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SOMMAIRE -- CONTENTS

Maritain and Historical Traditions in Philosophy

The Idea of Tradition & Idealism After Hegel 3
Leslie Armour

Maritain, Eco, and the History of Philosophical Aesthetics 21
Daniel Gallagher

Method in Philosophy: Maritain's Engagement with Modernity 38
Nikolaj Zunic

Aquinas and War 54
Richard Feist

Jacques Maritain et André Caplet : le Moyen-âge comme clé d'interprétation de l'histoire 71
Sylvain Caron

La philosophie de Jean Ladrière comme herméneutique de la métaphysique thomiste de la création 82
Louis Perron

Some Reflections on Thomism, Modern Chemistry, and the Four Causes 98
François F. Savard

St. Thomas, John Haldane and Mind 108
Robbie Moser

Socialism, the Self and the State 124
Will Brown

COMPTES RENDUS – BOOK REVIEWS

Autonomy and Sympathy: A Post-Kantian Moral Image. By Filimon Peonidis
Irene Switankowsky 129

God and Other Spirits: Intimations of Transcendence in Christian Experience, By Phillip Wiebe
Robert Larmer 131

Vol. XXI, 2005 – ERRATA

p. 31

reasons, truth and intelligence, human dignity, freedom, brotherly love, and tht absolute value of moral good.[93]

[93]Maritain, *State*, p. 111.

The Idea of Tradition & Idealism After Hegel

Leslie Armour

Alasdair MacIntyre has urged that what counts as a "good reason" depends on what philosophical tradition one belongs to. MacIntyre does not mean that this fact – even if he is right and it *is* fact – invariably puts an end to philosophical arguments between supporters of rival philosophical traditions. There is always argument about whether a given tradition meets its own conditions of rationality, and about which of two or more traditions is, effectively, most coherent. But he continues to underline the basic point.

"Debate between fundamentally opposed standpoints does occur; but it is inevitably inconclusive. Each warring position characteristically appears irrefutable to its own adherents."[1] And this appearance, MacIntyre thinks, is, in principle, justified.

Such a position must lead one to trip over one's own feet. If we can identify philosophical traditions at all, there must be something in common between them by virtue of which they are philosophical and traditions. And this must surely involve some orderly way of assembling basic principles and some way of identifying their continuity and development over time. The reasoning needed one might think would be common to all the examples which count as philosophical traditions.

Jacques Maritain, of course, thought there was a central tradition in western philosophies, one which had its roots in Aristotle, its flowering in St. Thomas and was sometimes dangerously cross-pollinated by Platonists. And it is true that in this tradition a certain notion of logic was common property. It is true,

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1 Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (London: Duckworth, 1990), p. 7. The caveats which soften the impact occur in various places, but especially on p. 5.

also, that in the high middle ages, when philosophers argued about the relation of reason and revelation, they developed different notions of the limits of reason. Still, it is not possible to argue about the limits of reason without using argument forms that both sides might find valid and so such debates have to be based on some common notions which both sides, at least find appropriate and assessable. Much, as we shall see, depends on the notions one holds about the relation of rationality to irrationality.

In fact, though in Maritain's own philosophy there is always a strong attachment to a specific doctrine which he speaks of as the "philosophy of Aristotle and St. Thomas," and central to it are specific metaphysical doctrines together with an account of what he called St. Thomas's use of the "light of Christianity," this is not the whole story. He also suggests that philosophy is a kind of *sagesse,* rather than a kind of *connaissance.*[2] And his discussion of the relation between philosophy and the intellect suggests that what is at issue is most importantly a way of responding to the specifically human situation. In certain moods Etienne Gilson, despite his attachment to the view that perennial philosophy is to be understood as a kind of historical development of continuing doctrine, hints at something like this, too.[3]

In a number of Louis Lavelle's works one finds such ideas developed further and in a somewhat different direction.[4] Philosophy is a certain persistent attempt to come to terms with a fundamental aspect of the human relation to the universe. As such, it necessarily involves an exploration of the relation of the human being to reason itself, and so in any philosophical tradition this becomes an issue to be argued about as part of the process of laying down that tradition. Such arguments must necessarily force us to think of the way reason and good arguments might appear outside the tradition and so force comparisons in a way which might give us some insight into the nature of reason and good argument as such.

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[2] Jacques Maritain, *Éléments de philosophie* (Paris: Téqui, 6th ed), corrected, 1921, pp. 64-65.

[3] Gilson says that "Plato, Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas had no system in the idealistic sense of the word. Their ambition was not to achieve philosophy once and for all, but to maintain it and serve it in their own times, as we have to maintain and serve it in ours." (Etienne Gilson, *Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: Scribner's, 1937), p. 317.

[4] See especially Louis Lavelle, *L'existence et la valeur, leçon inaugurale et résumes des cours au Collège de France (1941-1951)* (Paris: Documents et Inédits du Collège de France, 1991). The inaugural lecture has been available since it was first given, but the addition of the course resumés is new.

It therefore seems appropriate to look at an actual case of a philosophical tradition in whose development the issue of the relation of that tradition to the right use of reason became central.

Wilhelm Windelband, the great historian of philosophy, called the chapter which followed his account of Hegel "The Metaphysics of the Irrational."[5] Windelband put it this way: "The dialectic of history willed it that the System of Reason should also change into its opposite."[6] A book might be written about that sentence, but Windelband says that it was Friedrich Schelling through whom the dialectic of history acted first, for, of course, Windelband sees the opposition developing even during the life of Hegel. Schelling, in a sense, returned to Kant, and said that consciousness always has for its object something distinguished from reason, something merely given. Windelband says that Schelling went further and insisted that this residue which reason confronts "was also to be thought of as something irrational."[7]

Christoph Eschenmayer argued that while philosophy can show the reasonableness of the world the difficulty arises when it begins to show how the world has an intelligibility of its own in its relation to the deity.[8] Here, he thought, we leave reason and religion begins.

Indeed, one way of pointing to the central difficulty is to demand an explanation for the fact that God or the Absolute fails, somehow, to appear clearly in our world and why our world takes so long to instantiate the Absolute. Friedrich Schlegel supposed that there is, indeed, an irrationality[9] in the connection between the finite and infinite. He imagined that only

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[5] Wilhelm Windelband *Geschichte der Philosophie,* Freiburg, 1890, second edition, 1892, tr. as *A History of Philosophy* by James H.Tufts (New York: Macmillan, 1901), pp. 615-622.

[6] Recent English-speaking philosophers would suggest that such a sentence needs psychiatric rather than philosophical analysis and even the nineteenth century British idealists would have raised an eyebrow, but Windelband's meaning is tolerably clear for all that.

[7] Windelband, *A History of Philosophy,* p.616.

[8] Christoph Adolph Adam von Eschenmayer. Windelband calls attention to his *Die Philosophie in ihrem Uebergange zur Nichtphilosophie,* 1803. The only copy I have been able to locate is British Library 8464.bbb.13, published in Erlangen.

[9] The relation between irrationality and non-rationality is obscure. If what is beyond reason is not subject to the rules of reason is it irrational? In the ordinary way, of course, if we say that cows are not rational animals we do not mean that they are irrational, only that reason does not motivate them. But a non-rational world would seem to be one to which the laws of logic do not apply. the question now is not one of behaviour but one of description. And a world beyond the bounds of logic would seem, in some sense, irrational. At any rate in the kinds of discussions which occupy us here, the switch from one to the other seems to be made rather frequently.

Scripture could reconcile them.[10] Schopenhauer, of course, found a mysterious irrationality in our attachment to the will and in our difficulty in overcoming it.[11]

The Hegelian Idea & Its Consequences

Basically, the process of thought at work here is the result of the Hegelian theory of the Idea. The Absolute Idea finally overcomes all opposition. It is a unity which absorbs within it the tension between reason and experience, between subject and object, and, for that matter, between unity and plurality. Its genesis is – in one sense – a simple enough matter. Hegel begins both his *Logics*[12] with the notion of pure being, the notion, that is, of what simply *is* – that which is but is nothing in particular or nothing determinate. But when we have stripped away all the determinations we are left with nothing.

Equally, however, if one examines the notion of nothing one finds that it is what can be talked about but has no determinateness. Pure being collapses into nothing and nothing collapses into pure being. The remedy is simple: In order to get not "pure being" but being as it is in the world one must introduce the notion of determinateness. To be determinate is to have some characteristics, some quality. But, again, we should examine the notion of quality. A quality, in itself, is still, indeterminate. Nothing is merely red or, if you prefer it, to be merely red is nothing at all. Everything which is red has some determinate quantity of redness. And so we are forced to introduce quantity as well as quality. The process goes on, inevitably, until one has developed whatever one needs to prevent the collapse into nothingness. But any determinate characteristic seemingly brings about this result.

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[10] See Carl Wilhelm Friedrich von Schlegel;,*Philosophische Vorlesungen,* n.p.. Vienna 1830; also *Philosophie des Lebens,* Vienna, n.p., 1828; *Vorlesungen zur Philosophie Geschichte*, 2 vols., Vienna, 1829, tr. J. B. Robertson as *The Philosophy of History,* 2 vols., London: Bohn,1848.

[11] See especially *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstelung,* Leipzig, 1819 (modern German edition, Stuttgart and Frankfurt am Main, 1960, *Samtliche Werke,* Vol. 1). There are two English translations: *The World as Will and Idea* by J. B. S. Haldane and J. Kemp (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1883), and *The World as Will and Representation* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Falcon's Wing Press, 1958).

[12] See G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. by Georg Lasson (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1966), Vol. II, p. 505, tr. as *Science of Logic* by W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1929), Vol. II, p.485; and by A. V. Miller (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969); and *Enzyklopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften*, ed. by Friedhelm Nicolin and Otto Pöggeler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1959), p. 197. Part I is translated by William Wallace as *The Logic of Hegel* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1874). The passage cited is on p. 328.

The situation is this: When we apply a determinate property to something we mark it off from other things. We say that it is this and not that. Thus we exclude something. But what we postulate positively depends in some measure on what it excludes. For concepts which mark things out are (in this respect) like lines on a map. There cannot be a France unless there is a Belgium (or some place) on the other side of the line. Concepts take their logical functions and the propositions which express them take their meanings, in part, from this very process of boundary drawing. There is no point in drawing a boundary if there is nothing on the other side. Failure to produce what is on the other side always destroys the concept in question. But, if all the concepts depend on all the others for their sense then they all collapse unless they form a single all-embracing and mutually implicating system.

This system, however, is either undescribable or it is properly subsumed under the concept of the Absolute. But if there is a concept of the Absolute, then it admits of no further analysis for that would simply start the chain of dependencies all over again.

The Further Determination of the Absolute

The difficulty is that if the Absolute really does overcome all the opposition, then it is a featureless blank. McTaggart complained about that effect in his first major essay, and he was encouraged by F. H. Bradley.[13] He was also supported by one of the Caird brothers.[14]

The "further determination of the Absolute" was to become a central problem of post-Hegelian philosophy. The Hegelian legacy, then, appeared to promise an unpleasant choice. One choice required the re-introduction of the irrational or at least of the non-rational. The other required some new and bold solution to the problem of the Absolute. The most restrained re-introduction of the irrational, perhaps, was that of Arthur Schopenhauer who

[13] See John McTaggart, Ellis McTaggart, "The Further Determination of the Absolute." It was originally privately printed in 1893, and is reprinted in S. V. Keeling, ed., *Philosophical Studies* (London: Edward Arnold, 1934), pp. 210-263. According to a letter which McTaggart wrote to his future wife in New Zealand, August, 1894, he showed it to Bradley (then the leading philosopher in Britain).

[14] The same letter speaks of "Caird of Glasgow." (Probably John Caird -- "Principal Caird"-- but possibly his brother Edward.) John Caird, 1820-1898 is the man who turned religious thought in Scotland toward Hegelianism and revolutionised the Church of Scotland. He became the titular head of Glasgow University and is usually known as "Principal Caird." Edward Caird, 1835-1908, was his younger brother and was professor of philosophy at Glasgow and then became Master of Balliol College, Oxford. He was a leader of the pacifist movement during the Boer War and campaigned to prevent Cecil Rhodes from obtaining an honorary degree.

saw irrationality as connected to the inevitable human attraction to will. A deeper draught of the same medicine might lead on to Nietzsche and to the outright espousal of a kind of irrationalism with deep roots in the philosophy and religion of the west. In western philosophy, the concept of the will is never far from sight, for western thought has always had will close to its centre. Wrestling with the will is the essence of the Judeo-Christian tradition and the religious world of the west has revolved around a real or imaginary struggle between the will of God and the will of man. Sometimes Greek intellectualism is contrasted with the Judeo-Christian tradition. But Greek tragedy, too, saw man locked in a fateful struggle of wills, essentially man against the Gods.

When intellect fails to solve our problems, the tendency in western thought has always been to fall back on will. Sometimes this takes the form of using will as a source of values. If we do not know what the good is, we can make things good by our own fiats. Sometimes the pursuit of power becomes an alternative to understanding. In Nietzsche's writings one can find both results. But Nietzsche is by no means alone. His colourful rhetoric has resulted in his condemnation by people who would otherwise praise such activities.

The American pragmatists also faced what they took to be the impotence of the intellect to produce ultimate understanding and decided to make the true that which "works." Charles Peirce understood the difficulties of any such position and reacted against what he took to be the excesses of William James. A closely related doctrine, however, might be found, in a form disguised with pedestrian prose, in the works of John Dewey. Much the same doctrine ultimately animates the thought of "logical pragmatists" like C. I. Lewis and Willard Quine and yet another form of it can be found in the recent work of Richard Rorty.[15]

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[15] For Schopenhauer see *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstelung.* See also Patrick Gardener, *Schopenhauer* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963); and Frederick Copleston, *Arthur Schopenhauer, Philosopher of Pessimism* (London: Search Press, 1946). Nietzsche's remarks are scattered through his works. See *Werke* (Munich: Hanser, 1954-1956) *or The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche,* ed. and tr. by O. Levy (London: Foulis, 1909-13). (The edition is not *quite* complete!) For a critical account see H. L. Stewart, *Nietzsche and the Ideals of Modern Germany* (London: Edward Arnold, 1915). For Peirce's critique of James see his letter to James in R. B. Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1935), Vol. II pp. 437-438. He says "I thought your Will to Believe was a very exaggerated utterance such as injures a serious man very much, but what you now do is far more suicidal." This refers to the doctrine of *A Pluralistic Universe* (London: Longmans Green, 1909). In *From a Logical Point of View* (New York: Harper and Row, 1936), Chapter III, Willard Quine has said "I espouse a more thorough pragmatism [than]

The alternative is to try to reconstruct the idea of the Absolute, either, as McTaggart proposes, to permit it to have parts while retaining a certain unity or, as Bradley proposes, to introduce a complex notion of degrees of reality so that, in some sense, the whole can be expressed through a set of parts. In McTaggart's scheme, reality has a set of fundamental parts but they are each, in one sense, co-extensive with the whole.[16] In Bradley's account, the meaning of the expression "the Absolute" always eludes us though it is possible that an infinity of expressions of it would convey its content if not its nature.[17]

The most important source of these difficulties is the final, Hegelian, chapter in the history of the idea of ideas. The most obvious solution to the ancient but central problem of knowledge – how ideas can give rise to or convey knowledge – has always been to elide the two: In confronting the idea one confronts knowledge. For Plato this took the form of a claim that the ideas involved in knowledge ultimately were reality. This enabled Plato to reconcile Parmenides' claim that reality is one and unchanging with Heraclitus's claim that reality is many and changing, by associating reality proper with the eternal ideas and holding that such ideas informed the world of chaos which, otherwise, would lapse into nothingness. But as many people read Plato over the centuries, it downgraded the world of immediate experience. The world of our sensory experience became a world which merely mirrored or conveyed a shadow of the eternal ideas.[18] Even time had to become the moving shadow of eternity. And the cautious Aristotle, of course, continued to wonder how the ideas could be related to the appearances without introducing still more relating devices – and so on to infinity.

Hegel was still concerned to complete the elision of idea and reality. The Idea *was* reality. He insisted, however, that the Absolute Idea was intended to save the appearances at the same time that it made reality intelligible. The solution was a kind of doctrine of ablation: Each level of the dialectic contained what was contained in the lower levels and added something new. Nothing was to be lost in the process. The great mystery is to understand how this summing is to be achieved. If the Absolute could be regarded as merely a

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Carnap, Lewis, and others." For Richard Rorty see *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), and *Philosophy in History* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1984).

[16] See John McTaggart, Ellis McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence* (Cambridge: the University Press, 1921) Vol. I, Vol. II, ed. by C. D. Broad, 1927.

[17] See F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality* (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1893), second edition (with appendix) 1897, ninth impression (corrected), 1930.

[18] This is what became known as "Platonism," but whether it is Plato's doctrine is arguable and the argument cannot be pursued here.

sum of its parts we would still have an endless chain of relations of dependency. Leibniz had argued in *The Monadology* that the objects we ordinarily meet in the world seem, like space, to be divisible to infinity like the space they are in. Perhaps there are in the world indivisible quanta or entities.[19] But McTaggart pointed out that every property has properties and they have properties in their turn. Every whole depends on the properties of its parts and infinite chains of dependence entail that the existence conditions of things cannot be completely specified. Can they then exist? McTaggart thought not.[20] But if the Absolute does not have real parts, in what sense does it actually sum what lies below it?

Experience & Idea

One might think that the solution would be to question the manner in which idea and experience become elided. If ideas are not another kind of thing, but things are an interpretation of ideas, then one can still retain a measure of distinctness between ideas and things (by insisting on the possibility of different sorts of interpretations) without becoming committed to ontologically troubling chains of dependency.

Although this possibility surely goes back to Locke and (in a different way) to Malebranche, it did not immediately suggest itself to the post-Hegelian idealists. The nearest thing, perhaps, is in the work of the French-Italian (Savoyard) philosopher Cardinal Gerdil who died while Hegel was still in early middle age,[21] and in the work of Gioberti who followed him. Gerdil

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[19] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Monadology*, 1714, tr. by George R.Montgomery, revised Albert R.Chandler (Chicago: Open Court, 1968).

[20] The point is made most clearly in McTaggart's summary of his system in his essay, "An Ontological Idealism," reprinted in *Philosophical Studies,* ed. by S. V. Keeling (London: Edward Arnold, 1934), pp. 278-292. McTaggart thought he could solve the problem with the doctrine of "determining correspondence" which involved the determination of an infinity of parts by a set of percipients all of whose parts were perceptions, perceptions of perceptions, and so on to infinity. If perceptions of perceptions are exactly like the original perceptions this might be an intelligible notion, but it is not clear that all the parts of the system *can* be perceptions for there are many mathematical properties in such systems, for instance, and therefore it is not clear that the solution meets all of McTaggart's own concerns. See the extended discussion in McTaggart's *The Nature of Existence* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1921, 1927) and C. D. Broad's *Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy,* 3 vols. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1933-1938).

[21] Hyacinthe-Sigismond Gerdil was born June 13, 1718. He died in 1802. In 1800 he was apparently elected pope, but his election was vetoed by Cardinal Herzan acting for the "Emperor of Germany," i.e. the King of Austria. Gerdil came from Savoie and the veto seems to have been a purely political matter. The Austrians did not want a pope

was a Malebranchiste. He followed the Jesuit philosopher and biographer of Malebranche, Yves-Marie André, in using the theory of ideas to reunify knowledge, and he wrote an important political tract as well as two long theological treatises. His best-known contribution perhaps was a defence of Malebranche against Locke.[22] Chiefly, he is concerned in that work to defend the doctrine that there is an objective, impersonal, reason and to show that Locke needs such a doctrine to demonstrate the existence of God. He thinks that Locke needs to admit innate ideas to make this claim. But Gerdil is defending a doctrine to which Locke actually (had Gerdil chosen his words a little differently) would have had little objection. For Locke does not deny that the cabinet of the mind is equipped to deal with incoming ideas, only that it has substantive, ready-made ideas at its disposal. Gerdil takes on Antoine Arnauld and accuses him of making exactly the mistake which seems to produce the trouble we are discussing here: Arnauld confuses the perception of an object with the idea of the object and so elides the two in a way which makes knowledge impossible.[23] Gerdil complains that Arnauld's account leaves no room for the idea itself and destroys the representational claim.[24] Arnauld struggled constantly for a simplified account of idea, but seemed always to fail to grasp what the Malebranchians were saying.[25]

Gerdil gets the central issues straight, but he was writing in French and Italian[26] and outside the stream of thought which Hegel came to dominate. His

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with possible French sympathies. Philosophy seems to have played no part in the dispute, though his election as pope might well have changed the whole history of Catholic philosophy.

[22] Yves-Marie André, *Defense du sentiment de P. Malebranche sur la nature et l'origine des idées contre l'examen de M. Locke* (Turin: Imprimerie Royale, 1748).

[23] *Defence du sentiment de P. Malebranche,* pp. xxiii: "Arnauld prend pour la même chose l'idée d'un objet et la perception de cet objet..." he adds, p. xvii, "donc toute perception est representative de son objet ou nulle perception est representative de son objet."

[24] Gerdil at times in these passages seems closer to Descartes than one might expect. Arnauld becomes the target because Gerdil thinks Locke was influenced by Arnauld.

[25] Antoine Arnauld, 1612-1694, remains, along with Blaise Pascal, the best known of the Port Royal thinkers. His sister Angélique was its Abbess. He continues to attract readers. A recent and very extensive study of Arnauld's theory of ideas is Steven M. Nadler, *Arnauld and the Cartesian Philosophy of Ideas* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989).

[26] He was bilingual and frequently wrote works with the French on one side of the page -- or down one column -- and the Italian on the other. Now and then he improves on himself in one version or the other!

work did, however, influence Vincenzo Gioberti[27] and perhaps Antonio Rosmini.[28]

Indeed, it was Gioberti who developed the ideas of Gerdil and Malebranche to their logical conclusion. It is worth a brief moment to see how Gioberti proposed to deal with the problems I have been posing.

A good account of his theory of being, creativity and ideas can be found in his *Cours de philosophie.*[29] Basically, his philosophy draws upon a strong neo-Platonic and Augustinian tradition to work out the implications of the theses of Malebranche and Gerdil. It is in Gioberti's writings that the creativity of being itself becomes a central principle.[30] His thesis amounts to this: Being is the primary reality as well as the primary object of thought. The mind's grasp of the unity of being is its first certainty. Only by fragmenting or particularising being can we go wrong. In both the order of reality and the order of knowledge the second reality is that of ideas and principles which are clear, universal, and determinate. Error at this level consists either of confusion between distinct ideas or of improper particularisation.

The idea of idea is, however, potentially ambiguous. There is a difficulty about ideas considered as objects and ideas considered as phases of the process of knowing. There is, after all, the *activity* of thinking and its processes. In modern philosophy, says Gioberti, these are frequently called – or miscalled – ideas also. They are not ideas in the same sense, though they have the same origin: Being.

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[27] Vincenzo Gioberti, 1801-1852. Gioberti was born in Turin (where Gerdil had worked) and died in Paris. Though he studied in Turin after Gerdil had left, he was trained in Gerdil's version of Malebranche's philosophy.

[28] Antonio Rosmini 1797-1855. Actually his name was Antonio Rosmini Serbati, but he is always referred to as Rosmini. He became embroiled in the controversies over "ontologism" because he, like Gioberti, made use of the notion that we have a kind of contact with being through ideas which inform our inner natures, but his position fell considerably short of the alleged heresy which involved the claim that we have direct knowledge of God.

[29] See Vincenzo Gioberti, *Cours de philosophie,* edited in the original French with two introductions in Italian by Mario Battisini and Giovanni Galo (Milan: Fratelli Biocca, 1947). It was originally a course which Gioberti gave in Brussels. His stay in Brussels was one of the rare quiet periods in a life punctuated with political and religious disputes.

[30] *See* Gioberti, *Cours de Philosophie*, Chapter V, pp. 201-238. His position on creation and creativity is briefly but clearly put in an extract from his *Del Bello,* Chapter 4 and Chapter 7, reprinted in *Vincenzo Gioberti: Scritti Litterari,* ed. by Ernesto Travi (Milan: Marzorati, 1971), pp. 23-26.

