome resistance and induce receptivity within qualitatively different and stronger and weaker organizational parts to do what needs to be done when it needs to be done.

Beyond experiential knowledge, someone who possesses knowledge through an artistic quality of soul resembles a person with the habit of mathematics who has memorized formulas and knows when they can reasonably be applied to solve this or that problem. Similarly, people with the art of leadership know the tactical operational principles at work that cause doing this or that at this or that time, under this or that condition or circumstance, to be reasonable in relation to the internal abilities of an organization and a tactical plan of operation.

People possessed of the philosophy, science, of leadership, however, more perfectly possess what they already know by apprehending it most precisely in relation to the strategic plan and aim articulated in an organizational mission statement that generates the operational principles behind tactical operations in the here and now.

Such people more perfectly than others: 1) know how to overcome resistance and encourage receptivity to taking directions so as to build and preserve organizations; and 2) have the qualities of great discoverers, pioneers, and great teachers. Because such people must constantly instill hope, drive out fear, and communicate a superior ability to know and unify potentially opposing convictions among free and intelligent agents about the right direction to take within an organizational operation to satisfy a chief organizational aim in the here and

now, such people must, best of all, know the first reason why this or that action needs to be done, how to do it, and be able to communicate this to themselves and parts of their organization. As a result, such people can never be absolute skeptics, egalitarians, totalitarians, or anarchists. They must be professionals who merit being called “philosophers”/“scientists.”

Since acts of art and science are proximately generated by habits that these *acts cannot, as their proximate generating principles, qualitatively exceed in existential greatness*, and habits can only exist within natural abilities, or faculties, the existence of artists and scientists indicates the evident truth of *principle six*: An art or science grows out of a human habit *existing within* a human knowing faculty to which a subject known *proportionately in power* relates, that the subject known helps generate and activate within this natural human knowing faculty; and *principle seven*: Every art, science (or philosophical activity) grows out of the experiential, *proportionate*, relationship between the specific, facultative, ability, habit, of an artist, scientist (philosopher) and *a known and improvable, but somewhat resistant, material or subject* (organizational whole) that activates the habit.

8 through 14 Evident Truths and Some of Their Consequences

Since habitually to lead organizations well, to be a great leader, demands that a leader understand (*induce*) the nature of the organization (composite whole) being led, the internal relations and, at times, talents, that compose it, its ability to be led, and its doable deeds, evident are several more truths from the organizational genius of St. Thomas.

Since organizational unity constitutes organizational truth (what kind of real identity [ontological truth] an organization has), *an eighth*

evident truth is that human knowing faculties of sense and intellect are generally reliable and, most of the time, can adequately apprehend (sometimes with, and sometimes without, the help of technology) truth (organizational unity, ontological truth) within things (organizational wholes).

Since organizational leaders and organizational members (people who belong to an organization led by a leader) really exist, evident is the truth of *principle nine*: An analogous unity (*qualitative proportion*) of truth (*adaequatio*) exists among things (externally-existing organizational wholes) and human knowing faculties (at least, that of a leader, such as an artist, philosopher, scientist). And *principle ten*: Truth in the human intellect chiefly consists in analogously relating in an act of judgment (mental organization) the part/whole relationships (organizational unity, ontological truth) that exist within organizational wholes.

From the truth of principle ten evidently flows the truth of *principles eleven and twelve*. *Eleven*: Eliminate one of the essential parts of this *proportionate* relationship, and the leadership, artistic, or scientific (philosophical) activity can no longer exist. *Twelve*: The *proportionate* relation existing between the leadership, artistic, or scientific (philosophical), habit and the led, artistic, scientific (philosophical), subject (organizational whole) known generates the habits and act of leadership, art, and science (philosophy); the habit and externally existing organizational whole are essentially connected, related, as extreme terms of the same real genus.

Following from principle twelve is the evident truth of principle *thirteen*: We take the nature, divisions, and methods, of all experience, art, science (philosophy), and leadership, from an essential relationship between human habits existing within human faculties and a known and somewhat resistant material, or known subject (organizational whole), that activates these human abilities.

By unpacking implications from the first thirteen principles given above, evident becomes the truth of concluding *principle fourteen* (as a chief, or leadership principle, aim, or end, generated by all the preceding principles and arguments): Scientific (philosophical) sense wonder about real organizations in relation to their essential parts is a chief first principle of all science (philosophy) for everyone for all time.

Why All Philosophy, Science, and Leadership Starts, for Everyone and Always, in Sense Wonder¹

As I think most people familiar with any of the human qualities of experience, art, science/philosophy, or leadership implicitly, if not explicitly, realize (at least in our saner moments), all these principles articulated above chiefly grow out of an essential relationship among the human faculties of intellect, will, and emotions and an organizationally and operationally deprived body (an incompletely developed organizational and operational whole, one that can be receptive to or resist further organizational and operational development) and a chief action that parts of that deprived body naturally and cooperatively incline to produce, or aim (end) they incline to realize.

The first beginnings of my explicit realization of this reality came to me decades ago while I was reading Book 1 of Plato's *Republic* in which Socrates gives Polemarchus examples of people ancient Athenians reasonably considered to be artists: cooks, physicians, pilots of ships, money makers, traders, and so on. In each case, Socrates made evident to Polemarchus that: 1) to be an artist or scientist, a person has to work with some kind of essentially improvable body; and 2) an artistic or scientific subject, body, or organization an artist or scientist, in

¹ This part is a revised version of the excerpt of my article: "The Essential Connection between Common Sense Philosophy and Leadership Excellence," *Studia Gilsoniana* 3, supplement (2014): 606–610.

some way, improves has to be essentially deprived, impoverished, but improvable; and somewhat resistant to taking direction from an artist.²

Subsequent reading of different works of Armand A. Maurer showing that St. Thomas understood: 1) the genus, or subject, of the philosopher to be essentially different from the genus of the logician; 2) philosophy to be chiefly a habit of the human soul, not a body of knowledge;³ and 3) analogy to be “above all . . . a doctrine of a *judgment* of analogy or proportion rather than an analogous *concept*”⁴ caused me to start to realize that *none of the leading twentieth-century students of St. Thomas, including Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson, had adequately understood his teaching about many of St. Thomas’s most fundamental principles, including his understanding of induction, analogy, and philosophy, science.* At that point, I decided that I had better start to investigate these issues on my own.

Spending more than two decades studying these matters, among other things, this is what I discovered. For St. Thomas Aquinas, philosophy, science (leadership activity in its highest form) is, just as for Aristotle before him, chiefly an intellectually-virtuous, habitual knowledge born of sense wonder. This philosophical, scientific, wonder is essentially about a multitude of beings already generically known to be

² Plato, *Republic*, bk. 1, 331D–334B, in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, vols. 5–6, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969). Available online—see the section *References* for details.

³ Armand A. Maurer, “The Unity of a Science: St. Thomas and the Nominalists,” in *St. Thomas Aquinas, 1274–1974, Commemorative Studies*, vol. 2 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), 269–291. See, also, Maurer, “Introduction,” in *St. Thomas Aquinas, The Divisions and Methods of the Sciences, Questions V and VI of His Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius*, trans. with an intro. and notes Armand A. Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1963), 75, fn. 15. See St. Thomas Aquinas: *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1; *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, lect. 12, nn. 2142–2144; and *S.Th.*, I, 66, 2, ad 2 and 88, 2, ad 4.

⁴ Armand A. Maurer, *The Philosophy of William of Ockham in Light of Its Principles* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1999), 278.

one or a whole and the memory of the way an individual has been able to acquire much memory of this multitude as one or a whole.

Just as no human being can become morally virtuous without much psychological practice, habitually choosing what is right in the right way, no human being can become intellectually virtuous (scientific, philosophical, a great leader) without much psychological practice, habitually judging specifically and individually about what he or she has already rightly conceived and generically judged; habitually engaging in right reasoning about already existing, *and rightly induced*, generic orders of truths, things (organizational wholes) known.

More precisely, according to St. Thomas, all philosophy, science, starts in sense wonder essentially involving: 1) a complicated *psychological state of fear*; 2) intellectual confidence about the unity of truth and the essential reliability of our sense and intellectual faculties; and 3) personal *hope* to achieve intellectual, volitional, and emotional satisfaction though resolving the wonder and putting the fear to rest.

As St. Thomas recognized even before the historical birth of some later, mistaken notions of philosophy's first principle of generation, philosophy does not start in faith seeking understanding, absolute skepticism, universal method doubt, impossible dreams of pure reason, Absolute Spirit's urge to emerge, historical economic dialectic, veils of ignorance, or any of the other false starting points that Western intellectuals, mistaking themselves to be doing philosophy, have *wrongly induced* over the centuries. *Philosophy, science, starts in a psychological opposition between fear and hope within the human soul in which the act of philosophizing, pursuing science, essentially constitutes an act of hope of success based upon an essential conviction about the unity of truth and the essential reliability of our human sense and intellectual faculties.*

St. Thomas maintained that sense wonder is a species of fear that results from ignorance of a cause.⁵ Because the formal object of fear (what essentially and externally stimulates this emotion to arise) calls to mind a difficulty of some magnitude and a sense of dissatisfying personal weakness (an immediate psychological sense of opposition, dependency, privation, and moderate amount of doubt related to personal ability), the desire to philosophize, engage in science, can only arise within a person who can experience a complicated psychological state involving: 1) a *prudential* desire to escape from the fear we experience of the real difficulty, danger, and damage ignorance can cause us; 2) *personal self-confidence* that our sense and intellectual faculties are reliable enough to help us put this fear to rest by overcoming an initial, moderate doubt related to knowing the truth of things (organizational wholes) as expressed in the truth of our intellectual and sensory judgments; and 4) some *hope* in our personal ability to use our intellectual and sense faculties to put this fear to rest by rationally resolving an apparently irreconcilable contradiction; and 5), by so doing, achieving a state of intellectual, volitional, and emotional satisfaction that we have done so.

St. Thomas explained that this initial sense of fear grips us in two stages: 1) initial recognition (*induction*) of partial intellectual weakness and fear of failure (some doubt about the strength of our personal abilities) causes us to refrain immediately from passing judgment; and 2) *induction* of *hope* of possibility of understanding an effect's cause and confidence in our ability to effect this understanding prompts us intellectually to seek the cause.⁶

Actually, this fear appears to include an intervening third stage between fear and hope in which we *induce* intellectual, volitional, and

⁵ *S.Th.*, I-II, 41, 4, ad 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*

emotional dissatisfaction with being in a state of fear and a determination to eliminate it. Thomas added that, since philosophical investigation starts with wonder, “it must end in or arrive at the contrary of this.”⁷

St. Thomas maintained that we do not, and cannot, wonder about the answer to questions we already know, about what is evident, nor about what we consider *impossible* to know; and, strictly speaking, when working as philosophers, scientists, we do not seek to remain in a state of wonder.⁸

We seek to put wonder to rest by discovering the causes that have generated the wonder. Since wonder is a first principle of all theoretical, practical, or productive philosophy, science, for everyone and all time (the wonderer being another), initially all philosophical, scientific, first principles arise from a pre-philosophical, pre-scientific, experientially-based knowledge—a generic induction involving: 1) human senses, emotions, intellect, will; 2) some personal self-confidence about the reliability of our sense and intellectual faculties and the unity of truth as expressed in things and in the human intellect; and 3) something that causes in us an induction of real opposition, possession and privation (not simply difference): contrary (not contradictory) opposition.

Consequently, since, in their nature and origin, philosophy, science, and the art and science of leadership, presuppose knowledge of the existence of several things and complicated psychological states, including something we fear can hurt us, and the hope of overcoming this fear, the psychological attitude of complete skepticism is a contradictory opposite, and cannot simultaneously co-exist with, the psychological states of philosophy, science, and real leadership.

⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, bk. 1, lect. 3, no. 67.

⁸ *Ibid.*

No matter what modern confidence men like René Descartes and his historical descendants, posing as philosophers and scientists, tell us, philosophy, science, cannot pre-exist knowledge in the form of some vague state called “thinking” or “consciousness.” “Thinking” and “consciousness” are species of knowing.

Philosophy, science, presupposes knowledge, including knowledge of evident truths, and is born of sense wonder. *People who cannot wonder lack an essential psychological quality necessary to become philosophers, scientists, leaders in the most perfect form.* And people who think they have the one philosophical method finally to put all wonder to rest are delusional. Only God has the one method to put all wonder to rest.

Since only people who fear ignorance philosophically wonder about how to escape from it, strictly speaking: 1) none of us is born a philosopher, scientist, or great leader; 2) seeking to become a philosopher, scientist, or great leader is not something that all human beings explicitly desire to do; and 3) engaging in philosophical, scientific, reasoning in general or for the chief aim of becoming a great leader, is not something all human beings do, can do, or even want to do.

People who are content to be in a state of ignorance cannot become philosophers, scientists, or the greatest of leaders. As Plato and Socrates emphasized, people cannot pour philosophy, science, into us like water into an empty jug. Only those who have the proper psychological disposition, some knowledge and experience of this initial sort of fear accompanied by the appropriate desire to put it to rest, can become philosophers, scientists, the greatest of leaders.

For this reason, absolute skeptics cannot become philosophers, scientists, and the greatest of leaders; cannot even start the journey to become these. Hence, when Socrates confronted people who were content to be ignorant, he attempted to jolt them out of their blissful ignorance by publicly shaming them, by driving them through Socratic iro-

ny into an *aporia* (an intellectual dead end), into becoming aware of the dangers of their ignorance.

Aside from the first principle of sense wonder, then, philosophy's, science's, specific, or *proximate*, evident first principles include: 1) habits of knowing faculties; 2) existing things, real natures (organizational wholes); 3) prior knowledge of these existing things (organizational wholes); 4) the existence and knowledge of fear, hope; 5) desire to escape from fear and possess hope; 6) convictions of certainty about the: a) unity of truth; b) reliability of human sense and intellectual faculties; c) and the existence and knowledge of real, but apparently contradictory, opposites.

Since philosophy's, science's, first principles, and those of the greatest of leaders include human knowing faculties, and since sense wonder must exist in sense wonderers, the existence of philosophy, science, and leadership in its greatest form essentially depends upon an understanding of human nature such as had by St. Thomas Aquinas: one that involves human beings possessed of a human soul (or some identical, if differently named, psychological principle) that can generate human knowing faculties capable of possessing human habits. We cannot be wrong about human nature and its essential powers and abilities and expect to be right about the nature of science, philosophy, and wise/prudent leadership.

Since denial of the existence of a human soul and of a faculty psychology involves an essential misunderstanding of human nature and denial of one of philosophy's, science's, essential principles of wonder (the wonderer), no human being can rationally affirm the existence of philosophy/science and wise/prudent leadership and simultaneously deny the existence of the only human knowing principle capable of essentially producing philosophical/scientific activity: human knowing faculties. (As St. Thomas recognized, what we human beings chiefly admire and find praiseworthy about science and leadership is not that

a human intellect contains a body of facts, or knowledge of exceptional worth. It is the quality, or habit, of soul capable of producing such a great good.)

More. As St. Thomas well understood, none of us can deny the existence of a moral culture and hope to develop philosophy, science, or become the greatest of leaders (people possessed of wisdom and prudence).

As Mortimer J. Adler has well said, all philosophy, science, is the product of conscious cultural effort, is a cultural enterprise, a great conversation. Philosophy, science, is not, as Descartes mistakenly thought, the product of the strong will of a single individual. Its generation presupposes a moral culture capable of producing the moral virtues of justice and prudence that enable generation of a culture of teamwork.

As Plato maintained, not even a band of thieves can cooperate successfully to treat other people unjustly unless this group has the ability, while so doing, to act justly (apply a moral culture of teamwork) toward each other. Justice (not injustice) and prudence (not imprudence) are essential principles of teamwork. And individual excellence working within an educational organization (genus) of one form or another is a necessary condition for generating art, philosophy, science, and the greatest forms of leadership.

Only a moral culture imbued with a minimal level of justice and prudence can act as the midwife for the cultural conditions (such as peace that generates leisure time) capable producing art, philosophy, science, and highest forms of human leadership. An oxymoronic “totally barbaric culture” completely at war with every part of itself can produce no harmonious cooperation and, consequently, can generate no effective teamwork. As a result, it cannot generate an educationally-friendly culture that can produce the circumstances and conditions in which people can develop the moral habits of justice and prudence ca-

pable of generating philosophical, scientific, sense wonder and the greatest forms of leadership that follow from such a condition of soul.

One of the Greatest Mistakes of the Modern “Enlightenment”

Not understanding the moral and psychological complexity needed to generate and sustain a philosophical, scientific, culture, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century “modern” and “Enlightenment” intellectuals naively thought that: 1) no human beings before them had properly understood the nature of induction and 2) they could reduce the whole of philosophy and science to one systematic, logical method that no one prior to them had ever discovered.

As a result, they passed on to subsequent generations in the West and globally faulty notions of induction and philosophical, scientific, reasoning that still dominate in the world today that, for centuries, have wreaked havoc upon Western culture and internationally and now threaten to cause global war and the West’s total demise.

Because logical reasoning is only so true as the induction upon which its premises rest, Sir Francis Bacon was right to criticize the tendency in his time of university *scholastics* to reduce philosophy, science, to syllogistic logic and to attack their misunderstanding of the nature of induction. Nonetheless, Bacon’s understanding of induction was not superior to theirs.

During Bacon’s time, just as in our own, scholastic thinkers tended to understand induction to be chiefly a form of logical reasoning that proceeds from knowledge of some individual concept or premise to form a general idea or premise. As Bacon rightly understood, *induction is not chiefly a logical act of reasoning from particulars to generalities*. It is chiefly a knowledge about the natures of things that precedes logical reasoning.

Like scores of thinkers prior to him, Bacon was convinced that “nature loves to hide” and that, properly understood, induction is an act by which human beings have to force nature to reveal her secrets. As a result, following Bacon’s mistake, over the centuries since Bacon lived, Western students enamored by positivistic “science” have tended to reduce the whole of science to a process sometimes used to generate induction of practical and productive scientific principles and subsequent deductions: what they call “empirically testing hypotheses.”

As Aristotle and St. Thomas understood better than Bacon, forcing nature to reveal secrets is not essential to induction; but it is sometimes necessary to act as a starting point, first principle, in some forms of practical and productive reasoning. For example, in the case of a lawyer like Bacon threatening a witness to induce a confession; or in the case of a chemist heating materials to determine their chemical composition.

Since: 1) empirically testing hypotheses is chiefly related to productive and practical knowledge; 2) productive knowledge is chiefly directed to making products (tools); 3) practical knowledge is mainly related to perfecting this or that facultative activity through perfecting use of tools; and 4), by uniting all our organizational parts (faculties) through our whole person (whole individual human nature), through our qualitatively highest faculties of knowledge and love (the human intellect and will) with perfect truth and goodness, only “speculative,” “theoretical,” or “contemplative knowledge” (in the sense that St. Thomas used these terms) chiefly aims at, and succeeds in, achieving perfecting our person as an organizational and operational whole.

Consequently, 5) neither productive nor practical sciences can ever qualitatively be the highest, most psychologically-satisfying, happiness-generating, human science; and 6) empirically testing hypotheses can never be the highest form of human knowing: science.

More. Empirically testing hypotheses mainly aims at securing an induction of a truth (the nature of an organizational whole and the part/whole relations that cause its operations). This procedure is actually short-hand for empirically inducing premises from which deductive testing can confirm a scientific conclusion.

All science, always and everywhere, terminates its activity in a deduction (a deduction from a true induction). And some sciences (such as mathematics, which induces and tests in the imagination) have no need to use empirical testing for inducing or verifying their premises.

In fact, as Aristotle and St. Thomas comprehended (once again, far better than Bacon), the nature and complexity of induction depends upon the nature of the inducer (his or her intellectual powers) and the organizational part/whole relationships and causes being induced. Induction in physical science is chiefly an act of intellectually sensing (intellectually seeing through this or that sense, or conjunction of senses) principles, causes, that generate organizational effects: parts that generate, cause, wholes.