Finally, there is only one source for all ideas: Being. But in knowing – even with certainty – we are faced with the division between the object, a universal idea, and the subject, a particularised state. In the activities of the mind, however, being shows itself in two ways. One way is that of the *principles* of thinking (which yield the principles of morality as a rational activity). The second way is that of the particularisation of ideas as mental states. This particularisation is a necessary condition of being. Just as thinking is only possible if one thinks somewhere and sometime, so being is only possible if it is somewhere at some time.

It is not so clear to me why Gioberti thinks this, but one can readily give some Gioberti-like reasons: The universal is *unlimited.* Redness is the idea of any and all redness everywhere and at all times. But such an unlimited re-dness cannot be. If it were to exist, then everything would be red always, everywhere, and to the exclusion of everything else. Nothing could be anything but red. But every instance of redness is a red something or other. There is always some other quality. And the two limit one another. Such limits particularise.

Thus the ultimate ontological condition – *being* – naturally generates both particular things and ideas of them. Here various kinds of error are possible. The kinds of knowledge – and the kinds of error – can be divided into three. For the kinds of error parallel the kinds of ideas: There are metaphysical ideas – ideas of being and its possible limiting forms; mathematical ideas – ideas of space and time and of denumerable quantities; and moral ideas – ideas of the acceptable limitation on action.

What Gioberti was concerned with of course was an explanation of the fragmentation of the Absolute in experience. The Absolute[31] (or Being as he, of course, preferred to call it), must *create*. And it must do so in a way which generates the distinctions amongst ideas and modes of reality of which he speaks.

It may be that this complex thesis is difficult to understand and that this is why it made the church hierarchy suspicious. It is obviously Augustinian at a moment when the situation which followed the French Revolution made the church suspicious of anti-authoritarian claims about the authority of the inner life. At any rate, the church scurried about to find a pigeon-hole into which Gioberti, whose ideas had begun to attract far beyond Italy, could be put. They decided that he was guilty of the heresies of ontologism and pantheism.

[31] Gioberti always speaks of Being and not of the Absolute. But the being that he speaks of is the equivalent of the Hegelian Absolute in the sense that it is not the abstract pure being of the beginning of the *Science of Logic*, but the ground of reality and the source of all activity. It is, however, dynamic and creative by its nature.

Ontologism is a heresy which consists in believing that we have direct and immediate access to God through our own inner experiences. It presumably denies the need for reason and asserts the individual's claim to immediate and transcendent knowledge which would eclipse the claims of the church. A genuine example of it – perhaps – is the Methodist doctrine of enthusiasm. The enthusiast believes that God has literally taken possession of him.

Gioberti was accused of ontologism because he believed that the idea of Being itself and so the idea of God was immanent within us. But in fact it requires, as he said, complex reasoning to get from Being to God. It requires to be *shown* that Being is the source of creativity and that God as Creator therefore is, in that respect, identical with God. But one should notice that Gioberti is also concerned to show that the creativity of Being generates moral principles without which the association of Being with God would be impossible.

The pantheism charge against him depends upon an elision of the elements of his philosophy. Being as such is not identical with what there is, but it is the source of everything there is. Being is expressed through whatever there is so that it can be said that the things of the world are "in being." Only if being and its particularised forms are elided into one does the charge hold.

But, in fact, like Gerdil, Gioberti was struggling to find a balance between the new individualism and the old sense of community. True, individual conscience becomes paramount in his philosophy. Yet conscience derives its rights and powers from an idea of reason and an idea of God in which all share.

Gioberti's idealism, based on the notion that there is an inner truth open to reflection, in turn influenced nineteenth century American philosophers including Orestes Brownson, but the controversies which raged around him seems to have obscured the central point about the idea of idea.

Idealism, Kant & History in France and Italy

The dynamic account of being continued to play a role in Italian thought and can be found, in the twentieth century, in the work of Giovanni Gentile.[32] A strong movement amongst Italian idealists, however, sought to solve the problems of the irrationality of the immediately given by reference to Hegel's philosophy of history, seeing in the human mind the slow development of the

[32] Giovanni Gentile, 1875-1944, gave Italian idealism a much more Hegelian turn. He was engaged in educational reform and served for a time as Mussolini's minister of education after being promised power to overhaul the university system. He was assassinated in Florence by anti-Mussolini partisans at the end of the Second World War.

capacity to instantiate the Absolute. Benedetto Croce[33] represented the culmination of this movement along with Guido De Ruggiero.[34] Both influenced and were influenced by the English historical idealist, R. G. Collingwood.[35]

In France the difficulties posed by the Hegelian system led to a re-examination of Kant and to the development of a rather subdued epistemological idealism with Kantian overtones which culminated in the work of Léon Brunschvicg.[36] Brunschvicg was inclined to deal with the problem of irrationality by accepting the limitations of human reason in a Kantian sense, but his methodology was not that of Kant but rather historical. He believed, that is, that by studying the development of the human mind as it is exhibited in the sciences, in mathematics, and in philosophy, one could determine the possibilities for human rationality.

Jules Lachelier,[37] whose work just preceded Brunschvicg's, was more inclined to a kind of Berkeleyan reduction of all experience to the immediately given, but he also insisted on a more orthodox Kantianism which attempted to specify the necessary conditions for any possible experience. But he, too, was very much interested in the history of human thought. He was inclined to accept the limitations of human reason in a Kantian sense. Pierre Lachièze-Rey[38] went back further to Descartes and Spinoza (he wrote a book on Kant as well) in search of a specific answer to the puzzles left by the Hegelian theory of the Absolute. He centred his constructive philosophy on the idea of an originally given consciousness with its own natural structure of ideas. He argued that in fact all mental activity leads us to the eternal and infinite, but that we are limited by our original consciousness, and this is why

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[33] Benedetto Croce, 1866-1952, became the champion of Italian liberalism during the Mussolini era.

[34] Guido De Ruggiero, 1888-1948, also wrote a history of European liberalism.

[35] Robin George Collingwood, 1889-1943. Collingwood's *Autobiography* (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1938), gives one of the best accounts of this kind of idealism and of the early twentieth century developments in British philosophy.

[36] Léon Brunschvicg, 1869-1944, lived all his life in Paris with the exception of the years after 1940 when he was driven from Paris by the German occupation. He held various chairs at the University of Paris and the École Normale Supérieure and was a founder of the *Revue de metaphysique et de morale.*

[37] Jules Lachelier, 1832-1918, another product of the École Normale Supérieure de Paris, spent most of his life as an educational administration, becoming, in 1900, Inspector General of the French educational system.

[38] Pierre Lachièze-Rey, 1885-1957, was born at Martel in France. Though he, too, was educated at the École Normale Supérieure, he spent most of his professional life at the University of Lyon. His historical work continues to be influential.

we understand the need for and nature of the Absolute but do not find it in immediate experience.

In Germany, Italy and France the idealist movement after Hegel is largely animated by a kind of perplexity which leads to theories at once more complex and more cautious. The basic theory of the Hegelian dialectic was little explored and the idea of a Hegelian logic was nowhere seriously developed.[39] Indeed, substantial rational construction in metaphysics largely gave way to cautious analyses of the structure of human experience, frequently based on historical considerations.

The Critique of British Empiricism

The movement of thought in Britain followed an opposite direction. Samuel Taylor Coleridge revolted against what he took to be the dreary sterility of British empiricism, and Hutchison Sterling[40] again was looking for someone to save philosophy from Hume. James Frederick Ferrier brought to the process an interest in language.[41] Indeed, John Haldane says "the ideas [Ferrier] expresses are suggestive of the sort of linguistic analytical 'phenomenology' associated with Wittgenstein and Husserl."[42]

Thomas Hill Green was, however, the prime mover in the English Idealist movement and it cannot be said that he found Locke and Hume dull. Rather, he found lacunae in their philosophy which needed to be filled, and he set out to do this while sticking as closely to experience as he could. If his *Prolegomena to Ethics* is an attack on Hume and Kant, it is certainly a respectful one. As for Hegel's logic, Green was quoted by Edward Caird as saying "It must be done all over again."[43]

F. H. Bradley, who succeeded Green as the accepted leader of the Oxford idealists, became more and more concerned with the logical aspects of idealist problems and saw the problem of relations largely in logical terms, but, even

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[39] For some account of this phenomenon, see my *Logic and Reality, An Investigation into the Idea of a Dialectical System* (Assen: Royal Vangorcum; and New York: Humanities Press, 1973)

[40] James Hutchison Sterling 1820-1909 was a Scottish philosopher originally trained in medicine (not an unusual background in Scotland). He wrote, in 1868, *The Secret of Hegel,* published in two volumes. He tended to emphasise the complexity of Hegel, and it was said that he kept the secret of Hegel very well.

[41] See James Frederick Ferrier, *Institutes of Metaphysics* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1854).

[42] From John Haldane's preface to the new edition of Elizabeth Haldane's *James Frederick Ferrier* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1991). (The original was published by Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, Edinburgh, 1899.)

[43] Edward Caird in *Essays in Philosophical Criticism,* ed. Andrew Seth and R. B. Haldane (London: Longmans Green, 1883).

so, he tried to stay as close as he could to experience and even his logic has an experiential if not an empirical base.

J. M. E. McTaggart, as we have seen, thought that Bradley had failed, in effect, to solve the dilemma of the Absolute and he believed that one must do so with a philosophy based on pure reason descending from self-evident first premises. He had first attempted to reconstruct Hegel's logic and to build his system on a dialectical logic, but he finally gave it up and returned to a kind of Spinozistic philosophical geometry (or a Leibnizian metaphysical mathematics).[44]

Thus philosophy had gone full circle. One other feature of the post-idealist situation will perhaps serve to bring this home to us. I am inclined to call it the revaluation of values.

The Revaluation of Values

For Hegel the Absolute Idea is the culmination of goodness as much as it is the culmination of truth and being. But the world is unfolding in a process which leads towards the Absolute. As W. T. Stace puts it: "the world in its essence is nothing but the good, and therefore the good is already and eternally accomplished."[45]

But this is where the difficulty became clear. If we do not find the Absolute around us, if, indeed, we find the world very bad, and headed for hell, then the association of goodness and objective reality is broken. Nietzsche believed that the superman must rise above the world of the given and the assortments of received values and assert his own values. Indeed, he must ram them down the teeth of a reluctant world, but, whether that was to be recommended or not, will had come once again to play a part against logic and the intellect.

Some idealists – the Cairds, T. H. Green, Bernard Bosanquet, John Watson and John Clark Murray for instance – saw the difficulty in finding the Absolute in the world as a call to reform the world, to make it fit for the Absolute. Others saw the situation as cautioning against a headlong rush toward an imagined Absolute and as a call to conserve such values as history commended to us.

The reformers, though they were not always as clear about it as one might like, tended to use moral considerations as a way of overcoming, partially at

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[44] See his *Studies in the Nature of the Dialectic* (Cambridge, The University Press, 1896). McTaggart wrote the early drafts of *The Nature of Existence* in dialectical form but they have been lost.

[45] W. T. Stace, *The Philosophy of Hegel* (New York: Dover, 1955, p.290).

least, the puzzles about the Absolute. John Watson[46] insisted that the Absolute was a community which must reveal itself through mutual understanding. The failure of the Absolute to materialise was to be explained in part through this failure of the community to develop – though Watson was optimistic about the future.[47] John Clark Murray expressed a similar view about the importance of community, though he was less optimistic than Watson.[48]

Bernard Bosanquet,[49] in contrast to F. H. Bradley, saw the solution to the problem of the Absolute not in terms of a logical analysis of the concept of the Absolute, but in terms of the expanding unity of experience – a process which he believed to be typified in the development of science. Our failure to grasp the Absolute is therefore consequent upon (and perhaps identical with) our failure to complete our scientific enquiries. The difficulty with such "constructionist" solutions, inevitably, concerns the final stage of the process: What would a final grasp of the Absolute be like? If we don't know, how do we know that we are moving toward it?

Like Watson, Bosanquet tended to think that the partial expression of the Absolute through individuals who do not fully grasp the extent to which they form communities at a higher level of reality helped to overcome the difficulty. This view is expressed (along with Bosanquet's views about knowledge) in his two volumes of Gifford Lectures and in his central work on political philosophy.[50] But is the Absolute just what science might discover or

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[46] John Watson, 1847-1939 was a pupil of the Cairds. Most of his career was spent at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. See his *Interpretation of Religious Experience,* Gifford Lectures (Glasgow: Maclehose, 1912), *The Philosophical Basis of Religion* (Glasgow: Maclehose, 1907), and numerous other works.

[47] John Watson pursues this theme in his *The State in Peace and War* (Glasgow: Maclehose, 1919).

[48] John Clark Murray, 1836-1917, was originally attracted to the philosophy of Sir William Hamilton, but had begun to express doubts about that philosophy before he left Scotland for Kingston and Montreal (where he spent most of his life.) His political views – and some of their metaphysical implications – can be found in his ironically entitled *Industrial Kingdom of God,* finally published (ed. Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott) by the University of Ottawa Press in 1981.

[49] Bernard Bosanquet, 1848-1923, was generally regarded as, along with Bradley, Green, and McTaggart, one of the four most important figures in the British idealist movement. Deeply committed to social reform, he left his academic posts to become chairman of the London Charities Board. He was also a founder of the London School of Economics. It is frequently claimed that he was fundamentally more conservative than Green, but it has been suggested that he, in fact, became a member of the British Labour Party.

[50] See Bernard Basanquet, *The Principle of Individuality and Value* and *The Value and Destiny of the Individual,* Gifford Lectures (London: Macmillan, 1912 and 1913); and

what the community of rational human beings might create in so far as it *is* rational?

Bradley's warning, that the good always has about it an element of the ideal as opposed to the given or immediately real, might have been taken as a call, once again, for the return of the idea of idea as a way of allowing us to grasp the good without becoming committed to the worship of whatever happens to be turned up by history. Plato had placed the form of the good at the pinnacle of concepts, and Plotinus had placed the good along with the One *beyond* the distinction of being from non-being.

But the warning again went unheeded and, once again, the elision of the idea into the other modes of being left values problematic – up for analysis and destined to a debate without an outcome. The moral skepticism which followed was certainly one of the reasons for the difficulties which idealist theories were to face as the twentieth century wore on.

And Again the Question of Reason

What counts as a "good reason" within the idealist tradition seems little different from what counts as a "good reason" in the Thomist tradition. The effort constantly was to develop a set of concepts which can order experience into an intelligible system within which we can ask the questions about reality and about the good which animate us. Hegelians may enjoy the tensions between pairs of concepts, but they insist that those tensions be resolved in a way that does not commit us to contradictions. It is seeming contradictions and not real ones that are overcome in any plausible dialectic. The limits of reason are always an issue and the way of dealing with them may vary from system to system. A Thomist may concede that faith can take us where reason cannot but he would not accept that faith and reason can finally collide. Sometimes, as I said, at least on the fringes of the idealist tradition, philosophers have believed that will must decide where intellect cannot, but the central stream of the idealist tradition has always rejected that, too.

The idealist tradition shows us how ideas tie together in ways which sometimes outrun the capacities of their protagonists. And yet the tradition projects a powerful impetus to continue. Perhaps now we are beginning to see that the world does not have a single univocal description. As science shows it to be open to many interpretations and political morality shows that we must accommodate a range of complex values we are beginning to see how a proper idealism forces us to admit our concerns with values into our descriptions of the world. In that way we can build a theory which might restore some of the lost unity to knowledge. Any philosophical tradition will

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see also *The Philosophical Theory of the State* (London: Macmillan, 1899, fourth edition, 1913).

force us to think about the line between reason and irrationality and so to make decisions in which our epistemic and moral values begin to merge.

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Maritain, Eco, and the History of Philosophical Aesthetics

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Jacques Maritain's philosophy of beauty and the arts has had a significant impact on numerous aestheticians and artists. However, insufficient scholarly attention has been devoted to understanding Maritain's place in the broader context of the history of philosophical aesthetics. In the twentieth century, idealist and analytic schools of philosophy had an enormous influence on shaping contemporary philosophical aesthetics. The former, represented by figures such as Benedetto Croce and R. G. Collingwood, tended toward an extreme emphasis on the cognitive aspect of artistic creation and aesthetic appreciation. The latter, exemplified in the more recent work of philosophers such as Peter Kivy and Noël Carroll, approaches issues of aesthetic perception and artistic value through a rigorous analysis of their underlying concepts.

The present paper constitutes an attempt to contextualize Maritain's place in the broader history of philosophical aesthetics by more narrowly focusing on a comparison between him and Umberto Eco. By the time Eco completed *Il problema estetico in Tommaso d'Aquino* in 1956,[1] Maritain had already occupied a prestigious position in the philosophical academy. Yet, it seems to me that Eco may end up leaving a more indelible mark on the current period within the overall history of aesthetics.

I will argue that the key reason for this is the difference between Maritain's and Eco's approaches to the role of Thomistic aesthetics in informing aesthetic theory in general. Eco's primary concern has been to elucidate the notion of beauty as understood by the medieval thinkers within their original cultural framework. How accurately Eco presents that notion is open to dispute. Maritain's project, however, without undermining the importance of

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[1] Published for the second time as *Il problema estetico in Tommaso d'Aquino* (Milano: Gruppo Editoriale Fabbri, 1970).

grasping the notion of beauty as understood by Aquinas and his contemporaries, aims to expound upon that original notion by allowing it to incorporate contemporary philosophical and artistic currents, and by applying it to new areas in which the power of creative intuition manifests itself in the modern world.

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Both Maritain (1882-1973) and Eco (1932-   ) were instrumental in carving out a space for medieval aesthetics within the philosophical discipline to which Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762) is said to have given birth in the mid-eighteenth century. Of course, beauty and the perception of it had been a driving issue from the time of the ancients, but most philosophers today turn to Baumgarten for an authoritative definition of aesthetics, who in 1750 wrote that "aesthetics (the theory of the liberal arts, lower gnoseology, the art of beautiful thinking, the art of the analogue of reason) is the science of sensitive cognition."[2]

It is the "sensitive cognition" part of this definition that has dogged philosophers since the time of Plato. Does the perception of beauty, which we distinctively call "aesthetic" perception, rely more heavily on the senses, or on the intellect? Or, to put it in a more refined way, what is the unique interaction between the senses and the intellect in the perception of the beautiful? Naturally, these gnoseological questions entail the related question of the objectivity of beauty. The fact that Thomists have long squabbled even among themselves over this question testifies to how elusive a satisfactory answer may be.[3]

Most contemporary aestheticians agree that the most serious attempt to resolve these questions was made by Immanuel Kant in his so-called Third Critique.[4] Whatever virtues and flaws may be found therein, the Third Critique was deemed necessary by Kant and his disciples as a means of bridging the chasm between pure and practical reason that had been left open after the First and Second Critiques.[5] That which the judgment of taste

[2] Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Aesthetica,* §1.

[3] Francis J. Kovach has been one of the more vociferous defenders of the objectivity of beauty in Aquinas. See *Philosophy of Beauty* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974).

[4] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgmnent,* tr. by Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987).

[5] See "The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited" in Paul Guyer, *Values of Beauty: Historical Essays in Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.

(Geschmacksurteil) drives at must be, on the one hand, distinct from the concept, which is proper to pure reason, and, on the other hand, must also be distinct from the aim of practical reason, which is ordered to moral action.[6] The central notion that connects the latter to the former is the freedom with which the human agent determines his will by the legislation of pure reason.[7] We are free to conduct ourselves autonomously by the law dictated by pure reason. This is the most distinctive feature about human beings.

However, Kant acknowledges that another distinctive feature of human beings is their capacity to agree not only upon matters of morality, but also on matters of taste; that is, on matters regarding the beautiful.[8] A key idea that Kant utilizes to explain this phenomenon is "disinterestedness," which he understands as independence from a merely sensible agreeableness of an object, and from recognizing it as a good under a certain determinate concept or another.[9] In the First Critique, Kant made it clear that the ordinary objective condition of cognition is the subject's ability to subsume an object under a determinate concept. But, because judgments of taste are not made in regard to determinate concepts, the aesthetic response is understood by Kant as a harmony of free play between the cognitive faculties of the imagination and of the understanding.[10] The involvement of both these faculties ultimately grounds the universal communicability of judgments of taste.

Kant has had a greater influence than anyone else on the general direction of philosophical aesthetics. Though there have been notable excursions into territories of idealism (e.g. Croce, Collingwood), analytic philosophy (e.g. Beardsley, Dickey, Carroll), and other philosophical schools, all of them have derived their vital force from Kant's theory of beauty and aesthetic judgment.[11] Consequently, if Maritain and Eco have appeared, and will continue to appear, anywhere in mainstream aesthetics – by which I mean the

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77-109. See also Francis X. J. Coleman, *The Harmony of Reason: A Study in Kant's Aesthetics* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974), pp. 3-19.

[6] See Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* §20; §46.

[7] See *Ibid*., §20. See also *Critique of Practical Reason,* §2; §20-§23.

[8] See Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* §32.

[9] See *Ibid*., §16.

[10] See *Ibid*., §9; §22. See also Peter Kivy, *Philosophies of Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 94-96.

[11] "I think that Kant's aesthetic ought to be attempted by anyone who seriously wishes to be a philosophical aesthetician. …This is because of the intrinsic interest of the view he has of philosophy an the seriousness of the questions he raises. He has set the agenda for much that has happened in aesthetics." Colin Lyas, *Aesthetics* (Londan: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), p. 33. Cf. Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1975), pp. 210-211.

disciple as generally understood by the vast majority of philosophy departments – then they will inevitably be scrutinized through a Kantian lens.

There has been a rather feeble attempt to draw attention to similarities between the aesthetics of Kant and Maritain.[12] In particular, it is tempting to draw parallels between Kant's division of theoretical and practical philosophy and Maritain's Thomistic distinction between speculative reason and practical reason, or between Kant's notion of disinterestedness and Maritain's elaboration of the role of the appetite in the apprehension of beauty in contrast to the apprehension of the good, or Kant's idea of artistic genius and Maritain's idea of poetic intuition. Yet as enticing as such comparisons might be, aestheticians have managed to gloss over Maritain's explicit criticism of Kant's epistemological subjectivism.[13] Granted, Maritain sympathizes with Kant's attempt to specify the essential role of the faculty of understanding in aesthetic judgment, but he is convinced that Kant made a fatal flaw in describing the emotional response as posterior to aesthetic perception itself.[14] Maritain believes that this consecutive ordering of aesthetic delight can only lead to delegating the end of aesthetic perception as the "excitement of vital energies." Quoting the Italian Jesuit Guido Mattiussi, Maritain notes that "it is interesting to observe that the subjectivist 'poison' introduced into modern thought by Kant has almost fatally compelled philosophers to seek for the essence of aesthetic perception, in spite of Kant himself, in emotion."[15]

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[12] See, for example, Manuel M. Davenport, "Kant and Maritain on the Nature of Art," *British Journal of Aesthetics,* 12, pp. 359-368.

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> Concerning beauty, therefore, there is tenuous but never final agreement between Kant and Maritain. Both agree that pleasure is consequent upon apprehension, and that pleasure in the beautiful is neither sensuous of conceptual. For Maritain, this pleasure arises as beauty perfects the intellect by delighting it, and this perfection is due to the consciousness of a harmony of cognitive faculties. The beautiful for Maritain is that aspect of an object – its being – which delights the mind as intuited; the beautiful for Kant is the formal aspect of an object which is purposive but perceived as representing no purpose. Despite these differences, due principally to Kant's more critical realism, both support the view that the occurrence of aesthetic experience requires an underlying unity of man's cognitive, emotional and moral faculties and a potential communion between these powers and the being of material objects. For both, then, art as an activity is the revelation of the being within objects in perceptual form. (Manuel M. Davenport, "Kant and Maritain on the Nature of Art," *British Journal of Aesthetics,* 12, pp. 367.)

[14] Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism,* tr. by J. F. Scanlan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), pp. 161-166.

[15] Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, p. 166. It is worth noting that in his comments on the *Third Critique,* Maritain seems to take a somewhat more moderate stance towards

I have sketched the Kantian approach to aesthetic judgment and the subsequent attempt to relate Maritain to Kant for two reasons. First, this all-to-brief review of Kantian aesthetics may be of some assistance in understanding the contemporary context into which medieval aesthetics has been appropriated by thinkers such as Maritain and Eco. Within his own unique metaphysical and epistemological framework, Kant was dealing with problems that were by no means foreign to the schoolman of the Middle Ages. Maritain and Eco agree on this point. Both assert that a careful investigation of Medieval philosophy of beauty and aesthetic perception yields results for contemporary approaches to the same questions. However, as I will indicate, Maritain and Eco differ considerably over the appropriate methodology to apply to such an investigation. I will argue that these differences have already begun to influence their status within the overall history of aesthetics.

The second reason for glancing at Kant's Third Critique is to set the stage for Eco's more long-term project of engaging the philosophical enterprise through the practice of semiotics, which he sardonically defines as "the science of everything subject to the lie: it is also the science of everything subject to comic or tragic distortion."[16] In his *Kant and the Platypus,* Eco affirms the necessity of beginning the philosophical inquiry into being and cognition from a Kantian starting point, but argues that the overall Kantian project must be entirely revised in the wake of post-Heideggerian metaphysics.[17] In the final section of my paper, I shall return to suggest some implications of Eco's more recent projects on the field of aesthetics.

Kant than most Catholic thinkers of the early twentieth century. In his encyclical letter *Pascendi,* Leo XIII was unsparing in his condemnation of many modernists' attempts to appropriate Kantian philosophy; Father Mattiussi wrote the work to which Maritain refers immediately in the wake of Leo's condemnation. Mattiussi himself did not mince words as he offered his own assessment of the Kantian project and its effect on the contemporary situation:

> From beginning to the end everything is impossible and the entire plan is self-contradictory … the whole thing is in ruins … and any assertion that (Kant) makes regarding that which he has already said remains cut off at the roots in the order of knowledge, and is a poison, one drop of which is enough to bring about the death of science and the intellect (dal principio alla fine ogni cosa è impossibile e il disegno n'è contradditorio, […] tutto è rovina, e […] qualunque asserzione si ammetta di quello che egli da sé nuovamente disse, ne rimane tronco alla radice l'ordine conoscitivo, ed è veleno del quale basta una goccia, per dar la morte alla scienza e all'intelletto. (As quoted by Dario Antiseri in *Avvenire,* February 10, 2004.)

[16] Umberto Eco, *Opera aperta* (Milano: Bompiani, 1967), p. 20.

[17] Umberto Eco, *Kant e l'ornitorinco* (Milano: Bompiani, 1997), pp. 6-24; pp. 50-66.

In the late sixties and early seventies, it was already clear that the neo-Thomistic aesthetic, which had been so enthusiastically embraced by leading members of the New Criticism movement in the 1950s, was already losing its charm.[18] Maritain had had a remarkable and immediate influence upon a number of notable artists, the names of whom are already well familiar to Maritain scholars: Jean Cocteau, Emmanuel Mounier, Jacques Copeau, and Paul Claudel to name but a few. These artists were united in their conviction that objective and categorical criteria could be used in both the production of, and the evaluation of, works of art. However, the ways in which these criteria were employed, as well as the strident confidence with which they were sometimes applied, belied the philosophical rigor sought by the predominating *philosophical* schools as opposed to the *critical* schools.[19]

The reasons for which neo-Thomistic aesthetic principles began to slip out of usage by art critics are substantially different from the reasons for which they were never really received by philosophers of aesthetics in the first place. In the case of art criticism, Neal Oxenhandler writes that Maritain's aesthetic "presuppositions and language are not available to the contemporary critic. To use them would amount to self-exclusion from the on-going critical dialogue."[20] On the plane of philosophical aesthetics, however, the dialogue has barely begun. Umberto Eco is one of the few contemporaries of Maritain to engage the "old layman" directly on a philosophical level.

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In a critical essay initially composed in 1961, and more widely disseminated only in 1983 in perhaps the most comprehensive collection of his aesthetic thought entitled *La definizione dell'arte,* Eco labels Maritain's approach to medieval aesthetics as "primitive."[21] The reason for this somewhat derogatory appellation flows from Eco's understanding of the correct methodology to be employed in the study of medieval texts.

Despite Eco's overt criticism of Maritain's approach to Thomistic aesthetics, an initial study of their respective readings of the Thomistic texts reveals that they have much in common. Both clearly engage the study of

[18] See Neal Oxenhandler, "Maritain and Recent Critical Thought," *Renascence,* 34, 4, pp. 260-270.

[19] See Umberto Eco's reflections on the direction of critical methods since the influence of neo-Scholastic aesthetics in *La definizione dell'arte,* 2nd ed. (Milano: Garzanti, 1984), pp. 56-65.

[20] Oxenhandler, "Maritain and Recent Critical Thought," *Renascence,* 34, 4, p. 264.

[21] Umberto Eco, *La definizione dell'arte,* 2nd ed. (Milano: Garzanti, 1984), p.103.

medieval aesthetics on the presupposition that beauty is more than a mere passing interest lying somewhere on the fringes of scholastic philosophy in general.[22] Neither do Eco and Maritain believe the relevant texts within the various *Summae* to be indiscriminately scattered and inchoate.[23] Rather, these texts both refer to a set of core aesthetic ideas and simultaneously exemplify the breadth of medieval aesthetics.

However, Eco offers a clear methodological direction to justify his criticism of Maritain. In both *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas* and in *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages,* Eco emphasizes that medieval textual evidence allows us to reconstruct an entire cultural vision of the medieval aesthetic.[24] Passages dealing with beauty indicate general cultural attitudes towards the beautiful in art and nature.[25] Acknowledging this inextricable connection between medieval philosophy and culture in turn leads us to approach the texts in question as specifically aesthetic as opposed to physical, metaphysical, or ethical.

Eco justifies this approach by suggesting that the study of medieval aesthetics should be, above all else, historiographical.[26] A historigraphical

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[22] See Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas,* trans. by Hugh Breden (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 4-11; Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages,* trans. by Hugh Bredin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 4-16; and Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism,* pp. 1-2.

[23] "...nessuno pensa più che gli accenni al Bello contenuti nelle *Summe* e nei *Commentaria* siano sparsi e informi rederi della tematica classica," Eco, *La definizione dell'Arte,* p. 102.

[24] "Proprio attraverso la discussione estetica is può ricostruire in prospettiva una fisionomia di tutta la cultura medievale, che ne conferma i caratteri assodati e ne pone in luce dei nuovi," Eco, *La definizione dell'arte,* 2nd ed., Milano: Garzanti, 1984, p. 102.

[25] Eco views his primary task to be one of presenting the rich variety of sensual aesthetic experiences that characterized the Middle Ages. In particular, he turns to such figures as St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who describes in great detail the sumptuous décor of gothic cathedrals and the brilliance of the artwork within. In doing so, Bernard reveals a certain ambivalence toward sensual beauty and its place in the life of the prayer. His ambivalence, claims Eco, was to a large extent typical of the medieval culture surrounding him. Indeed, though Eco downplays the similarity, it is an ambivalence that harks back to Plato himself. The point is that philosophical sections of the Scholastic *corpus* handed down to us are not merely tracts mere speculative musing. According to Eco, both the impetus and the implications of these works are more than theoretical. They were both grounded in, and turn back to, an empirical experience of beauty. This was as true for Aquinas as it was for Bernard and Bonaventure. See Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages,* pp. 4-16.

[26] See Eco, *La definizione dell'arte,* p. 103. Cf. Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas,* pp. 22; 39-46, and *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages,* pp. 15-16.

approach, argues Eco, necessitates that we explicitly acknowledge the "otherness" of the object under study.[27] He compares the methodology contained in this approach to the practice of archeology. After having collected a set of seemingly disparate artifacts, the archeologist must relate them to one another through a process of interpretation that leads to a meaningful reconstruction. Through this process, concludes Eco, the "other" comes alive "for me" once again in the present moment, but only because I have respected the object as "other".

On the surface, the legitimacy of Eco's approach to the study of medieval aesthetics appears rather obvious. Simply put, in order to understand the philosophy of a certain time, we have to respect the cultural, sociological, and intellectual idiosyncrasies of that time. Even if Eco intends to imply something more profound than this, his critique of Maritain's *Art and Scholasticism* can easily be framed in these more obvious terms. Eco goes on to argue that Maritain's "scholastic" aesthetics was formed more by the idiosyncrasies of early twentieth-century France than by the idiosyncrasies of mid-thirteenth century Europe. *"Art and Scholasticism,"* Eco bluntly states, "is the book of a modern man" who had proclaimed himself to be a "paleo-Thomist."[28] Eco goes on at length to uncover, and then decry, the Bergsonian interpretation of Aquinas that Maritain has bequeathed to his disciples.

Eco and Maritain do agree that, for Thomas, beauty is a transcendental.[29] But Eco and Maritain differ significantly in their respective views of how the transcendentality of beauty should be deduced from the relevant Thomistic texts. Let me make it clear that, as I turn to their respective views on this matter, I do not intend to revisit exhaustively the on-going debate on the transcendentality of beauty, much less to resolve the debate.[30] My purpose is rather to unpack the broader methodological principles implicit in Maritain's and Eco's respective treatments of the issue.

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[27] See Eco, *La definizione dell'arte,* p. 103. "Questa la situatzione di *Art et Scolastique.* Un libro di battaglia che ebbe influenza storiografica stimulando studi storici … un'opera teoretica mascherata da commentario." (Eco, *La definizione dell'arte,* p. 109.

[28] "*Art et Scolastique* è il libro di un uomo moderno, che nel *Court traité de l'existence et de l'existent* si proclamerà peraltro paleotomista, di un medievale che crede in Cocteau (ancora funambolico e vivace inventore di modi e mode poetiche), si entusiasma per Satie, Milhaud, Poulenc, per la pittura di Severini e per il medievalismo così intriso di modernità pittorica di Rouault." Eco, *La definizione dell'arte,* p. 104.

[29] See Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism,* pp. 30-38; Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas,* pp. 20-48, and *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages,* pp. 16-27.

[30] For an interesting and recently-expressed response to the question, see Jan A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996), pp. 335-359. Aertsen includes both Eco and Maritain in his discussion, but disagrees with both of them on the transcendentality of beauty.

Maritain is rather straight forward in his argumentation for the transcendentality of beauty. Though Eco claims that Maritain "argues exhaustively"[31] for the transcendentality of beauty in *Art and Scholasticism,* the truth is that Maritain's argument is rather terse and, for the most part, relegated to a footnote.[32] Maritain accepts the well established Thomistic premise that, in order for something to be included among the transcendentals, it must be both co-extensive with being, and also add a conceptual aspect to being that is distinct in its own right. So, rather than adding a specific difference, a transcendental property designates an aspect of being that is present wherever being is found, but unique in its relation to our cognitive faculty. In this respect, Eco writes that the transcendentals "are a bit like differing visual angles from which being can be looked at."[33] Maritain had similarly designated them as "concepts which surpass all limits of kind or category and will not suffer themselves to be confined in any class, because they absorb everything and are to be found everywhere."[34]

So what is the distinctive aspect of being that designates beauty as a transcendental according to Maritain? He clearly states that it is the aspect of "delighting."[35] Once he makes this claim, Maritain places himself in a position where he must concede that (1) the aspect of "delighting" is co-extensive with being, and that (2) it is a property of being itself rather than a description of what we subjectively experience in aesthetic perception. Maritain is prepared to defend both points. Regarding the latter, he argues that "giving pleasure … is itself transcendental and analogical."[36] In regard to the former, he firmly asserts that beauty is not to be thought of as an enjoyable good as opposed to other kinds of good. Consequently, just as the good is coextensive with being, so is the beautiful.

However, in *Art and Scholasticism,* Maritain's argument for the transcendentality of beauty is not an end in itself. Maritain's ulterior objective is to relate this transcendental in a meaningful way to the fine arts.[37] To do so, he must explain how the vast range of variegated artistic forms can strive for a common end: namely, beauty. What allows each individual artist, each of whom creates numerous distinct and unique works, to achieve this common end is the participated aspect of beauty, which in turn is grounded in the forma causality of beauty, which in turn allows for a wholly unique way in

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[31] Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas,* p. 38
[32] See Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism,* pp. 172-173.
[33] Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas,* p. 21.
[34] Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism,* p. 30.
[35] *Ibid*., p. 173.
[36] *Ibid*
[37] See *Ibid*., pp. 34-38.

which each individual thing can participate in beauty. The substance of Maritain's argument is that if beauty is a transcendental, and if being is everywhere various, then beauty is everywhere various.[38] In short, beauty, transcendentally understood, is predicated of things analogously. It is predicated "*sub diversa ratione.*" Maritain is quick to add that such is the case with the other transcendentals: "Each kind of being *is* in its own way, is *good* in its own way, is beautiful in its own way."[39]

In *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas,* Eco confronts the same Thomistic texts as Maritain and other Thomistic commentators. However, ever conscious of his unwavering commitment to historiography, he prefaces his direct treatment of the Thomistic texts with a caveat. The driving force behind medieval transcendental theory, Eco notes, was the need to combat the Manichean tendencies of the Cathari and Albigensian heresies.[40] The exigencies of the time led ineluctably to a bolder formulation of the inherent goodness and beauty of all being. Eco once again underlined the importance of these historical conditions in *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages,* in which he writes that the doctrine of the interconvertibility of unity, truth, and goodness with being was heavily influenced by the surrounding "climate of integrated values."[41]

Oddly, as influential as Eco believes the historical conditions to be, his subsequent exegesis of the Thomistic passages makes little, if any, reference back to these historical conditions. Rather, he rests on the assumption that composing a commentary on the Aeropagite's *The Divine Names,* a work that had been canonical in the scholastic curriculum for quite some time, was simply standard practice for any serious university professor, rather than a tool for combating heresy.[42] Be that as it may, Eco's ensuing analysis of Aquinas' teaching on beauty is plain enough. Beginning with the *Commentary on the Divine Names,* Eco elucidates Thomas' basic teaching on God as the primary subject to whom goodness and beauty are predicated, as well as the metaphysical explanation of the goodness and beauty in all created things as a direct participation in divine goodness and beauty.[43] Eco's reading of the *Commentary on the Divine Names* leads him to assert that Aquinas used this work as an occasion to "make amends for the oversight" of omitting beauty in the list of transcendentals which we find in *De Veritate.*[44]

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[38] See *Ibid.,* pp. 30, and 173.
[39] *Ibid.,* p. 30.
[40] See Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas,* p. 21.
[41] Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages,* p. 20.
[42] See Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas, p.* 37.
[43] See *Ibid., pp.* 39-42.
[44] See *Ibid.,* p. 40.

Eco then goes on to explain Thomas' basis for the conceptual distinction between the good and the beautiful. Eco perceptively notes that up until paragraph 8 of Chapter IV of the *Commentary on the Divine Names,* the beautiful, rather than an explicitly unique aspect of being itself, appears merely to be assimilated into the good.[45] However, insofar as the beautiful can be considered an object of the appetite, Eco believes that Thomas consistently taught that beauty is "the way in which the good makes itself manifest."[46] Eco believes that this was a consistent teaching throughout the career of Friar Thomas because the interconvertibility of the beautiful and good, based on their relationship to the appetitive faculty, is explicitly stated in both the *Commentary on the Sentences* and over a dozen years later in the *Commentary on the Divine Names.*

From the relevant Thomistic texts, Eco concludes that Aquinas included beauty among the transcendentals, but only implicitly. He writes that beauty "is a property of being in a precise and categorical sense of these terms."[47] At the same time, Eco is of the opinion that Thomas included beauty among the transcendentals only through the mediation of the good.

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Already we begin to note a difference between Maritain and Eco. As we have seen, Maritain's logic ran as follows: a transcendental property adds something conceptually to being and is coextensive with being. Beauty adds the concept "delighting" to being and, because it is found wherever there is goodness (and goodness itself is a transcendental), beauty is also a transcendental property. Eco, as I understand him, arrives at the transcendentality of beauty along a slightly different logical route. His major premise is the same as Maritain's: a transcendental property adds something conceptually to being and is coextensive with being. The good adds the concept of desirability to being. Because anyone who desires the good (which is itself a transcendental) also desires the beautiful, beauty is also a transcendental property.

We notice that both syllogistic lines of argumentation are dependent on the transcendentality of the good. Indeed, since, unlike beauty, goodness is an indisputable transcendental in Aquinas' thought, and since it is so closely related to the beautiful for Thomas, every scholar confronting the issue of the

[45] See *Ibid.,* p. 41.
[46] *Ibid., p.* 32.
[47] *Ibid.,* p. 37.

transcendentality of beauty must construct his argument upon the beautiful's relationship to the good.

However, unlike Maritain, Eco shies away from emphasizing the distinctive conceptual aspect of beauty as "delighting" in his analysis of the Thomistic text. In fact, after having argued that Thomas implicitly teaches that beauty is transcendental, he states that the phrase *visa placent* is a "disturbing intrusion into the whole question." [48] Maritain is considerably less hesitant about Thomas' aesthetic definition of beauty in his argument for the transcendentality of beauty; indeed, his argument for beauty's transcedentality is *dependent* upon beauty's capacity to cause delight in the knower. Whereas Maritain considered the "delighting" or "pleasing" aspect of beauty to itself be transcendental, Eco cautions that "it introduces a subjective condition for beauty, and thus points to a denial of its transcendental status." [49]

In *Art and Scholasticism,* Maritain does not postpone the question of the beautiful's capacity to delight until after its transcendentality has been established.[50] The reason for this is fairly clear. Maritain understands aesthetic beauty to be ultimately ordered to the faculty of intelligence rather than the sense faculties. It is not that the apprehension of beauty is not dependent upon the senses; to the contrary, such a dependence on the senses is "well-nigh indispensable."[51] However, the perception of the beautiful does not come about through a process of discursive reasoning. Rather, to use a phrase that became paradigmatic in both Maritain's aesthetics and his metaphysics, it is an intuition.[52] The beautiful is ultimately proportioned to the mind – or, as Maritain is fond of repeating in *Art and Scholasticism* – the heart.[53]

Eco does not disagree with Maritain over beauty's ultimate appeal to the intellect. The Thomistic evidence for this, as Eco persuasively argues, is overwhelming. However, Eco does take issue with Maritain's use of the word "intuition." [54] Eco is an agreement with Maritain on the indispensable role of the senses in the apprehension of the beautiful. But he is uncomfortable with Maritain's insistence on the non-abstractive role of the intellect in the

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[48] *Ibid.*
[49] *Ibid.*
[50] See Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism,* pp. 172-173.
[51] *Ibid.,* p. 23.
[52] See *Ibid.,* p. 170. The idea is more fully developed, of course, in Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intution in Art and Poetry*, The A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, (New York: Published by Pantheon Books, Inc., for Bollingen Foundation, 1953), pp. 75-90.
[53] See Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism, p.* 172.
[54] See Eco, *La definizione dell'arte,* pp. 131-135.

apprehension of beauty. Maritian favors the description made famous by Albert the Great, according to whom beauty is “the splendor of the form shining on the proportioned parts of matter.”[55] Maritain interprets this definition to mean that the intellect refrains from any abstractive or discursive work in the enjoyment of beauty. It is precisely on account of being apprehended by the senses that the intellect grasps the form of a thing, and therefore simultaneously delights in the very being of the thing. Eco argues that if this is what Maritain understands to be the essence of aesthetic intuition, it fails to conform to Aquinas’ own understanding of the process of cognition. “The kind of intuition that is discussed by Maritain,” concludes Eco, “is alien to the Thomist system.”[56]

Eco’s discomfort with Maritain’s intuitional interpretation of aesthetic perception is indicative of the general suspicion of an integral interrelatedness between the senses and the intellect in mainstream philosophical aesthetics. Eco begins his investigation of medieval aesthetics with a thorough examination of the transcendentality of beauty, and only then turns to confront the “disturbing intrusion” of the *visa quae placent.* Maritain approaches Thomistic aesthetics in an entirely converse manner. He first acknowledges Thomas’ aesthetic definition of beauty *(visa quae placent)* as it appears in Question 5, Article 4 of the *Summa,* and only then moves to consider beauty’s transcendentality. Because he considers “delighting” to be a transcendental characteristic of all being, Maritain, unlike Eco, is not afraid of the subjective notion inherent in the *visa quae placent* definition. Both Eco and Maritain maintain that the term *visio,* a technical term employed by Aquinas, embraces much more than the physical sense of vision.[57] Eco, however, frantically tries to reconcile the objective and subjective connotations of the *visa* in a way strongly reminiscent of Kant, whereas Maritain accepts the *visa* as a determinate *fact.* Eco and Maritain agree that the *visa quae placent* definition of beauty is a definition though effect, but whereas Eco undertakes great pains to explain this effect as subsequent to cognition, Maritain describes aesthetic pleasure as concomitant to the knowledge of the beautiful. Maritain understands the characteristics of proportion, integrity, and splendor to constitute an *essential* definition of the beautiful, whereas Eco is preoccupied with trying to demonstrate how those

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[55] Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism,* p. 25. Cf. Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas,* p. 60. The original quote is found in the *Opusculum de Pulchro et Bono,* attributed to Albert the Great.

[56] Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas,* p. 63.

[57] See *Ibid.,* pp. 58-61, and Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism,* pp. 28-30; 172-173.

three conditions can be understood as objectively real within Thomas' system.[58]

In short, Maritain weaves an unbroken cord that connects aesthetic beauty to transcendental beauty, whereas Eco, after having firmly established the historicity of Thomas' teaching on transcendental beauty, ultimately despairs of finding a meaningful passage that will carry us from transcendental beauty to aesthetic beauty.

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The limits of the present paper prevent me from entering into more deeply into a comparison between Maritain and Eco with the *Doctor communis* himself. But my immediate concern is rather a direct comparison between the methodologies of Eco and Maritain in aesthetics, and an assessment of where those methodologies place them within the history of aesthetics.

Eco clearly believes Maritain's aesthetic theory, which Maritain himself claims to be Scholastic, to be more modern and *sui generis* than Thomistic. Moreover, as we have seen, Eco brings a more serious charge against Maritain when he accuses him of lacking historiographical rigor in his treatment of medieval aesthetics.

There are parts of Eco's criticism against Maritain that elicit sympathy from philosophers of aesthetics. Maritain, for example, employs the phrase *id quod visum placet* as a Thomistic definition of beauty with great liberality. Eco rightly points out that students of Maritain who have never come into direct contact with the original Thomistic texts are easily led astray into believing that Aquinas used such a phrase.[59] In fact, Eco emphatically insists, Thomas did not. However, when we read Maritain more carefully, it may make less of a difference *philosophically* than Eco would lead us to believe. Eco has a problem with Maritain paraphrasing Thomas because of the greater metaphysical weight the expression *id quod visum placet* carries. According to Eco, Maritain "went on to identify this *visio* with an intuitive act of a contemporary brand." [60]

In regard to the second more serious charge against Maritain, I would like to point out but one poignant example of how Eco sets himself up to be similarly indicted.

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[58] See Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism,* p. 159, and Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas,* pp. 65-70.

[59] See Eco, *La definizione dell'arte,* p. 104; pp. 138-141.

[60] *Ibid.,* p. 105.

One of the points for which Maritain received the most vociferous criticism was the way in which he progressively related beauty to the other transcendentals. Already in the 1920 edition of *Art et Scolastique* Maritian wrote that the beautiful *"est la splendeur de tous les transcendantaux réunis."*[61] Eco takes specific issue with this dictum because it is the basis for Maritain's emphatic teaching on the analogous predication of transcendental beauty. In *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas,* published in 1956, Eco argued that there was no historical precedent for Maritain's definition in either the Thomistic tradition or the neo-Thomistic tradition. "Nowhere else do we find a theory which, instead of putting beauty side by side with the other transcendentals, says that it is the splendor of all of them together."[62] However, two years later when Eco publishes *Beauty and Art in the Middle Ages,* Eco is forced to admit rather sheepishly that this exact idea is found in a diminutive *opusculum* attributed to St. Bonaventure and published in the *Études Francisains.* In this work, Bonaventure relates the four transcendentals to the four causes. "*Unum* has to do with the efficient cause, *verum* with the formal cause, and *bonum* with the final cause; but *pulchrum* 'encompasses every cause and is common to each … It has to do equally with every cause."[63] Eco qualifies his confession by remarking that "Maritain does not seem to have known this particular passage."[64]

A definitive answer as to whether Maritain was familiar with this particular Bonaventuran passage or not will have to wait until the eschaton. Leaving aside for the moment the questionable authorship of this *opusculum,* I only cite this example to illustrate how Eco may have set up historiographical standards of interpretation for himself and for Maritain that severely limit the ability of medieval aesthetics to have relevance for today. Eco seems to want the Thomistic texts to speak for themselves, but in words that cannot but be heavily scrutinized by the historical, sociological, and cultural hermeneutic he demands.