Depending upon the complexity of the organizational whole involved and the experience of a person familiar with the organization, the act of induction need involve no research or testing at all. A simple example is that of a skilled medical doctor who, through simple observation, immediately induces the nature of a disease a person has and precisely what kind of organic dysfunction, disharmony, is causing it.

Unhappily for the West, since the time of Sir Francis Bacon, most Western intellectuals (including even many leading theologians) have inclined to reduce the whole of induction, and with it, the whole of scientific reasoning, to what, today, is popularly called “empirical science.” Since truth is chiefly an intellectual activity, since, in and of themselves, the human senses grasp no truth, the notion of empirical science is one more oxymoron generated by “Enlightenment science” falsely-so-called.

The reduction of the whole of induction and scientific reasoning to empirically testing hypotheses has had, and continues to have, devastating cultural consequences for the West, especially in relation to generating great cultural leaders, including great politicians.

Absent real art and science (art and science that improve, perfect, human life), no real culture and higher forms of human leadership can exist. Cultures and higher forms of human leadership grow out of arts and sciences and cultural justice and prudence; and more perfect cultures and forms of human leadership grow out of more perfect arts, sciences, and cultural justice and prudence. Arts and sciences, and cultural justice and prudence, in turn, grow out of habits of the human soul. Consequently, denial of the reality of the human soul necessarily involves essential denial of human faculties out of which human arts, science, and cultural principles of leadership (great as well as flawed) grow.

Conclusion

Comprehending *the personalistic and psychologically-complicated nature of philosophy/science*, St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI both sought revival of a *proper, personalistic, psychologically-fitting* understanding of *logos* to halt Western cultural decline and promote global peace. In so doing, while they had both recognized, admired, and had learned much from the organizational genius of St. Thomas Aquinas, and while they had admitted studying his teachings had been extremely valuable for them, they had recognized something (*a personalistic element*) had been missing from the “Systematic Thomism” they had been taught in their “manual” and “commentarian” seminary training, which they had attempted to add by reading other authors.

I think the current Pope Francis has a somewhat similar attitude as John Paul II and Benedict. He notices this problem of a lack of a personalistic element within centuries-old Thomism of thinkers like Francisco Suárez and the manual neo-Thomistic tradition of the twentieth century to which he was exposed as a seminarian. And he has also tried to make up for this lack in his education by supplementing his knowledge though study of other authors.

At the same time, I think Francis's seminary exposure to the manual and commentarian scholastic pedagogies and his seminary instructors in the commentarian Thomistic tradition and manual neo-Thomism left a deep emotional scar on him, and resentment within him, which he carries to this day. Viscerally, this exposure appears to me intensely to anger him. Nonetheless, despite the fact that some Catholic intellectuals tend to think, in a spirit representative of some post-Vatican II Church hierarchy, that Pope Francis is totally anti-Thomistic, totally hostile to the thought of St. Thomas, that portrait does not appear to be accurate.

In part, what makes me draw this conclusion is something he said in the review for the Jesuit periodical *America*:

The church has experienced times of brilliance, like that of Thomas Aquinas. But the church has lived also times of decline in its ability to think. For example, we must not confuse the genius of Thomas Aquinas with the age of decadent Thomist commentaries. Unfortunately, I studied philosophy from textbooks that came from decadent or largely bankrupt Thomism. In thinking of the human being, therefore, the church should strive for genius and not for decadence.⁹

And this conclusion is also supported by what Francis recently said in Cartagena, Columbia, on 10 September 2017, in defense of what

⁹ Antonio Spadaro, S.J., "A Big Heart Open to God: An Interview with Pope Francis," *America. The Jesuit Review* (September 30, 2013). Available online—see the section *References* for details.

he called his “Thomistic,” apostolic exhortation on the family entitled *Amoris Laetitia*:

“In order to understand *Amoris Laetitia*, you must read it from the beginning to the end,” reading each chapter in order, reading what got said during the synods of bishops on the family in 2014 and 2015, and reflecting on all of it, he said.

To those who maintain that the morality underlying the document is not “a Catholic morality” or a morality that can be certain or sure, “I want to repeat clearly that the morality of *Amoris Laetitia* is Thomist,” that is, built on the moral philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, he said.

One of best and “most mature” theologians today who can explain the document, he told them, is Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schonborn of Vienna.

“I want to say this so that you can help those who believe that morality is purely casuistic,” he said, meaning a morality that changes according to particular cases and circumstances rather than one that determines a general approach that should guide the church’s pastoral activity.

The pope had made a similar point during his meeting with Jesuits gathered in Rome for their general congregation in 2016. There he said, “In the field of morality, we must advance without falling into situationalism.”

“St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure affirm that the general principle holds for all but—they say it explicitly—as one moves to the particular, the question becomes diversified and many nuances arise without changing the principle,” he had said. It is a method that was used for the Catechism of the Catholic Church and *Amoris Laetitia*, he added.¹⁰

As someone who, in his youth, had done much reading of manual neo-Thomists like Richard P. Phillips and Celestine N. Bittle and the renaissance “commentarian tradition,” and had learned much from them, I find Pope Francis’s statements about the “bankrupt” and “decadent” Thomism he was forced to study as a seminarian excessively harsh,

¹⁰ Carol Glatz, “*Amoris Laetitia* Is Built on Traditional Thomist Morality, Pope Says,” *TheBostonPilot.com* (Posted: 9/28/2017). Available online—see the section *References* for details.

somewhat historically inaccurate, indelicately put, and somewhat disrespectful of the yeoman-like recovery and revival work scholars had done during the post-Reformation renaissance and neo-Thomistic revival of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nonetheless, the main points I take from his critique are: 1) during his youth and today, Thomistic studies have not been as qualitatively excellent as they were during the time of St. Thomas; 2) the Thomism he had studied came largely from textbooks that did not reflect genius; 3) he has no problems with the teaching of St. Thomas; 4) he does have problems with bad pedagogy and boring readings.

St. Thomas Aquinas had similar problems with bad pedagogy and boring readings in Catholic universities. (So have I.) As St. Thomas tells us in his prologue, his dissatisfaction with the way theology had been taught to him had prompted him to write his magisterial *Summa Theologiae*.¹¹

Since the work of philosophy, science, is a cultural enterprise, we cannot expect the scholarship done during periods of recovery and revival to match in excellence scholarship and writing style done during a cultural golden age. While the post-Reformation Spanish commentaries might have been extremely boring for him as a youth to read, as Pope Francis knows, the work of John of St. Thomas (John Poinset) of the same period is one of genius.

Similarly, even though they contain some mistakes, the early “systematic Thomisms” of Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson during the second, *humanistic* (in the sense made popular by Paul Oskar Kristeller) wave of neo-Thomism are marked with genius. The “manual” neo-Thomistic period preceding Maritain and Gilson lacked the same measure of scholarly genius and great writing for the simple reason that it was chiefly an *initial research and apologetical period* during which

¹¹ See *S.Th.*, Prologue.

scholastic thinkers were trying to: 1) engage in recovery of some basic understanding of the teaching of St. Thomas and 2) produce an apologetical defense of the Faith to stop the bleeding that the Church found itself suffering during the post-Reformation and post-French Revolution periods. Maritain, Gilson, and many other great twentieth-century Thomistic scholars had to stand upon the shoulders of some nineteenth-century “boring” (but still quite intelligent) manual authors and older commentarians to see further than those authors had been able to do.

At present, Thomism is entering into a neo-*Thomistic third wave* designed to reinterpret in a properly personalistic way the teachings of St. Thomas in light of essential principles (and ways of working with these principles and previously-discovered principles) not previously employed within the prior waves of neo-Thomism and centuries of post-Reformation Thomism prior to that. I call movement the period of “Born Again Thomism” or “Ragamuffin Thomism.”

Among other reasons, I have written this paper to articulate in summary form essential principles and some necessary consequences related to this *third period of neo-Thomism*.¹² Without application of the principles described above to the Church’s “new evangelization” program started by St. John Paul II and continued by Popes Benedict and Francis, I am certain that program cannot succeed. And, if it fails, I am convinced that the Church will be unable to halt the cultural suicide in which the West is presently engaged.

¹² I describe in detail this new and, hopefully, improved understanding of St. Thomas’s teachings in the following books: *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics: Written in the Hope of Ending the Centuries-Old Separation between Philosophy and Science and Science and Wisdom*, vol. 1 (St. Louis, Mo.: En Route Books & Media, 2015); *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics: An Introduction to Ragamuffin Thomism*, vol. 2 (St. Louis, Mo.: En Route Books & Media, 2016); and *The Moral Psychology of St. Thomas Aquinas: An Introduction to Ragamuffin Ethics* (St. Louis, Mo.: En Route Books & Media, 2017).

Instead of being anti-Thomistic, while he appears not explicitly to realize it, for decades, Pope Francis seems to me to have been on a restless intellectual journey to become a “Born Again,” or “Ragamuffin,” Thomist. Up until this time, however, he has not been able completely to figure out how most fully to realize this quest.



**14 Evident Truths from the Organizational Genius of St. Thomas Aquinas:
How “Born Again Thomism” Can Help Save the West from Cultural Suicide**

SUMMARY

This paper is written to articulate in a summary form 14 evidently-known essential and personalistic principles from the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas needed, especially by Pope Francis, to understand a *third period of neo-Thomism* we are now in: *Born-again*, or *Ragamuffin*, *Thomism*. It maintains that, without application of these principles to the Church’s “new evangelization,” this movement will fail. With that failure the Church will be unable to halt the cultural suicide in which the West is presently engaged.

KEYWORDS

Thomas Aquinas, Thomism, West, Enlightenment, neo-Thomism, Pope Francis, new evangelization, culture, end, communication, experience, genus, habit, induction, leader, leadership, nominalism, organization, part, philosophy, principle, proportionality, ragamuffin, science, sense, species, truth, unity, whole, wonder.

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Peter A. Redpath

Why, Through Application of Its Educational Principles, the New World Order Can Never Generate Higher Education

As the title of this article clearly indicates, my main aim in writing it is to make as precisely intelligible as I can why, *strictly speaking*, through its Enlightenment educational principles, the New World Order has never been able to, and *can never, generate higher education*, can at best generate a caricature of it and of any human education at all.¹

I take as my point of departure for this paper an essay written in 1941 by the great American educator Mortimer J. Adler entitled, “Are There Any Universal Principles on Which Education Should Be Founded?”²

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¹ For more about the New World Order, see Peter A. Redpath’s: “Justice in the New World Order: Reduction of Justice to Tolerance in the New Totalitarian World State,” *Telos: Critical Theory of the Contemporary*, no. 157 (2011): 185–192; and “The New World Disorder: A Crisis of Philosophical Identity,” *Contemporary Philosophy* 16, no. 6 (November/December 1994): 19–24.

² Mortimer J. Adler, “Are There Any Universal Principles on Which Education Should Be Founded?,” in Mortimer J. Adler, *Reforming Education: The Opening of the American Mind*, ed. Geraldine Van Doren (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, and London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1988), 53–65. For more about Adler’s approach to education, see, for example, Mortimer J. Adler’s: *The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1982); *Paideia Problems and Possibilities* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1983); *The Paideia*

Toward the start of this article, Adler claims that, like medicine—which he calls, “the art of using knowledge about the body to prevent and cure disease, to sustain and improve health”—education is a practical activity. Just as medicine is the art of using knowledge about the body to prevent and cure disease, to sustain and improve health, “so education is an art of using knowledge about the nature of man”—by which Adler means, man as an organizational whole comprised of organizational parts that harmonize to generate human action—“to prevent and cure ignorance to sustain and improve what one might call mental or spiritual health.”³

Such being the case, because whatever any human being’s goals are, they are, for him or her, foundational educational principles, Adler maintains that the educational principles that generate educational policy should be the ends aimed at “by anyone undertaking any educational responsibilities, for himself or others.”⁴

Nonetheless, Adler maintains, “The ends of education, the ends men should seek, are always and everywhere the same. They are absolute in the same sense that they are not relative to time and place, to individual differences and the variety of cultures. They are universal in the sense that they are invariable and without exception.”⁵

The chief reason for this is, as Adler explains, many philosophies of education among which we can choose according to our tastes and temperaments do not exist. Just as we human beings must accept as essential first principles of doing natural science the well-established rules of natural science “according to the weight of the evidence and the dic-

Program: An Educational Syllabus (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1984).

³ Adler, “Are There Any Universal Principles on Which Education Should Be Founded?,” 56.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁵ *Ibid.*

tates of reason,” so, Adler claims, we must apply the same principles toward educational policy.⁶

In defense of his forceful assertion that *only one true educational philosophy exists*, Adler offers three propositions: (1) human nature is everywhere the same; (2) human nature is something not fully, perfectly, developed at birth; and (3) that the ends of education are two-fold: proximate and ultimate.⁷

Elaborating on his first proposition, Adler states: “My first and basic proposition is that human nature is everywhere the same. The universality and constancy of human nature, the same throughout history, the same in various cultures, the same in different individuals, is the source of the universal and absolute principles of education.”⁸ Once again, by human “nature” Adler means a specific cause intrinsically existing within each and every human being that inclines its parts harmoniously to organize and generate specifically-one, chief action, like all the parts of a symphony orchestra harmonize to generate symphonic music, not fighting fires or playing “rock and roll.” Hence, he adds, “By human nature I mean the nature of the human offspring has at birth—whatever it is that makes that all offspring something capable of growing into a man rather than a flea or a pig.”⁹

To this clarification, he emphasizes an essential property that “all human offspring have . . . [their] potentialities or capacities for growth and development.” His point in saying this “is simply that the offspring of papa and mama flea, papa and mama pig, does not have the capacity for becoming a man. Trying to make a baby pig into an adult man is

⁶ *Ibid.*, 57–58.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 58–59.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁹ *Ibid.*

one miracle no educator has ever attempted, though some have tried, and almost succeeded, in making a man-child into an adult pig.”¹⁰

Consequently, when Adler talks about “the constancy and universality of human nature,” he means “precisely what a biologist means when he speaks of the uniformity in procreation of any animal or plant species.”¹¹ Whether or not a human species as a composite, organizational, whole has *evolved* from other species or other species have evolved from it, is irrelevant to the issue at hand. “So long as the human species endures on earth,” Adler states, “all members of that species will have the same specific nature, and it is the same specific nature which I say is everywhere the same.”¹² That is, so long as specific human nature exists as the organizational whole that its parts essentially and harmoniously generate (so long as a symphony orchestra is a symphony orchestra, for example), it is everywhere specifically identical.

Regarding his second proposition, Adler asserts that this “is a definition of education itself.”¹³ As Adler has described it, specific human nature existing within individual human beings, is an imperfectly-developed organizational, causal whole, an organizational whole that is not fully, maturely, perfectly existing at birth. Specific human nature only exists within individual human natures, is an essential cause uniting them into the same genus of rational animal. At birth, our specific nature causes us to come into existence as unequally developed in our natural powers and abilities, capacities, as an organizational whole. As we live, if properly exercised, our human powers, abilities, and organizational activities maturely develop, become increasingly more perfect.

Precisely because, at birth, all individual human beings have limited natural (organizational) abilities, capacities, to grow in strength,

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

mature, Adler claims, “Education is the process whereby a man helps himself or another to become what he can be.”¹⁴

As just stated, Adler adds that his definition is not complete. We human beings can change for better or worse, to be a better or worse human beings. Hence, the specific difference of education properly understood must maintain it to be “the process whereby a man is changed for the better, whereby a man helps himself or another to become a good man, which is something he can be, though perhaps not as readily as being a bad man.”¹⁵

Adler then gives two reasons why education must be a process for human betterment, not for human corruption—(1) because education is everywhere and always recorded as a process of human improvement; for a person to ask why education must be for human betterment and not human corruption, he asserts, “is like asking why medical therapy aims at restoring or improving health rather than at spreading disease;” and (2) because, if education were not, in fact, for human betterment, Adler asks, how could contemporary educators “justify compulsory education?”¹⁶

The fact that contemporary, professional educators all tend to “approve, as just and wise, the laws requiring every potential citizen to submit to a certain minimum of education,” and the fact that most of them “would like to increase that minimum a great deal . . . indicate” to Adler that professional educators think that “education is good for men (just as we think health is good for them, and still make certain hygienic observances compulsory).”¹⁷

Regarding his third basic proposition, Adler states that it logically follows from his first two.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

“In light of the constancy and universality of specific nature, especially as a set of capacities for development, and in light of the definition of education as a process of developing those capacities to the best realization,”¹⁸ Adler states, he is able to “say that the ends of education are twofold: proximate and ultimate. The proximate ends of education are the moral and intellectual virtues. . . . The ultimate end of education is happiness or a good human life, life enriched by the possession of every kind of good, by the enjoyment of every type of satisfaction.”¹⁹

He then presents his reason for this distinction between the proximate ends and the ultimate end of education. Even though they are indispensable, more than good habits are required for happiness: “The educator is as educator not responsible for providing all the conditions indispensable to happiness, but only some, and those are the virtues, or good habits. That is why we speak of the virtues or good habits as the proximate ends of education, and we mention happiness as the ultimate end because it would be wrong to suppose that the virtues were ends in themselves—they are ends, but they are also means—means to happiness.”²⁰

Adler then identifies the intellectual and moral virtues as the proximate ends of education, good habits of knowing and thinking being the intellectual virtues; and good habits of desiring and freely acting being the moral virtues.²¹

Having done this, he states:

If specific human nature is everywhere and at all times the same in all men, then all men have the same powers or capacities to be

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

developed—though, as individuals, they differ in the degree or extent to which they possess these capacities.

If the powers or capacities just referred to are parts of human nature, they are natural capacities, and as natural each has a nature—a determinate character, by which he tends naturally toward a certain kind of development.

Therefore, habits, as developments of powers or fulfillment of capacities, can be said to be good if they conform to the natural tendency of the power or capacity which they develop.²²

For example, Adler states:

The power of knowing, shared by all men, is perfected by habits of knowledge, not by habits of error or by that privation of knowledge which we called ignorance. Similarly, the power of thinking shared by all men, is perfected by habits of thinking well, by the arts of thinking; it is not perfected, but rather wasted or ruined, by habits of thinking poorly or inartistically.

Hence I say that we call a habit good when it perfects a power, when it develops the capacity in the direction toward which that capacity naturally tends.²³

In light of his preceding argument, and because our specific nature and natural capacities are specifically the same, Adler concludes that the intellectual and moral virtues and the chief aim they naturally incline to generate (human happiness) are specifically the same for all human beings.

His proof thus having been completed to his satisfaction, Adler summarizes it thus: “If education must aim at the betterment of men by forming good habits in them, and if the virtues, or good habits, are the same for all men because their natural capacities are the same and tend naturally to the same developments, then it follows that the virtues, or good habits, as the ends of education, are the absolute and universal principles on which education should be founded.”²⁴

²² *Ibid.*, 61.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

He then immediately adds that his “conclusion follows logically: but it is true only if the premises—the two *ifs*—are true.”²⁵

He then claims, “The truth of these two premises is guaranteed by two propositions which I think cannot be denied by anyone: my first proposition about the constancy of specific human nature, and my second proposition, i. e., the definition of education as a process of betterment.”²⁶

And he maintains that if his premises are true and his reasoning is valid, his conclusion is inescapable.²⁷

According to Adler, for a person who professes to be an “educator” to disagree with his argument, that person would have to deny the reality of all intellectual and moral virtue: for example, the intellectual virtues traditionally known as “the liberal arts,” the possession of which better the individual human intellect and make one individual human intellect better than another; the reality of the liberal arts of logic, sound reasoning, and grammar: which contains linguistic rules for distinguishing between meaningful and meaningless utterances.