Maritain, on the other hand, finds in the Thomistic texts a living, breathing *philosophia perennis.* In his aesthetics, Maritain does not fear that a free and open dialogue with modern art and with contemporary philosophies, even those of a Bergsonian bend, will require him to compromise his fidelity to Thomas.

Eco, who still actively speaks and writes today, is a bit more difficult to pin down. He has not returned to medieval aesthetics since embarking on his long

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[61] Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism, p.* 30, n. 63b.
[62] Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas,* p. 39.
[63] *Ibid.*
[64] Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages, p.* 24.

journey into semiotics almost forty years ago. Yet, as I have suggested, that journey itself has been significant.

The history of aesthetics, as the Table of Contents of any anthology will tell us, is predominately written in post-Kantian terms. Plato and Aristotle receive cursory treatment, if for no other reason than the fact that their gigantesque status in the history of philosophy is unquestionable. Apparently, Eco has taken the Kantian project quite seriously, but has joined the ranks of those who believe that the Third Critique falls short of fulfilling its promise.[65] Because the question of the respective roles of the senses and the intellect in judgments of taste has proved too daunting, Eco seems to have found an escape in a semiotic interpretation of art and beauty.[66] If he were to return to medieval aesthetics, I would venture to say that he might favor the symbolic interpretation of beauty represented by John Scottus Eriugena rather than the metaphysical interpretation represented by Thomas.[67]

Although in no way a primarily philosophical work, his recently published *A History of Beauty* has traces of Eco's semiotic turn.[68] It is preferable to examine beauty through its varied and manifold historical manifestations rather than as a unified and cohesive set of interrelated concepts. *A History of Beauty* is undoubtedly a brilliant *tour de force* and a fascinating read. It affirms Eco's well-deserved reputation as an academic/novelist completely devoted to popularizing his semiotic philosophy to the bewildered delight of a post-modern mass-media culture. In the history of philosophical aesthetics, in

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> L'estetica, almeno da Kant in poi, non stabilisce un canone della bellezza, ma definisce le condizioni formali di un giudizio estetico: all'interno di questi schemi descritivi dell'esperienza possibile si muove la varietà delle esperienze personali segnate ciascuna da un marchio di originalità. Per il problema del giudizio estetico come per gli altri suoi problemi, l'estetica come disciplina filosofica procede dunque come fenomenologia di esperienze concrete per elaborare definizioni che siano comprensize di esperienze possibili senza prescriverne il contenuto. La massima *scientificità* dell-estetica non viene raggiunta stabiliendo scientificamente (secondo leggi psicologiche o statistiche) le regole del gusto, ma definiendo la *a-scientificità* della esperienza di gusto ed il margine che in essa va lasciato al fattore personale e prospettico. (Umberto Eco, *La definizione dell'arte,* p. 61.)

[66] See Eco's discussions in *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1984), pp. 18-29; 143-153; *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press), pp. 69-106.

[67] Cf. his discussion in *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas,* p. 214.

[68] See Umberto Eco, *A History of Beauty* (New York: Rizzoli: 2004).

which particular questions about art and beauty cannot help but be phrased in post-modern terms, Umberto Eco's place, at least for now, seems more secure than that of the tried-and-true Thomist, Jacques Maritain.

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Method in Philosophy: Maritain's Engagement with Modernity

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There exists a popular view among certain groups of philosophers, whether it be devoted traditionalists, passionate fideists, or anti-rationalist existentialists, that modernity is nothing short of a big mistake. The revolutions of thought and spirit that were carried out by the likes of Descartes, Bacon, and Kant, in their rejection of traditional metaphysics, absolutization of reason, and turn towards the subject, have, so the argument goes, led humankind down the path of intellectual error and moral confusion. It would not be a misrepresentation to assert that Jacques Maritain shares this point of view, for his trenchant critiques of modern philosophy, which he believes rests on fundamental perversions of thought, constitute the very substance of his philosophical activity. In just about every one of his books Maritain rails against the poverty of intelligence of modern philosophy and seeks to overcome the sterile ratiocination of modern thought.[1] In fact, Maritain consistently strove to find solutions to the problems that modernity caused and to set philosophical thinking aright. Gerald Phelan succinctly describes this general tenor of suspicion about modernity which lay at the centre of Maritain's philosophical outlook:

> On every side we hear the wail of disappointed men complaining that the times are evil, that thought is bankrupt, our civilization effete and our social order crumbling. Melancholy persons praise the peaceful, happy days of an imaginary past; the pusillanimous shrink from every effort or movement of reform; violent people clamour for revolt. Only a few set themselves patiently to study the situation as it is and diagnose the malady from which the world is

[1] A few notable examples in this regard include the following works: *Antimodern* (1922), *Three Reformers: Luther, Descartes, Rousseau* (1925), *Integral Humanism* (1936), *The Range of Reason* (1947), and *The Peasant of the Garonne* (1966).

> suffering. The philosopher among those few choice spirits is Jacques Maritain. His diagnosis is as deep and searching as the remedy he offers is hopeful.[2]

The disease of the modern mind, according to Maritain, festers on the distorted conception of human knowledge which has robbed human intelligence of the capacity to know reality. If a crisis exists in modern philosophy then it must be diagnosed nowhere else than in the domain of intelligence itself and it is precisely on this terrain that the solutions to this problem need to be discovered.

Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879) was the Catholic Church's response to the pervasive influence of positivism and naturalism in the nineteenth century. The call was made for a concerted return to the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor, who was held up as the ideal teacher and the appropriate remedy to the sorry plight of Western civilization. Maritain enthusiastically answered this call and devoted his intellectual career to explaining and defending the wisdom of Aquinas to an audience in need of proper guidance in philosophical matters. As Ralph McInerny narrates in his recent spiritual biography of Maritain, the atheistic and nihilistic tendencies of modern culture did not sit well with Maritain since his early student days and it is primarily his insatiable thirst for meaning and truth in a wasteland of scientistic and rationalistic theorizing that was one of the main motivations of his conversion to the Catholic faith in 1906.[3] Modernity had lost its very soul by turning away from its Christian heritage and by seeking salvation in science and political idealism. It is for this reason that Maritain always confronted modernity under the auspices of his Catholic faith and the guidance of the Church's teachings. Faith and reason must be viewed as compatible partners in the human being's quest for truth in this life and the modern movement to discredit religious faith must itself be placed into doubt.

It is not surprising, then, to notice that Maritain's critical assessment of modernity is inspired and supported by the philosophy of St. Thomas, the physician whose task is to heal the illnesses afflicting modern intelligence and to set human knowledge back on the right course. Although it is incontrovertible that Maritain is a Thomist through and through, it must also be recognized that Jacques Maritain is not St. Thomas Aquinas. In this regard, we can aptly describe Maritain's thought as the metaphysics of Thomas

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[2] Gerald B. Phelan, *Jacques Maritain* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1937), pp. 11-12.

[3] Ralph McInerny, *The Very Rich Hours of Jacques Maritain: A Spiritual Life* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), pp. 81-87.

"entirely transfigured."[4] The modern context of Maritain's philosophical activity manifests a unique approach to the acquisition of philosophical knowledge, one which differs in some significant respects from St. Thomas himself. It would be a gross misunderstanding of Maritain's philosophical work, therefore, if it were simply regarded as a straightforward regurgitation of Thomistic philosophy bereft of any originality and clean of any personal imprint of Maritain's own philosophical vision. An accurate representation should view Maritain as an eminent philosopher in his own right and as developing a distinctive philosophical methodology.

Thus I would like to argue in this paper that Maritain's persistent engagement with modernity left an indelible impression on his own method in philosophy, so much so that the spirit of modernity actually determined the nature of Maritain's philosophical thought. Such a view certainly rejects the supposition that Maritain is no more than a dry presenter of the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, but rather emphasizes the special relationship that Maritain had with modernity which dynamically shaped and molded his ideas. Hence it is crucial to discover what precisely that relationship was and how it made its mark on Maritain's own philosophical method. To be sure, the guiding notion in this interpretation is taken from the hermeneutical tradition which stresses that the subject's relationship with an object is inescapably influenced by *both* the subject *and* the object. It would be an illusion, therefore, to suppose that Maritain's constant preoccupation with modernity, albeit in a critical and even dismissive tone, did not contribute in an essential manner to the formation of the philosophical method which he exercised.

By the phrase "philosophical method" I mean to suggest the path or procedure that philosophical activity is to follow in order to acquire authentic philosophical knowledge. It should be obvious that a philosophical method presupposes a certain conception of what constitutes authentic philosophical knowledge. Put concisely, the development and implementation of a philosophical method requires by necessity a clear and stable notion of the goal to which the method is being put to service. Indeed, one can go even further to assert that it is precisely the nature of this goal or object of pursuit that determines the method itself. This insight leads us to the inevitable conclusion that the end or goal of philosophical activity must already be comprehended prior to the beginning of the search since it dictates the specific direction the philosopher is to take on this journey. It is the nature of

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[4] Maritain makes a similar remark in his comparison of Thomas with Aristotle. See Jacques Maritain, *The Peasant of the Garonne*, tr. by Michael Cuddihy and Elizabeth Hughes (Toronto: The MacMillan Company, 1969), p. 158: "The metaphysics of St. Thomas is not the metaphysics of Aristotle, because it is the metaphysics of Aristotle *entirely transfigured*."

this goal or object at the centre of Maritain's philosophical vision that needs to be clarified if we are going to understand what exactly Maritain's method in philosophy is. Therefore, to achieve this objective I propose to explicate the structure of Maritain's philosophical method in accordance with the three stages of appropriation, engagement and redemption. It is my basic contention here that Maritain's method of philosophical activity follows this tripartite structure which reveals the very nature of the sought-after goal of philosophy.

Appropriation: "In My Beginning is My End"

How does philosophy begin? This timeless philosophical question has troubled many a pensive individual who desires to know the nature of philosophy and how it comes to take hold of a person's soul. Regardless of the variety of answers provided it is universally acknowledged that philosophy involves, among other things, an exercise in rational thought. When human intelligence is actualized in its full reality and the human being comes to know the truth of things it is at this point that philosophy begins as a scientific discipline, as a peculiar form of knowledge. To explore this dimension of philosophical thinking more fully we should dwell on the structure of a human act. Every act involves a subject and object, a subject which is related to an object. So, for instance, when I cook, it is I, the subject, who cooks the pork chop, the object. This schema also applies to seemingly intransitive actions, such as walking, since the operation performed is the medium between the agent and the goal of the activity, such as reaching a destination or simply passing the time, which can be construed as the object of the act, in this case not a physical object, but nonetheless an object. When we consider the act of thinking the subject-object structure obtains in a special manner. It is the object of thought – that which my mind entertains in thought – that determines the very essence of thinking. Maritain explains this formation of the philosophical spirit in the following terms:

> If a particular development and dynamic organization of the spirit, which we know as philosophy, takes form in us, it will be – as in the case of every act of knowing, searching and judging – essentially related to an object to which it makes our intelligence adapted and co-natured; and it will be exclusively specified by this object. Hence it is uniquely in function of the object that philosophy is specified, and it is the object toward which it tends by virtue of itself (by no means the subject in which it resides) that determines its *nature*.[5]

[5] Jacques Maritain, *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, tr. by Edward H. Flannery (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), p. 13.

The object that is adequately suited to be apprehended by our intelligence is physical nature. Endowed with senses we are able to apprehend in an immaterial manner the being of physical things, the truth of sensible objects of this world. It is for this reason that Maritain understands philosophy as rooted in and emanating from the human being's attempt to understand the world in which he or she lives. In this sense, philosophy is "intrinsically a natural and rational form of knowledge."[6] There is nothing fantastical or supernatural in the origin of philosophy since it begins in the mind's grasp of the being of physical things. Furthermore, given philosophy's natural and rational character it is an activity that is accessible to every human being, not reserved to only a select few. Human intelligence is nurtured and sustained by this intimate contact with physical, sensible reality because its nature is to know being (*capax entis*) and the mind's first contact with being is through the senses.

The knowledge of the being of sensible things leads to the creation of distinctive philosophical sciences, the most important of which for Maritain is the philosophy of nature.[7] There are three ways in which the intellect can know the being of sensible things which correspond to three orders of abstraction or visualization.[8] On the first level of abstraction, the mind comes to know a sensible object by grasping its essence in reference to sensible perception. As such, this kind of knowledge pertains to physical reality and is thus the domain of either natural science or the philosophy of nature. If the emphasis within the thinker lies with the sensible or physical qualities of the thing, then this attitude will tend in the direction of the establishment of an experimental or empiriological science. On the other hand, if the abstractive visualization penetrates to the being of the thing insofar as it is mutable or mobile, then we are in the domain of the philosophy of nature. According to the second level of abstraction, the object is known, no longer with respect to its sensible qualities, but with respect to the imagination. The mind grasps the being of the thing in terms of its quantitative essence and to accomplish this the intellect must divest the object of its sensible aspects when it is taken up in thought. This second order pertains to mathematical knowledge in which the principles of extension, number and motion are applied to the object in question.[9] Lastly, in the third order of abstraction, the object is abstracted from both the senses and imagination to be apprehended in accordance with

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[6] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[7] Jacques Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, tr. by Bernard Wall (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1954), pp. 36-37. See also Jacques Maritain, *Philosophy of Nature*, tr. by Imelda C. Byrne (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951).

[8] Jacques Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, p. 38.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

its purely intelligible nature. This is the domain of metaphysics where intellect views the being of the thing with respect to its being, that is, as completely independent of any sensible or imaginative quality. In this case, for example, the metaphysical concepts of potency and act would be grasped by the intellect. Therefore, for Maritain there exist degrees of knowledge in the philosophical realm, each possessing its own irreducible and unique kind of intelligibility.[10] We begin on the level of senses, proceed to a mathematical cognition and eventually arrive at a metaphysical knowledge which focuses on being with respect to being.

Philosophy is essentially this activity of the appropriation of being as one endeavours to know reality in itself. This progressive movement of human intelligence is proper to its very nature. Maritain tells us that the more one knows a thing, the more one desires to know.[11] In a specific sense, the knowledge of sensible things whets the person's desire to know the cause of this being which leads one to the domain of metaphysical knowledge, the study of being as being. To be sure, the kind of knowledge that is particular to philosophy is called wisdom. There is in fact a type of wisdom that belongs to the philosophy of nature, this being the lowest kind of philosophical knowledge, but Maritain asserts that it is an imperfect and incomplete wisdom. The genuine philosophical knowledge is metaphysical wisdom. Maritain defines wisdom as "a supreme knowledge, having a universal object and judging things by first principles."[12] Put simply, wisdom is the complete and all-encompassing form of human knowledge as such. What is distinctive about metaphysical wisdom is that it is a knowledge attained by natural and rational means, on the strength of human intelligence alone. There is no pretense of knowing any *supernatural* object in metaphysics since the object under consideration was originally abstracted from sense experience. Nonetheless, the law of cognition stipulates that the more perfect our metaphysical wisdom becomes the stronger our desire will be to attain a

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[10] See Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), pp. 37-41.

[11] "Because of that dynamism which is of the substance of the soul, and which was never more intensely experienced than by St. Thomas Aquinas, the lower wisdom of itself aspires to the higher wisdom. Not because it is in itself powerless in regard to its proper object, which would be absurd: but because the more it attains its object, the more this object awakens in it the desire of a higher knowledge, and the more in this sense it forms a void which the lower wisdom is by its essence incapable of filling. It does not aspire towards the higher wisdom because it knows incompetently its own proper object and according to the measure of its incompetence: but because it knows it well. Thus the more it drinks, the more it thirsts." (Jacques Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, p. 24.)

[12] Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 263.

higher form of knowledge, one that surpasses the domain of metaphysics proper. In this sense, metaphysical wisdom must eventually give way to theological wisdom, which is a knowledge of God inspired by faith; and theological wisdom in turn inevitably points to the highest form of wisdom, namely, mystical wisdom, which is bestowed on the human being through divine grace.[13]

It is clear, therefore, that Maritain understands philosophy as beginning with a sensible apprehension of being and by means of a progressive noetic movement human intelligence ends with an intimate knowledge of God Himself. I would like to call this noetic development a process of the appropriation of being, that is, a movement of making being one's own (*proprium*). I certainly do not mean to suggest that being is ruthlessly seized or captured by the mind and horded selfishly for oneself as a possession. Rather, the correct view is that the human being as a whole is ontologically enriched by this appropriation of being as an act of intelligence. In short, there is an essential relation between the progressive cognition of higher orders of being and personal development. The more one's mind is filled with being, the brighter one's heart burns with the desire to know the ultimate cause of being. It becomes apparent that Maritain envisages philosophy as consuming the entire person and as not simply restricted to the intellect as the human being is led gradually to the heights of mystical wisdom. Yet this traditional understanding of philosophy was radically altered in modernity with the effect that the structure of human knowledge was turned upside down.

Engagement: Confrontation and Commitment

There is no secret of the fact that Maritain's conception of philosophy is inspired by Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. To be sure, Maritain explicitly relies on these hallowed thinkers and their doctrines as he presents his own meditations on the nature of knowledge, truth, being and philosophy. The task of appropriation, which lies at the foundation of the philosophical exercise, is carried out concretely through study and learning and by maintaining an openness to truth, wherever it may be found, in the bosom of one's soul. Maritain exemplifies this attitude of appropriation in his numerous expository and critical studies of philosophers, such as St. Thomas Aquinas, René Descartes, and Henri Bergson, as well as theologians and mystics, such as Martin Luther, John of the Cross and St. Paul. There is no doubt that Maritain's greatness as a teacher and intellectual is due in large measure to his vast erudition and profound insights into the spirit of Western civilization. However, Maritain discerned in the philosophies of Aristotle and St. Thomas

[13] *Ibid*., pp. 263-270.

a genuine search for truth as such which made their instruction superior to every other philosophical system. It is important to recognize in this regard that Maritain rejects the label of "system" to describe Thomism, as one theory among others, but rather understands Thomism as a "spiritual organism," that is, a living, rational pursuit of truth.[14] Maritain's faithful obedience to his master, it must be said, is not the result of an arbitrary predilection or queer idiosyncrasy, but is due entirely to his conviction that Thomism teaches truth.[15] In this light it becomes clear that Maritain views philosophy as a

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[14] "In truth, Thomism is a common task. One is not a Thomist because, in the emporium of systems, one chooses it as if one were choosing one system among others just as you try one pair of shoes after another in a shoestore until you find a pattern that fits your foot better. If that were the way it was done, it would be more stimulating to cut a system to one's own measure. One is a Thomist because one has repudiated every attempt to find philosophical truth in any system fabricated by an individual (even though that individual be called *ego*) and because one wants to seek out what is true – for oneself, indeed, and by one's own reason – by allowing oneself to be taught by the whole range of human though, in order not to neglect anything of that which is. Aristotle and St. Thomas occupy a privileged place for us only because, thanks to their supreme docility to the lessons of the real, we find in them the principles and scale of values though which the total effort of this universal thought can be preserved without running the risk of eclecticism and confusion." (*Ibid*., p. xiii – xiv).

[15] "Viewed as a formally constructed philosophy, Thomistic philosophy – I do not say Thomistic theology – is wholly rational: no reasoning issuing from faith finds its way into its inner fabric; it derives intrinsically from reason and rational criticism alone; and its soundness as a philosophy is based entirely on experimental or intellectual evidence and on logical proof." (Maritain, *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, p. 15);

"This philosophy of Aristotle and St. Thomas is in fact what a modern philosopher has termed *the natural philosophy of the human* mind, for it develops and brings to perfection what is most deeply and genuinely natural in our intellect alike in its elementary apprehensions and in its native tendency towards truth" (Jacques Maritain, *An Introduction to* Philosophy, tr. by E. I. Watkin [London: Sheed & Ward, 1947], p. 74.)

Maritain expresses this same sentiment, although seeming to contradict the claims given above that Thomism is grounded in reason alone:

> St. Thomas was a theologian, absorbed all his life in *sacra doctrina*, and his whole work is essentially a work of theology. It wasn't his job to say 'I'm right' where another man is wrong, but, on the contrary, to preserve and assimilate the whole truth (with a fair amount of junk and blunders which had to be weeded out), carried along by an immense tradition. Hence his sacred respect for all the Fathers – in particular for St. Augustine, whose ways of approach, however, were not his, and consisted more in a loving meditation on the things of God than in the search for an elucidation strictly grounded in reason. (Maritain, *The Peasant of the Garonne*, pp. 155 – 156.)

sincere rational investigation of the truth, free of the encumbrances of prejudice, ideology and subjectivism.

Maritain's engagement with modernity, in line with the ambiguous meaning of the term "engagement," can be conceived as having two interrelated aspects: a confrontation and a commitment. The first, negative moment of this engagement is a confrontation with the philosophical systems propounded in modern times, as can be discerned, for instance, in the expression "to be engaged in battle." The term "confrontation" should be understood as a meeting or encounter which is an opposition. The task of the philosopher is to confront those theories and ideas which purport to be philosophical, but which lack an indispensable orientation towards reality and desire to know the truth. The awareness of the intrinsic emptiness of these systems provokes a clear and strong denunciation and critique. There is no doubt that the great figures of modern philosophy deserve our admiration for the impressive intellectual work they have done which demonstrates their superior talent and indefatigable industry. Indeed, Maritain explicitly acknowledges his respect for the likes of Descartes, Berkeley, Spinoza, Hume, Leibniz, Kant, Comte, Hegel and Bergson, thinkers he has assiduously studied in detail and from whom he has learned a good deal.[16] The problem with such *penseurs*, however, is that they have so radically transformed philosophy that they can no longer be considered philosophers. On this point Maritain expresses himself with the utmost clarity:

> Of all the thinkers – and great thinkers – whose lineage has its origin in Descartes, I contest neither the exceptional intelligence, nor the importance, nor the worth, nor, at times, the genius. In regard to them I challenge only one thing, but that I challenge with might and main, and with the certainty of being right: namely, their right to the name of philosopher (except, of course, for Bergson, and perhaps also Blondel). In dealing with those children of Descartes we must sweep away this name with the back of our hand. They are not philosophers; they are *ideosophers*: that is the only name which fits and by which it is proper to call them. It is in no way pejorative of itself, it merely designates *another* way of research and thought than the philosophic one.[17]

The claim that Maritain is making here is an exceedingly strong one; he is essentially asserting that modern philosophy, which takes its point of departure from Descartes, is idealist, since it begins with thought and not reality. Maritain is adamant that philosophy cannot and should not begin with an idea or thought or some mental phenomenon, but must fundamentally be grounded in the intellectual apprehension of the being of sensible things. In

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[16] Maritain, *The Peasant of the Garonne*, pp. 119 – 120.
[17] *Ibid*., p. 120.

short, modern philosophy is simply ideosophy because it is rooted in ideas and not reality, and this cannot pass as genuine philosophy.

This confrontation with modernity is guided by a realist conception of philosophy. Maritain does not oppose Descartes and Kant on ideological grounds because they happen to reject the Thomistic *system* and Maritain happens to be its defender, but rather because they have committed a radical error in their pursuit of truth by supposing that truth is a product of the human mind. A fundamental misunderstanding lies at the core of modern philosophy and it is this elemental mistake which Maritain wants to identify and correct. It is revealing to note that Maritain does not ignore or dismiss out of hand the achievements of modern philosophers, even though they have erred so egregiously. In fact, Maritain affirms unstintingly that modern philosophy is also dedicated to knowing the truth and that its most eminent representatives were sincere and noble in this undertaking. Yet it remains a self-evident truth that good intentions can still be governed by false notions and result in misdeeds. Despite its errors and missteps, modern philosophy does have much to teach us that is valuable and instructive. The pursuit of truth, Maritain suggests, is not limited merely to the positive manifestations of reality, but must pass, so to speak, through the valley of death and contend with the negative forces of this world which seek to blind human intelligence from the truth.

Paradoxically, human failure and weakness can be a pathway to truth. The recognition that human nature is fallible is a wellspring of wisdom. To ignore this basic human condition is in fact to violate the very nature of truth which encompasses being as such, or to put it succinctly, that which "is." This insight into the importance of understanding error for one's pursuit of truth inspired Maritain to evaluate modern philosophy in a rather unorthodox, yet positive light. As citizens of the modern world modern philosophy is *essential* to our apprehension of truth, Maritain argues, because it instructs us on the fallacies and mistakes that can be committed of which we should endeavour to be aware in order to avoid them. Maritain communicates this view as follows:

> Even when they are in the wrong, philosophers are a kind of mirror, on the heights of intelligence, of the deepest trends which are obscurely at play in the human mind at each epoch of history; (the greater they are, the more actively and powerfully radiant the mirror is). Now, since we are thinking beings, such mirrors are indispensable to us. After all, it is better for human society to have Hegelian errors with Hegel than to have Hegelian errors without Hegel – I mean hidden and diffuse errors rampant throughout the social body, which are Hegelian in type but anonymous and unrecognizable. A great philosopher in the wrong is like a beacon on the reefs, which says to seamen: steer clear of

> me. He enables men (at least those who have not been seduced by him) to *identify* the errors from which they suffer, and to become clearly aware of them, and to struggle against them. This is an essential need of society, insofar as society is not merely animal society, but society made up of persons endowed with intelligence and freedom.[18]

It would be gravely wrong, therefore, to debunk modern philosophy in its entirety as worthless since it does have something valuable to teach us. Such an appreciation of modern philosophy puts Maritain's attitude towards it in a new light. The intransigent criticisms of modern philosophers that fill the pages of Maritain's works should not be interpreted as Maritain's *rejection* of modern philosophy in favour of the Aristotelian or Thomistic *system*, as if all Maritain were doing was engaging in partisan one-upmanship. Instead, it is clear now that Maritain's opposition to modern philosophy is his attempt to point out and rectify its errors with the resolute aim of knowing the truth in the spirit of the *philosophia perennis*. What this reading of Maritain's relationship with modernity suggests is that Maritain continues to rely on a realist understanding of philosophy, namely, that its purpose is to abide in reality and to be aware of the sign of the times, something which determines his dispositional outlook. Put simply, Maritain does not dismiss modern philosophy because he affirms the perennial truth that wisdom is unified and one and that it can also be discovered in modern times. Had Maritain rejected modern philosophy outright as having no value, this judgement would have, paradoxically, in fact been motivated by a *modern* understanding of philosophical knowledge which refuses to accept the notion that wisdom and truth are ultimately one.

Maritain's engagement with modernity is really a commitment to modernity which is regulated by his commitment to truth. The modern world must not be shunned and the deposit of wisdom passed down through the ages must be our instruction in how we are to relate to this modern world. The motive in this commitment is neither pragmatic nor self-centered that serves merely the individual's interests in acquiring true knowledge. Philosophy has a responsibility to the world at large, to show human beings what truth and wisdom are and to liberate the human person from the shackles of lies and falsehoods. Consequently, this commitment to modernity is central to the vocation of philosophy as it is lived out in the modern age. But there is still one more stage in Maritain's philosophical method which orients philosophy to a supernatural end and delivers the person to the fullness of truth.

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[18] Jacques Maritain, *On the Use of Philosophy: Three Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 4 – 5.

Redemption: On Philosophy's Relation to God

A distinction must be made between the essence and the state of philosophy.[19] The essence of philosophy refers to the intrinsic constitution of the philosophical act which is to reason. On the other hand, the state of philosophy deals with the concrete and contingent expression of this same philosophical act as the human being engages in it in his worldly existence. Therefore, according to its state, philosophy must make use of the tools and resources offered to it in an historical human life, including the inheritance of tradition, the guidance of teachers, the support of institutions, and most importantly, the inspiration of religion. This insight emphasizes the truth that philosophy is not a disembodied, ethereal activity, but involves the whole human person in the many dimensions of his being with respect to the contingent circumstances of his life. On this view, philosophy is situated in the context of an encompassing human life and speaks to the entire person on his or her existential journey towards wisdom.

The philosopher is a person who reaches out to truth in knowledge and love. To know the truth one must also love it. It is a mistake, therefore, to maintain that truth can only be known with the mind and does not require the participation of one's volitional and affective energies. It is by means of connaturality, an openness of the whole person, that the highest degree of truth is revealed and adequately known. For Maritain this holistic and inclusive appreciation of the philosophical act paves the way for the validation of a Christian philosophy, a philosophy which takes its instruction from the revealed truths of Christian faith. Maritain argues that the validity of a Christian philosophy is vindicated when we acknowledge the reality of human weakness and error which are obstacles to the appropriation of truth.[20] The highest truths can only be known with divine assistance in the form of grace which bathes the human intellect in understanding. Reason receives a "positive endowment" from revelation and is empowered to know the truth of those realities which are otherwise hidden from view in the absence of such supernatural aids.[21]

If modern philosophy has difficulty in accepting this idea of a Christian philosophy, then this is due to two disastrous developments in the Western tradition, one which affects the subject and the other the object of the philosophical act. First, with respect to the object of the philosophical act, Maritain considers *averroism* as the chief cause behind the devaluation of religious truths in the philosophical spectrum. Averroism refers to the

[19] Maritain, *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, pp. 11 – 18.
[20] *Ibid*., p. 17 – 18.
[21] *Ibid*., p. 19.

separation of philosophical wisdom and theological wisdom.[22] The problem with averroism is not that theology was rejected and philosophy absolutized in its place. On the contrary, averroism affirms quite strongly that theology and religious faith must be preserved alongside philosophy. What does change, however, is that theology is no longer regarded as a source of *knowledge*. Thus Descartes was true to the precepts of averroism by removing theological wisdom from the domain of philosophical knowledge, all the while paying homage to his Christian faith which is deprived of any cognitive content.[23] Essentially, Descartes held that faith was opposed to cognition; he denied that theology could be a science.

In his book *The Dream of Descartes* Maritain describes Descartes' neo-stoical Catholic faith in which he was blindly obedient to the Church and did not bother to understand intellectually and scrutinize rationally the truth-claims of Christianity.[24] Descartes' faith was stagnant, incapable of growth, and completely cut off from the other sectors of his life. This peculiar, modern vision of religious faith which compartmentalizes it into a impervious corner of one's life and which allows it to have no contact with one's intellect is one which, in Maritain's sincere estimation, has wreaked havoc on the human being and delivered humanity into a disastrous situation. At issue is the very nature of knowledge and truth which has undergone a radical transformation since the Middle Ages. Maritain's ongoing insistence that there are different degrees and kinds of knowledge, all valid within their own parameters, and his inveterate refusal to stow away his Catholic faith whenever he philosophized, testify to his earnest belief that modern philosophy had falsified epistemology and had done a grave injustice to the human spirit by indoctrinating the modern human being with the view that religious faith has nothing to do with truth or intellectual affairs.

The second major upheaval in modernity which transformed the subject of philosophy is the reduction of the human being to a mere philosopher. By this I mean that it is only in modern times when philosophy is engaged in, not by a "human being" in the fullness of his or her existence, but by a "philosopher"

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[22] Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, p. 28.

[23] This is a point made by Étienne Gilson:

> Descartes did not differ from Saint Thomas Aquinas in that he suppressed theology – he very carefully preserved it; nor in that he formally distinguished philosophy from theology – Saint Thomas Aquinas had done it many centuries before him. What was new with Descartes was his actual and practical separation of philosophical wisdom and theological wisdom. (*God and Philosophy* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941], pp. 76-77.)

[24] Jacques Maritain, *The Dream of Descartes*, tr. by Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), pp. 62-69.

who is a specialist in a certain type of thinking. Maritain explains his point as follows:

> History seems to indicate that at the time of Guillaume de Vair and of Charron, and later of Descartes, certain thinkers, who still professed the Christian faith, conjured up a man of pure nature whose lot it was to philosophize, and to whom might be superadded a man of the theological virtues destined to merit heaven. Later on the non-Christian rationalists, more logical in the same error, were to slough off this man of the theological virtues as a superfluous counterpart; they satisfied themselves that to philosophize properly, that is to say, according to the exigencies of reason, it is necessary to believe only in reason, in other words to be only a philosopher, existing only *qua* philosopher. What they failed to see was that in so doing they made of the philosopher a simple *hypostasierung* of philosophy, and denied him existence as a man, asking him to lose his soul for the sake of his object. But where man departs philosophy can no longer remain.[25]

In the ancient and medieval worldviews philosophy was consistently regarded as serving the ends of life, but in modern times the tables have been turned and life is supposed to serve philosophy. The philosopher thinks about truth, beauty and goodness, but does not relate these concepts to his or her own life. Moreover, the modern philosopher is ready to sacrifice himself for the sake of philosophy, a disposition exemplified by the likes of Friedrich Nietzsche, whose mental breakdown towards the end of his life is largely attributed to his unwavering, obsessive commitment to philosophy. Even in our own day one need only observe the philosophers teaching at universities across North America and Europe and one invariably finds individuals who worship at the altar of their self-constructed idea of philosophy and refuse to allow human life to enter into their deliberations. Only when afflicted with this contagion can a philosopher argue and defend a theory of justice while remaining blind to the plight and needs of others in society who suffer injustice.

Essentially what is missing in such a condition is an understanding of the human person as a whole, the purpose and context of human existence, and the overall meaning of human life, in the investigation of which philosophy is supposed to play a subservient, yet constructive role. The motivating force in any philosophical activity must be the life impulse coursing through our veins, not a sterile idea or notion which one happens to have concocted in one's mind about what constitutes the legitimate criteria of philosophical research. Truth, as Maritain has affirmed, does not belong to a system, but ultimately leads the human being, in the terrain of living experience, to ever

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[25] Maritain, *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, p. 16.
See also: "Descartes 'has opened up the line of thinkers who will be philosophers *only.*'" (Maritain, *The Dream of Descartes*, p. 86).

higher reaches of being itself. The organic and energetic attachment that human beings have to truth itself is the beginning and end of all philosophical knowledge, and this truth cannot and should not be held captive within the walls of some artificially constructed system of ideas.

Therefore, to summarize, the impoverished *state* of philosophy in modernity is reflected in the defective conceptions regarding the subject and object of the philosophical act. As we have already shown, the nature of philosophy is determined by its object, and if the object is misconceived then this will certainly have negative consequences for the essence of philosophy itself. Furthermore, the proper and true conception of the highest object of philosophical knowledge will benefit the subject as well. In concert with the Thomistic doctrine that the thing known is known in accordance with the mode of the knower, Maritain recognizes that human personality, in contradistinction to human individuality, realizes itself in the acts of knowledge and love which are ordained towards a supernatural end, the uncreated, eternal Good.[26] But this supreme form of knowledge, what Aquinas calls infused wisdom or the wisdom of grace, can only be granted to the human being by God. If philosophy is a natural and rational act, then we can say with Maritain and Aquinas that grace perfects nature and does not destroy it. It is through God's act of redemption, in accordance with the "law of the Incarnation", that divine wisdom descends to our earthly existence and ennobles our frail attempts to know truth.[27] It is only in the state of the Christian world that philosophy is redeemed from its own errors and made to be the most perfect, most sublime and most joyous activity given to the human being.

According to Maritain, it is Christianity and its mightiest representatives, most notably St. Paul and St. Thomas Aquinas, who instruct us all about the perpetual need to look beyond this natural world of ours and to discover the wellspring of wisdom and truth in God. The primacy of the spiritual was a principle that Maritain affirmed assiduously throughout his life. Our natural and rational mode of knowing, which is the basis of philosophy, is not the ultimate criterion of truth, but is merely the first step in our journey towards reality itself, towards the Being of beings. We should forever be attentive to the supernatural sources of wisdom and conform our minds and hearts to the spiritual truths which we neither create nor destroy, but are called upon to recognize. But the life of the spirit should not flee from the demands of this temporal realm; it should confront the world in all its raw energy. Maritain certainly does not endorse a fideist or Manichean conception of Christian

[26] See Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, tr. by John J. Fitzgerald (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), pp. 31 – 46.
[27] Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, p. 21.

faith, according to which the temporal and the divine do not mix. On the contrary, the human being receives a divine inspiration in faith to spread the message of love to all of humankind, especially those most in need of divine assistance, and is urged to engage himself with the world in order to redeem it.

This type of engagement is precisely what Maritain intended in his confrontation with and commitment to modernity. The point is not to banish or denigrate the world in favour of the spiritual realm, but to transform the world from within with the aid of supernatural faith. Maritain's clarion call to all philosophers is to use their intellects and special talents for the sake of truth, not only in their own personal quests to know truth, but more importantly to share this insight into truth with others and in so doing to elevate the human spirit to Truth itself. This knowledge of the truth, as already indicated, must be animated by forces deep within each and every human being: a sincere desire to be authentically free in mind and spirit, a deliberate channeling of one's passions towards greater, transcendent ends, and an ardent love for everything which is real and true. Indeed, we can still hear Maritain urging us on today:

> A crusade of the spirit, a spirit of crusaders! Purely defensive positions, compromises, provisional withdrawals, partial truths are now of no avail. It is to a universal expansion of the mind that we are summoned through love. It is high time. The soul craves to adhere unreservedly to the absolutism of truth and charity. There will be men come forward free from every preoccupation but Christ. The Saints have foretold their coming. They will make no exception of persons, nations or races. The ancient routine or modern prejudices, the peace of mind of the rich, the fate of literature and good taste, will concern them little. Distinguishing in all things light from darkness, they will undertake to reconcile human antagonisms in justice and to give man wholly back to God. Love will make them universal by grace as God is universal by nature and expand their minds to the measure of the divine intentions. If the world refuses to receive them, their work will nevertheless not be in vain: it will be fulfilled at all events in the invisible kingdom of the hearts of such as listen to them.[28]

St. Jerome's University

[28] Jacques Maritain, *The Things That Are Not Caesar's*, tr. by J. F. Scanlan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), pp. 109-110.

Aquinas and War

Dr. Richard Feist

I. War and Ethics: War as a Normative Platform in the History of Philosophy

The title, "Aquinas and War," roughly illustrates my approach to examining the relationship between Aquinas' thought and war. Some precision, though, is required. First, I will *not* examine Aquinas' thought on war, as in elucidating his version of Just War Theory. This has been thoroughly done by Frederick H. Russell, who roots Aquinas' views in the Augustinian grounds of the Just War Tradition. [1] Hence, in terms of doctrine – actual content concerning the ethical framework of warfare – Aquinas is not original; however, this does not entail a complete lack of originality. According to Russell, part of Aquinas' originality is his use of "…Aristotelian political postulates to justify princely authority to wage war." [2] The other, larger part, is Aquinas' novel synthesis of Aristotelian and previous patristic discussions of virtue within the context of war.[3] True to the Seraphic Doctor's scholastic reputation, his contribution is also one of presentation.[4] Paul Christopher writes:

> None of Aquinas' three conditions for a Just War are new, but he is the first to place all three of them together as independently necessary and jointly sufficient.

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[1] See Frederick H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
[2] *Ibid*., p. 261.
[3] See *Ibid*., p. 263.
[4] Considering Aquinas' thought on war as representative of scholastic thought on war is done by no less an authority on medieval warfare than Philippe Contamine in his *War in the Middle Ages,* tr. by M. Jones (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1986), p. 280.

> Moreover, he elaborates on them and supports them with sound, and often original, argumentation.[5]

So, I shall put the specifics of the Just War Tradition to the side. Still, it is compelling to note that "war" is a truly trans-cultural topic, a subject of global speculation throughout humanity's history. Pacifism aside, there are two views on war that are culturally and temporally invariant.[6] First, that war is simultaneously the worst human activity and yet it *can* be morally legitimate. Consider the following from the *Book of Manu*, a Hindu text from around the fourth century. It governs the practice of warfare and reads in many ways like a contemporary piece of international law.

> When the king fights with his foes in battle, let him not strike with weapons concealed in wood, nor with such as are barbed, poisoned, or with the points of which are blazing with fire. Let him not strike one who in flight has climbed on an eminence, nor a eunuch, no one who joins the palms of his hands in supplication, nor one who flees with flying hair, nor one who sits down, nor one who says 'I am thine'; nor one who sleeps, nor one who has lost his coat of mail, nor one who is naked, nor one who is disarmed, nor one who looks on without taking part in the fight, nor one who is fighting with another foe; nor one whose weapons are broken, nor one afflicted with sorrow, nor one who has been grievously wounded, nor one who is in fear, nor one who has turned to flight; but in all cases let him remember the duty of honorable warriors.[7]

The notion of "duty" being important to ethics, of course, is well known via the philosophy of Kant and earlier Stoic theory. My point here is that ethics has its partial origins and subsequent development within the context of war.

So, let us think about the notion of "the context of war." In Western philosophical thought, the earliest *and* clearest views on war itself, as well as the earliest and clearest statements that belong to the "Just War Tradition" are from Aristotle. Aristotle accepts Plato's view that war – or at least the threat of it – is inevitable. "Feeling threatened by war" would have been a common

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[5] Paul Christopher, *The Ethics of War and Peace: An Introduction to Legal and Moral Issues* 3rd ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2004), p. 50. Again, Aquinas' argumentation is not terribly new, just its application.

[6] The history and philosophy of pacifism is beyond the scope of this paper. For a classic critique of pacifism as an intrinsically contradictory position, see Jan Narveson, "Pacifism: A Philosophical Analysis" in *Ethics*, Vol. 75, 1965, pp. 259-71. For an extended defense of the pacifist position see Richard Norman, *Ethics, Killing and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[7] Taken from *The Law of War: A Documentary History,* vol. 1, ed. by L. Friedman (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 3.

emotion among ancient thinkers. Plato came of age during one of the bloodiest wars of Antiquity, the Peloponnesian War. This war, most military historians agree, is a prime example of the worst kind of war. It was a civil war, pitting Greek against Greek, Athens against Sparta. Athens was predominantly a naval power, Sparta a land power. Strategy dictates that one does not engage the enemy on the enemy's terms. Hence, for many years Spartan hoplites ravaged Attica while the Athenians retreated to safety within the long walls that encircled Athens and ran down to her port of Piraeus. From this port Pericles would repeatedly launch the Athenian fleet of triremes, the cutting edge of then current military naval technology, to wreak havoc upon the cities of the Peloponnesus.[8] Neither side could destroy the other's supply lines and so the war dragged on for decades. As mentioned, Plato came of age during this war and a cursory glance at his works, especially the *Republic*, shows that they are laced with war imagery.[9] A noted authority on the city life of fourth-century Athens, Kurt Raaflaub, argues that while it is somewhat true that Athens was a city of culture and Sparta a military camp, "...the warmongers sat in Athens, not Sparta."[10] Raaflaub then describes the propaganda of ancient Athens:

> It was Athens that built the most powerful war machine the Greek world had seen and used it permanently and ruthlessly. The Athenian citizens were exposed to a constant barrage of visual and oral expressions of a highly militaristic ideology of war, power, and commitment to serve and sacrifice for the polis. Sites, monuments, and rituals reminded them of their city's glorious past and unprecedented power, of their ancestors' heroic accomplishments, and of their obligation to live up to these examples: as Thucydides' Perikles puts it, the citizens' *aretē* culminated in being lovers of their city and willing to die for it.[11]

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[8] The classic reference for this war is, of course, the monumental study by Thucydides. The standard, modern scholarly study of the war is the four-volume set by Donald Kagan—all published by Cornell University Press. Kagan has also written a shorter account, *The Peloponnesian War* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004). Studies of particular aspects of this war multiply by the minute. I mention but one, accessible and interesting little text: Chester G. Starr, *The Influence of Sea Power on Ancient History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[9] For an interesting, albeit controversial discussion of the war imagery in Plato, see Leon Harold Craig, *The War Lover: A Study of Plato's* Republic (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

[10] Kurt Raaflaub, "The Transformation of Athens in the Fifth Century," in *Democracy, Empire and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens,* ed. by D. Boedeker and K. Raaflaub (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998) p. 18.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

I doubt that any philosopher could read Raflaaub's final reference to Thucydides, namely, his famous funeral oration, without being reminded of Socrates' discussion with Crito concerning a possible escape from consuming the hemlock. I will return to Socrates presently. For now I would like to point out that Plato's war imagery stems only partly from his coming of age during the Peloponnesian War. It would seem that most likely Plato was himself a hoplite during the Corinthian War and so could have had some direct experience of war to draw upon. However, what is more important for understanding the early relationship between war and ethics is that Plato's mentor, Socrates, was certainly a hoplite.

Plato's *Apology*, which is not written in the dialogue format and represents what occurred before a jury of some four hundred Athenian citizens, is most likely the closest representation of the historical Socrates we have. Socrates refers to himself as standing his philosophical ground in the same way as he stood his ground against the Boeotians on the battlefield at Delium, in the November of 424 BC. This battle was strategically insignificant compared to Salamis or Marathon, as well as most other battles comprising the Peloponnesian War. It was, in the words of a noted historian, "a gory non-event."[12] There were no great generals of antiquity at Delium; Thucydides does not even mention Socrates' presence. What we know of Socrates' involvement at Delium derives from Plato's writings and the Platonic tradition. Delium turned into a bloodbath for the Athenians. At the peak of battle their spirit collapsed, panic set in and the Athenian hoplites broke their phalanx formation.[13] This was a disaster since hoplites in a phalanx are mutually dependent for their protection. Power, protection – all derives from the solidarity of the soldiers. Not surprisingly, various military historians have pointed out the connection between the power structure of the phalanx and the origins of political ideas, such as democracy.[14] In sum, military historians have long recognized the influence of military practices upon the development of political ideas.

Again, I am not taking the traditional approach of writing about Aquinas' views of war, as in the context of his contribution to the Just War Tradition. Instead, I am borrowing from the military historian's perspective, namely that

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[12] Victor Davis Hanson, *Ripples of Battle: How the Wars of the Past Still Determine How We Fight, How We Live and How We Think* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003), p. 171.

[13] For more on this battle as well as a historian's discussion of war's influence on thought, see *Ibid*.

[14] For a concise introduction to this as well as a good, up to date bibliography, see Harry Sidebottom, *Ancient Warfare: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

war is a shaping force. But, there is a danger of being misinterpreted when importing the military historian's view into philosophical analyses. To view war non-instrumentally, to see it as not simply a means to an externally related objective, is not necessarily to embrace that particular non-instrumental kind of creative view of war that is typically and pejoratively deemed "militarism." In sum, seeing war as a creative force is more akin to a genus view than a species. Without doubt many "creative views of war" litter the graveyard of history, for instance the Nazi perspective, and represent nothing but moral abominations. Nonetheless, these horrid species do not exhaust the genus.

So, one can recognize the creative aspect of the history of war without endorsing it. It is simply to recognize that war has contributed to human thought, to philosophy, to ethics. This recognition is nothing new; William James recognized it about a century ago in "The Moral Equivalent of War."[15] Adhering to the view that one understands and achieves peace only by understanding war, James insisted that pacifists take note that war does produce good things, namely, martial virtues. James' point is that it does not follow that *only* war can produce and maintain martial virtues. We must find a non-violent way to produce war's goods; we must find the "moral equivalent of war." So, even though war has been a normative platform that does not say anything more than that, namely, that war *has been* a normative platform. It does not allow anyone to say that war is anything more than that or that war is necessary. Still, given the fact that the percentage of human history involved in war dwarfs that without war, there is some plausibility to saying that war is a necessary part of us.

II. Is War Natural?

In his fascinating study, *Of Arms and Men: A History of War, Weapons, and Aggression,* Robert O'Connell writes that:

> War has fallen upon hard times. The true sport of kings appears no longer worthy of Clausewitz' famous dictum "A mere continuation of policy by other means." From our own perspective the phrase has the ring of black humor, a grotesque mockery of reality. Two centuries of increasingly pointless, financially disastrous, and above all, lethal conflicts, have rendered this venerable institution virtually incapable of performing any of the roles classically assigned to it.[16]

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[15] This essay originally appeared as a leaflet in 1910 and has been republished numerous times. A readily available version is in *War and Morality*, ed. by R.A. Wasserstrom (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1970).

[16] Robert O'Connell, *Of Arms and Men: A History of War, Weapons, and Aggression* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 3. Clausewitz's comment is from, Karl

No doubt it sounds rather odd to say that *war*, a repugnant activity, has itself "fallen on hard times." That is certainly not something to lament. War should be seen as something to despise and so to constrain as much as possible, to the point of eradication. Clearly O'Connell does not see war in this way. After all, he does refer to it as the "true sport of kings" and as a "venerable institution."