More. Adler maintains that rejection of his argument would require an “educator” to deny as an educational responsibility the existence of the moral “virtue of justice, a justice that is the same for all men everywhere, which should always be the aim of moral education to cultivate.”²⁸ If just forms of government are naturally good for a human being, naturally better than unjust, totalitarian, ones, Adler maintains, “Any educational system which trains men to be just in their dealings with other men is objectively better than one which prepares some men for slavery and others to use them as their tools.”²⁹

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 61–62.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 64.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

To conclude, Adler claims that legitimate educators must agree with him that some intellectual and moral virtues exist the same for all men everywhere and always are the natural ends of education. If they choose to disagree with him they must: (1) “make no appeals whatsoever to logic and grammar as canons of sound thinking and correct speech;”³⁰ (2) be willing to violate the intellectual principle of non-contradiction; and (3) claim that “there is no such thing as justice, that there is nothing wrong with tyranny and slavery, with medieval inquisitions or modern gestapos, and that anyone who says democracy is the best form of government is talking through his hat.”³¹

Having laid his cards on the table, Adler invites those who disagree with him to do the same.³²

Having done so, however, I think Adler has made a serious error of not showing all his cards. For, as anyone, like Adler, who has studied the teachings of Aristotle knows, Adler’s entire argument rests upon the existence of natural human powers, capacities, habits existing as properties caused by the existence of an intellectual soul, on human beings being essentially rational animals, hylomorphic-composite-whole-organizations of soul and body. Such being the case, to agree with Adler, contemporary educators would have to admit the existence of a human soul in which human faculties, powers, habits exist; and also the reality of ends, aims, in really-existing natures.³³

More. Because specific human nature and its essential properties, powers, and abilities are unequally possessed by individual human beings, contemporary, “Enlightened” educators would have to admit the existence not only of commutative justice, but also of contributive and

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 62–65.

³³ For more about man, see Mortimer J. Adler, *The Difference of Man and the Difference It Makes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005).

distributive justice. Such admissions as the existence of a human, or any, nature; an intellectual soul; the reality of aims, ends, in things; and contributive and distributive justice essentially contradict the foundational principles of the Enlightenment understanding of reality and human beings. The Enlightenment considers human beings to be systems of feelings; real natures and aims not to exist; and justice to be determined by the sincere feelings of Enlightened emotional elites. “Enlightened philosophy of education” falsely-so-called is a caricature of real human education that Adler has brilliantly exposed for what it is. Shame that he folded his hand prematurely and did not take full advantage of exposing it to be the total fraud that it is.³⁴



**Why, Through Application of Its Educational Principles, the New World Order
Can Never Generate Higher Education**

SUMMARY

This article defends the teaching of Mortimer J. Adler that human education must aim at the betterment of human beings by forming good habits in us; and that, if intellectual and moral virtues, or good habits, are the same for all human beings because our natural capacities are the same and tend naturally to the same developments, then what logically follows is that the intellectual and moral virtues, or good habits, as the ends of education, are the absolute and universal principles on which education should always and everywhere be founded. This being the case, it concludes that, because of its essential foundation in the essentially flawed Enlightenment understanding of human nature, the New World Order can never be a cause of higher education, can, at best, cause a caricature of it.

³⁴ For more about the dilemmas of modern education, see Peter A. Redpath, “Understanding the Current Revolution in Western Higher Education: How We Got Here and Where We Are Headed,” in *Sztuka i realizm [Art and Reality]*, ed. Tomasz Duma, Andrzej Maryniarczyk, and Paulina Sulenta (Lublin: PTTA, 2014), 703–720.

KEYWORDS

Adler, Aristotle, betterment, capacity, education, educator, good, happiness, harmonize, human nature, ignorance, justice, knowledge, liberal arts, organizational whole, perfection, potentiality, power, prudence, soul, teaching.

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Editio Secunda

Richard J. Fafara

A Portrait of Gilson¹

6 mai 1935. Conversation
Du Bos.

Il admire en Gilson ce simple bon sens qui n'a pas besoin de se simplifier. Ce n'est pas la formule exacte, mais c'est à peu

6 May 1935. Conversation with
Du Bos.²

Du Bos admires Gilson's simple common or good sense which needs no further elaboration. These are not his exact words, but they are

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¹ Mme. Marie-Louise Gouhier suggested the title for this excerpt from Henri Gouhier's (1898–1994) personal journal which she graciously allowed me to publish. An earlier translation of this excerpt was published in: *The Malebranche Moment. Selections from the Letters of Étienne Gilson & Henri Gouhier (1920–1936)*, trans. & ed. Richard J. Fafara (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2007), 133–135.

² Charles Du Bos (1882–1939) was a writer and French literary critic whom Gilson and Gouhier came to know and admire. They first met in 1930 when they were all in Jacques Maritain's circle of friends. After losing his Catholic faith at Oxford (1900–1901) and subsequent years of agnosticism, Du Bos returned to the Catholic Church in 1927. He worked as a newspaper correspondent and at French publishing firms (1919–1927); lectured at universities in Germany, Italy, and Switzerland (1925–1932); and became the editor of a short-lived review, *Vigile* (1930–1933) to which Gilson contributed two important articles (“La tradition française et la chrétienté” and “Examen de conscience”). Du Bos also taught at the University of Notre Dame and St. Mary's College in Indiana (1937–1939). Relying on intellectual and spiritual sympathy rather than on precise analytical judgments, Du Bos' literary criticism focused on understanding the human mystery in a writer, the soul or creative source, which is expressed in a work and, in turn, affects the soul of a reader. See Étienne Gilson, “Charles Du Bos et les Théologiens,” *Cahiers Charles Du Bos* 18 (1974): 3–16; Henri Gouhier, “In Memoriam: Étienne Gilson et Charles Du Bos,” *Cahiers Charles Du Bos* 23 (1979): 61–62; and Wallace Fowlie, *The French Critic 1549–1967*, preface Harry T. Moore (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968), 45–47.

près le sens. En effet, ce qui est étonnant chez Gilson, c'est la force par laquelle il gonfle d'intelligence le bon sens. Le bon sens est chez la plupart des gens à qui on l'attribue, une baudruche dégonflée, de l'intelligence anémiée. Ou encore—sous le nom de rude bon sens—on célèbre une espèce de brutalité intellectuelle qui est simple paresse d'esprit.* Chez Gilson le mot *bon* a repris la signification de *droit*. Le bon sens, loin d'être une simpliste des questions, est au contraire ce qui lui permet de montrer spontanément la complexité réel des questions sous leur apparente simplicité.

Je connais peu d'hommes qui aient moins de préjugés. Il y a chez lui une probité qui fonctionne avec la précision d'un déclic devant tout jugement: la réduction au réel est instantanée. Il va immédiatement voir *ce qui est dessous*. Jamais dupe du décor, il commence par aller dans les coulisses.

* Ou beaucoup moins: le culte de Clément Vautel représentant

close. What is astonishing about Gilson is how forcefully he infuses common sense with intelligence. Common sense, for most of those thought to have it, is an indecisiveness of a weakened intellect. In the name of basic common sense, some even celebrate a kind of intellectual viciousness which is just mental laziness.* But with Gilson, the word *good* regained its *rightful* meaning. Good or common sense, far from being an oversimplification of questions, is, on the contrary, what enables him to show spontaneously the real complexity of questions despite their outward simplicity.

I know few people with less prejudices. Gilson's integrity functions with hair-trigger precision prior to all judgment: it instantaneously grasps the real. He will immediately see *what lies below*. Never fooled by the scenery of the stage, he begins by going backstage.

* Or much less: the cult of Clément Vautel representing common sense

du bon sens pour les lecteurs du *Journal*.

Il y a un génie du bon sens.

Une œuvre comme celle de Gilson est parfaitement objective. Il est historien. Il ne parle jamais de lui. Mais, sur le plan objectif, cette sérénité historique est la transposition de la sérénité intérieure sur le plan de la vie. On sent que c'est le même homme qui conduit Bernard au zoo et qui reconstruit la pensée de St. Thomas. Il y a un équilibre souverain qui s'exprime dans chaque démarche de cette âme.

C'est par là qu'il donne l'impression d'âme. Souvent celle est donnée par la fragilité, la maladie même, tout ce qui est diminution de matière ou même diminution de la matière. Il y a là un signe de notre dégénérescence. L'âme est d'abord unité et santé, équilibre et domination. Gilson ne peut pas donner l'impression de l'âme

for the readers of the *Journal* (Gouhier's note).³

There is a genius of common sense.

A work such as Gilson's is perfectly objective. He is a historian. He never speaks about himself. But, objectively, this historical serenity is the transposition of interior serenity in terms of life. We sense that this is the same man who takes Bernard⁴ to the zoo and reconstructs the thought of St. Thomas. There is an absolute equilibrium expressed in every step this soul takes.

That is how he reveals his soul. Frequently, it is conveyed by frailty, even sickness, everything that is physical decline or even diminishment of the physical. Therein lies an indication of our own degeneracy. The soul is, above all, unity and health, equilibrium, and mastery. Gilson cannot convey an impression of the soul to aesthetes, to spiritual snobs who see the soul on-

³ Clément Vautel (1876–1954), a prominent French novelist, historian, dramaturg, and the most popular newspaper columnist between the two world wars (more than 30,000 articles), was known for his wry sense of humor and his right-leaning, xenophobic, and exaggerated antifeminist views. From 1918 to 1940 his popular daily column, "Mon Film," in the *Journal* provided brief commentary on the news.

⁴ The reference is to Gilson's son Bernard (1928–2009).

aux esthètes, aux snobs de la spiritualité qui ne voient l'âme qu'à travers les corps à la Greco. Il est vrai qu'elle est là, mais pas exclusivement là. D'ailleurs ce serait ne rien comprendre à Greco que de prendre ces formes spiritualisées des corps anémiés.

C'est par cette présence de l'âme, santé et équilibre que Gilson est parent de Claudel. Si Claudel était aussi intelligent que Gilson, nous aurions un Goethe catholique.

ly via bodies like those of El Greco.⁵ It is true that the soul is there, but not exclusively. Furthermore, we would understand nothing of El Greco if all we know are his spiritualized forms of anemic bodies.⁶

By this presence of the soul, health, and equilibrium, Gilson has much in common with Claudel.⁷ If Claudel were as intelligent as Gilson, we would have a Catholic Goethe.

⁵ El Greco (1541–1614), a Greek painter of the Spanish Renaissance, combined courtly elegance with religious fervor in his work. Influenced by the dictates of the Counter Reformation in Toledo, Spain, El Greco intentionally elongated or distorted form to emphasize the spiritual quality of a figure or event in order to affect the viewer emotionally and impart a sense of piety. Penitence, as exemplified by the Catholic saints, was one of his common themes.

⁶ Years later, Gouhier echoed and elaborated on Du Bos' views. Gouhier accepted Maine de Biran's observation that "hardly any besides those who are ill know they exist," but while art and thought owe much to a "sickly existence and unhappiness, [Gouhier maintained that] we must not forget what these realms also owe to a well-balanced existence and joyfulness. Health is profound when it is the lucid health of Saint Thomas, the exuberant health of Rubens, the triumphant health of Paul Claudel. Gilson did not go from the history of philosophy to philosophy. He was first and foremost a philosopher because he always knew and loved life in its fullness. His activity has always gone far beyond the vast culture of the specialist. . . . The perfectly healthy man is aware of his existence and philosophy almost necessitates this unity. . . . Physical misery and distress produce or can produce a type of pathetic dematerialization, [but] there is also an equilibrium that intensifies spiritualization." Henri Gouhier, "Étienne Gilson ou la vitalité de l'esprit," *Ecclésia* (May, 1960): 45–47; *Études sur l'histoire des idées en France depuis le XVIIe siècle* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1980), 161–162.

⁷ Paul Claudel (1868–1955) a French poet, playwright, essayist, and diplomat was a towering force in French literature. "Claudel and Gilson . . . were both exemplary Catholics who lived in the public eye, and both were active in the French cultural mission. Despite different interests they were both involved with literature. And in their respec-

A Portrait of Gilson

SUMMARY

In the early 1930s, when they were all in Jacques Maritain's circle of friends, Étienne Gilson and his pupil and colleague Henri Gouhier came to know and admire the writer and literary critic Charles Du Bos known for his intellectual and spiritual sympathy for the authors he studied. In 1936, Gouhier took notes on a conversation with Du Bos in which he commented on Gilson's extraordinary common sense, inner serenity, and healthy and balanced soul. The result is a brief, insightful, and original portrait of Gilson.

KEYWORDS

Charles Du Bos, Étienne Gilson, Henri Gouhier.

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tive modes of thought, both were realists." Laurence K. Shook, *Étienne Gilson* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), 178.

Étienne Gilson

La teología mística de San Bernardo: *paradisus claustralis**

La bienaventuranza celestial es la unión con Dios, que es Caridad; restaurar en el corazón del hombre esta vida de caridad que nunca habría debido extinguirse, es acercarlo a lo que será la vida eterna: escuela donde la caridad se enseña, el claustro es verdaderamente la antecámara del paraíso.

¿Es verdad que todo depende de saber si, y cómo, el amor divino puede enseñarse? Más particularmente aún, se trata de saber si esta enseñanza es posible según los métodos que san Bernardo mismo ha propuesto. Se ha dudado. De ahora en más estamos obligados, para comprender su pensamiento, a atravesar el bosque de espinas artificiales de que ha sido rodeado; ¿cómo ignorarlas? Ellas constituyen sin duda la única contribución positiva de la historia para la inteligencia de la teología mística de san Bernardo. Intentemos pues comprender qué camino sigue su pensamiento y a qué objetivo conduce.

La primera dificultad que encontramos, cuando nos esforzamos en discernir su coherencia, está en la aparente contradicción que existe entre el punto de partida y el punto de llegada. El punto de llegada es el amor puro y desinteresado de Dios que nos coloca en un estado análogo

Étienne Gilson (1884–1978) — Collège de France.

* This article was originally published as a chapter in Étienne Gilson, *La Teología Mística de San Bernardo*, trans. Cristian Jacobo, Gladis Wiersma, Rafael Rossi (Córdoba: ATHANASIUS, 2019), 129–165.

a la visión beatífica; el punto de partida es un amor egoísta, e incluso “un amor propio estrecho, un amor propio vicioso, el que caracteriza la naturaleza pecadora.”¹ ¿Cómo no sorprenderse, después de eso, de que san Bernardo encuentre alguna dificultad en hacer del amor un movimiento uno y continuo? Para lograrlo, le sería preciso poder mostrar que el desinterés esté en lugar del amor propio y la caridad en lugar de la codicia (*cupidité*). Evidentemente es un desafío imposible de sostener.

Nada más verdadero, y es por eso mismo que san Bernardo no lo ha sostenido. El problema que se le impone y del que se le desafía encontrar la solución es en efecto, insoluble; jamás lo planteó. Sin duda, el punto de partida de su análisis de los grados del amor es siempre el amor de sí, pero este es el lugar de recordar que esta codicia (*cupidité*), esta concupiscencia, este amor carnal por los que comenzamos de hecho, no son el comienzo verdadero de la historia del amor. Si se tratara de transformar una “codicia (*cupidité*) esencial” en caridad, la tarea sería evidentemente contradictoria; pero se trata simplemente de recuperar un amor de Dios, que se degradó en amor propio, a su estado primitivo de amor a Dios. El problema es pues completamente diferente. No digo que sea simple—de hecho, será precisa la gracia divina para resolverlo—pero no es ciertamente contradictorio plantearlo en estos términos. En una palabra, aquello de lo que se acusa a san Bernardo de haber vanamente intentado resolver, consistiría en buscar cómo la semejanza divina puede ser devuelta al hombre, sin tener en cuenta el hecho de que ha conservado la imagen. Lo que se considera como el punto de partida de la operación, no es en realidad más que el segundo período; lejos de ser una característica esencial del hombre, este “amor propio

¹ P. Rousselot, *Pour l'histoire du problème de l'amour au moyen âge* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1908), 51.

vicioso” es una corrupción adventicia, y por consecuencia eliminable, que la gracia tendrá por efecto curar.

Por no haber percibido este punto, se atascaron en dificultades inextricables, a riesgo de adjudicárselas a san Bernardo. Es muy verdadero decir: “no hay más que una sola corriente del apetito humano que se trata de canalizar;” pero no es verdadero decir que la *cupiditas* sea concebida por san Bernardo “como el fondo mismo de apetito natural que la *caritas* mantendrá dirigiéndolo.”² Expresarse así, es cercenar la historia del amor cisterciense y creer que esta historia comienza después de este corte. No, la corriente única que se debe canalizar no es la *cupiditas*: es el amor divino que, accidentalmente desviado en nosotros bajo la forma de codicia (*cupidité*), no pide más que retomar su curso normal y primitivo. El punto de partida del análisis es pues para san Bernardo, y debe ser para nosotros, el estado de hecho sin el cual la pregunta no se plantearía y sin el cual no habría problema para resolver, pero este problema consiste para él en encontrar la salud debajo de una enfermedad, no en canalizar tan bien una enfermedad que llegue a ser una salud.

Es verdad que san Bernardo mismo se expresa a veces como si tal fuera su intención. La caridad, dice, no existirá jamás sin temor, ni sin codicia (*cupidité*), pero la ordena; en una palabra, no se trata de no llegar nunca a no amarnos más a nosotros mismos, sino a no amarnos más a nosotros mismos más que por Dios.³ ¿Acaso no es ese el fondo común de codicia (*cupidité*) que no puede quitarse de raíz, que se trata de canalizar en caridad? La objeción es tanto más fuerte que puede ser reforzada por el célebre análisis de los grados del amor, tal como se lo encuentra en el *De diligendo Deo*, o más bien, en la *Epistola de caritate* dirigida a los Cartujos y que constituye la conclusión de ese tratado.

² *Ibid.*, 51–52.

³ San Bernardo, *De diligendo Deo*, XIV, 38; P. L., t. 182, c. 998 A. Cf. Rousselot, *Pour l'histoire du problème de l'amour au moyen âge*, 52.

San Bernardo distingue allí, en efecto, cuatro grados del amor: en el primero, el hombre se ama él mismo por él mismo y se encuentra en estado de codicia (*cupidité*) casi puro; en el segundo grado, el hombre comienza a amar a Dios porque, tomando conciencia de su propia miseria, se da cuenta que tiene necesidad del auxilio divino para salir de ella. Amar así a Dios es aún codicia (*cupidité*), pero tengamos cuidado que al fijarse sobre el objeto propio del amor, la codicia (*cupidité*) prepara la curación de la enfermedad que el hombre sufre y lo pone sobre el camino de la caridad. Lo que ama aún mal, tiene sin embargo razón de amarlo, incluso mal, porque es la única manera de llegar a amarlo mejor. En efecto, este segundo grado conduce pronto a un tercero, que le es superior. A fuerza de dirigirse a Dios por necesidad, el alma comienza pronto a sentir que es dulce vivir con Él; comienza pues a amarlo por Él mismo, sin dejar sin embargo de amarlo aún por ella misma, de suerte que vacila alternativamente entre el amor puro y una codicia (*cupidité*) interesada, aunque bien ordenada. Este estado es aquel donde el alma permanece por más tiempo, y es incluso imposible que lo abandone completamente en esta vida. Sobrepassar completamente esta mezcla de codicia (*cupidité*) y de amor desinteresado, elevarse al amor puro de Dios, sería salir de esta vida y vivir ya la de los bienaventurados en el cielo. Señalemos bien este punto, sobre el cual hemos de volver y que es esencial: jamás, en ningún estado, el amor humano por Dios es un amor absolutamente puro en esta vida, y es por eso que habrá siempre un corte neto entre los estados místicos más sublimes y la visión beatífica. Pero agreguemos este segundo punto, que no es menos importante: la diferencia entre el tercer estado del amor y el cuarto no consiste en que el tercero comporta aún un cierto amor de sí mismo del que el cuarto estaría liberado. La diferencia está necesariamente en otra parte, ya que el amor de sí subsiste hasta en la visión beatífica. San Bernardo se expresa claramente sobre este punto: el amor puro de Dios no es un estado donde el hombre dejaría de amarse a sí mismo, sino donde no se

ama a sí mismo más que por Dios: “Iste est tertius amoris gradus, quo jam propter se ipsum Deus diligitur. Felix qui meruit ad quartum usque pertingere, quatenus nec seipsum diligat homo nisi propter Deum.”⁴ ¿Cómo no ver en tales expresiones (con esta permanencia de la codicia (*cupidité*) que esperamos eliminar) *la contradictio in terminis*, de la cual quisiéramos negar que el planteo del problema fue obligado en san Bernardo?