Moreover, O'Connell cites a famous remark by Karl von Clausewitz, the "Plato of war theorizing." As Alfred N. Whitehead once remarked that all western philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato, one could say that western war theorizing in many ways forms a set of footnotes to Clausewitz. For his works, like those of Plato, possess an ambitious scope of inquiry and intrinsically ambiguous nature that constantly suggests an inexhaustible source of riches. As Plato was taught by Socrates, Clausewitz was taught, through war itself (Thucydides' "violent teacher") by none other than Napoleon Bonaparte, perhaps the greatest general and strategic innovators of all time.

As Clausewitz writes, "war is the continuation of policy by other means."[17] In essence, there is a continuity of practice that nation-states employ in their dealings with one another.[18] War is not something radically other than "politics as usual." If one then thinks of Aristotle's view that "man is a political animal," then the logic of it all leads us into saying that war is natural as well. This may all sound outrageous, and it is admittedly a simplification of the issues, but there is some truth to it. For instance, "war" is heavily integrated into contemporary society. Many people work in the Departments of Defense and their associated contractors, all without thinking of themselves as "war mongering" in *any* sense of that term. Indeed, this is all part of Clausewitz' view, and others as well, that society itself, has become militarized. "War" and "Peace" become extremes of a continuum. Every country in the world (with the exception of Costa Rica) maintains a standing

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von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. by M. Howard and P. Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 24.

[17] Protagoras, in the dialogue that bears his name, says much the same thing when describing how the gods distributed gifts among mortal creatures. Humans, he says, were given justice, and 'the art of war' forms a part of 'the art of politics.'

[18] The continuity view is a matter for debate. Colin Gray, on the opening page of his *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) expresses the extreme version of this view. He bluntly asserts that the unity of human strategic experience is grounded on the deeper unity that throughout history "…nothing vital to the nature and function of war and strategy changes." On the other hand, but not quite to the other extreme, is John Lynn's *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture from Ancient Greece to Modern America* (USA: Westview Press, 2004). Lynn argues that war has indeed changed over time and varied from place to place.

armed force. We know historically that such maintenance cannot be accomplished without some kind of state support. The world is, so to speak, an armed camp.

A deplorable situation, but *not*, it would appear, a totally unnatural one. For nature, too, is an armed camp. Of course we are all familiar with perhaps the most famous expression of this view, one which was the result of blurring the distinction between humanity and nature, seeing nature as an evolutionary competitive arena, the words of Tennyson: "nature is red in tooth and claw." But is nature so red? Suppose that we consider the concept of "weapon." What, exactly, is a weapon? Trying to define this term raises the typical problems of definitions such as "too broad," "too narrow" and so on. Consequently, there has to be some kind of starting point. And as typical, the starting point often builds in the presuppositions of the author. A commonly accepted working definition of weapon is an object with an "ability to inflict damage upon another organism or to prevent damage from another organism."[19] This functional definition, like other such definitions, is quite controversial. Nonetheless, one has to start somewhere. Should we begin studying weapons by insisting that a weapon has to be bodily non-contiguous and deliberately chosen? In this case, weapons would be limited to humans (and some upper primates). Moreover, we would also end up in the strange situation of saying that when a human strikes another using an object, like a sword or stick, that is "using a weapon." But if the blow came at the end of fist, that is something quite different.[20] Moreover, insisting that "choice" be a part of the definition of "weapon" strikes me as adding an unnecessary complexity to the story. Nonetheless, one could argue that animals make choices in battle. Piranha fish, well-known for their biting their prey, do not use their teeth on each other. Instead, they strike each other with their tail-fins.[21] In sum, to maintain the uniquely human notion of weapon demands a substantial amount of traditional philosophical argument and, I would argue, ultimately indefensible metaphysical/physical dichotomies. In the interests of Ockham's razor, it is perfectly natural to speak of "nature's weapons." I certainly have not settled this issue, but I leave it with a rhetorical question. If the deadly mandible of an army ant or the sharp spiked end of a Stegasaurus' tail or hardened shell of a tortoise do not count as weapons of offensive and defensive sorts, what would?[22]

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[19] O'Connell, *Of Arms and Men*, p. 14.

[20] Our laws seem to agree with it since 'armed robbery' is a much more serious crime than 'unarmed robbery.'

[21] See O'Connell, *Of Arms and Men*, p. 15.

[22] Consider that two of the world's leading authorities on ants describe ant behaviour in terms of warfare as well as evolutionary arms races. See B. Hölldobler and E.O.

Of course, it is one thing to make the argument that weapons are natural and quite another to make the argument that *war*, itself, is natural. Organized warfare, in one sense, predates humans, such as the genes that push certain kinds of ants in fighting wars.[23] However, it is difficult to look at some of the earliest examples of human art, which contain pictures of war, and not seriously wonder if war is deeply intertwined with our genes.[24] Nonetheless, as Quincy Wright in his classic work pointed out, studying animal aggression as well as primitive human behaviour only takes us so far in explaining conscious, organized warfare.[25] Wright points out that there are many aspects of war that are, ultimately, truly the possession of humanity. Indeed, it is often pointed out that the rise of independent symbolic constructions of meaning systems accounts for the "liberation" of the human organism from the genetic prison of war.[26] Clearly, this genetic prison manifested itself early; cave paintings illustrate men at battle, not simply on the hunt. But, the notion of language or culture or any symbol system as a means of liberation raises a certain questions. Why hasn't the liberation been complete? Why is it that stable, peaceful democracies can be readily provoked into war? Why are the citizens of such peaceful societies often quite violent?

Again, today, this may strike us as overblown. After all, classical Athens was a democracy, a bastion of freedoms in many ways. It was driven by ideas; indeed, it was a time that has been referred to as the Greek enlightenment.[27] But to embrace this as the only view of this period is to distort it. This is evident if one considers the writings of the time. Again, as we have seen, Socrates, in his most public statement, Plato's *Apology*, clearly identifies himself in military terms. Plato's chief work, *The Republic*, is dominated by military metaphors. The Persian and Peloponnesian Wars served as inspiration for numerous works by the tragic writers and the greatest historians of antiquity, Herodotus and Thucydides. Finally, Athens, during its

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Wilson, *Journey to the Ants: A Story of Scientific Explanation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

[23] Again, see *Ibid*.

[24] There are Mesolithic cave paintings, namely those at Morela la Vella, Spain, which date from 20,000 BC.

[25] See Quincy Wright, *A Study of War* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1942), Vol. 1, pp. 32-35, 39.

[26] See Robert O'Connell, *Ride of the Second Horseman: The Birth and Death of War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 39.

[27] W.K.C. Guthrie in his classic (and still informative) several volume work, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, subtitles his third volume "*The Fifth Century Enlightenment*." W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) 5 volumes.

enlightenment, was seen by its rivals as another military power in the Mediterranean, to conquer or to be conquered by.

The point of my discussion, so far, is simply this. Warfare has been a natural and critical part of human history. What I am doing here is expanding the fundamental thesis of O'Connell, who writes that:

> …the relationship between man and his weapons is a great deal more intimate and complex than heretofore has been admitted. The length of time we have been using them, the profound effect they have had on political and military systems, and the psychological impact of their death-dealing capacity all argue strongly that weapons are very special devices, artifacts of the greatest significance.[28]

Again, the same route is being traced as mentioned before. There is a natural link from weapons ultimately to the social structures that ultimately come to contain them. These social structures, in general, form the boundaries in which we do ethics.

The main point of this section was to provide some motivation for overcoming what I think is a false presupposition of many, that war is intrinsically sterile. That is, war may cause many things, such as misery and carnage; however, it is in no way a source of anything "good." If it is a source of any kind of ethics, that certainly would not be an acceptable kind of ethics, at best only a kind of militaristic ethics, which is unacceptable. This view, that war is ethically sterile or a source of militarism is a false dichotomy.

I end this discussion of "war as a platform for nomativity" with some reflections by Chris Hedges, the last person who would glorify war. Hedges was in Sarajevo in the summer of 1995, a time and place he describes as nothing short of "Dante's inner circle of Hell." Sarajevo sat in the shadow of surrounding heights from which Serb gunners rained shells, hundreds of them per day. Multiple Katyusha rockets also bombarded the city; each rocket was able to destroy within seconds a five-story apartment building and its occupants. Hedges writes:

> Families lived huddled in basements, and mothers, who had to make a mad dash to the common water taps set up by the United Nations, faced an excruciating choice—whether to run through the streets with their children or leave them in a building that might be rubble when they returned.[29]

But, in spite of this, Hedges goes on to write:

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[28] O'Connell, *Of Arms and Men*, p. 5.

[29] Chris Hedges, *War Is Force That Gives Us Meaning* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), p. 1.

> I learned early on that war forms its own culture. The rush of battle is a potent and often lethal addiction, for war is a drug, one I ingested for many years

Now, it is one thing to talk about war's culture, that those actually inside of the "war situation" or "theatre of operations" are influenced to say and do certain things. Hedges continues and says that war is a kind of "industry" which is "…peddled by mythmakers – historians, war correspondents, filmmakers, novelists, and the state – all of whom endow it with qualities it often does possess… ." Now, what are these qualities that war does possess? Hedges lists them: excitement, exoticism and power. But, he also lists one characteristic of war that was also recognized long ago by Thucydides in his observations of the Peloponnesian War, namely, that war lays bare the soul, exposing the capacity for evil that lurks within all of us. Clearly this sounds, once again, like the view that regards war as hardwired into humans. Again, the list of wars that dominate the history of humanity suggests that this sad proposition might be true. Nonetheless, Hedges, in spite of all his horrifying experiences, ends on a basically optimistic note:

> The enduring attraction of war is this: Even with its destruction and carnage it can give us what we long for in life. It can give us purpose, meaning, a reason for living. Only when we are in the midst of conflict does the shallowness and vapidness of much of our lives become apparent. Triva dominates our conversations and increasingly our airwaves. And war is an enticing elixir. It gives us resolve, a cause. It allows us to be noble.[30]

In many ways, the method here is simply that of the military historian. There is no sense of the glorification of war, just the recognition of the importance of its contribution to human intellectual history. This recognition contravenes what Isaiah Berlin regards as Voltaire's attitude, an attitude that I think is common to many philosophers, and perhaps theologians as well. Berlin writes:

> The greatest publicist of the Enlightenment, Voltaire, even while he advocated the widening of historical inquiry to embrace social and economic activities and their effects, strongly believed that the only objects worthy of historical study were the peaks, not the valleys, of the achievements of mankind. He had no doubt about what they were: Periclean Athens, Rome of the late republic and early principate, Renaissance Florence, and France during the regin of Louis XIV. … The dark periods of human history were, for Voltaire, simply not worthy of the attention of intelligent men. The purpose of history is to impart instructive truths,

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

> not to satisfy idle curiousity, and this can only be done by studying the triumphs of reason and imagination, not the failures.[31]

III. War and Medieval Ethics: The Background to Aquinas

In the feudal age, which began around the year 1000 AD, large centralized states, certainly anything as large and as organized as the Roman Empire, were absent.[32] Military historians point to the shift in the nature of warfare. O'Connell remarks that during the height of the Roman Empire, war had become a routine, a process. The Roman infantryman killed with the calm precision of a carnivore catching its meal. We see this in the writings of Caesar, which are first hand combat reports, and are often quite bland. "For the Greeks," O'Connell writes, "…combat was a terrifying if exhilarating experience. For the Romans, it was largely in a day's work."[33] Military historians often refer to this kind of warfare as predatorial; soldiers as individuals disappear in favour of the soldier as member of a species. But in medieval times, warfare has taken on the characteristics of what military historians call "intraspecific combat." Indeed, many aspects of the broader category, intraspecific aggression – aggression towards members of one's own species – are quite salient during this time. I indicate one. When members of a species battle each other (for whatever reason), the fight is rarely to the death. Of course this sometimes happens, but the point is not to kill, but to establish a ranking. For instance, rattlesnakes do not bite each other; instead, they determine dominance via elaborate wrestling procedures.[34]

The actual practice of warfare during the times preceding Aquinas becomes what is typically referred to as "siege warfare." This type of fighting, at least during the Middle Ages, has been categorized as intraspecific combat. Siege warfare was essentially dominated by two principles. All open confrontations are to be avoided. The days of "the pitched battle" are gone. Second, all defense is governed by a "siege mentality." That is, there is an automatic response to an attack that is basically to hole up in strongholds. These two principles lead to the general shape of medieval battles: isolated skirmishes and very few major battles.

Alongside of the development of this siege style of warfare was that class structure began to characterize war and fighting. Like standard accounts of

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[31] Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), p. 52.

[32] Perhaps one could point to an exception, Germany. Nonetheless, Germany during this time was beginning its decent into decentralization.

[33] O'Connell, *Of Arms and Men*, p. 70.

[34] See *Ibid*., pp. 16-17.

intraspecific aggression, this kind of warfare led to an emphasis on the individual but the goal is not killing, just ranking. Out of all this grew the system of values that we have come to call chivalric codes.

In sum, from the very structure of the warfare that was practiced we have the following emerging properties. First, there was an emphasis on hierarchy. Second, the individual's place and rules that accompanied that place were stressed.

This admittedly very vague sketch of the structure of medieval warfare matches the general contours of Aquinas's philosophy. This comparison of the structure of medieval warfare with the structure of Aquinas' thought resembles a comparison done by Erwin Panofsky.[35] Panofsky compares medieval architecture and Aquinas' writings. More specifically, Panofsky compares the architectural structure of Aquinas' *Summa* to the structure of Gothic architecture. Briefly put, the basic structure of the *Summa* consists of two objects: questions and articles. Each question focuses on a specific theme. The theme is then examined in an associated cluster of articles. Each of the articles breaks down into five parts: the question posed; objections; authority quoted to the contrary; determination of the question and replies to the objections. Panofsky points out that within each of the parts of the article there exists a tension such that one cannot ultimately understand any part of an article without understanding the others. In sum, the articles and questions form an interlocked system whose parts cannot be pulled apart and properly understood in isolation. Similarly, Gothic architecture is composed of segments of materials in balanced force relations. Panofsky's discussion is essentially this. In a modern building such as an office tower or a house, as well as an ancient building such as the Parthenon, parts could be removed and the structure still stands. But the Gothic architecture of Aquinas' time was an "exceptionally holistic form." Remove the stone vaulted ceilings and the walls would collapse for they are being "pushed in" by the flying buttresses that compensate for the forces that the vault impresses upon the walls.

Panofsky only stresses an analogy between scholasticism and gothic architecture. In other words, he only makes the case that the ideas of structure appeared in philosophy *and* in architecture during the middle ages. He does not answer the question as to the origin of the ideas themselves or whether philosophy influenced architecture or vice-versa. Now, I have suggested that not only did certain ideas in the structure of warfare appear in Aquinas' thought, but something a little stronger, that war is an actual influence on Aquinas' thought.

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[35] See Edwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957).

Interestingly enough, the question of the origins of ideas in philosophy coming from an external discipline, once again architecture, has been explored by Robert Hahn in his *Anaximander and the Architects.*[36] Hahn attacks the thesis concerning the origins of philosophical ideas, a thesis that comes down to us from Aristotle, namely, that to do philosophy one must have vast amounts of leisure time. It is as though the tranquil and open mind just "waits" for the muse to strike. There are political implications here, too. It is often held that some kind of democracy is necessary for the muse's appearance. Hahn's attack on all this is empirically grounded. He examines the how the world of ancient technology, mainly architecture, forms the basis for experimental science and the overcoming of the mytho-poetical view of the world. In my case, I suggest that war, not architecture, forms a driving force for new ideas in philosophy.

Now, I have only begun the story of the influence of war on Aquinas. But, before proceeding further, I would like to counter what might be a clear warning against trying to find the influences of the times upon Aquinas. This warning is what John Finnis calls Aquinas' "silence on his own times." Finnis writes:

> …the dealings of his era's kings, popes, and emperors leave almost no palpable trace in Thomas' writings. The Holy Roman Empire itself goes as unmentioned as the historical myths by which its authority was commonly defended.[37]

This seeming indifference to his time is often captured in various representations of Aquinas. He often looks Buddha-like in his aloofness from the world. Of course it would be most helpful were Aquinas to directly refer to his surrounding milieu. Indeed, sometimes he does; there are a few remarks concerning the crusades in which Aquinas briefly defends the possibility of a religious society formed to fight for the Holy Land.[38] He also discusses various results connected with the effects of crusading on home life. If going on crusade will wreck your marriage, you should stay home. As a personality, we can find evidence that he was not an aloof figure. He was deeply affected by the war-torn situation of his time. Read any biography of Aquinas and one can see how eventful his life was. Fergus Kerr makes the point that if one reads manuscripts from Aquinas' own hand, one sees a

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[36] See Robert Hahn, *Anaximander and the Architects: The Contributions of Egyptian and Greek Architectural Technologies to the Origins of Greek Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

[37] John Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[38] See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, *Second Part of the Second Part, Question 188, Article 3, Ad.3.*

strong sense of passion. This image of Aquinas, the passionate philosopher, is nicely captured in a work by Botticelli.[39]

Art aside, I suggest that Aquinas' seeming indifference is just that, *seeming*. It all depends on how one interprets the expression "being a child of one's time." One could say that "X is a child of time T" means that X writes and thinks *using* the contents of what we could call "the Zeitgeist of T." X does not, then, consciously think of these contents. But I think that there is an even deeper sense to "being a child of one's times," and it is one that Aquinas embodies. In this sense being a child of the time is to fully realize the contents but to only use the structure. Aquinas, as far as I know, does not speak about medieval architecture. However, there is at least an analogy between his writings and the architecture of the time. That is, one is fully aware and uses only the governing principles of the contents. This, to me, is what truly comes through in Aquinas' thought. I offer an example of this distinction, which, I think is run in the opposite way. This comes from a footnote by Finnis.[40] Finnis comments on Genicot's discussion of Aquinas' *De Regno*. Genicot argues that although Aquinas' work "breathes 13th century and ideas" it does not mention the political realities of that time. Finnis takes this as evidence of Aquinas' "silence on the times." But silence is not causal isolation. Clearly Aquinas breathes the *form* of his times.

The final example, to help motivate the view of Aquinas as a child of his times, can be found within his discussion of the requirements for a just war. To launch a just war, three requirements must be met. The right authority must have a just cause to declare it and do so with a just intention. Earlier, writers on war insisted on clarification of who can do the actual fighting – namely, knights. Why doesn't Aquinas mention this? Most likely by this time it was common knowledge that only knights have a right to fight in war. So, here we do have some kind of influence and it is one that goes unmentioned by Aquinas. But the topic of knights in the thought of Aquinas deserves further discussion.

IV. Aquinas and Knighthood

Aquinas came from a military family. His father, Landulf of Aquino, was a knight. Two of Aquinas' three brothers were military men; Aimo had gone on crusade with Frederick II to the Holy Land in 1229 and Renaldo served the same emperor as a knightly troubadour.[41] This would have exposed Aquinas

[39] See Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 2002). Botticelli's painting of Aquinas is aptly chosen for the cover of Kerr's text.
[40] See Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political and Legal Theory*, footnote e, p. 16.
[41] See Edward A. Synan, "St. Thomas Aquinas and the Profession of Arms," *Medieval Studies*, 50, 1988, pp. 404-37, 406.

to a full range of what we could now call the "military ethos." For instance, he would have no doubt heard from Aimo about the supposed 'impending dangers' from foreigners such as Muslims. More generally, Europe was awash in fear during this time since there was a real threat as the armies of the Mongols were poised on the eastern Kingdoms. Renaldo, a troubadour, would naturally have sung the literary or artistic side of the knight's life – something that would have no doubt appealed (at least for a while) to the young Aquinas.[42] Finally, his sisters, those that survived, married counts and knights. Clearly Aquinas was exposed to the full range of knighthood. Synan writes:

> This family background and the Saint's recurrent exposure to it, are reasons enough for us to expect that Brother Thomas would possess as a matter of course a wide and precise knowledge of military affairs.[43]

Moreover, it was a commonplace for scholastics to comment *upon* war. After all, the biblical texts are full of images of war and violence all of which had to ultimately be squared with the image of "Christ, the peace-maker."[44] And even then, not all sacred scripture's images of Christ are "the simple peacemaker." One could say that, in these cases, the themes of the object text determine the commentary upon them.

What makes Aquinas unique and specifically indicates war's influence upon him is his use of military references. Moreover, his military references are both gratuitous and of high quality. I deal with their gratuitous nature first. Suppose author, A, wishes to elucidate abstract concept, AC, by a concrete example, CE, drawn from domain, D. Sometimes AC's nature logically determines – or at least shapes – the judgment concerning which D is apt to provide a clarifying CE. But in most cases there is no logical guidance concerning D; such cases are what Synan calls "gratuitous." So, what guides A's choice of D in a gratuitous case? There are, I suggest a number of answers here. But consider Synan's view. He points out that in many gratuitous cases Aquinas chooses military illustrations. For instance, Aquinas illustrates Aristotle's tenth category by the example of a war-horse. He also uses a war-horse to illustrate the concept of "goods consumed in

[42] Of course it did not always appeal to Aquinas, as attested to by his later writings on knights which take on a cynical flavour. (For more on this, see *Ibid*., pp. 408-9.)

[43] *Ibid*., p. 407.

[44] Many recognize Isaiah 2:4, which insists that we "beat swords into plowshares" but Aquinas would have had to grapple with Joel 3:10, which tells us to "beat plowshares into swords."

use."[45] Synan states that gratuitous references "...reveal the mentality of this preaching friar; his mentality in turn stems from his social class and rearing."[46] Once again, Aquinas is breathing the air of his times. Still, this is all a little too hasty – and Synan himself offers a hint. Note that Synan calls Aquinas a "*preaching* friar." Now a good preacher would illustrate themes by drawing from a domain that he or she would consider familiar to the audience. Indeed, Aquinas had quite the reputation for teaching. Aquinas always had the background of his students in mind as well.

Perhaps what is more indicative of the influence of war on Aquinas than the gratuitous nature of military references is the *quality* of these military references. Here I part company with Synan, who maintains the importance of the gratuitous nature of the references over their quality. First, by quality, I mean that Aquinas read and drew upon the best military manuals available to a medieval theologian, the *Epiteme de re militari* of Renatus Vegetius.[47] Moreover, he demonstrates a sophisticated knowledge of medieval shields in his interpretation of Leviathan in the book of Job.[48] And this is not all – in Aquinas one finds an author knowledgeable about knights and their horses,[49] knights and their communities,[50] knights' obligations,[51] as well as tournaments and duels.[52] So, it is not surprising that he would not feel it necessary to consider the question as to who is eligible to fight. Or, as we might put it today, who would be a legal combatant.

V. Summary and Conclusion

The general point that I have been trying to make is that war is, to a certain degree natural but not imprisoning, and is a source for ethics. The structure of warfare in the medieval ages – siege warfare – resembles that of Aquinas' combination of natural law and virtue theory. The general influence of warfare on Aquinas is directly related to his upbringing, indeed his immersion, in the world of knights. I also stress that my discussion is but the first step to truly examining how warfare influenced Aquinas' thought. I make no pretense to completeness. Moreover, my attempts to connect

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[45] See Synan, "St. Thomas Aquinas and the Profession of Arms," 408 for more discussion of this point.
[46] *Ibid*., 436.
[47] See *Ibid*., p. 436.
[48] See *Ibid., pp.* 409-16 for Aquinas' knowledge of medieval shields.
[49] See *Ibid*., pp. 417-9.
[50] See *Ibid*., pp. 419-22.
[51] See *Ibid*., pp. 422-431.
[52] See *Ibid*., pp. 431-434.

Aquinas' thought and warfare should not be read as an attempted reductionism of Aquinas' thought to warfare.

I would infer that future studies in this direction will help in redefining Aquinas' ethics, that is, to present him less as a natural law theorist and more as a virtue ethics theorist. If this turns out to be correct, then reading Aquinas within the context of war will lead to a more modern view of this medieval saint.

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Jacques Maritain et André Caplet : le Moyen-âge comme clé d'interprétation de l'histoire

Sylvain Caron

Le but de cette conférence est de tisser des liens interdisciplinaires plus étroits entre la musique, la philosophie et la théologie, dans une perspective où l'histoire est source d'interprétation du présent. Je suis persuadé que nous pouvons tous tirer profit de ce type d'approche, qui peut permettre un élargissement des perspectives de recherche. Le réseau social de Maritain a favorisé une telle construction collective où les idées mises de l'avant en philosophie, en théologie et dans les différentes formes d'art se sont alimentées et amplifiées entre elles. Il y a comme une sorte de résonance entre la musique et les idées, à travers une certaine unité de l'univers symbolique où elles évoluent. En revanche, il faut éviter le piège que constituent les associations trop directes ou de conclure trop rapidement à des mécanismes de cause à effet. Les différents domaines évoluent dans des univers fondamentalement distincts. En fait, il y a plutôt une expression multiforme d'idées communes et propres à l'air du temps. Je tiens donc pour acquis que la correspondance entre la philosophie, la théologie et la musique s'établit sous le mode de la résonance, et non de la causalité.