Las contradicciones en los términos no son peligrosas, cuando no son más que en los términos, pues es suficiente entonces con explicar los términos para que la contradicción se desvanezca. Para responder a la cuestión así planteada, debemos retomar y profundizar la totalidad del problema de la vida de caridad tal como se practica en un claustro cisterciense, pues no se explicará jamás completamente el amor así concebido, a menos de haber definido la relación del amor con sus diferentes objetos. Ahora bien, la unión mística no es más que el coronamiento del amor de Dios en esta vida; es pues toda la interpretación de la mística cisterciense que se encuentra aquí comprometida.

El origen de todas las dificultades parece ser la tendencia que tienen algunos historiadores de definir abstractamente los términos que usan los filósofos o los teólogos en lugar de definirlos en función de los problemas concretos de los que preparan la solución. Por ejemplo, no se podría considerar la definición del amor, en san Bernardo, como una de las respuestas posibles a esta cuestión abstracta: ¿qué es el amor? Para san Bernardo, la cuestión ya ha recibido su respuesta: el amor, es Dios. Inútil, por consecuencia, preguntarse a qué consecuencias podrían conducir sus fórmulas en una doctrina donde Dios no sería el amor, pues Él lo es, y eso basta. El problema se plantea de la misma manera en lo que concierne a este otro elemento de la solución: la naturaleza del hombre,

⁴ San Bernardo, *De diligendo Deo*, IX, 26; X, 27; P. L., t. 182, c. 989–990. Cf. *ibid.*, XV, 39; c. 998 D: “et nescio si a quoquam hominum quartus (gradus) in hac vita perfecte apprehenditur, ut se scilicet diligat homo tantum propter Deum.”

lo que fue y podría ser aún, lo que es y lo que ella podría volver a ser. El hombre (es otro hecho para Bernardo) es una imagen divina que ha perdido su semejanza y puede recuperarla, con tal que Dios se la restituya. Intentar interpretar independientemente de estos hechos las fórmulas que no tienen sentido más que con relación a ellos, es evidentemente embarcarse en dificultades inextricables, de las que debemos intentar salir.

Volvamos pues a la situación concreta del Cisterciense que, bajo la dirección de su Abad, acaba de hacer el aprendizaje de la caridad. Tal como la hemos definido, la caridad es una liberación de la voluntad. Es en este sentido que, por ella, nuestro querer se deshace progresivamente de la “contractura” que le impone el temor y de la “curvatura” del querer propio. En otros términos, en lugar de querer una cosa porque teme que de ella se siga otra, o de querer una cosa porque en ella desea otra, puede de ahora en más, habiendo elegido el único objeto que se puede querer por sí mismo, tender hacia él con un movimiento directo, simple; en una palabra, con un movimiento “espontáneo.” Entendemos por *espontáneo* un movimiento cuya explicación no hace intervenir ningún elemento exterior a este movimiento mismo, pero que contiene, por el contrario en sí mismo su completa justificación. Desear una cosa por temor de otra, no es un movimiento espontáneo; desear una cosa para obtener otra, es aún un movimiento determinado desde afuera; amar, por el contrario, es querer lo que se ama, porque se lo ama, y en eso consiste la espontaneidad. Si pues la espontaneidad es la manifestación de la voluntad bajo su forma pura, se puede decir que al devolverle la espontaneidad, el amor la vuelve voluntaria, la vuelve ella misma, la hace volver a ser una voluntad.

Por otra parte, se ha dicho que la única medida que conviene al amor del hombre por Dios, es la ausencia de medida. ¿Dónde pues se detendrá la voluntad amante en el camino del amor? Digamos más bien: ¿cuál puede ser la naturaleza del objetivo que persigue una voluntad tal,

cuando se propone amarlo sin medida? Alcanzar a Dios, sin duda, poseerlo; pero ¿cómo, en qué sentido, bajo qué forma? Tal es la cuestión que importa resolver antes de buscar en qué el amor es desinteresado o no, pues es solamente en su relación con un objeto determinado que su naturaleza puede aparecérsenos, y hacérsenos inteligible. Intentemos pues precisar la naturaleza de este objeto.

En primer lugar, notemos que si el claustro es *un* paraíso, no es *el* paraíso. Podremos colocar el término de la vida mística y el objeto del amor tan alto como queramos en esta vida, pero en ningún caso lo debemos confundir con la visión beatífica. Se dice a menudo que el éxtasis es un pregonar la bienaventuranza, y la expresión no es falsa, pero no es sin embargo más que una metáfora. Es de la esencia de la bienaventuranza el ser eterna, pues ¿qué sería una bienaventuranza que estuviera amenazada con perderse a cada instante, sino una miseria? El extático, incluso aquél al que el arrobamiento eleva al tercer cielo, no es menos habitante de la tierra; es contradictorio imaginarlo como una suerte de elegido provisorio y es por consecuencia verdad decir que el término del amor, en esta vida, no podría ser la visión de Dios cara a cara, ni la posesión del soberano bien tal como es, por breves que puedan ser una tal posesión y una tal visión.⁵

⁵ No creo que haya habido una duda real en el pensamiento de san Bernardo sobre este punto. En todo caso, su posición es clara en los sermones sobre el Cantar de los Cantares: “At talis visio non est vitae praesentis, sed in novissimis reservatur, his dumtaxat qui dicere possunt: *Scimus quia cum apparuerit similes ei erimus, quia videbimus eum sicuti est (I Jn. III, 2). Et nunc quidem apparet quibus vult; sed sicuti vult, non sicuti est.* Non sapiens, non sanctus, non propheta videre illum, sicuti est, potest, aut potuit in corpore hoc mortali; poterit autem in immortalis, qui dignus habebitur. Itaque videtur et hic, sed sicut videtur ipsi, et non sicuti est.” San Bernardo, *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón XXXI, 2; P. L., t. 183, c. 941. Este texto tan firme parece que debe ser puesto como la regla que permite interpretar los otros. Esta regla es que la visión de Dios en esta vida no es imposible, sino que ningún hombre *jamás* lo ha visto “tal cual es.” Cuando comparamos estas fórmulas con las explicaciones aparentemente contrarias que san Bernardo da a propósito de san Benito, vemos en efecto que le atribuye el conocimiento de las cosas en Dios, visión mística análoga a la de los ángeles, y más que humana, ya que el premio del hombre es conocer a Dios en las cosas, no a las cosas en Dios. El *raptus* de

Sin embargo, sigue siendo verdad decir que el término de la vida de caridad es incluso desde aquí abajo, alcanzar a Dios con un alcance directo, verlo, en cierto sentido, con una visión inmediata; gustarlo, tocarlo. Para apreciar hasta qué punto esta ambición del místico cisterciense quiere ser tomada en serio, basta recordar el “espiritualismo” acentuado que caracteriza esta doctrina. San Bernardo—y tendremos ocasión de volver sobre esto—juzga posible la unión del alma con Dios, en razón de la espiritualidad absoluta de Dios y de la espiritualidad del alma humana misma. Es porque se trata de dos espíritus que su contacto, su unión, su fusión incluso es posible; de donde se sigue inmediatamente que el alma no puede alcanzar a Dios sino después de haber sobrepasado toda realidad material y toda imagen corporal. No basta pues con ofrecer a san Bernardo un sueño místico, o incluso una aparición sobrenatural, aunque sea la de Dios. Sin duda, éstas son gracias muy altas que sería insensato despreciar, pero no son a las que tiende san Bernardo, ni las que nos aconseja ambicionar. El término de su búsqueda mística aquí abajo es un estado de unión con Dios, que no sea la visión beatífica, pues Dios no se revela aquí tal cual es, sino donde Dios nos revela sin embargo algo de lo que Él es.⁶

san Benito consistió pues en una breve “visión en Dios” que aunque supone una cierta visión de Dios, pero no de Dios *sicuti est* (tal cual es) (véase *De diversis*, sermón IX, 1; P. L., t. 183, c. 565 CD). De la misma manera, cuando se lo mira atentamente, el texto donde san Bernardo cita a Moisés, Felipe, Tomás y David como habiendo visto a Dios, no implica, en su terminología, que ellos lo hayan visto tal cual es: *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón XXXIII, 8–9; P. L., t. 183, c. 949–950; y sermón XXXIV, 1; donde vemos que incluso Moisés no recibió de Dios más que una visión inferior a la que ambicionaba: *ibid.*, P. L., t. 183, c. 959–960. Podemos pues atenernos a esta conclusión de que san Bernardo rechazó toda identificación de la unión mística, incluso el *raptus*, con la visión beatífica.

⁶ Ni siquiera a los santos del Antiguo Testamento se les concedió gozar de la presencia divina “*sicuti est, sed sicut dignata est*,” además: “*haec demonstratio, non quidem communis, sed tamen foris facta est, nimirum exhibitata per imagines extrinsecus apparentes, seu voces sonantes. Sed est divina inspectio, eo differentior ab his quo interior, cum per se ipsum dignatur invisere Deus animam quaerentem se, quae tamen ad quaerendum toto se desiderio et amore devovit.*” San Bernardo, *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón

Para comprender la naturaleza de los estados de este género, cualquier nombre que san Bernardo les dé y de cualquier forma que los describa, lo esencial es recordar que la primera condición de toda manera de conocer es una cierta manera de ser. Fiel a la antigua doctrina griega: lo semejante sólo puede conocer a su semejante, Bernardo afirma que la semejanza del alma con Dios es la condición necesaria del conocimiento que tiene de Dios. El ojo no ve el sol mismo tal como es, sino tal como ilumina los objetos, así sea el aire, una montaña, un muro; esos objetos mismos, no los vería si no participara de la naturaleza de la luz por su transparencia y su limpidez; transparente y límpido, en fin, no ve la luz sino en la medida de su limpidez y de su transparencia.⁷ Esas no son más que comparaciones, pero podemos usarlas, si tenemos cuidado de conservarles un sentido propiamente espiritual. Ellas significan, en efecto, que la condición inmediata de la visión beatífica será una semejanza perfecta del hombre con Dios; que esta semejanza es en el presente demasiado imperfecta para que podamos pretender la visión beatífica; y finalmente, que cuanto más se acrecienta nuestra semejanza con Dios, tanto más también crece el conocimiento que tenemos de Él. Las etapas del camino que nos acercan a Él son pues los progresos espirituales de nuestro espíritu en el orden de la semejanza divina. Progresos que se hacen por el Espíritu Santo, pero en nuestro espíritu, y gracias a los cuales nos acercamos poco a poco a este estado divino, donde el alma verá a Dios tal como Él es, porque ella será, no lo que Él es, sino tal como Él es.⁸

XXXI, 4; P. L., t. 183, c. 942. Cf. la fórmula precisa que sigue: “Non tamen adhuc illum dixerim apparere sicuti est, quamvis non omnino aliud hoc modo exhibeat quam quod est;” *ibid.*, 7; c. 943 D. Sobre las visiones acordadas a los Padres del Antiguo Testamento, cf. Pseudo-Dionisio, *Coel. hier.*, trad. J. Escoto Erígena, P. L., t. 122, col. 1047 BC.

⁷ San Bernardo, *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón XXXI, 2; P. L., t. 183, c. 941.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3; c. 941 CD.

“Pero el verlo tal como es, cuando estemos ya en Su presencia no es otra cosa que ser como Él es, y no ser confundidos por ninguna semejanza. Pero eso será entonces, como dije.” La fórmula es de importancia capital. Nos explica en primer lugar por qué la unión con Dios debe ser exclusivamente espiritual. Fundada sobre una transformación interna del alma, no sabría realizarse por un conocimiento de Dios en sus creaturas, ni siquiera por una visión de Dios bajo forma de imágenes exteriores; para que esta unión se lleve a cabo, es preciso que el alma misma sea cambiada desde adentro, purificada, clarificada y restaurada a semejanza de su creador.⁹ Aquí todo debe pues acabar en lo interior, sin que nada pueda suplir esta purificación interna del alma que la emparenta con su objeto. Pero veamos, al mismo tiempo, cuál es la naturaleza de esta transformación necesaria: una eliminación progresiva de la semejanza, que nos lo hará conocer en la medida misma en que nos volverá a hacer semejantes a Él.

San Bernardo ha retomado muchas veces la descripción de estas transformaciones unificadoras y de estas asimilaciones progresivas. Es bastante difícil decir si los estados místicos se clasifican en él según una jerarquía definida, y cuál podría ser. Los dos principios en los cuales se mantiene firmemente, son la superioridad de los estados puramente “espirituales” sobre aquellos donde las imágenes juegan aún un rol, y el carácter esencialmente diverso, sin equiparación, de las experiencias místicas individuales. Ya hemos comentado el primero; el segundo se relaciona igualmente con esta otra idea fundamental que hemos recordado: en esta vida, Dios no puede ser visto tal como Él es. De lo que resulta, en efecto, que Dios no puede ser visto más que tal como Él mismo se digna hacerse ver, y puesto que su libertad en la distribución de las gracias es absoluta, nada permite concluir sobre la naturaleza de un favor místico respecto de otro otorgado por Dios en condi-

⁹ *Ibid.*, 3–4; c. 941 D–942 C.

ciones diferentes o a un sujeto diferente.¹⁰ Es incluso por eso que la naturaleza de la unión divina no se presta a descripciones generales que valdrían para cada caso particular; solamente la experiencia podría hacernos conocer lo que son tales estados, y la experiencia de uno no vale para otro: que cada uno beba el agua de su propio pozo.¹¹

Este individualismo tan fuertemente acentuado de los estados místicos tal vez disuadió a san Bernardo de intentar una clasificación sistemática; pues es imposible clasificar sin comparar, y este partidario decidido del *nosce te ipsum* siempre experimentó la más grande repugnancia en comparar su propia experiencia, que él conocía, con la de otros, que para él permanecía naturalmente cerrada. A veces insiste más en las condiciones teológicas de la unión con Dios y busca describir la economía de las gracias divinas que la preparan; a veces busca más bien seguir el rastro de la acción de las gracias en su alma y elevarse desde estos efectos a su causa. Intentemos seguirlo por nuestra parte en uno y otro de estos esfuerzos, y preguntémonos antes que nada en qué condiciones es posible, de parte de Dios, la unión del alma con Dios por el amor.

En la Trinidad, el Padre engendra al Hijo, y el Espíritu Santo procede a la vez del Padre y del Hijo; Él es pues el lazo entre el uno y el otro; pero el Espíritu Santo es caridad—además es por esto que Él es lazo—de modo que podemos decir de Él que, como caridad, el Espíritu Santo asegura de alguna manera la unidad de la Trinidad.¹² Es lo que se

¹⁰ San Bernardo, *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón XXIII, 9; P. L., t. 183, c. 888–889. Cf. sermón XXXI, 2; c. 941.

¹¹ San Bernardo, *De consideratione*, II, 3; P. L., t. 182, c. 745 D. Cf.: “Hodie legimus in libro experientiae . . . hunc proprium experimentum . . . Audi expertum . . .” *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón III, 1, P. L., t. 183, c. 794. Sermón XXII, 2; c. 878–879. Ver J. Schuck, *Das religiöse Erlebnis beim hl. Bernard von Clairvaux, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der christlichen Gotteserfahrung* (Würzburg: C. J. Becker, 1922), 23–24.

¹² El Espíritu Santo, lazo entre el Padre y el Hijo, será pues también el lazo del alma con Dios en la doctrina de san Bernardo. Juega exactamente el mismo rol que en la de Guillermo de Saint-Thierry, pero lo juega de otra manera. En el *De diligendo Deo* (XII,

expresa al decir que la caridad es la ley de Dios. Esta expresión significa dos cosas, en primer lugar que Dios vive de la caridad, luego que todo el que quiera vivir de la vida de Dios no lo puede hacer más que viviendo de esta misma caridad, es decir recibéndola de Él como un don. En Dios, la unidad suprema e inefable se conserva por este lazo substancial como ley suya; pero recordemos el carácter esencial de la caridad: ella es por definición voluntad común; casta, es decir desinteresada; inmaculada, es decir sin sombra de querer propio: *lex ergo Dei immaculata caritas est, quae non quod sibi utile quaerit, sed quod*

35; P. L., t. 182, c. 996; en realidad la *Epistola de caritate* dirigida a los Cartujos como respuesta a las *Meditationes* de Guigo I) San Bernardo construye su doctrina sobre la noción del Espíritu Santo concebido como ley de la vida divina. Guillermo de Saint-Thierry, en la época en que redactaba su *De contemplando Deo*, o bien no conocía aún esta doctrina, o prefería seguir una vía más directa. Plantea así el problema: Jesucristo ha querido que sus discípulos fuesen uno en Él y en el Padre, como Él mismo y el Padre son uno (Jn. XVII, 21). Pero, el Padre y el Hijo son uno por el Espíritu Santo; por lo tanto es por Él que podemos unirnos a Dios. La solución es, evidentemente, que al recibir al Espíritu Santo bajo forma de don: la gracia, participamos en la vida divina, porque, al estar el Espíritu Santo en nosotros, el amor del Padre por el Hijo y del Hijo por el Padre está por eso mismo en nosotros. Es pues entonces Dios quien se ama en nosotros, no siendo el amor que nosotros tenemos por Él más que el don gratuito del amor por el cual se ama a sí mismo: “Tu te ipsum amas in nobis, et nos in te, cum te per te amamus, et in tantum tibi unimur, in quantum te amare meremur” (Guillermo de Saint-Thierry, *De contemplando Deo*, VII, 15; P. L., t. 184, c. 375 B). Pero, este amor de Dios por Dios es el Espíritu Santo, por lo tanto Dios mismo; de donde se sigue que el don de la caridad nos hace de raza divina (Hech. XVII, 29), hace de nosotros dioses (Sal. LXXXI, 6), nos autoriza a dar a Dios, en virtud de esta adopción, el nombre de Padre que el Hijo puede darle por naturaleza y nos une a Él no sólo por el amor sino también por la bienaventuranza (*ibid.*, VIII, 16; c. 375 D) que le es inseparable. Guillermo de Saint-Thierry encuentra pues en la vida de la gracia, don del Espíritu Santo, el camino corto, el “compendium,” que conduce a las experiencias místicas afectivas descriptas en su tratado (IX, 20; c. 378 CD). En la ausencia de datos cronológicos ciertos que nos permitirían situar los tratados de Guillermo con relación a los de Bernardo, ninguna hipótesis sobre su posible filiación puede ser formulada. A pesar del notable acuerdo de sus puntos de vista, no he logrado descubrir la menor traza de influencia de uno sobre otro, sea en los razonamientos, sea en la redacción. Sigo persuadido, hasta prueba en contrario, de su completa independencia. La crítica interna confirmaría pues la hipótesis propuesta por Dom A. Wilmart, que pospone al período precisterciense de la vida de Guillermo, la composición de este tratado: “La série et la date des ouvrages de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry,” *Revue Mabillon* XIV (1924): 166.

multis. La caridad divina pues se va a comunicar: substancial en Dios, será en la criatura una cualidad, *qualitatem*, o una suerte de accidente, *aliquod accidens*. Así “es igualmente justo decir de la caridad que es Dios y que es el don de Dios; porque la Caridad da la caridad: la substancial da la accidental.” Pero en virtud de este don, por el cual Dios la confiere al hombre, la caridad que era la ley de Dios pasa a ser la ley del hombre.

Esta es la ley eterna, creadora y gobernadora del universo. Por ella fueron hechas todas las cosas en peso, número y medida, y nada ha quedado sin ley; porque ella misma aunque ley de todas las cosas no existe sin ley, pero no es otra que ella misma: por la cual, aunque no se creó, sin embargo, se rige.¹³

Fórmulas de una densidad extraordinaria, y que comanda toda la economía de la liberación del amor humano.

Consideremos en efecto la posición de un querer aún “contraído” por el temor o “curvado” por la codicia (*cupidité*). Nosotros sabemos que Dios mismo vive de una ley—*nec absurdum videatur quod dixi etiam Deum vivere ex lege*—con mayor razón el siervo o el mercenario tendrán también la suya. Son leyes que ellos mismos se hicieron. Ellos no aman a Dios; ya que Dios no ama más que a Sí mismo y se ama totalmente, el siervo y el mercenario no viven de la ley divina; pero en lugar de vivir de la caridad, viven bajo otra ley, la ley del temor o de la codicia (*cupidité*). Vemos aquí plenamente en qué consiste la perversidad de la voluntad propia; ella se prefiere a la voluntad común y eterna; más aún, pretende imitarla haciendo lo que sólo su creador puede hacer, es decir ser para ella sola su propia ley, gobernarse a sí misma, hacer que su voluntad sea también su ley. Solamente sucede que, por justa compensación, queriendo sustraerse a la ley de la caridad, la voluntad permanece sometida al orden inmutable y necesario de la ley eterna.

¹³ San Bernardo, *De diligendo Deo*, XII, 35; P. L., t. 182, c. 996. Sobre el rol del Espíritu Santo como lazo: *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón VIII, 4; P. L., t. 183, c. 811–812.

Para castigar al hombre, Dios no precisa infligirle un castigo suplementario, le basta con dejar a la voluntad propia librada a ella misma, puesto que ella implica su propio castigo. En lugar del yugo ligero de la caridad, el siervo y el mercenario tienen que sufrir el yugo insoportable de la voluntad propia; yugo pesado porque si la caridad es espontaneidad, libertad, la voluntad propia es esclavitud; en lugar de hacer al hombre *spontaneus*, lo hace *invitus*, incapaz de obrar por un movimiento simple y directo de amor, condenado, por el contrario, a no desear jamás una cosa, más que por temor o por codicia (*cupidité*). Dios permanece pues en el inmóvil goce de su libertad, pero nos abandona a la servidumbre que hemos elegido. Opuestos a nosotros mismos, divididos contra nosotros mismos, no podemos más que dirigir a Dios esta oración:

Señor Dios mío, ¿por qué no quitas mi pecado y por qué no apartas mi iniquidad? Para que habiendo arrojado el pesado fardo de mi voluntad propia, respire bajo el suave peso de la caridad; no ya obligado por un temor servil ni seducido por una codicia mercenaria, sino conducido por tu espíritu, espíritu de libertad, por el cual son conducidos tus hijos; que dé testimonio a mi espíritu, de que yo también sea uno de tus hijos, para que sea la misma ley para mí y para ti; y como tú eres, así sea yo en este mundo. Estos hacen decir al apóstol: “no seáis deudores de nadie, sino del amor mutuo;” tal como es Dios seguramente serán ellos en este mundo: no son siervos ni mercenarios, sino hijos.¹⁴

Para el que sigue la deducción de san Bernardo, aparece claramente una vez más que su doctrina de la libertad es una de las piezas esenciales de su mística. No podría tratarse para el hombre de buscar esta libertad en el rechazo de toda ley, porque Dios mismo vive de la suya, sino, por el contrario, de colocarse voluntariamente bajo la única ley que sea verdaderamente liberadora, porque es la misma de Dios, que es libertad. Es en este sentido que tenemos que entender la palabra de san Pablo (I Tim. I, 19): *justis non est lex posita*. Ella no significa que no haya ley para los justos, sino que su actitud con respecto a ella

¹⁴ San Bernardo, *De diligendo Deo*, XIII, 36; P. L., t. 182, c. 997.

es tal, que deja para ellos de pesar como una carga o de atar como una traba. Por eso Dios dice también: *tollite jugum meum super vos* (Mt. XI, 29), es decir no les impongo este yugo, sino que vosotros mismos tomadlo, de suerte que aunque no estéis jamás sin ley—*sine lege*—no estéis sin embargo bajo la ley—*sub lege*.¹⁵ En una palabra, lo que san Bernardo nos pide que hagamos es renunciar a poner nuestra propia ley y a aceptar la de Dios, de fundar nuestra libertad asimilándola a la de Dios.

El aprendizaje del amor verdadero consiste pues en sobrepasar el plano del amor sensible para unirse a la vida puramente espiritual de la caridad divina. El mejor medio para determinar con qué condiciones es posible semejante paso, es considerar en primer lugar el caso extremo en el cual se está seguro que está cumplido: el del “arrobamiento” divino o *raptus*. Esta palabra designa con propiedad los estados extraordinarios donde el alma es elevada de esta vida a la visión de Dios. La Escritura trae la promesa y establece la condición esencial en lo que concierne al hombre: *beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt* (Mt. V, 8). Está claro pues que la pureza de corazón se requiere para el que pretenda gozar de la visión de Dios; pero podemos agregar que a aquel cuyo corazón es puro, esta visión beatificante se le promete. ¿Por qué y cómo le será dada?

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, XIV, 37; P. L., t. 182, c. 997. No se debe olvidar jamás los fundamentos de la doctrina: a) la imagen de Dios en nosotros—el libre arbitrio—aún subsiste; b) la doble semejanza de Dios en nosotros—la *libertas consilii* y la *libertas complaciti*—han sido perdidas (*De gratia et libero arbitrio*, IX, 31, P. L., t. 182, c. 1018 B); c) la imagen, aunque subsistente, ha sido manchada y deformada por el pecado y lo sería por siempre jamás sin la gracia de Jesucristo (*ibid.*, X, 32; c. 1018 C); la gracia ayuda al hombre a recobrar las dos libertades perdidas, y por consecuencia también su semejanza divina (*ibid.*, X, 34; c. 1019). Cotejemos esta conclusión con la doctrina de *De diligendo Deo*, se esclarecen mutuamente. Si todo el problema de la vida mística consiste en hacer suya la ley de Dios, que es la Caridad, es claro que ese problema consiste igualmente en procurar en sí mismo la purificación de la imagen divina, que no se lo puede hacer sin substituir la voluntad propia por la voluntad común o caridad. La doctrina de la restauración de la imagen en la semejanza perfecta no hace más que una con la de la libertad; el resultado final de una y otra es la unión mística, aguardando la visión beatífica.

Es que el aprendizaje de la caridad es una asimilación progresiva a la vida divina, y que el alma que alcanza la pureza está en el punto donde los secretos de Dios le pueden ser revelados. Repasemos, por su orden, las etapas ya atravesadas. En primer lugar, la práctica de la Regla benedictina tal como se la observa en el Císter: es el aprendizaje de la humildad, es decir la unión de hecho con la vida de Cristo, que se manifestó como la Humildad misma en su encarnación. Entonces, Cristo es el Hijo de Dios, la segunda persona de la Trinidad, aquella por la cual esta Trinidad nos es menos inaccesible, porque se encarnó para construirnos un acceso hacia las insondables profundidades de un Dios que, para nosotros, permanecería sin eso totalmente escondido. Por otra parte, Cristo nos ha revelado en la humildad el misterio de la misericordia; Él enseña en efecto con su ejemplo cómo puede el hombre encontrar en la experiencia de su propia miseria la compasión por la de otro. Pero, la compasión es caridad, y la caridad es el Espíritu Santo: la tercera persona de la Trinidad. El hombre se encuentra pues así conducido a una unión cada vez más íntima y completa con la vida de las personas divinas, y podemos agregar que está preparada, de ahora en más, para la iniciación suprema, si le place al Padre dársela.

De ahora en adelante, en efecto, el Padre puede unir a sí (*conglutinat*) esta razón esclarecida y este querer inflamado de caridad. El corazón del hombre ha llegado a ser entonces un corazón “puro,” entendiéndose por esto, en el sentido técnico de esta expresión en san Bernardo, un corazón purgado de todo “*proprium*,” es decir: desapropiado. La razón conoce entonces al hombre, y lo juzga, como Dios lo conoce y lo juzga. Despojándose su codicia (*cupidité*) así como la razón ha sacrificado su juicio propio, la voluntad ama al prójimo por compasión, por el amor de Dios. En la medida en que se ha cumplido esta purificación, el alma ha recobrado su semejanza perdida; ella ya ha vuelto a ser tal que Dios pueda reconocerse en ella; reconociéndose allí, Él va a complacerse allí, pues Él no puede amarse a sí mismo sin amar a quien, por modo

de imagen y semejanza, es como otro Él mismo.¹⁶ Amándola, o, lo que es lo mismo, amándose en ella, Dios va a poder desear unírsele. Tal es precisamente el sentido de la expresión de la que usa a menudo san Bernardo, cuando dice que el alma ha pasado a ser, entonces, la “prometida” de Dios. La metáfora designa siempre en su lenguaje un estado netamente definido, el de un alma que Dios puede de ahora en adelante querer hacer su esposa, porque se reconoce en ella y porque ya no subsiste nada en ella a lo que su amor no pueda unirse.

¹⁶ Aquí también Guillermo de Saint-Thierry se une a san Bernardo, pero por caminos tan independientes que apenas si se puede suponer que haya sido influenciado en este punto. En todo caso, ha sabido conservar intacta su originalidad. De esta manera, muy brevemente, podemos resumir su posición: a) lo semejante desea naturalmente su semejante; creado a imagen de Dios, el hombre ama pues naturalmente a Dios y Dios ama al hombre mientras la imagen de Dios brille en el hombre (*De nat. et dign. amoris*, II, 3; P. L., t. 184, c. 382 BC); b) a esta aplicación cristiana de un principio griego se agrega una tesis agustiniana, que juega en Guillermo un rol capital que no juega en Bernardo: en la imagen creada se encuentra la memoria; correspondiendo al Padre, es en nosotros como el centro de nuestra alma, donde ella engendra la razón (el Hijo), y la voluntad (el Espíritu Santo) procede de uno y otro (*ibid.*, c. 382 CD); c) el punto de partida de la contemplación mística debe ser pues un esfuerzo de recogimiento, para buscar a Dios donde está, es decir en la memoria, donde Él reside, y donde se lo encuentra como Caridad (*De contemplando Deo*, todo el admirable *De profundis* místico del *Proemium*, 1–3; P. L., t. 184, c. 365–367); d) por eso el lugar de nacimiento del amor es Dios: allí él está en su casa, ciudadano, nativo; pero creado en el hombre por Dios y confortado por la gracia, él es natural en nosotros, aunque recibido (*De nat. et dign. amoris*, II, 3; P. L., t. 184, c. 382 B), si bien se puede decir, contra Ovidio, que el arte de amar no tiene más que un maestro: “natura, et Deus auctor naturae” (*ibid.*, I, 1; c. 379 C); e) perdido por la falta original, este arte natural debe ser aprendido de nuevo; su reeducación no puede ser hecha más que por la gracia, bajo un solo maestro: Jesucristo, pero no sin el ministerio de un hombre que nos recuerde las lecciones: “Amor ergo, ut dictum est, ab auctore naturae naturaliter est animae inditus; sed postquam legem Dei amisit, ab homine est docendus. Non est autem docendus, ut sit tanquam qui non sit; sed ut purgetur, et quomodo purgetur; et ut proficiat, et quomodo proficiat; ut solidetur et quomodo solidetur, docendus est.” (*ibid.*, I, 2; c. 381 A; cf. VIII, 21; c. 398 A); f) se trata pues, para el hombre, de recobrar progresivamente la conciencia de esta ley naturalmente innata en él, lo que hace por una profundización de su “memoria,” donde esta ley permanece inscrita. Se puede pues decir que, mientras que la mística de san Bernardo está fundada sobre todo en una doctrina de la libertad, la de Guillermo de Saint-Thierry está fundada sobre todo en una doctrina de la “memoria,” que la emparenta más estrechamente que a la de san Bernardo con la tradición salida de san Agustín.

En el punto a que hemos llegado, nada puede reemplazar el texto de san Bernardo mismo, pues tenemos que acostumbrarnos a leerlo substituyendo las imágenes que usa por los conceptos definidos, de los cuales ellas no son para él más que símbolos.

I. ENDEREZAMIENTO DE LA RAZÓN POR EL VERBO

“Así entonces el hijo de Dios, es decir el Verbo y la Sabiduría del Padre, en primer lugar hallando esta potencia de nuestra alma llamada razón, rebajada por la carne,¹⁷ cautiva por el pecado, cegada por la ignorancia, entregada a las cosas exteriores¹⁸ tomándola con clemencia,

¹⁷ CARO (sinónimo: *corpus*): el cuerpo al que el alma está unida. Pero le está unida en dos sentidos que es importante distinguir, pues sólo del segundo se trata aquí.

1º El alma está unida al cuerpo por un lazo de necesidad natural. Obligada a satisfacer sus necesidades, se encuentra en una situación inferior a la de los espíritus puros; pero es la situación normal del hombre y, en ese sentido, el cuerpo no “deprime” al alma, no la rebaja por debajo de su situación de alma, que implica la unión con el cuerpo. Si el alma ama su cuerpo como conviene, se hará de él, por el contrario, un auxiliar y ambos, ayudándose uno al otro, alcanzarán su fin común: la gloria celestial. Véase San Bernardo, *De diligendo Deo*, XI, 31; P. L., t. 182, c. 993–994: “Bonus plane fidsusque comes caro spiritui bono . . .” *In Psal. Qui habitat*, sermón X, 3; P. L., t. 183, c. 222 D.

2º El alma está también, no exactamente “unida” sino “sometida” al cuerpo debido al pecado. Este es un estado no natural sino contra-natura, porque el alma es superior al cuerpo. En este sentido, el cuerpo es una “carga,” que “agobia” al alma y la “deprime.” Es en este sentido en que se toma *caro* aquí, como todas las veces que implica una esclavización del alma al cuerpo. Cf. “Traxit animam corpus in regionem suam et ecce praevalens opprimit peregrinum. Factum est namque talentum plumbi, non aliunde tamen, nisi quia sedet iniquitas super illud. Corpus enim aggravat animam, sed utique quod corrumpitur.” San Bernardo, *In Festo S. Martini episc.*, Sermón 3; P. L., t. 183, c. 491. A propósito del pasaje que comentamos, Barton R. V. Mills (*Select Treatises of S. Bernard of Clairvaux*, 105, nota 20) reenvía con razón a dos textos importantes: *De praecepto et dispensatione*, XX, 59; P. L., t. 182, c. 892. *In Ascensione Domini*, sermón III, 1; P. L., t. 183, c. 304–305.

TEMA ESCRITURÍSTICO: “Corpus enim, quod corrumpitur, aggravat animam, et terrena inhabitatio deprimit sensum multa cogitantem.” Sab. IX, 15.

¹⁸ Cegada por la ignorancia de su propia miseria. Esta ignorancia lleva a que el alma se vuelva hacia las cosas para conformarse a ellas, en lugar de buscar conocerse (tema: *Si ignoras te . . .*). En esto consiste la *curiositas*, primer grado del orgullo: “Quia enim se ipsam ignorat, foras mittitur, ut haedos pascat.” San Bernardo, *De grad. humilitatis*, II, 10, 28; P. L., t. 182, c. 957 C). El comentario literal del texto se encuentra en el *De*

enderezándola con fuerza, instruyéndola con prudencia, trayéndola dentro de sí misma, y sirviéndose de ella de una manera sorprendente para reemplazarla, la establece juez de sí misma, aunque por respeto al Verbo al cual está unida, se vuelve acusadora, juez y testigo de sí misma, ejerciendo así contra sí el oficio de la Verdad. De esta primera unión del Verbo y la razón nace la humildad.”

II. ENDEREZAMIENTO DE LA VOLUNTAD POR EL ESPÍRITU SANTO

“En cuanto a la otra parte del alma llamada voluntad, infectada por el veneno de la carne¹⁹ pero una vez que la razón la ha liberado, el Espíritu Santo la visita, la purifica con suavidad, la enciende con ardor, le hace misericordiosa;²⁰ así como un cuero que se estira al unirlo para curtirlo, así también, por la unción celestial que recibe, se dilata hasta sus enemigos por el afecto.²¹ Y así por esta segunda unión del Espíritu de Dios y de la voluntad humana nace la caridad.²²”

diligendo Deo, II, 4: “Fit igitur ut sese non agnoscendo egregia rationis munere creatura, irrationabilium gregibus aggregari incipias, dum ignara propriae gloriae, quae ab intus est, conformanda foris rebus sensibilibus, sua ipsius curiositate abducitur: efficiturque una de caeteris, quod se prae ceteris nihil accepisse intelligat.” P. L., t. 182, c. 976. Véase Apéndice I.

¹⁹ Ver más arriba, nota 17.

²⁰ Pasaje de la humildad, por conocimiento de su propia miseria, a la compasión por la miseria del otro.

²¹ AFFECTUS: Uno de los cuatro sentimientos fundamentales con los que se componen todos los otros. Son: *amor*, *timor*, *gaudium* y *tristitia*. Aquí, evidentemente, el amor. Cf. *De dilig. Deo*, cap. VIII, 23; t. 182, c. 987. In *Cant. Cant.*, sermón LXXXV, 5; t. 183, c. 1190. Cf. W. Williams, *Select Treatises of S. Bernard of Clairvaux*, 41, nota 9.

A menudo hay que distinguir los *affectus* de las AFFECTIONES.

AFFECTIONES: Los diversos sentimientos que el alma puede tener para con Dios. Son cinco, cada uno de los cuales determina una relación distinta del hombre con Dios.

Timor, estado de *servus*.

Spes, estado de *mercenarius*.

Obedientia, estado de *discipulus*.

Honor, estado de *filius*.

Amor, estado de *sponsa*.

III. PASO A LA UNIÓN MÍSTICA

“De las dos partes del alma, es decir la razón y la voluntad, una instruida por el Verbo de la verdad y la otra inspirada por el Espíritu de la Verdad;²³ aquella asperjada por el hisopo de la humildad;²⁴ ésta encendida por el fuego de la caridad; el alma ya perfecta, sin mancha a causa de la humildad²⁵ y sin arruga gracias a la caridad,²⁶ porque la vo-

Véase *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón VII, 2; P. L., t. 183, c. 807.

Las *affectiones*, tomadas en sentido propio, son sentimientos complejos y compuestos de diversos *affectus* fundamentales (ver: *Affectus*). Sin embargo, sucede muy frecuentemente que Bernardo emplea *affectiones* en el sentido de *affectus*, sigue entonces la terminología recibida, pero no sigue sino la suya cuando clasifica las *affectiones* como lo acabamos de decir.

²² La caridad es la “voluntad común” al hombre y a Dios; nace pues de la unión de nuestra voluntad con el Espíritu Santo, amor común del Padre y del Hijo.

²³ Sobre la función “docente” del Espíritu Santo, ver: San Bernardo, *In Festo Pentecostes*, sermón I, 5; P. L., t. 183, c. 325.

²⁴ El hisopo es uno de los símbolos de la humildad en san Bernardo; pero la humildad es purificadora y es por eso que leemos inmediatamente después que, por la humildad, el alma no tiene mancha. Tema escriturístico: “Asperges me hyssopo et mundabor” (Sal. L, 9). El simbolismo del hisopo es comentado en este sentido *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón XLV, 2; P. L., t. 183, c. 999–1000. Se complica además por el agregado de un dato tomado de la botánica simbolista: el hisopo es una “humilis herba et pectoris purgativa humilitatem significans” (*ibid.*); e *In dedicatione Ecclesiae*, sermón II, 4; P. L., t. 183, c. 520 B. Como un símbolo no excluye nunca a otro, la humildad puede ser además representada por el nardo, al que se le atribuyen las mismas propiedades medicinales: *In Assumptione B. Mariae virginis*, sermón IV, 7; P. L., t. 183, c. 428 D (tema escriturístico: *Cant. Cant.*, I, 11); cf. *In Cant. Cant.*, XLII, 6; P. L., t. 183, c. 990 B. Por la paloma: *In Cant. Cant.*, XLV, 4; P. L., t. 183, c. 1001. Por la aurora: *De diversis*, sermón XCII, 3; P. L., t. 183, c. 711 D.

²⁵ La mancha es el pecado; el pecado es voluntad propia; la humildad es voluntad común porque es sumisión y unión con la voluntad de Dios; entonces la humildad quita la mancha del pecado y vuelve al alma inmaculada. Cf. nota precedente.