Je commencerai cet article en présentant d'abord un tableau général de la musique et des musiciens, dans la France des années 1920, en raison de l'importance du courant dit *néoclassique*. Il me semble aussi nécessaire de présenter André Caplet (1878-1925), qui est un compositeur aujourd'hui méconnu, avant d'entrer dans l'explication des procédés poétiques, musicaux et symbolistes mis en œuvre dans *Le Miroir de Jésus*. Cette analyse permettra de nous interroger sur la notion d'histoire : de quelle histoire est-il question chez Maritain et Caplet? En reprenant quelques idées de Maritain, tirées principalement d'*Art et scolastique* et *L'Intuition créatrice dans l'art et dans la poésie*, nous tâcherons de comprendre en quoi consiste le paradigme médiéval lorsqu'on l'applique à la musique. Selon moi, c'est la notion d'expérience et de « connaissance par connaturalité » qui constitue la clé de

voûte de cette question. Et c'est ce qui permet d'expliquer en bonne partie la musique religieuse de la première partie du XXe siècle.

Musique et musiciens en France dans les années 1920

Le premier parallèle que l'on peut tracer entre Maritain et les musiciens des années 1920 est la préoccupation commune d'un retour à l'ordre et d'une réappropriation de l'histoire. En musique, la volonté de retour à l'ordre est une réaction à deux idéaux esthétiques révolutionnaires qui ont prédominé entre 1900 et 1914. Cette période comprenait d'abord l'esthétique symboliste, dont l'œuvre clé a été l'opéra *Pelléas et Mélisande* de Debussy (1902), sur un livret de Maeterlinck. Au début du XXe siècle, il y avait aussi un foisonnement d'œuvres expérimentales et radicalement nouvelles, comme celles qui ont figuré au « Concert scandaleux » organisé par Maurice Ravel en 1913, ou encore *Le Sacre du printemps*, de Stravinsky, créé la même année. Enfin, l'ombre de Richard Wagner et de son art, érigé en véritable religion, était très présente et suscitait de vives réactions.

Le néoclassicisme musical s'est développé après la Première Guerre mondiale. En France, son principal représentant est d'abord Stravinsky, et aussi des compositeurs regroupés sous le vocable de Groupe des six, dont Darius Milhaud, Arthur Honegger et Francis Poulenc sont les plus connus. Le Groupe gravite autour de Jean Cocteau, qui y agit comme mentor, écrivain et théoricien (*Le coq et l'Arlequin*, 1918). Maritain et Cocteau ont entretenu une importante correspondance, d'où un contact plus étroit, bien qu'indirect, entre Maritain et le Groupe des six. Le néoclassicisme musical ne représente pas un courant unifié, mais il comprend tout de même certaines caractéristiques communes :

- Un souci d'équilibre et de clarté dans la forme musicale.
- Un attachement au XVIIIe siècle (notamment Bach, Mozart, Pergolèse), qui se manifeste par l'emprunt de formes classiques, de modes d'expression archaïsant qui vont parfois jusqu'au pastiche, voire à la citation de motifs musicaux anciens ayant acquis le statut de formules standardisées.

Malgré un niveau de surface très redevable au classicisme, les œuvres néoclassiques ne font pas usage des emprunts au passé comme une fin en soi. Il n'y a pas « fétichisation » de la musique ancienne pour elle-même, mais plutôt une volonté de se réapproprier le passé et de le réinterpréter de manière bien actuelle.

Parallèlement au courant néoclassique, il existe un autre courant que je nommerais *néogothique*, et qui touche le domaine de la musique religieuse. Il regroupe des compositeurs comme Caplet, Tournemire, Daniel-Lesure et

Messiaen. À partir des années 1920, la composition religieuse connaît un grand essor, notamment dans la musique vocale soliste et chorale. Cet essor est en partie provoqué par un regain de ferveur religieuse d'après-guerre, et aussi par une volonté des artistes catholiques de reprendre leur place dans le monde, après l'isolement des réseaux religieux au début du siècle[1]. Le *Motu proprio,* édicté par Pie X en 1903, fait sentir son influence, malgré un décalage de près de 20 ans. Véritable code de la musique sacrée, le *Motu proprio* rétablit le chant grégorien comme modèle de la composition liturgique, et remet à l'honneur les compositions polyphoniques de la Renaissance. Il s'oppose à la théâtralité de la musique religieuse du XIXe siècle, et souhaite établir un idéal de musique sacrée dans la pratique liturgique.

Selon leur sensibilité, les musiciens des années 1920 ne reçoivent pas le *Motu proprio* comme un retour au passé, mais ils adhèrent de plein gré à un modèle historique considéré comme un idéal esthétique. La conception mystique de la musique religieuse qui prévaut dans le courant néogothique va de pair avec les orientations implicites du *Motu proprio*, à savoir la recherche d'une expression transcendante, ascétique et contemplative, à l'opposé du profane.[2] Enfin, le développement de la musicologie et la redécouverte du répertoire ancien viennent conforter l'idée que le présent doit se fonder sur des valeurs du passé qui ont fait leurs preuves, et qu'il faut retourner aux plus hautes manifestations de l'esprit humain après une période de décadence. L'esthétique des musiciens néogothiques semblent particulièrement proche de la pensée de Maritain, et il semble étonnant que celui-ci n'ait pas davantage développé de contact avec eux ni qu'il n'en ait fait mention dans ses écrits. Le lien entre Maritain et Caplet est donc indirect. Jusqu'ici, aucun document connu n'atteste un contact direct entre les deux hommes. Par contre, il existe quelques articles d'époque, notamment dans la *Revue musicale*[3], qui associent

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[1] La lutte contre le modernisme menée par Pie X est en grande partie responsable de cet isolement.

[2] C'est aussi la conception de Maritain, comme en témoigne ce passage de sa réponse à Jean Cocteau : « Votre esthétique de la corde raide rejoignait sans peine la théorie scolastique de l'art. Avec une sagacité qui m'enchantait, vous formuliez pour la poésie (cachée sous la musique) les grandes lois de purification et de dépouillement qui commandent toute spiritualité , celle de l'œuvre à faire comme celle de la vie éternelle à atteindre, et qui ont leur souverain analogué (mais transcendant et surnaturel) dans l'ascèse et la contemplation ». « Réponse à Jean Cocteau », dans M. Bressolette et P. Glaudes, éditeurs, *Jean Cocteau – Jacques Maritain – Correspondance 1923-1963*, Paris, Gallimard, 1993, Les cahiers de la NRF, p. 307.

[3] *La Revue musicale* représente le plus important témoignage d'époque sur la musique française d'entre-deux-guerres. Elle comporte autant des articles de fonds, des réflexions personnelles que des comptes-rendus d'œuvres nouvellement composées.

Maritain et Caplet, en raison de leur parenté de pensée.[4] On retrouve aussi un article sur « Bergsonisme et musique » écrit par Gabriel Marcel dans le numéro de mars 1925 (p. 219 à 229). Bref, l'impact de Maritain sur les musiciens est réel, bien que souvent indirect et limité à certains cercles.

André Caplet et le symbolisme

Né au Havre (France) en 1878, André Caplet s'inscrit tout à fait dans le courant néogothique musical; il est aussi une figure-type du catholique converti et militant. La carrière de Caplet est particulièrement brillante. Admis en 1896 dans la classe de composition du Conservatoire de Paris, il est rapidement reconnu pour ses talents de chef d'orchestre. Il est nommé directeur musical au théâtre de l'Odéon, en 1898, et fait rapidement autorité à l'échelle internationale pour le répertoire français de l'époque, notamment celui de Debussy. En 1901, il remporte le Prix de Rome, le plus prestigieux concours de composition en France. Il devient ensuite le directeur musical de l'Opéra de Boston en 1912, et partage alors son temps entre les États-Unis et la France. Lorsque la Première Guerre est déclenchée, il s'engage comme volontaire. C'est à ce moment que son destin change : il inhale des gaz toxiques qui fragilisent irrémédiablement sa santé. Après la guerre, il se tourne activement vers la religion, et fréquente assidûment l'abbaye de Solesmes, lieu de rayonnement par excellence du chant grégorien. Il compose aussi beaucoup d'œuvres vocales religieuses dans l'esprit du *Motu proprio*, à savoir qu'elles sont baignées de la culture du grégorien et du chant choral polyphonique. Il meurt prématurément en 1925.

La poétique musicale de Caplet est fortement tributaire du courant symboliste qui marque le passage du XIXe au XXe siècle. En musique, le symbolisme est incarné notamment par Fauré, Debussy et Ravel, et en littérature par Verlaine, Mallarmé et Maeterlinck (*Pelléas et Mélisande*).

Le symbolisme est un courant multiforme, dont le propre est justement d'échapper à une définition trop précise. Nous pouvons néanmoins préciser en quoi Caplet s'y rattache. L'esthétique symboliste vise à induire une expérience chez l'auditeur par le biais du symbole discret et de la suggestion. Cette expérience n'est pas prédéterminée par le compositeur, puisqu'elle est propre à chaque auditeur. Néanmoins, le compositeur définit une certaine *zone sémantique* à l'intérieur de laquelle il guide l'auditeur, et les procédés musicaux mis de l'avant pour y parvenir sont savamment étudiés. Le fait de ne pas arrêter de sens trop précis et l'appel à la pensée symbolique permettent

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[4] Brillant, Maurice : « André Caplet, musicien mystique », dans La Revue musicale, VI/9, juillet 1925, p. 3-12. Hoerée, Arthur : « L'œuvre d'André Caplet », dans *La Revue musicale*, VI/9, juillet 1925, p. 11-23.

l'émergence d'un mode particulier de compréhension de l'art, que je serais porté à rapprocher de ce que Maritain nomme le *préconceptuel*. Tel que défini dans l'*Intuition créatrice*, le préconceptuel est un mode de compréhension qui fait résolument appel à l'intelligence, mais à travers une expérience directe et un mode de pensée non-discursif. En soi, la musique est la forme d'art qui, en elle-même, nous conduit le plus résolument au non-discursif[5], à cause de l'absence de référence à un arrière-plan linguistique, comme en littérature, ou figuratif, en peinture. Certes, l'art abstrait permet à la peinture et à la littérature de sortir de ce cadre référentiel, et permet une expérience poétique plus directe. Aussi Maritain établit une distinction entre les poèmes *clairs*, comme ceux de Baudelaire, et les poèmes obscurs, comme ceux de Mallarmé (*Intuition créatrice*, p. 425). Le symbolisme de Caplet se situe dans un symbolisme clair, où il y a toujours un sens donné immédiatement, selon une clarté intelligible issue de la tradition classique. Ce n'est pas Mallarmé que Caplet choisit de mettre en musique, mais bien Baudelaire (*Le masque de la mort rouge*), Armand Sylvestre, Victor Hugo ou Henri Ghéon. Et pour la peinture, Caplet préfère le figuralisme stylisé de Maurice Denis aux mouvements d'avant-garde qui sont alors en pleine explosion.

Le Miroir de Jésus

Composé en 1923, *Le Miroir de Jésus* représente la plus importante composition religieuse de Caplet, tant par son ampleur que par son rayonnement. La forme musicale est tout naturellement conditionnée par le texte d'Henri Ghéon, l'auteur du texte. Défenseur actif de Maritain, Ghéon est un converti militant, qui cherche à évangéliser les masses par le théâtre. Le texte de Ghéon va de pair avec l'élan mystique et le prosélytisme de la musique de Caplet. L'œuvre est conçue comme un véritable Rosaire, où les cinq dizaines du chapelet sont reprises trois fois. L'œuvre se divise donc en trois grandes parties : Miroir de joie, Miroir de peine et Miroir de gloire, qui correspondent respectivement aux mystères joyeux, aux mystères douloureux et aux mystères glorieux que l'on retrouve dans le Rosaire. Chaque Miroir (donc chaque mystère) est à son tour composé de cinq pièces, qui correspondent aux cinq dizaines du chapelet (voir le tableau 1).

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[5] Certes, dans le cas de la musique vocale, les paroles qui s'ajoutent nécessairement à la musique ajoutent un élément discursif, mais la musique qui supporte le texte conserve toujours par elle-même son autonomie non discursive.

Tableau 1 : Plan d'ensemble du Miroir de Jésus

Miroir de joie	**Miroir de peine**	**Miroir de gloire**
Annonciation	Agonie au jardin	Résurrection
Visitation	Flagellation	Ascension
Nativité	Couronnement d'épines	Pentecôte
Présentation	Portement de croix	Assomption
Recouvrement	Crucifixion	Couronnement au ciel

C'est ici que commence véritablement l'exploration du paradigme médiéval présent dans cette œuvre de Caplet, comme je souhaite le démontrer dans l'analyse qui va suivre. D'emblée, je précise que Caplet adopte *l'attitude historique* de Maritain en prenant le Moyen-âge pour modèle, non pas pour l'imiter servilement, mais pour en tirer ce qui est toujours actuel. Certes, l'œuvre n'est pas exempte de procédés tirés de la musique du Moyen-âge, mais ceux-ci ne sont pas utilisés par conservatisme, mais bien pour leur puissance symbolique et évocatrice d'un idéal. Déjà, la première page du manuscrit présente une enluminure qui rappelle celles du Moyen-âge. Le peintre Maurice Denis devait même dessiner d'autres enluminures dans le manuscrit de Caplet, projet qui ne s'est finalement pas réalisé en raison de la mort prématurée du compositeur.

Le Miroir de Jésus de Caplet présente différents degrés de fidélité à l'héritage médiéval. Afin de mettre en lumière ces degrés, je fait appel à la métaphore du *contrepoint*. En musique, le contrepoint signifie à la fois la science qui étudie les principes de la superposition des mélodies, et le résultat musical, la superposition des différentes mélodies entendues simultanément. Chez Caplet, les différents degrés de fidélité à l'héritage médiéval forment en quelque sorte, au sens figuré, un *contrepoint sémantique* qui s'articule ainsi :

- Un degré imitatif :
  - Une annonce de chaque pièce (Annonciation, Visitation, Nativité…) et de chaque grande section (Miroirs de Joie, de peine et de gloire), qui rappelle la forme médiévale du « mystère».
  - Des sonorités en accords parallèles, qui rappellent les organums du XIIIe siècle (école de Notre-Dame-de-Paris).

    - Des lignes mélodiques dont la souplesse rythmique rappelle à certains égards le verbomélodisme[6] du chant grégorien[7].
    - Une écriture modale qui reprend et développe l'idée des tons grégoriens
- Un degré formel, qui ne se perçoit que par mémoire cumulative :
    - Les intonations de chacune des 5 pièces de chaque *Miroir* constituent cumulativement un accord qui génère l'ensemble, d'où un lien entre microcosme et macrocosme.[8]
    - Des motifs cycliques, qui reviennent d'un mouvement à l'autre, suscitent des associations sémantiques à même la musique
- Un degré métaphorique ou symbolique
    - L'œuvre invite l'auditeur à sortir d'un cadre conceptuel et l'invite à une expérience spirituelle inédite, à une connaissance du Rosaire « par connaturalité » plutôt que de manière dogmatique. Elle permet un lien plus direct avec l'expérience mystique que le compositeur veut nous faire partager.

En fait, ce contrepoint sémantique vise à transmettre une certaine expérience du Rosaire à l'auditeur, par le biais de la médiation musicale et textuelle de l'œuvre. Mais il s'agit d'une expérience qui n'est pas donnée d'emblée, et qui risque de demeurer cachée si l'on se contente d'une écoute distraite ou superficielle. Dans le courant symboliste, le compositeur introduit certains indicateurs permettant d'induire non pas un sens circonscrit, mais plutôt une zone sémantique. Dans *Le Miroir de Jésus*, la première clé d'accès au sens caché, au sens poétique de l'œuvre, se trouve dans le titre. L'idée de *miroir* indique que la vie de Jésus est racontée au travers du regard de Marie, sa mère. C'est cette subjectivité du regard qui permet de dépasser le niveau du

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[6] Le verbomélodisme se dit d'un rythme musical qui se rapproche du débit naturel de la parole.

[7] Il s'agit des tons grégoriens tels que compris par Caplet.

[8] Par exemple, les notes d'intonation du « Miroir de joie » sont *ré* bémol, *ré* naturel et *fa*. Ces notes correspondent à celles qui sont mises en évidence dès le premier mystère, « Annonciation » : *ré* à la mesure 1, *fa* à la mesure 7 et *ré* bémol à la mesure 8. De plus, la mélodie formée par ces notes est la même – transposée – que celle du motif récurrent de la souffrance, qui est entendu notamment dans « Recouvrement », aux paroles « Je vois votre front rayé d'une ride » (chiffre 34 dans la partition). Beaucoup d'autres exemples de liens entre le microcosme et le macrocosme dans l'harmonie pourraient être mentionnés, mais la longueur des explications requises et leur nature technique déborderaient du cadre de cet article.

rationnel et du narratif pour accéder à l'intuitif. On retrouve, dans certaines peintures de l'Annonciation faites au Moyen-âge, l'illustration de Marie qui, suite à l'annonce de l'ange, se voit telle qu'elle est, dans un miroir. C'est l'ange Gabriel qui révèle Marie à elle-même, et lui enseigne le sens de sa destinée. Le texte de Ghéon décrit l'expérience subjective faite par Marie au cours différents mystères vécus entre l'Annonciation et son Couronnement au ciel; il s'agit de Marie qui, en tant que sujet sensible et incarné, est mise en présence de l'Autre. Ultimement, c'est par l'expérience de Marie que l'auditeur est renvoyé à sa propre expérience des mystères, grâce à la médiation du texte et de la musique. L'intelligence de l'œuvre passe donc par tout un jeu de miroirs : d'abord, l'auditeur reçoit l'expérience induite par *Le Miroir de Jésus*; il est ensuite renvoyé à sa propre image-expérience. Il y a prééminence du spirituel : le miroir est d'abord une vision de l'Autre qui nous permet d'atteindre à une vision du Soi, tant pour Marie que pour nous-mêmes.

De quelle histoire parlons-nous?

L'histoire est une chose tellement vaste que les divers courants qui s'en réclament en tirent des observations et des conclusions bien diverses. L'histoire que Maritain conserve en arrière-plan est souvent liée au Moyen-Âge, plus précisément en France au siècle de saint Louis[9]. Mais s'agit-il de l'histoire objective, des faits complets et exacts? Je ne le crois pas. Tout au long du XIXe siècle, les artistes romantiques ont pris le Moyen-âge comme un modèle idéalisé, un âge d'or de la spiritualité et des vertus humaines poussées à leur maximum. Il s'agit en fait d'un Moyen-âge qui revêt d'abord une importance en tant que symbole. Certes, il ne s'agit pas pour autant d'une fabulation : de nombreux faits objectifs viennent alimenter cette vision du Moyen-Âge. Les années 1920 connaissent d'intenses recherches historiques, menées notamment par Étienne Gilson. De plus, la musicologie est en pleine effervescence : les travaux de Maurice Emmanuel (1862-1938) sur la Grèce antique et sur le Moyen-Âge viennent alimenter la connaissance des pratiques et des formes musicales anciennes. Mais ce qui rend le Moyen-Âge si fascinant pour les artistes, et aussi pour un penseur comme Maritain, c'est qu'il est la métaphore d'un monde idéal en raison de l'unicité de son savoir, qui n'est pas dissocié entre foi et raison, science et sagesse. Il est aussi idéal car fondamentalement tourné vers Dieu dans son mode de fonctionnement et ses institutions. Le rêve de Maritain et des artistes qui l'entourent est de refonder une chrétienté sur les bases de la sagesse chrétienne[10], comme cela était au Moyen-Âge. Mais ultimement, on pourrait dire que l'intérêt pour le

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[9] Floucat, Yves, *Jacques Maritain ou la fidélité à l'Éternel*, Paris, FAC-Éditions. 1996, p. 29 à 87.
[10] Floucat, Yves, op. cit., p. 50.

Moyen-Âge est transhistorique : antimoderne et ultramoderne se rencontrent dans ce qu'il y a de commun chez les humains de toutes les époques. Et l'une de ces valeurs transhistoriques symbolisées par le Moyen-Âge est, pour Maritain, la notion d'expérience. Il y a historicisation de la notion d'expérience : l'histoire n'est plus une donnée statique, mais un enseignement actualisable.

Un paradigme médiéval rattaché à l'expérience

La « connaissance par connaturalité » – un concept que Maritain emprunte à saint Thomas – se rattache à la notion d'expérience. Pour Maritain, l'expérience artistique comprend quatre pôles :

- La sensibilité : alors que la philosophie poursuit une connaissance abstraite, les beaux-arts et la musique s'expriment dans une délectation sensible.[11]
- Le préconceptuel : l'intelligence est précédée par le travail caché d'une vie préconsciente, qui se développe dans une nuit transparente et féconde. Le préconscient relève des puissances spirituelles de l'âme, de l'abîme intérieur de la liberté personnelle.[12]
- La connaissance rationnelle : le sens intelligible, explicite et conceptuel.
- Le savoir-faire artisanal : l'idée créatrice est la forme intellectuelle qui va amener une chose à l'existence. Pour Maritain, l'idée créatrice se rapporte à l'artisanat, mais pas aux beaux-arts[13].

Même s'ils sont distincts, ces quatre pôles ne fonctionnent pas de manière autonome; ils forment un tout intégré et indissociable. Le concept « d'intellect illuminateur » explique les mécanismes d'interaction entre le préconceptuel et la connaissance rationnelle, qui sont à la base de l'acte de création et de

[11] Maritain, Jacques, « L'intuition créatrice », dans *Œuvres complètes*, vol X, Fribourg (Suisse), Éditions universitaires et Paris, Éditions Saint-Paul, p. 393.

[12] Maritain, Jacques, *op. cit.*, p. 220-221

[13] On voit ici la différence fondamentale qui sépare Maritain de Stravinsky et des néoclassiques. Pour celui-ci, la musique est d'abord artisanat, alors que pour Maritain l'idée créatrice n'est pas l'intuition poétique. Cette différence s'explique par le fait que Stravinsky croit que la musique n'exprime rien, et qu'elle ne vaut que pour sa forme. Cette vision formaliste de la musique découle de la pensée de Hanslick, pour qui la délectation musicale repose entièrement sur la contemplation de la perfection de la forme, et non sur un sens symbolique. Certes, Stravinsky a lu *Art et Scolastique* en 1926 (cf : *Grove Music Dictionary*), mais il est resté attaché à cette conception dans les années 1940, alors que Maritain a passablement évolué au moment où il rédige *l'Intuition créatrice*. En ce sens, on peut dire que dans les années 1920, Caplet annonce ce que pensera Maritain 30 ans plus tard.

réception de l'œuvre d'art. Par ailleurs, tout art musical requiert un savoir-faire, une technique qui assure l'efficacité de la forme, pour atteindre la sensibilité de l'auditeur.

La démarche musicale de Caplet s'inscrit tout à fait dans cette optique. En tant que produit d'une génération symboliste, Caplet cherche à induire chez l'auditeur une expérience à la fois circonscrite sur le plan sémantique et ouverte à l'individualité de chacun : le compositeur doit suggérer discrètement le sens et nom le forcer, puisque l'expérience de l'œuvre est propre à chacun. Dans l'expression symboliste, il y a donc une intention sémantique – quelle musique renforcera le mieux le sens du texte? – tout en cherchant volontairement à produire un flou artistique – comment ne pas limiter le sens? Le flou, qui se rattache à la sensibilité et au préconceptuel, concerne principalement le niveau de surface, alors que l'intention sémantique, qui se rattache à la connaissance rationnelle et au savoir-faire artisanal, touche à la forme de l'œuvre : son écoute attentive et éclairée révèle un flou savamment organisé.