²⁶ No conozco ningún texto donde esta imagen sea explícitamente comentada. Tal vez habría que relacionarlo con este otro, frecuente en san Bernardo, que describe la codicia (*cupidité*), o voluntad propia, como un “affectus contractus;” *sine ruga* significaría entonces que la caridad, al hacer perder al alma esta contractura, la aplana de alguna manera, y le hace perder sus arrugas o rugosidades. San Bernardo acaba de decirnos que la caridad unge al alma “ita ut more pellis quae extenditur, ipsa quoque . . . per affectum dilatetur.” Entonces muy probablemente es esta reducción de la contractura del alma por la caridad lo que quiere expresar aquí.

luntad ya no se opone a la razón²⁷ ni la razón disimula la verdad,²⁸ el Padre se une a ella como a una esposa gloriosa: de modo que ni la razón permite pensar en sí misma, ni la voluntad en el prójimo, sino que esta alma bienaventurada se deleita solamente en decir esto: “el Rey me introdujo en su habitación.” Ciertamente, digna al salir de la escuela de la humildad,²⁹ en la cual aprendió primero a entrar en sí misma bajo el Hijo maestro³⁰ según la conminación que se le hizo: “si no te conoces, sal fuera y apacienta tus cabritos;” digna, conducida por el Espíritu Santo desde aquella escuela de humildad hacia la bodega de la caridad³¹ (que debe entenderse por los corazones de los prójimos)³² es in-

²⁷ Barton R. V. Mills (*Select Treatises of S. Bernard of Clairvaux*, 106, nota 18), interpreta estas palabras como significando el *liberum consilium*. Creo más bien que significan el *liberum complacitum*, es decir la aceptación por la voluntad de los juicios de una recta razón. San Bernardo quiere decir: “la voluntad ya no se opone a la razón, porque el *proprium complacitum* ha sido eliminado.”

²⁸ La razón ya no disimula la verdad porque, gracias a la humildad, el *proprium consilium* ha sido eliminado y el *liberum consilium* recuperado. Como el *consilium* y el *complacitum* ciertamente están apuntados en estos dos miembros de la frase, y el segundo no se puede aplicar al *complacitum*, es preciso que éste sea aplicado al precedente. No olvidemos, en efecto, que es por la razón que el hombre juzga: “Judex sui propter rationem.”

²⁹ Tema: *Regula Monasteriorum*: “Schola divini servitii;” “Schola Caritatis.” El Hijo, ejemplo de humildad en la Encarnación, es allí nuestro maestro.

³⁰ Es decir, instruida por el Verbo-Sabiduría, que le ha enseñado a conocerse y a juzgarse tal como es, según el principio del Socratismo cristiano. Tema escriturístico: *Cant. Cant.*, I, 7.

³¹ Segunda etapa: de la humildad, aprendida del magisterio del Hijo, el alma pasa a la caridad, bajo la conducción del Espíritu Santo. Bodega (*cellaria*): lugar donde son conservados los productos del campo o del jardín y de donde, como una invitación, se escapan sus perfumes. San Bernardo, *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón XXIII, I, P. L., t. 183, c. 884 B.

El *Cant. Cant.*, I, 3 (cf. II, 4) nos da este texto: “Introduxit me Rex in *cellaria* sua,” según la Vulgata “in *cubiculum* suum.” Bernardo conserva los dos términos y da a cada uno una significación propia. Les agrega un tercero: *hortus*, de donde provienen las flores y los frutos guardados en la *cellaria*. Estos términos son definidos en *loc. cit.* 3, c. 885 D y en *De diversis*, sermón XCII, P. L., t. 183, c. 714–715. El elemento que permanece constante a través de los tres textos, como también el hecho justamente destacado por Barton R. V. Mills (*Select Treatises of S. Bernard of Clairvaux*, 106, nota 22) es que *cellarium* tiene un sentido moral, mientras que *cubiculum* tiene un sentido más-

troucida por el afecto;³³ de allí, que confortada con flores y fortalecida con frutos de granada, es decir, con buenas costumbres y con virtudes santas,³⁴ es admitida nuevamente a la habitación del Rey por cuyo amor languidece.³⁵

tico: “Sit itaque *hortus* simplex ac plana historia; sit *cellarium* moralis sensus: sit *cubiculum* arcanum theoricas contemplaciones” (*loc. cit.*, P. L., t. 183, c. 885 D). En efecto, en el párrafo que comentamos, las *cellaria* son las virtudes conferidas por la caridad, y que son el camino del *cubiculum*, donde se realiza la unión mística propiamente dicha.

³² La caridad nos hace entrar en los corazones de los otros hombres, porque nos hace compadecer su miseria, que conocemos por la nuestra.

³³ *Affectionem*, en el sentido de *amor*. Cf. nota 21.

³⁴ Tema escriturístico: “Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis, quia amore langueo,” *Cant.*, II, 5.

Barton R. B. Mills (*Select Treatises of S. Bernard of Clairvaux*, 107, nota 6) observa: “cf. a better interpretation of these words (cf. una mejor interpretación de estas palabras) (*Cant.*, II, 5) in *De diligendo Deo* . . .” Sobre esto se imponen dos advertencias:

1º Los editores de San Bernardo, tan atentos y cuidadosos en sus comentarios, parecen atormentados por la cuestión de saber si sus interpretaciones del texto bíblico respetan exactamente la letra. De por sí la exégesis de San Bernardo es una exégesis mística y debe ser tratada como tal, al menos si queremos entenderla tal como él mismo la entiende;

2º La interpretación de estas palabras en el *De diligendo Deo* puede, en efecto, ser mejor, pero sobre todo es distinta. En este último escrito, las granadas son los frutos de la Pasión, y las flores lo son de la Resurrección (III, 8; P. L., t. 182, c. 979 AB). El texto corresponde entonces a la meditación de la vida de Cristo y describe las razones de nuestro “amor carnalis” por Él. Es un grado inferior de la contemplación mística, pero es ya un grado. Aquí, en el *De gradibus humilitatis*, la interpretación de las mismas palabras es moral; San Bernardo lee allí una descripción del estado de un alma pronta al éxtasis, pero que aún no ha entrado. Nada más frecuente que ver el mismo texto interpretado por el mismo autor “moraliter,” luego “mystice.”

³⁵ LANGUOR. Estado en el cual se encuentra el alma por la ausencia del objeto amado: *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón LI, 3; P. L., t. 183, c. 1026 B. Sinónimo: *languor animi*, *mentis hebetudo*, *inertia spiritus*. Tema escriturístico: *Cant.*, II, 5.

Este estado puede ser el deseo, no aún satisfecho, del *osculum*, o el intervalo entre dos uniones místicas: *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón IX, 3; P. L., t. 183, c. 816. Es el caso en el texto que comentamos. Puede ser también el castigo, querido por Dios, a algún movimiento de orgullo: *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón LIV, 8; P. L., t. 183, c. 1042.

IV. LA UNIÓN MÍSTICA

“Allí, por poco tiempo,³⁶ es decir alrededor de media hora, se ha hecho silencio en el cielo,³⁷ reposa suavemente en los abrazos deseados,³⁸ sin duda duerme, pero su corazón vela,³⁹ porque escudriña du-

³⁶ MODICUM. Palabra empleada frecuentemente por san Bernardo para designar la brevedad de la unión mística. Cf. “O modicum et modicum!” *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón LXXIV, 4; P. L., t. 183, c. 1140 C. Tema escriturístico: “Modicum et non videbitis me; et iterum modicum, et videbitis me,” Jn. XVI, 17.

³⁷ Tema escriturístico: “factum est silentium in caelo, quasi media hora.” Apoc., VIII, 1. Cf. Guillermo de Saint-Thierry, *De contemplando Deo*, IV, 10; P. L., t. 184, c. 372 D. Barton R. V. Mills (*Select Treatises of S. Bernard of Clairvaux*, 107, nota 6) observa: “It is difficult, e. g. to trace the relevance of the silence made in heaven (a clear allusion to Rev. VIII, 1) to the slumbers of the Bride . . .” (“Es difícil, por ejemplo, seguir la relevancia del silencio en el cielo (clara alusión a Apoc. VIII, 1) con el sueño de la esposa . . .”). La relación se aclara sin embargo, si agregamos que san Bernardo recuerda aquí a Gregorio Magno y que sin duda tiene presente en su pensamiento el comentario místico del mismo texto que este santo había dejado. Gregorio compara el alma del justo con el cielo; el silencio en el cielo es pues el silencio de la vida activa que deja lugar a la paz de la vida contemplativa en el alma del justo. El texto de Gregorio Magno está resumido en D. Cuthbert Butler, *Le monachisme bénédictin*, trad. Ch. Grolleau (París: de Gigord, 1924), cap. VII, 89–90.

³⁸ AMPLEXUS: conjunción espiritual de Dios, que desea unirse al alma purificada, y del alma en la cual se infunde por la gracia. Tema escriturístico: *Cant.*, II, 6; VIII, 3. No he podido encontrar en san Bernardo una definición explícita de este término, ni siquiera en el sermón donde comenta *Cant.*, II, 6. Por el contrario, el estado designado por *amplexus* me parece que está descrito, en cuanto puede serlo, *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón XXXII, 6; P. L., t. 183, c. 943. Es pues una metáfora escriturística para designar el éxtasis, tal como san Bernardo lo analiza en su comentario a *Cant.*, II, 7: el sueño del alma en el abrazo divino: *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón LII, 2; P. L., t. 183, c. 1030 C. San Bernardo no comentó especialmente el “amplexabitur” de *Cant.*, II, 6, sin duda porque todo el sermón LII, que trata sobre II, 7, es un comentario.

Notar una definición del término (tanto del *amplexus* humano como del *amplexus* divino), en Guillermo de Saint-Thierry, *De contemplando Deo, Proemium*, 3; P. L., t. 184, c. 366 BC.

³⁹ Tema escriturístico: *Cant.* V, 2. *Dormio*, generalmente comentado a propósito de los términos: SOMNUS, SOPOR. Estado caracterizado por un doble efecto de la gracia: 1º El alma se encuentra liberada del ejercicio de los sentidos corporales; es lo que constituye el éxtasis propiamente dicho. En este sentido, se puede decir que el primer momento de este sueño místico es el *Exstasis*. Es el estado en que se encontraba Adán al momento de la creación de Eva: “corporeis excendens sensibus obdormisse videtur.” La observación de Bernardo no permite equivocarnos sobre lo que quiere decir: “Ille sop-

rante ese tiempo los arcanos de la verdad: cuando haya vuelto a sí misma será alimentada por el recuerdo. Allí ve cosas invisibles, oye cosas inefables que no está permitido al hombre decir.⁴⁰ Exceden toda aquella ciencia que la noche indica a la noche;⁴¹ pues el día lanza la palabra al día, y habla sabiduría entre los sabios y conversa cosas espirituales con los espirituales.⁴² (De grad. humilitatis, VII, 21; P. L., t. 182, c. 953.)

ratus videtur prae excessu contemplationis.” La muerte de Cristo es otra dormición de esta clase, pues la vida sensible fue suspendida en Él, no por un exceso de contemplación sino por un exceso de caridad: *In Septuag.*, sermón II, 1–2; P. L., t. 183, c. 166–167;

2° Eso no es todo; la suspensión de los sentidos externos se acompaña, en el sueño místico, con una “abducción” del sentido interno. Hay que entender por esto que, sin dormirse, sino por el contrario permaneciendo completamente despierto, el sentido interno es dirigido por Dios, que lo ilumina. Este estado presenta pues las apariencias de un sueño, pero es lo contrario de un entumecimiento: “Magis autem istiusmodi vitalis vigilque sopor sensum interiorem illuminat, et morte propulsata, vitam tribuit sempiternam. Revera enim dormitio est, quae tamen sensum non sopiat, sed abducat.” *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón LII, 3; P. L., t. 183, c. 1031.

⁴⁰ San Pablo, I Cor. II, 9–10; II Cor. XII, 1–4. La inefabilidad del éxtasis tiende inmediatamente al estado de abducción donde se encuentra el sentido, mientras dura.

⁴¹ Sal. XVIII, 3. San Bernardo ha comentado este texto en otra parte, pero en un contexto diferente: *De diversis*, sermón XLIX; P. L., t. 183, c. 671–672. Nuestro pasaje significa probablemente: “Sobrepasan todo aquel conocimiento por el cual el entendimiento humano se comunica con otro entendimiento; sin embargo, Dios puede decir esas cosas al alma iluminada, y nos está permitido, entre sabios, hablar lo que es sabio . . .” etc. Ver el Sermón XLIX, *ibid.*, para la comparación del día con Dios e *ibid.*, c. 672 A, para el sentido de la palabra “eructat.”

⁴² San Pablo, I Cor. II, 13. Texto que san Bernardo evoca cuando quiere recordar que las imágenes por las cuales se expresa la unión mística, no deben ser tomadas en un sentido material, sino espiritual. Cf. San Bernardo, *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón XXXI, 6; P. L., t. 183, c. 943 B al comienzo. Se ve que lo que Barton R. V. Mills (*Select Treatises of S. Bernard of Clairvaux*, 107, nota 6) llama “a strange medley of metaphor and scriptural allusions” (una extraña mezcla de alusiones metafóricas y escriturísticas) puede explicarse. En primer lugar, hasta donde puedo ver, todas las metáforas son alusiones escriturísticas; no se mezclan pues: son textos escriturísticos entendidos en sentido místico. Además, el procedimiento no tiene nada de extraño en la Edad Media—y allí esta-mossino que es, por el contrario, completamente clásico (véase É. Gilson, *Les Idées et les Lettres* [Paris: J. Vrin, 1932], 154–169). Finalmente, cuando se le dan a estas metáforas sus significados técnicos, aparece el orden de las ideas: “Cuando la razón, hace silencio durante un tiempo en el alma del justo, reposa en el sueño del éxtasis deseado; ella duerme, pero su sentido más profundo, el amor, vela en ella y escruta los arcanos

Esta síntesis doctrinal parece ofrecerse al pensamiento de san Bernardo como un descubrimiento personal. Tal vez no haya allí más que un redescubrimiento; sin embargo, si hubiera alguno, él mismo no ha tenido conciencia de recordarlo, y el comienzo de su exposición traiciona incluso el esfuerzo de un pensamiento, que quiere asir alguna intuición aún confusa, pronta a escapársele.⁴³ Sea lo que sea sobre este punto, las tres etapas así descritas se adaptaban fácilmente al célebre texto de san Pablo, del cual el de san Bernardo es como el comentario doctrinal. San Pablo dice que fue “arreatado” al tercer cielo; entendamos bien *arreatado* y no *conducido*. Es que en efecto el Hijo conduce al alma al primer grado—es decir al primer cielo—que es el de la humildad; el Espíritu Santo la conduce al segundo grado—es decir al segundo cielo—que es el de la misericordia; pero para pasar del segundo al tercero, hace falta algo más que una conducción: un arrebatado (*enlèvement*), un arrancamiento es necesario. Aquel que es conducido marcha por sí mismo, coopera al movimiento, y es así que trabajamos por nosotros mismos para adquirir la humildad y la misericordia, bajo la dirección del Hijo y del Espíritu. San Pablo ha podido pues dejarse conducir al segundo cielo, pero para alcanzar el tercero, ha sido necesario que fuera arrebatado allí: *rapi oportuit*.

Tal es el sentido exacto de la palabra *raptus*. Pues quiere decir que el alma así arrebatada no tiene nada que poner de lo suyo en semejante operación, que se opera en ella sin ella y a la cual no coopera. El rasgo es por otra parte característico de las operaciones del Padre. El Hijo se ha encarnado y ha descendido entre nosotros para rescatarnos; es con nosotros y del medio mismo de la tierra que Él obró nuestra sal-

de la verdad cuyo recuerdo la alimentará cuando vuelva en sí. Allí, ella ve lo invisible y escucha palabras inefables que el hombre no puede repetir al hombre, pero que Dios puede decir al alma, y de las cuales podemos conversar entre sabios, usando nuestras expresiones en sentido espiritual para hablar de cosas espirituales.”

⁴³ San Bernardo, *De gradibus humilitatis*, VII, 20; P. L., t. 182, c. 952 C.

vacación. Tampoco el Espíritu Santo, queda sin descender del cielo, de donde viene en “misión;” es por lo tanto conveniente que la primera y la segunda etapas sean recorridas por nosotros bajo su conducción. Pero el Padre nunca descendió del cielo y nunca ha sido enviado entre nosotros. Ciertamente está en todas partes pero, en su persona, no se lo puede encontrar nunca más que en el cielo. Es en este sentido fuerte que hay que entender la palabra de la oración por excelencia: *Pater noster qui es in coelis*. La persona del Padre está ahí, y ahí permanece; san Pablo no pudo pues ser conducido allí por ella, sino arrebatado. Así,

aquellos que el Hijo llama al primer cielo por la humildad, el Espíritu los agrega al segundo por la caridad, y el Padre los exalta al tercero por la contemplación. En el primero son humillados en la verdad, y dicen: “me humillaste en tu verdad;” en el segundo se alegran con la verdad, y cantan el Salmo: “Ved qué bueno y qué gozoso habitar los hermanos unidos” porque es de la caridad que está escrito: “goza con la verdad.” En el tercer cielo son arrebatados a los arcanos de la verdad, y dicen: “¡mi secreto para mí, mi secreto para mí!”⁴⁴

Podríamos estar tentados a ver en este análisis del raptus la descripción de un estado específicamente distinto del *excessus* del que de ahora en adelante nos vamos a ocupar. No osaría afirmar que san Bernardo no tuvo conciencia de una cierta diferencia entre los dos casos, pero no logré encontrar ningún texto que autorice a distinguirlos netamente, menos aún a jerarquizarlos. La diferencia entre sus descripciones está tal vez más en la diferencia de los dos puntos de vista que podemos adoptar sobre los estados de este género: el del teólogo que determina *ex professo* las condiciones, como lo acaba de hacer san Bernardo, y el del místico que se narra, se inclina sobre su propia experiencia, para intentar decir lo que pasa en él, como san Bernardo lo va a hacer para nosotros. Negar la unidad fundamental de los estados que des-

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, VIII, 23; P. L., t. 182, c. 954–955. Los textos escriturísticos alegados son, por orden, Mt. VI, 9; Sal. CXVIII, 75; Sal. CXXXII, 1; Is. XXIV, 16.

cribe, a partir del momento que se ha sobrepasado francamente el plano de las visiones y de las imágenes, sería obligarse a probar que existe para él una unión del alma con Dios, que no sea una asunción del alma por el Padre, a continuación de su restauración por el Hijo y el Espíritu Santo. Pero vamos a ver que tal es precisamente la característica de lo que san Bernardo describe como su éxtasis personal. Si, en la descripción que da, san Bernardo parece detenerse en el punto donde el alma, ya llena de caridad, exultante a la voz de la verdad, implora a Dios que “tienda su derecha a la obra de sus manos” para unirla a Él,⁴⁵ ¿no es simplemente que a partir de ahí, todo es misterio? Incluso para el sujeto que lo padece, el *excessus*⁴⁶ se pierde en lo inefable desde que es un hecho realizado. ¿Cómo pues representarse tales estados?

Su primera característica es la de ser contactos directos e inmediatos con Dios; su primera condición es entonces que tales contactos sean concebibles. Ahora bien, ellos lo son, la inmaterialidad del alma y la absoluta pureza de la espiritualidad de Dios hacen posibles tales comunicaciones. Hay cuatro órdenes de espíritus: los animales, los hom-

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 24; P. L., t. 182, c. 955. Cf. Job XIV, 15.

⁴⁶ EXCESSUS: término genérico que significa de una manera general toda superación de un estado para alcanzar otro. Ya es un *excessus* el librarse de sus pasiones. Sin embargo, la palabra no toma un sentido místico más que cuando designa el paso de un estado normalmente humano, aunque sea alcanzado con la ayuda de la gracia, a un estado más que humano. Los dos *excessus* más importantes son el que libera al hombre de sus sentidos externos (el éxtasis propiamente dicho) y aquél que lo hace superar al pensamental mismo (*abductio interioris sensus*).

Se ve así que, hablando estrictamente, habría que distinguir el *excessus*, tomado en sentido absoluto, del éxtasis; pero los dos términos están tan estrechamente unidos como para que observemos siempre esta precaución.

EXTASIS. Palabra rara en san Bernardo; la emplea sin embargo para designar el estado en el cual los sentidos corporales cesan de ejercer sus funciones. En este sentido, vuelve a entrar en el género *excessus*; es el *excessus* el que nos hace salir de la sensibilidad externa: “Proinde et ego non absurde sponsae extasim vocaverim mortem, quae tamen non vita, sed vitae eripiat laqueis” (*Cant. Cant.*, LII, 4; t. 183, c. 1031). Si el *éxtasis* es completo, hace exceder no sólo el sentido externo, sino también el sentido interno; es idéntico, entonces, al *excessus mentis*.

bres, los ángeles, Dios. El animal no existe sin principio espiritual, pero es esencialmente cuerpo y su *spiritus* es tan poco capaz de existir fuera de un cuerpo que muere con él. El hombre es diferente. Tiene un cuerpo y este cuerpo le es incluso necesario para adquirir los conocimientos sin los cuales no sabría hacerse ningún concepto de Dios. La famosa palabra de san Pablo: *invisibilia Dei* . . . significa claramente que, aunque seamos seres espirituales, el cuerpo nos es necesario para adquirir esta ciencia de Dios, sin la cual nos es imposible aspirar a la bienaventuranza. Se objetará tal vez el caso de los niños bautizados que mueren sin haber ejercitado su razón, y sin embargo ven a Dios; pero es un milagro de la gracia divina, “¿y qué me importa el milagro de Dios, cuando diserto sobre las cosas naturales?” (*Super Cantica*, V, 1). Ateniéndonos al orden natural, el cuerpo es (*fait*) tan necesariamente parte del hombre, que es para nosotros el instrumento de conocimiento sin el cual no sabríamos alcanzar nuestro fin sobrenatural. Bernardo, como se ve, no hubiera levantado ninguna objeción fundamental contra la epistemología de santo Tomás de Aquino.

Los ángeles tienen a veces cuerpos, pero no son (*font*) parte de su naturaleza, pues no son necesarios para ellos, sino para nosotros. Bernardo no resuelve la cuestión de saber si esos cuerpos son “naturales” o “asumidos,” pues constata que los Padres no son concordantes en esto, pero afirma claramente que, de todas formas, el conocimiento angélico está puro de todo elemento sensible; los cuerpos de los ángeles no les sirven para conocer, sino para ayudarnos, a nosotros que somos sus futuros conciudadanos de la Ciudad celestial. Sin embargo, por más espirituales que seamos nosotros y sean ellos, no sabrían unirse directamente a nuestro espíritu, ni nosotros al suyo. Fiel al principio agustiniano de la inviolabilidad de los espíritus, que podríamos llamar la ley de las conciencias cerradas, Bernardo mantiene que ningún espíritu puede unirse a ningún otro espíritu directamente y sin la intermediación de signos. Los ángeles son impenetrables los unos a los otros, y a los hombres, y

los hombres son impenetrables los unos a los otros, y a los ángeles; no hay otro más que Dios que pueda penetrarlos.

Es necesario reservar esta prerrogativa al Espíritu supremo e ilimitado. Él es el único que, cuando enseña la ciencia al ángel o al hombre no necesita usar de nuestro oído corporal para hacerse oír ni de una boca para hablar. Es por sí mismo que Él se derrama en el alma, por sí mismo que Él se hace conocer; siendo puro, Él es captado por los puros.⁴⁷

En este sentido se puede decir que sólo Dios es absolutamente espiritual; no tiene necesidad de un cuerpo ni para existir, ni para conocer, ni para obrar.⁴⁸ Nada se opone pues a que el Espíritu Santo, si quiere, penetre directamente nuestro espíritu.

Una segunda condición para que esta unión se produzca, es que entre el Espíritu y nuestro espíritu, el Verbo sirva de intermediario. Esta no es, parece, una necesidad para Dios, ni incluso que se deba a la esencia de la naturaleza humana, sino que parece deberse a la depravación de esta naturaleza por el pecado. El Hijo se ha encarnado para rescatarnos, es decir para restaurar esta posibilidad de amor entre el hombre y Dios que el pecado había destruido: Él llegó a ser pues para nosotros la condición necesaria de la unión divina. Se puede incluso ir más lejos. ¿El Hombre-Dios no es en efecto como un éxtasis concreto, donde el Verbo asume al hombre y el Hombre es asumido por Dios? Él es pues el Beso por excelencia, el *Osculum* del Cantar, y es por Él que podemos aspirar a los favores de la vida mística. La importancia de este punto es tal para las fuentes de la mística de san Buenaventura,⁴⁹ que conviene señalar el carácter absoluto de esta exigencia. Ningún hombre, sea quien sea, puede pretender a más que lo que pide el Cantar: “que me bese con el beso de su boca,” es decir, no exactamente a la boca misma,

⁴⁷ San Bernardo, *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón V, 1–9; P. L., t. 183, c. 798–802.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, sermón VI, 1; P. L., t. 183, c. 803.

⁴⁹ San Buenaventura, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, Prolog. 3–4; ed. minor (Quaracchi, 1911), 201–202.

sino solamente a su beso: “Christo, igitur, osculum est plenitudo, Paulo participatio: ut cum ille de ore, iste tantum de osculo osculatum gloriatur.”⁵⁰ Cristo es pues el beso divino mismo, donde la naturaleza humana es asumida por la naturaleza divina; el hombre no puede esperar más que recibir el beso de este Beso, el Éxtasis que fue Cristo es el modelo y la fuente, del cual todo éxtasis no es más que una participación.

Basta recordar, como tercera condición, que el alma que aspira a la unión divina debe haber superado el temor del esclavo y la codicia (*cupidité*) del mercenario, pero es importante, por el contrario, precisar que debe además querer ir incluso más allá de la obediencia del discípulo o de la piedad del Hijo. Ya no hay más lugar en ella para ningún otro sentimiento que el amor, pues ha llegado a ser la esposa (*sponsa*) es decir, *anima sitiens Deum*: un alma que tiene sed de Dios.⁵¹ Entendemos por esto que el deseo del alma llegada a este punto de perfección, excluye todo objeto que no sea el beso del Verbo. La que pide ese beso, es la que ama: “*quae vero osculum postulat, amat;*” y la que ama, es la que pide este beso y ningún otro: “*Amat autem quae osculum petit. Non petit libertatem, non mercedem, non denique vel doctrinam, sed osculum.*”⁵² En una palabra, el amor de Dios, llegado a este grado de intensidad, participa de este carácter de la bienaventuranza celestial, de ser un fin en sí mismo, aquel cuya posesión dispensa de todo lo demás, porque lo incluye. Esto no es sin razón, pues vamos pronto a definir la unión mística como una pregustación de esta bienaventuranza, pero antes de llegar a este punto es preciso que enumeremos primero las seña-

⁵⁰ San Bernardo, *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón VIII, 8; P. L., t. 183, c. 814.

⁵¹ “*Osculetur, inquit, me osculo oris sui (Cant., I, 1). Quis dicit? Sponsa. Quenam ipsa? Anima sitiens Deum.*” San Bernardo, *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón VII, 2; P. L., t. 183, c. 807 A. Hay que entender, por otra parte, por esta sed de Dios, el desprecio absoluto de todo lo que no es Dios y el deseo, excluyente de cualquier otro sentimiento, de ser unido a Él. Cf. *ibid.*, sermón LXXIV, 3; P. L., t. 183, c. 1140 A; sermón LXXXV, 12; c. 1194 A.

⁵² San Bernardo, *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón VII, 2; P. L., t. 183, c. 807 C.

les de un amor tan absolutamente exclusivo como éste. Tres palabras lo resumen: el alma que ama de esta manera, ama *caste, sancte, ardentem*.

Que ella entonces ama castamente, nada más evidente; sabemos en efecto que casto significa *desinteresado*; ahora bien, el alma ama entonces por él mismo a aquel que ella ama, y no por alguna otra cosa, ni siquiera por cualesquiera de los dones que podría recibir. Del amor propiamente dicho, tiene esta simplicidad directa que la distingue de la codicia (*cupiditē*). El alma va entonces directo hacia su objeto y no busca en él más que a él mismo: *quae ipsum quem amat quaerit, non aliud quicquam ipsius*. Casto, este amor ofrece además este otro carácter de ser santo; entendemos por esto que es exactamente lo contrario de una afección de la concupiscencia, porque consiste en el deseo de una unión de voluntad entre el hombre y Dios. Lo que el alma desea en el beso, es precisamente la infusión en ella del Espíritu Santo, cuya gracia la unirá al Padre. San Bernardo tan a menudo lo ha afirmado, que el sentido de sus fórmulas no deja aquí lugar a ninguna duda: *ab osculo, quod non est aliud nisi infundi Spiritu Sancto; non erit abs re osculum Spiritum Sanctum intelligi; dari sibi osculum hoc est Spiritum illum*.⁵³ Finalmente un tal amor es ardiente, en el sentido de que excluye del alma todo otro sentimiento, no destruyéndolos sino absorbiéndolos. Es particularmente verdadero respecto de los otros dos sentimientos fundamentales del alma humana, el temor y la codicia (*cupiditē*). Las consecuencias de esta transformación son de tal importancia, que es preciso nos detengamos en ellas.

El amor cuyo ardor es suficiente es una especie de embriaguez,⁵⁴ y es preciso que lo sea para que el alma tenga la audacia insensata de

⁵³ *Ibid.*, sermón VIII, 2–3; P. L., t. 183, c. 811–812.

⁵⁴ EBRIETAS, EBRIA. Estado del alma inflamada de un amor tal que olvidando su temor y su respeto por Dios, osa desear el beso de la unión mística.

“Quid enim? Respicit (Deus) terram et facit eam tremere (Psal. CIII, 32) et ista (anima) se ab eo postulat osculari! Ebriane est? Ebria prorsus. Et forte tunc, cum ad ista prorupit, exierat de cella vinaria . . .” *In Cant. Cant.*, sermón VII, 3; P. L., t. 183, c. 807.

aspirar a la unión divina. ¿Cómo osaría pretenderlo, si fuera de otra manera? Si la razón fuera juez, decidiría sabiamente que es absurdo de parte de una creatura aspirar a tal honor, que es particularmente locura de parte de una creatura caída, a menudo perdida en vicios y hundida en el fango de la carne. El mero pensamiento de la infinita majestad de Dios inspira pues al alma sentimientos de temor, si es impura, y sentimientos de respeto, si es pura. Temor y adoración, he ahí los dos únicos sentimientos que pueden normalmente encontrar lugar en el alma del hombre mientras se deja conducir por la razón, incluso acompañada de un amor tibio.

Sucede muy de otra manera cuando el amor alcanza el grado de ardor más alto de que sea capaz; transfigurando el temor y la codicia (*cupidité*) permite al alma sobrepasarlos. El temor ya no es más el miedo, sino ese respeto profundo de lo que se ama, que da todo su valor al objeto amado y no lo hace sino más deseable; la codicia (*cupidité*) se reabsorbe en el amor del bien amado, que deviene al mismo tiempo el medio y el fin del amor. La única violencia de este sentimiento, por el hecho mismo de que no deja más lugar a algún otro, tiene pues por efecto natural engendrar en nosotros una audacia, una confianza (*fiducia*) que la arrastra espontáneamente más allá de lo que nos retendría para aspirar a la unión divina, si no escuchamos más que la voz de la razón: pudor, respeto nacido del temor, majestad de Dios, el alma los olvida en esta embriaguez: *quae ita proprio ebriatur amore, ut majestatem non cogitet . . . ; desiderio feror, non ratione . . . pudor sane reclam, sed superat amor.*⁵⁵ Esta “confianza,” es precisamente la liberación del alma en quien comienza a reinar, en lugar de la miseria, la libertad de miseria, porque en ella está el Espíritu de caridad, que es el espíritu de Caridad.

⁵⁵ San Bernardo, *In Cant. Cant.*, Sermón VII, 4; P. L., t. 183, c. 808; véase, sobre todo, *ibid.*, IX, 2; c. 815–816.

El alma que llega a este punto está pronta para el matrimonio místico. No llega allí sin la gracia ni sin haber cooperado largamente por su celo (*industria*), pero parece que, en el pensamiento de san Bernardo, cuando el alma ha arribado a este punto de la vida de gracia y de penitencia, el matrimonio con el Verbo y su ascensión por el Padre son esas violencias hechas al Cielo, que el Cielo sufre de aquellos que lo aman con un amor ardiente. Para ver hasta qué punto la esperanza es legítima, baste acordarse lo que es el Espíritu Santo: el amor mutuo del Padre y del Hijo, su benevolencia mutua, la bondad de uno por el otro.⁵⁶ Al pedir ser unida al Verbo, el alma pide pues ser unida a Él y al Padre, por la intermediación del Espíritu Santo, que es el vínculo del uno y del otro. Es lo que hace el Hijo; se revela a Sí mismo y revela al Padre dando el Espíritu Santo. Tal es, provisoriamente al menos, el esquema de la operación: “Dando al Padre el Hijo revela, y revelando dona, y como esta revelación se hace por el Espíritu Santo, ella no ilumina solamente el conocimiento sino que inflama en el amor.” Dos puntos se deben considerar aquí: el contenido de esta revelación, la razón por la cual se produce.

Sobre el primer punto, es importante particularmente notar que el matrimonio del alma con el Verbo, aunque se haga por el amor, no lo hace sin incluir un elemento cognitivo. Es verdad que el conocimiento mismo, tal como san Bernardo lo concibe, está muy profundamente impregnado de afectividad. Sería sin embargo simplificar excesivamente su pensamiento, olvidar el rol que juega el conocimiento en su doctrina. Ya hemos visto que incluso el amor sensible de Cristo reclama dominar la ciencia teológica; san Bernardo no olvida hacer beneficiario a su vez a este intermediario de la unión con el Verbo, cuando finalmente se produce. No puede no haber allí unión con el Verbo cuando el amor alcanza este grado de intensidad, pero el alma no puede unirse al Ver-

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, sermón VIII, 4; P. L., t. 183, c. 811–812.

bo, que es Sabiduría, sin acrecentar su propia sabiduría. Mantengamos pues los dos aspectos del problema: hay conocimiento en el matrimonio del alma con el Verbo, en primer lugar porque sin conocimiento el alma no tendría nada para amar, y luego porque, en tal unión, adquiere una experiencia directa de este objeto; pero es igualmente verdadero decir que es porque saborea su objeto al experimentar que su conocimiento es sabiduría: “Ella invoca al Espíritu Santo para recibir al mismo tiempo el gusto de la ciencia y el condimento de la gracia. Y es natural que esta ciencia, que es dada en un beso, sea recibirla con amor.” Es preciso pues el uno y el otro para que la unión del alma con Dios sea completa: “Nadie piense que ha recibido el beso, si entiende la verdad y no la ama; o que la ama si no la entiende. En este beso no hay lugar para el error ni para el tedio.” En una palabra, “la gracia de besar aporta a uno y otro el don (a saber, del Espíritu Santo), es decir la luz del conocimiento y el jugo de la devoción. Porque él es el Espíritu de Sabiduría y de Inteligencia; como la abeja que lleva a la vez cera y miel, tiene todo junto para encender la luz de la ciencia, y para infundir el sabor de la gracia.”⁵⁷ El amor ardiente del alma la une pues al Espíritu Santo por el Verbo, lo que implica impregnación por una luz infusa que sea indivisiblemente la caridad de la ciencia y la ciencia de la caridad; ¿pero por qué se produce esta unión?

La respuesta cabe en algunas palabras, y ya la hemos sugerido; un amor de Cristo verdaderamente ardiente al punto de llegar a hacerse exclusivo, pone al alma en un tal estado de conformidad con el amor mutuo de las personas divinas, que permite el matrimonio del alma con Dios. Es eso lo que debemos explicar ahora, para ver cómo las objeciones dirigidas contra la doctrina de san Bernardo, puestas en un plano completamente extraño a aquel en el cual se mueve, desaparecen desde su propio punto de vista.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, sermón VIII, 6; P. L., t. 183, c. 812–813.

Volvamos al estado del alma, tal como la habíamos dejado, antes de que la caridad divina le haya devuelto algo de sus libertades perdidas. Desfigurada, dividida contra ella misma, se horroriza, porque se siente al mismo tiempo ella misma y otra, semejanza destruida en una imagen indestructible. Comparemos ahora lo que era entonces con lo que ha llegado a ser. Al establecerse en el alma, la caridad ha eliminado el *proprium* y lo ha substituido por una voluntad común al hombre y a Dios. Ahora bien, el *proprium* es la desemejanza. El amor de Dios tiene pues por efecto inmediato restaurar en el alma la semejanza divina perdida y de ahí van a derivarse consecuencias capitales para la inteligencia de la doctrina.

Antes que nada, dado que viene de reencontrar su verdadera naturaleza, el alma se reconoce ella misma en la plenitud de su ser. Imagen, lo que siempre ha sido, vuelve a ser además semejanza, lo que había dejado de ser por el pecado. El conflicto interior que la desgarrar llega a su fin, en la medida al menos en que es posible en esta vida; la paz renace, la miseria se hace soportable y el alma puede gozar de su propio rostro desde que ha vuelto a ser ella misma, un vivo amor de Dios. Tal es el primer aspecto de esta vida nueva, de la cual la paz de la conciencia hace una suerte de paraíso.

Pero hay más. Por una semejanza divina así restaurada, reconocerse ella misma, es reconocer en sí al Dios del que porta la semejanza. Viéndose, ella lo ve. San Pablo enseña que Dios puede ser conocido a partir de sus creaturas; ¡con cuánta más razón puede serlo a partir de aquella que ha hecho a su imagen y semejanza!⁵⁸ Y notemos bien que el hecho tiene sus consecuencias tanto de parte de Dios como de parte del hombre. En el alma desfigurada, el conocimiento de sí misma no revela más que deformidad propia y no permite ya más descubrir a Dios, pero Dios no se reconoce tampoco en el alma así manchada: Él no se ve ya

⁵⁸ Cf. San Bernardo, *De diversis*, sermón IX, 2; P. L., t. 183, c. 566.

en nosotros más de lo que nosotros lo vemos a Él allí. Desde que la caridad reina, por el contrario, Dios se reconoce en nosotros como nosotros lo reconocemos. De ahí dos nuevas consecuencias.

La primera es que la antinomia supuesta entre el amor de sí y el amor de Dios se desvanece. De parte de Dios, cuyo amor eterno de Sí no varía, podemos decir que nada ha cambiado. Él se ama a Él mismo; al volverse desemejante a Él, el alma se sustrae al amor que Él tiene por sí; en alguna medida, ella se ha retirado del campo del inmóvil amor divino. No viéndose más en ella, que no se le parece más, Él no se ama más en ella, y es entonces que se ve plenamente el sentido de las expresiones que usaba san Bernardo: peregrinando en la región de la desemejanza, el hombre yerra sin fin a lo largo del circuito de los impíos, en la obscuridad de una tierra sustraída al rayo del amor divino. Desde que el alma recupera, por el contrario, la semejanza perdida, Dios se ve de nuevo en ella y se ama de nuevo en ella, con el mismo amor con el que jamás ha cesado de amarse.

Por los caminos de la creatura inestable, el hombre arriba al mismo resultado. Mientras triunfaba en él la voluntad propia, este amor de la desemejanza como tal, no podía amar a Dios al amarse. Amarse a sí mismo, era amar una detestación de Dios. Supongamos, por el contrario, que la semejanza haya sido restaurada en el alma, lo que ama entonces, amándose, es una semejanza divina. Ahora bien, ser semejante a Dios es amar a Dios por Dios, porque Dios es este amor mismo. No podríamos pues pedir a san Bernardo que defina el grado supremo del amor de manera distinta de lo que lo ha definido: no amarse ya a sí mismo más que por Dios. Es imposible eliminar el amor de sí mismo, no sólo porque con él desaparecería el ser creado del cual es inseparable, sino también porque Dios nos ama, y dejaríamos de serle semejantes si dejáramos de amarnos. Es igualmente imposible eliminar la cláusula “más que por Dios,” porque Dios, no amándose y no amándonos más que por Él mismo, dejaríamos de serle semejantes si nos amáramos de

otra manera de la que Él nos ama: solamente por Él. Agreguemos finalmente, que dado que el amor de Dios por nosotros está tomado del amor que Él tiene por Sí mismo, amarnos exclusivamente por Él mismo es idéntico a lo que es en Él amarse exclusivamente a Él mismo. En el límite ideal, inaccesible en esta vida, pero que el éxtasis prefigura, habría comunión perfecta entre la voluntad de Dios y la nuestra. De la misma manera que el amor que Dios tiene por nosotros no es más que el amor que tiene por Sí mismo, el amor que tenemos por nosotros mismos no sería entonces más que el amor que tenemos por Dios.

La segunda de estas consecuencias, es que al devolver a la noción de imagen el lugar central que ocupa en esta doctrina, estamos de ahora en más en condición de comprender por qué toda vida de caridad tiende espontáneamente a las uniones místicas. Amarse a sí mismo, cuando uno se sabe una semejanza divina, es amar a Dios en sí y amarse en Dios. Y para Dios, cuando se mira en una imagen cada vez más perfecta de Él mismo, es amarse en ella y amarla en Sí. Lo semejante desea siempre su semejante; el hombre desea entonces a este Dios que representa y Dios codicia por así decir, esta alma donde Él se reconoce.

¿Cómo no desearía ardientemente llegar a ser la esposa, y cómo lo querría el esposo unirse a esta prometida, de la cual toda la belleza es obra de su amor? He aquí por qué sucede que, del primer y del segundo cielo, el Padre arrebató al alma al tercero; cómo es que sucede, que cediendo a un deseo impetuoso de un alma que no tiende hacia Él más que con el amor que Él tiene por Él mismo, el Esposo deja por un tiempo a esta corriente impetuosa volver a unirse a su fuente; el Amor se entrega al amor tal como Él quiere, adelantando la hora, para la cual Él la ha creado, cuando Él se entregará a ella tal cual Él es.

The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard: *Paradisus Claustralis*

SUMMARY

The author discusses St. Bernard of Clairvaux's understanding of *paradisus claustralis*—the monastic life of union with the Divine Will. Specifically, he tries to answer the question whether divine love can be taught according to the method proposed by St. Bernard. He makes his way through a whole thicket of artificial obstacles erected around it in order to show the whole positive contribution of history to the understanding of St. Bernard's mystical theology.

KEYWORDS

Bernard of Clairvaux, God, mysticism, paradisus claustralis, monasticism, caritas, love, cupiditas, cupidity.

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Book Reviews

Brian Welter

*Anthropologie phénoménologique et théorie de
l'éducation dans l'oeuvre d'Édith Stein*
by **Éric de Rus***

By the end of *Anthropologie phénoménologique et théorie de l'éducation dans l'oeuvre d'Édith Stein*, readers will clearly identify her as a leading Catholic thinker of the twentieth century. Raised Jewish, Stein (1891-1942) converted to Catholicism in 1922, was investitured as a Carmelite in 1934, and was later murdered by the Nazis. A student of the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, she maintained lively correspondences with some of the great thinkers of her day, including the Protestant philosopher and mystic (and Stein's godmother) Hedwig Conrad-Martius, the phenomenologists Roman Ingarden and Max Scheler, and the Catholic philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand. De Rus acquaints readers with the Carmelite through extensive citations of her writings, including her autobiography and letters. De Rus succeeds in portraying the philosophical and theological roots to Stein's outlook on education by discussing, among other topics, her metaphysical and theological positions at length (particularly in relation to the structure of the human soul), her reflections on the education of women, and her

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* Éric de Rus, *Anthropologie phénoménologique et théorie de l'éducation dans l'oeuvre d'Édith Stein* (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 2019), 340 pages. ISBN: 978-2-204-13655-6.

rejection of Heideggerian metaphysics. Though firmly rooted in her faith, Stein also remained up to date with the intellectual currents of her era.

The author shows how phenomenology, in its attempts at clarity and methodological rigor, informed Stein's notions of the soul and, from that, informed her understanding of education. She rejected psychoanalysis (too materialist to establish a true soul-to-soul connection), German idealism (too optimistic to explain human irrationality), and Heidegger (too nihilist and reductionist to develop a viable metaphysics) as bases for sound pedagogy. Phenomenology, Stein believed, could help explain the soul in metaphysical language and in terms that respect the individual. Phenomenology could explain this "essential reality" because "the phenomenological attitude consisted of 'directing its view on the *essential*'."¹ It sought the "immediate intuition" instead of trying to adhere to a theory.² Throughout this book, readers get a sense of how Stein's sober and realistic assessment exemplified this phenomenological perspective.

Stein's understanding of the human soul was informed by many sources, including such writers as Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, the Norwegian Sigrid Unset, and the German Gertrude von le Fort, the latter two being Catholic converts. De Rus cites Stein's thoughts on the insights of these writers which also indicated her ultimate pedagogical concerns:

[I]n penetrating into the concrete reality of the individual and in following the complexity of the soul as explorers unto the ultimate depths accessible to the human, one arrives at the point at which the soul's relationships no longer stem from interconnections to the worldly environment. This is the point at which the action of spiritual forces becomes visible.³

¹ De Rus, *Anthropologie Phénoménologique et théorie de l'Éducation dans l'Oeuvre d'Édith Stein*, 59.

² *Ibid.*, 61.

³ *Ibid.*, 59.

Much of de Rus's discussion occurs at this challenging and abstract level. He highlights how Stein did not reserve her insights into the depths of the human soul for the mystical. He does not try to prove that Stein was or wasn't a mystic or interested in mysticism. Her philosophical and theological pursuits led to her simple concern with the soul. After many chapters, the author arrives at the point at which this can be developed into a more systematic pedagogical view.

Though deeply infused with the Catholic faith, Stein's views on anthropology and education did not contest the German concept of education, *Bildung*. As how de Rus depicts things, Stein did not seek to separate Catholics in her country from their culture or the German tradition of education, though she called on education to "conform to the supernatural finality [finalité] of the human being," Christ.⁴ Unsurprisingly, Stein evoked the Rule of St. Benedict. De Rus shows that Stein's views, if followed by German educational authorities, could have reenergized German education by appealing to the medieval roots of teaching and learning. Sanctification, the end of such an education, would amount to "the *formation* of the human being to the image of the Christ archetype, which is to say as a process of configuration to the person of Christ."⁵ Education would spark the recreation of the human, with educators as "co-creators in the formation of a human."⁶ De Rus links *Bildung* to the noun *Bild*, citing M.-D. Richard in a footnote:

[T]he term *Bildung* (the equivalent of *Bild*, image), as well as the verbs *einbilden* (conform interiorly), *über-bilden* (conform to that which is above oneself), *ent-bilden* (renounce the image), built on the root *Bild*, were medieval neologisms created by . . . Meister Eckhart (1260-1327) to designate mystical experiences of the human being becoming the image and the resemblance of

⁴ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 293.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 294.

God (*imago Dei*). This concept therefore had a mystical-theological origin.⁷

De Rus shows the place of Stein's educational theory in German educational history and practice.

De Rus argues that Stein followed this German educational tradition and shows how this makes sense because elements of the Catholic perspective survived at the core of this tradition. Again from a footnote (though it needs more forceful emphasis), we read M.-D. Richard's words reflecting the heart of de Rus's own argument:

Hence, for Edith Stein, *Bildung* (formation) must penetrate to the deepest part of the soul, so that the human in his totality "reproduces in himself the image (*Bild*) of God so that he realizes in his being human nature in its purity, of which Christ is the original image (*Ur-Bild*). *Bildung* is the work of God working by Himself or via those instruments that He chooses."⁸

This points to the relevance of Stein's pedagogical theory for today's teachers and educational theorists.

De Rus's depiction of Stein as a careful metaphysical thinker adds to this sense of contemporary relevance. Based on her practice of phenomenology, she identified clear real-world implications for metaphysics, including for education. Education has clear metaphysical implications: "Education penetrates right to the soul itself, in order to give it a new form. By doing so, it recreates the human in his totality." This transformation "goes beyond natural possibilities" because the soul is the "receptacle of divine life."⁹ De Rus helps us see and appreciate Stein's sober and reasoned style of thinking, which adds to her credibility. Education's metaphysical impact affects all of us, not only an elite or mystical cadre. Stein goes so far as to call education "a work of sanc-

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 279.

tification”¹⁰ because the “ultimate end of the formation of the person is his configuration to Christ.” *Formation*, from de Rus’s French, corresponds to *Bildung* and represents whole-person education. *Formation* fosters a deeper vocation or life calling than simply a career.

Formation or *Bildung* according to Stein leads us to the Christian liberty which enables us to freely choose to develop into who God has created us to be. This path, unique for every man and woman, is a participation in the Logos. De Rus therefore notes the connection for Stein between liberty and the center of the soul.¹¹ This discussion comes toward the end of the book and builds on the earlier analysis of Stein’s philosophical and theological development of the soul and of human anthropology in general. Thus readers at this point have no problem with the following type of observation:

The liberty to orient oneself toward the center of the soul is a possibility of the I [capitalized *Je*] which can move itself in the soul’s space . . . The power to move toward the center of the soul belongs intrinsically to liberty in terms of it being an essential property of the will. An individual can therefore determine to situate himself in the most profound part of himself in order to take, from this point, ultimate decisions.¹²

The educator is called to support the flourishing of the person.

Given the rich philosophical thinking of *Anthropologie phénoménologique et théorie de l’éducation dans l’oeuvre d’Édith Stein*, some readers may be disappointed that the discussion on education does not take a practical direction. Yet Catholic educators who are searching for a clear and robust articulation of their mission need look no further. As how de Rus explains things, Stein’s development of a coherent vision of the human person far surpasses the image of the materialist and choice-besotted *individual* of contemporary culture. Stein envisioned a

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 283.

¹² *Ibid.*

person, starting from the deepest core of the human soul (with the soul having its own interior hierarchy), capable of flourishing through vocation and development. This development follows a unique, individual path that depends, naturally, on outer forces as well as the person's interior resolve to be steadfast and true to the inner calling. Such a vision of the human and the educator's pivotal role can support and revitalize Catholic education. That concrete mission makes this book essential reading.



Anthropologie phénoménologique et théorie de l'éducation dans l'oeuvre d'Édith Stein by **Éric de Rus**

SUMMARY

This paper is a review of Éric de Rus's book: *Anthropologie phénoménologique et théorie de l'éducation dans l'oeuvre d'Édith Stein* (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 2019). According to the author, de Rus succeeds in portraying the philosophical and theological roots to Stein's outlook on education by discussing, among other topics, her metaphysical and theological positions (particularly in relation to the structure of the human soul), her reflections on the education of women, and her rejection of Heideggerian metaphysics.

KEYWORDS

Eric de Rus, Edith Stein, education, theology, philosophy, metaphysics, anthropology, phenomenology, human soul.

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Brian Welter

La philosophie antique by Pierre Vesperini*

French philosophers such as Pierre Hadot, Michel Onfray, and Pierre Vesperini argue that modernity, influenced by ancient Christianity, has misinterpreted ancient Greek philosophy. This has cut us off from the ancients. The fresh and even provocative interpretations of ancient philosophy of these three thinkers depict it as a way of life and not simply as competing schools of thought. Vesperini leaves readers with the notion that not only Christianity but also later German thinkers radically altered what we today regard as the essence of ancient philosophy. Ancient Christianity's uncompromising declaration that faith, not philosophy, led to the only true philosophy ended the often playful convivium in which ancient Greek philosophers thrived. In order to convey to readers the extent of these changes, the author first provides ample and fascinating background to the varied and dynamic Greek philosophical mindset, starting from the pre-Socratics. Throughout *La philosophie antique*, Vesperini challenges modernity's deeply-rooted assumptions about the nature and practice of philosophy.

Like Hadot and Onfray, Vesperini succeeds at making the reader more aware and critical of our current interpretation of the ancients, which he blames in part on modern German thought. According to the

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* Pierre Vesperini, *La philosophie antique. Essai d'histoire* (Paris: Fayard, 2019), 493 pages. ISBN: 978-2-213-67850-4.

author, Hegel's view led one thinker to typically remark: "It is thanks to the Greek polis that 'rational thought' could be born."¹ Yet Vesperini asserts *contra* Hegel that the ancient world never split religion from philosophy. This notion of a split remains common. Vesperini likens the intellectual ferment in Germany between 1770 and 1830 to the Italian Renaissance in terms of its intellectual power. This period built the modern template for philosophy, including in its "idealization of Antiquity" and "the elevation of history to the status of a fundamental science of the spirit."² This perspective, particularly in its elevation of Greek over Roman thought, influenced subsequent teaching of philosophy.

Vesperini follows G. Colli in arguing that Greek thought did not slough off the "irrational," "mystique," or "mythique" over the centuries in favor of rationalism, but retained these elements throughout its pre-Christian history.³ But it is not so easy to challenge modern preconceptions. Vesperini endorses Foucault's observation, "Our entire epoch . . . tries to escape Hegel. But to really escape Hegel supposes that we understand exactly *what it costs to separate ourselves from him*."⁴ Such words speak of a certain humility: that scholars cannot simply turn their backs on a certain perspective, however troublesome that perspective may be, because it forms so many of our basic assumptions. Vesperini aims for a more authentic view of the ancient thinkers by attempting to differentiate between modern, that is German, views of the ancients, and what he sees as the real ancients.

One way he accomplishes this is by depicting the personalities of ancient Greek philosophy and their societies. Philosophers exuded religious power. Thales and Anaxagorus, for instance, "saw that which was

¹ Vesperini, *La philosophie antique*, 35.

² *Ibid.*, 32.

³ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

hidden.”⁵ The vision of the power behind the universe necessitated theological, not rational, discourse. *Sophia* therefore came from the gods, not from reason. Ancient Greek thought, steeped in religious assumptions, commonly cautioned that humans needed to stay humble and not venture outside of their limits.⁶ Ancient Greek philosophy mixed with the conviviality and social bonding of religious practice and beliefs. “All the secret cults offered authentic ‘parties for knowledge’” because this knowledge freed humans from the path toward death and led them toward becoming gods.⁷ The extremist Epicurus and his garden of delights, over which he made himself a god, exemplifies the playfulness that accompanied theological preoccupation. He dropped the prevalent notion from Plato and other thinkers that philosophy serves politics, instead regarding philosophy’s task as bringing happiness. Seeking virtue was vanity. In addition to permanent enthusiasm, pleasure—to live like the gods, wanting for nothing—was the goal: “We do not need to wait for death to achieve happiness.”⁸ Yet paradoxically these *bon vivants* did not encourage laxness. To bring about the harmony that Epicurus’ family of philosophers sought required “impeccable discipline.”⁹ Perhaps to soften any resulting puritanism, Epicurus the sage required a charismatic enthusiasm.

Vesperini shows that Greek philosophy did not develop in a linear fashion, away from religion and toward rationalism. Ancient Greek philosophy didn’t give up religious or initiatory practice. The gods remained inherent fixtures. The Enlightenment and its aftermath simply read a kind of church-state separation into these thinkers. Vesperini occasionally weaves modern views into his account of the ancients to

⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

highlight discrepancies and to show certain modern perspectives according with his vision: “The Socrates of modern thinkers is double: He is the first philosopher of doubt, of critique, of dialectical discussion, and he is the first philosopher who invites the individual to reflect on himself, and to apprehend himself as a subject.”¹⁰ Vesperini’s view of Socrates parallels in some ways the common modern view: The enigma of Socrates is that “he is the most wise because he knows that he knows nothing,” but, believing that his mission comes from God, he remains a theological thinker. He aims to destroy human thought in order to show the greatness of God.¹¹ Vesperini’s Socrates, in other words, is more complex than modernity has assumed. The author likewise depicts Plato as rejecting the “*sophia* of the sages of the past” without rejecting the gods, who are the true sages. Even though philosophers were no longer sages, they were charged with a serious and high mission. The Academy served the polis by developing the idea of justice and of men who would lead the citizens out of their caves of delusion. Plato envisaged philosophy as “the research and acquisition of the truth,” which he pursued through the dialectic method.¹² Yet neither he nor anyone else could ever transmit the truth orally, as the truth came from within and was unspeakable.

In turning to philosophy in the ancient Egyptian city of Alexandria, Vesperini examines certain powerful shifts in ancient Greek thought. Alexandrine philosophy more closely resembled encyclopedic knowledge and learning than it had in the past, as exemplified in the city’s famous library. Vesperini cannot identify the cause of this revolution: “This sudden importance for the written word is inexplicable, as is also inexplicable the sudden interest of the Greeks for the knowledge

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹² *Ibid.*, 134.

and 'barbarian wisdom'."¹³ Greek thinkers suddenly opened up to Egyptian, Persian, and Babylonian traditions. Alexandria adopted a certain epistemology through its urge to classify the library's holdings. Along with its "polumathia," this organizing indicated the spirit of Aristotle.

Yet Vesperini argues that Alexandrine philosophy retained its religious nature alongside the embrace of non-Greek practices: "For the Greeks, Egyptian priests were the masters of *philosophia*," from whom one could receive an initiation. Knowledge at this point still stemmed from religious practice. Initiation meant that "a god *reveals* to a mortal the truth that is hidden from other people," an idea prevalent in the Mediterranean at the time.¹⁴ In other words, thinkers still saw the sage as a bridge to the divine and to divinity. Egyptian practices, particularly close to the divine, were romanticized. The Egyptian Hermes Trismegiste was the great visionary of knowledge. "'Hermetic' writings spoke the common language of the Greek philosophical schools."¹⁵ All in all, this was a continuation of the religious approach of pre-Alexandrine Greek philosophy.

Rome's reorientation of philosophy did not radically alter the basics of Greek philosophy as much as Christianity later did. Vesperini identifies three significant groupings of philosophy in Rome in the second century B.C.: encyclopedic, initiatic, and ethical. They were not exclusive. While the initiatic aspect was reserved for the powerful, the ethical was more widespread. More interestingly, philosophy in ancient Rome played an essential political role as the republic turned into the empire. Given the ancient Roman love of freedom, philosophers had to distinguish between a tyrant and the legitimacy of the emperor in order to fit the political revolution into previous moulds. They became public

¹³ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 212.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 219.

relations men in exploiting theology. The emperor was not a tyrant, but had the blessing of the gods. Philosophers extended this PR to the image of the emperor. He was the good shepherd: “He watches over his subjects just as God watches over the world.”¹⁶ He was a sage.

Despite his assertion that the German creative period between 1760 and 1830 recast ancient philosophy, Vesperini argues most forcefully that it is really Christianity that ended the banquet. For Vesperini, what has Christianity left us with in our post-modern era? The misleading belief that we need a dominant belief. We wrongfully assume that philosophy somehow transcends politics, but Vesperini argues convincingly that philosophy is more engaged politically than ever before, as in Marxism. Like Plato and many of the other ancient Greeks and Romans, we now once again apply philosophy to politics in the form of ideology. We have inherited from Christendom a joyless, unplayful philosophy—quite unlike the ancient Greeks’ convivium. The author turns to the famous British child psychoanalyst, Donald Winnicott, proclaiming with him that our only way out is play and, in Vesperini’s words, “the free elaboration of thoughts that come in the most diverse forms (philosophy, literature, art, religion, cinema, politics) but which are characterized by their total independence with regards to the practical necessities of social life.”¹⁷



¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 269.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 305.

***La philosophie antique* by Pierre Vesperini**

SUMMARY

This paper is a review of Pierre Vesperini's book: *La philosophie antique. Essai d'histoire* (Paris: Fayard, 2019). According to the author, Vesperini attempts to make the reader more aware and critical of our current interpretation of the ancients. He does it by showing that modernity, influenced by ancient Christianity, misinterpreted ancient philosophy, and that the latter did not slough off the "irrational," "mystique," or "mythique" over the centuries in favor of rationalism, but retained these elements throughout its pre-Christian history.

KEYWORDS

Pierre Vesperini, ancient philosophy, religion, rationalism, modernity, Christianity.

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Appendix

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The Editorial Board of *Studia Gilsoniana* wishes to thank the Peer Reviewers for their diligence in reviewing articles submitted for publication in the ninth volume of the journal. With great hope for further fruitful cooperation, special appreciation is addressed to:

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