Maritain résume bien la démarche :

> Mon idée donc est que la poésie devenue consciente de soi ne peut retrouver son état normal de stabilité et d'autonomie dans l'univers spirituel que si la séduction de la magie est contrebalancée par l'attraction d'une connaissance rationnelle qui en elle-même a retrouvé la pleine étendue de son domaine et la pleine intelligence de ses propres degrés de vision […] ».[14]

Je veux maintenant préciser comment le concept de « connaissance par connaturalité » peut s'appliquer plus précisément à la musique religieuse. Maritain ne s'est pas prononcé directement sur la musique religieuse, mais on peut déduire certaines orientations de sa pensée. Au départ, il faut distinguer l'expérience poétique de l'expérience mystique (*Intuition créatrice* : 392). Ce sont deux expériences distinctes par nature, puisque l'une se rapporte au monde créé, et l'autre aux choses supramondaines. Mais elles naissent l'une près de l'autre, et près du centre de l'âme, dans les sources préconceptuelles de l'esprit. Il n'est donc pas étonnant qu'elles s'entrecroisent et se prédisposent mutuellement.

Si l'on extrapole, on pourrait dire le concept d'intellect illuminateur peut aussi s'appliquer aux mécanismes qui président à l'intégration de la foi et de la raison. Caplet et Ghéon réconcilient le dogme et l'expérience religieuse. Pour eux, le dogme devient une voie de connaissance par connaturalité au moyen de la poésie et de la musique, qui placent l'auditeur en contact avec l'expérience spirituelle induite par le dogme. Comme le dit l'adage *Lex*

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[14] Maritain, Jacques, *op. cit.*, p. 391.

orandi, lex credendi, foi et raison se construisent mutuellement dans un jeu d'interaction. En unissant l'intelligible et le sensible à l'intérieur du concept d'intuition créatrice, Maritain affirme qu'il faut un espace de réflexion spirituelle dans la personne afin qu'une œuvre d'art soit adéquatement reçue. Je crois que la pensée de Maritain est toujours d'actualité et le sera toujours, parce que l'équilibre entre le sensible et l'intelligible est toujours à construire, à toutes les époques, puisque les sensibilités et que la pensée évolue sans cesse.

Conclusion

À l'intérieur de leur fidélité à un paradigme médiéval, Caplet et Maritain demeurent des hommes de leur temps. Cette tension entre passé et présent favorise l'émergence de critères esthétiques transculturels et transtemporels, et prépare directement le passage vers les nouveaux courants esthétiques des années 1930, qui seront marqués par la liquidation du médiéval au profit de l'ouverture sur les musiques non-occidentales (notamment chez Messiaen), et par la montée de l'humanisme (Maritain et Mounier). Ce serait là un sujet à développer dans une conférence ultérieure.

Par rapport à la musique, ce qui me semble l'essentiel dans la conscience historique de Maritain et de Caplet, c'est que le sens de l'histoire est intimement lié à la notion d'expérience. Dans cette perspective, le paradigme médiéval ne représente pas une donnée historique statique, mais bien une donnée dynamique et actualisable. Faire appel à l'histoire n'est pas faire œuvre d'archéologue, mais plutôt retrouver ce qui, à un certain moment de l'histoire, demeure actuel et pertinent pour notre époque. Et ce qu'il y a de fondamental dans le Moyen-Âge, c'est que l'expérience est d'abord expérience de l'Autre, et aussi expérience unifiée de la délectation sensible, de la connaissance préconceptuelle et rationnelle et d'un savoir-faire artisanal. Dès lors, l'œuvre du musicien et l'œuvre du philosophe se rejoignent dans une préoccupation commune : celle d'induire ce type d'expérience de manière adaptée à la sensibilité contemporaine.

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La philosophie de Jean Ladrière comme herméneutique de la métaphysique thomiste de la création

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Dans son ouvrage *After Aquinas. Versions of Thomism*[1], Fergus Kerr souligne fort justement que la diversité de lectures que permet l'oeuvre de Thomas d'Aquin provient du caractère même de cette oeuvre en tant qu'« oeuvre ouverte ». Sa richesse engendre une pluralité d'interprétations irréconciliables comme autant de « versions du thomisme ». On pourrait également parler, cette fois-ci dans la perspective du présent colloque, de « traditions dans la tradition ». L'oeuvre de Maritain peut certainement être considérée comme l'une des multiples traditions engendrées par la tradition thomiste. Dans la même veine, Kerr note que l'une des sources de l'« ambivalence » de la pensée thomiste est son caractère irréductiblement théologique et philosophique. Il est ainsi amené à souligner à juste titre l'importance de la théologie de la création dans la pensée de Thomas d'Aquin[2].

Je voudrais ici faire écho au livre de Kerr, mais d'un point de vue proprement philosophique. Plus précisément, j'aimerais présenter une autre de ces « traditions », celle qui se déploie à travers l'oeuvre de Jean Ladrière. S'il est vrai que Ladrière n'est pas un thomiste au sens strict du terme, son oeuvre est tout entière imprégnée de l'influence de Thomas d'Aquin et l'on peut à bon droit voir son itinéraire philosophique comme une tentative de réinterprétation de l'oeuvre de Thomas à la lumière de l'histoire philosophique postérieure et plus particulièrement, du contexte culturel d'aujourd'hui. Il s'agit, si l'on veut, d'une « interprétation aux frontières », mais je pense que là précisément réside son caractère au plus haut point thomiste. Il se pourrait en effet que par-delà les écoles et les chapelles, Ladrière se révèle au final davantage thomiste que bien des thomistes officiellement reconnus tels, en raison de sa fidélité à l'esprit du thomisme

[1]Oxford, Blackwell, 2002. Voir également Id. (ed), *Contemplating Aquinas. On the Varieties of Interpretation*, London, SCM Press, 2003.
[2]*Ibid.*, c. 3.

plutôt qu'à sa lettre. La communication mettra ainsi en valeur une autre des nombreuses « histoires de l'être » ou « versions » qu'autorise l'oeuvre de Thomas. La lecture ladrièrienne me semble particulièrement riche car elle s'inscrit résolument dans l'horizon du champ philosophique contemporain, à l'instar du geste thomiste initial qu'elle se trouve ainsi non seulement à perpétuer, mais à re-faire.

La notion de création joue également un rôle important chez Ladrière, autant au plan de sa propre pensée que de sa lecture de Thomas d'Aquin[3]. Ces deux aspects sont bien sûr liés : la notion ladrièrienne de création doit être comprise comme une herméneutique contemporaine du traitement thomiste. Ce n'est pas l'un des moindres intérêts de l'interprétation de Ladrière de se porter d'emblée en l'un des lieux exemplaires de tension de l'oeuvre de Thomas d'Aquin : la notion de création, comprise comme la clé de voûte de toute la pensée thomiste[4]. Le propre de cette notion est d'articuler la double

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[3]Sur ce dernier point, voir J. Ladrière, *L'espérance de la raison*, Louvain-la-Neuve/Louvain/Paris, Éditions de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie/Éditions Peeters, 2004, p. 28-31.

[4]Ce n'est pas le lieu de justifier cette affirmation. J'endosse pleinement les propos suivants de J. Aertsen : « The Judaeo-Christian idea of creation plays a central role in Thomas's thought. If one had to provide him with a by-name, then, as J. Pieper says, it would have to be : *Thomas a Creatore* » En note, Aertsen ajoute : « It is remarkable that also this basic idea of Thomas's has been relatively seldom the object of systematic reflection (J. Aertsen, *Nature and Creature. Thomas Aquinas's Way of Thought*, Leiden, Brill, 1988, p. 4 et note 15). Je me contenterai des brèves remarques suivantes. 1) Dans son compte-rendu des cent ans de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, Ladrière souligne en conclusion l'importance qu'y a joué, au plan de la réflexion métaphysique, l'idée d'une ontologie créationniste (J. Ladrière, « Cent ans de philosophie à l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, 88(1990), p. 210).
2) Toute la question concerne bien entendu la manière d'entendre l'articulation entre la création et le salut. À mon avis, Thomas d'Aquin interprète l'oeuvre du salut dans l'horizon de la création; ainsi située par rapport à la création, la sotériologie se trouve « relativisée ». Le propre de la pensée de Thomas est de considérer l'incarnation rédemptrice comme moyen de salut pour la création; elle est seconde par rapport à celle-ci et à l'articulation constitutive qui lie la nature et la grâce, au sens où elle le fruit de l'oeuvre gratuite de Dieu, dans l'espace formé par la double causalité, efficiente et finale de Dieu. Tout est envisagé à partir des productions de Dieu, de ses oeuvres de création et de re-création. La création est déjà salut et le salut est celui de la création enfin aboutie, en sa vocation certes « surnaturelle », impliquant donc rupture d'avec sa condition actuelle, mais ancrée en sa naturalité même. Dans ce dépassement qui tout à la fois la conduit au-delà d'elle-même et qu'elle ne peut accomplir par elle-même, c'est encore elle-même qui s'accomplit dans et par ce don. La grâce du salut prolonge, par voie d'accomplissement, la grâce de la création. Telle est la portée de l'axiome célèbre qui veut que la grâce ne détruit pas la nature, mais la perfectionne. La nature ne peut être réduite à une condition préalable de la rédemption. 3) Cette question touche à

perspective philosophique et théologique, puisque la notion de création constitue le lieu même de cette articulation. En effet, la notion de création, d'origine religieuse, vise l'explicitation du réel en sa totalité, ce que la tradition philosophique à laquelle appartient l'Aquinate a toujours considéré comme l'essence même du questionnement ontologique[5]. La « métaphysique de la création », comprise comme une reprise ontologico-spéculative du concept de création, loge au coeur de l'oeuvre de Jean Ladrière qui conçoit l'entièreté du projet philosophique comme se rapportant à l'ordre de la création[6]. La notion de création dessine l'horizon dans lequel s'inscrit la dimension ontologique et la dimension spéculative de la raison.

Je me propose de présenter les grandes axes de l'interprétation ladrièrienne de la doctrine thomiste de la création. Je voudrais d'abord montrer dans quel esprit Ladrière reçoit cette doctrine pour en élaborer une reprise interprétante. Je suggérerai ensuite en quel sens l'entièreté de la philosophie de Ladrière peut être entendue comme une philosophie de la créativité, au sens d'un effort de pensée articulant les dimensions cosmologique et anthropologique à partir de l'idée directrice d'une appartenance commune à un champ de créativité. Enfin, j'essaierai de dire en quoi cette vision trouve son achèvement dans le concept ontologique d'événement, lui-même compris comme reprise interprétante de l'*esse* thomiste.

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l'interprétation du plan de la *Summa.* À cet égard, l'interprétation de Chenu pour qui tout y est vu *sub ratione Dei* n'a rien perdu de sa pertinence (M.-D. Chenu, *Introduction à l'étude de Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, 1954 (2e éd.), 1954, p. 254-276). Il est intéressant de noter la suggestion de Kerr, qui propose de remplacer le schéma *exitus-reditus* pas celui de création-résurrection. Voir F. Kerr, « Thomas Aquinas », dans G.R. Evans (ed.), *The Medieval Theologians.* Oxford, Blackwell, 2001, p. 212. 4) Pour un résumé récent et excellent de la métaphysique de la création, voir J. P. Torrell. On trouvera également une bref résumé instruit de la théologie actuelle dans l'introduction de J.-M Maldamé au traité de la création dans la plus récente traduction française de la *Somme* (Thomas d'Aquin, *Somme théologique*, t. 1 (A. Raulin, coord., A.-M. Roguet, trad.), Paris, Cerf, 1984, p. 465).

[5]J. Ladrière, *Le temps du possible*, Louvain-la-Neuve/Louvain/Paris, Éditions de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie/Éditions Peeters, 2004, p. 234 suiv.

[6]J. Ladrière, *Sens et vérité en théologie. L'articulation du sens III*, Paris, Cerf, 2004, p. 278 suiv. Cela, tout à fait dans la ligne de Thomas d'Aquin : « Creaturarum consideratio pertinet ad theologos et ad philosophos, sed diversimode. *Philosophi* enim considerant creaturas secundum quod in prioria natura consistunt [...] » (*In II Sent.,* prol.).

1. Ladrière interprète de Thomas d'Aquin

L'influence de Thomas d'Aquin est prégnante chez Ladrière; elle constitue l'une des sources majeures de sa pensée. Mais, comme il en va le plus souvent chez lui des auteurs qui inspirent sa réflexion, cette influence demeure le plus souvent hors de la mention expresse[7]. Le lecteur attentif et instruit de thomisme sait pourtant en reconnaître les traces nombreuses et la débusquer en des lieux stratégiques du déploiement conceptuel. C'est que cette imprégnation thomiste est d'abord de l'ordre de l'inspiration, de l'esprit plutôt que du simple contenu ou du matériau brut. Le Thomas d'Aquin de Jean Ladrière est toujours un Thomas intégré dans une pensée personnelle, originale, interprété à la lumière des développements postérieurs du champ philosophique jusqu'au contexte le plus contemporain, et donc irréductible à sa simple reconduction.

On pourrait montrer cette influence de plusieurs manières. Je me concentrerai ici sur celle qui peut à bon droit être considérée comme la plus essentielle et qui tient dans le fait que la philosophie de Ladrière reçoit la philosophie thomiste avant tout comme une métaphysique de la création et assume ainsi pour son propre compte la place centrale qu'y occupe l'idée de création. Celle-ci joue le rôle de présupposé herméneutique sous-tendant la lecture ladrièrienne de la philosophie thomiste. Tout en rappelant l'importance de la notion de création et de la réflexion sur le statut de la créature au moyen âge[8], Ladrière reconnaît dans la métaphysique de l'*esse* de Thomas d'Aquin un moment essentiel dans l'élaboration spéculative de l'idée de création. À l'instar de celle de l'Aquinate, la réflexion ontologique de Ladrière se présente au fond à l'enseigne de la métaphysique de la création.

Par l'expression « métaphysique de la création », Ladrière entend un effort pour conférer un statut spéculatif au concept de création, c'est-à-dire pour transcrire philosophiquement cette idée d'origine religieuse. Ainsi compris, le projet propre à la métaphysique de la création consiste à élaborer un concept proprement philosophique de création au point où la thématique de la création s'identifie à la pensée spéculative et donc à la philosophie comme telle[9]. Ladrière identifie à son tour élaboration spéculative du concept de création, recherche des principes et questionnement ontologique. La problématique de la création apparaît comme la question la plus centrale de la métaphysique

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[7]À cet égard, l'inclusion du texte « La situation actuelle de la philosophie et la pensée de Thomas d'Aquin » dans la première partie, intitulée « Références historiques », du recueil *L'espérance de la raison*, est hautement significative (p. 7-33).

[8]J. Ladrière, « Préface : Individu et individuation », dans A. Bitbol-Hespériès et alii., *Le problème de l'individuation*, Paris, Vrin, 1991, p. 18.

[9]*Le temps du possible*, p. 231 suiv.

entendue au sens d'un questionnement de caractère radical guidé par le concept de principe. Elle met en jeu une lecture transgressive du réel et l'ambition d'un savoir « selon les principes ». Ce type de questionnement cherche à préciser le statut de l'étant créé. À cette fin, il se concentre sur le statut de l'individu compris comme acte d'être, comme position dans l'existence. La problématique de la création revient à poser la question du statut de l'existant singulier. Elle vise la réalité finie en tant que réalité finie. Elle se concentre ainsi sur la thématisation de la question de la finitude : comment rendre compte du statut de l'étant fini en tant que tel? comment comprendre ce qui constitue la finitude de l'étant fini ? La métaphysique de la création est essentiellement une interrogation portant sur la finitude de l'étant[10].

Mais il est impossible pour Ladrière de reprendre l'Aquinate tel quel, en vertu de l'historicité qui affecte la pensée philosophique, et malgré que cet héritage thomiste demeure de la plus haute actualité. À vrai dire, la prise en charge de cette historicité est la condition même de l'actualité bien réelle de la pensée de Thomas d'Aquin[11]. Afin de développer une approche philosophique contemporaine de l'idée de création, il faut viser une relecture de l'élaboration thomiste, à partir du contexte actuel, marqué par les développements récents des sciences de la nature et par les nouvelles perspectives ouvertes par certaines philosophies contemporaines autour du thème de la créativité/création. Il est frappant de constater comment Ladrière comprend l'assomption de l'héritage thomiste en fonction du triple approfondissement de la notion de création, de la dimension ontologique de la pensée et de la réflexion sur l'historicité et sur l'événement, cette dernière catégorie étant particulièrement soulignée. Ces thèmes, qui appellent une actualisation du thomisme, sont ceux-là même autour desquels, selon Ladrière, s'organise la pensée de Thomas d'Aquin : thèmes du pouvoir de la raison, du statut de la réalité, de la vocation de la personne. Or il s'agit des grandes interrogations philosophiques actuelles, selon la lecture que Ladrière fait de notre expérience historique. Trois couples thématiques se laissent ainsi aisément repérer : raison-création, ontologie-statut de la réalité, historicité-vocation de la personne, tous situés au coeur de la propre réflexion de Ladrière. La métaphysique de la création chez Ladrière noue l'ensemble de ces notions et problématiques à partir du regain d'actualité de la notion de création dans la pensée scientifique et philosophique récente.

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[10]J. Ladrière, « Avant-propos : la tradition philosophique et l'idée de création », *Mélanges de Science Religieuse,* janvier-mars 1998, p. 5-7, 11; *Le temps du possible*, loc. cit.; Id., *L'Articulation du sens II*, Paris, Cerf, 1984, p. 303-305.

[11]Voir sur ce point *L'espérance de la raison*, c. 1 : « La situation actuelle de la pensée et la situation de Saint Thomas ».

De manière schématique, on peut préciser de la manière suivante comment Ladrière entend la tâche d'une reprise interprétante du concept de création :

- au plan scientifique

Il s'agit d'intégrer ce qu'enseignent la cosmologie et la biologie à propos de l'historicité de la nature, à travers les problématiques conjointes du temps, du devenir, de la contingence et de l'émergence[12]. La vision de la nature que propose la science actuelle est en effet celle d'une réalité essentiellement évolutive et processuelle. Elle suggère l'ajout d'une dimension de factualité, d'historicité à la dimension nomologique qui fait entrevoir le cosmos comme une vaste et constante genèse, comme une incessante émergence[13]. En d'autres termes, il importe de tenir compte de ce que la vision scientifique met en valeur au plan de l'aspect de créativité comme caractéristique essentielle de la réalité visible. Il faut ajouter encore l'activité scientifique elle-même, qui articule ajoute à l'inventivité de la nature celle de la raison humaine[14] Plus spécifiquement, la tâche qui se propose consiste en une retranscription philosophique de ce qu'indique la vision moderne de la nature afin de montrer comment il est possible de passer, en prenant appui sur les ressources de l'ontologie traditionnelle, du concept de créativité, tel que mis en lumière par cette vision, à celui de création comme position dans l'existence[15].

- au plan philosophique

Il convient de tabler sur l'intérêt contemporain pour la problématique de l'événement, autant au plan de la réflexion sur l'histoire, et plus particulièrement de l'action historique, que de la réflexion épistémologique. « Le concept d'événement, en tant qu'il connote les idées d'émergence, de non-prévisibilité, de pure survenance, de radicale nouveauté, paraît le concept approprié pour penser l'histoire en son originalité comme lieu d'apparition de l'inédit. Or avec ce concept nous sommes à nouveau près de l'idée de créativité »[16]. Cette configuration du champ philosophique détaille le cahier des charges d'une reprise contemporaine : affronter la question de la critique de la métaphysique, lire les pensées traitant de la question de la création, au premier chef celle de Whitehead[17], enfin relire Thomas d'Aquin lui-même. En

[12]« Avant-propos », p. 9, 11-12.
[13]J. Ladrière, *L'Articulation du sens II*, p. 291 suiv.
[14]*Ibid.*, p. 277.
[15]*Ibid.,* p. 281-308. Voir *Le temps du possible,* p. 231-251.
[16]« Avant-propos », p. 10. Pour ce qui suit, voir p. 11 suiv.
[17]L'influence de ce penseur est prégnante chez Ladrière, comme le prouve son inclusion, aux côtés de Thomas d'Aquin et de Blondel, dans la section « Références historiques » de *L'espérance de la raison*, p. 35-62.

un mot : il s'agit en somme de joindre la réflexion contemporaine autour de l'émergence, de l'événementiel et de la créativité à la métaphysique de l'*esse*.

2. La philosophie de Ladrière comme philosophie de la créativité

Le thème de la créativité est fondamental chez Ladrière et l'on peut lire l'ensemble de son oeuvre à partir de ce vecteur structurant autour duquel se regroupent les thématiques centrales de l'instauration, de la constitution et de la construction, de l'effectuation et de l'opération, de l'advenir et de l'émergence, de l'action et de la poiêsis. La philosophie de Ladrière apparaît alors comme une philosophie de la créativité, inspirée du geste thomiste qu'elle prolonge, et proposant à son tour une métaphysique culminant dans l'idée création.

De manière très significative, une telle réflexion met en oeuvre une réinterprétation de la pensée spéculative s'appuyant sur le croisement de la réflexion sur l'être et la réflexion sur l'action. Cette reprise de la thématique ontologique à travers le modèle offert par l'action constitue en fait une intériorisation du modèle créationniste classique. On rencontre ce faisant l'une des lignes de force de la pensée de Ladrière qui consiste à reprendre l'ontologie classique centrée sur la notion d'acte à la lumière des apports de la philosophie moderne de l'action, telle que développée par Kant et Blondel. Dans cette perspective, l'actualité de l'être est pensée à partir du vouloir comme dynamisme constitutif de cette actualité[18]. Dans la foulée de cette thématisation du lien entre création et action, je me contenterai de souligner comment Ladrière croise ces dimensions de l'être que sont la nature et l'histoire à partir de la notion de créativité.

Comme on l'a dit, l'image du monde que procure la science actuelle est celle d'un monde en perpétuelle genèse, en continuelle émergence, c'est-à-dire d'un monde affecté d'historicité. Dans la perspective de la création, cette image demande à être interprétée spéculativement, c'est-à-dire relativement à l'être. Mais un tel discours spéculatif doit s'approprier la critique contemporaine de la représentation, et conséquemment se comprendre comme un discours d'effectuation plutôt que comme un discours purement théorique. Ce glissement vers une nouvelle forme de discursivité spéculative équivaut à introduire la dimension existentielle à l'intérieur de l'horizon d'interprétation de type spéculatif. Le discours spéculatif doit devenir lui-même un discours effectuant, au sens d'un discours mettant en jeu l'existence elle-même. Il s'agit donc de lier discours cosmologique et discours de la responsabilité, la question du surgissement du monde et la question éthique. Ainsi parvient-on à une pensée de l'effectuation qui se conçoit elle-même comme discours

[18]Pour ce qui suit, voir *L'Articulation du sens II*, p. 281 suiv.

effectuant. Ladrière parle à cet égard d'une solidarité entre le sens du cosmos et celui de l'action, entre la cosmologie et l'humain. Cette solidarité permet de lier nature et action et d'établir une correspondance entre cosmos et histoire. Le cosmos se manifeste comme advenir de lui-même, comme émergence incessante, comme événement, et plus précisément, comme un devenir finalisant doté d'une structure d'indétermination appellant une résolution. Il demeure sans cesse suspendu à cette complétion que seule peut lui fournir une force instauratrice appropriée :

> On pourrait dire que le monde comme événement fait advenir, dans son devenir même, une question qui le concerne de part en part et qui demeure comme en suspens dans les configurations concrètes qu'il se donne, et qui est la question de sa qualité ultime, c'est-à-dire du sens même de l'émergence en laquelle il se constitue[19].

Autrement dit, le cosmos se manifeste, dans son registre le plus fondamental, comme une question destinale.

L'action humaine se déploie selon une structure parallèle. Elle porte en elle le même genre d'interrogation, car elle est elle aussi affectée d'une dichotomie originaire entre la localité de ses initiatives singulières et l'ampleur illimitée de sa visée même, à savoir l'instauration d'un règne de sens transcendant toute limitation et toute particularité. La genèse cosmique demande à être assumée par et dans l'action, assomption qui est en même temps accomplissement : « Une correspondance remarquable semble donc s'annoncer entre la structure du monde comme événement et celle de l'action, ce qui laisse entrevoir que c'est sans doute dans l'action que peut se trouver cette force unifiante capable de répondre à la question posée par le cosmos. »[20] Il apparaît donc que la création doive être comprise en fonction de la destinée et de la vocation propre de l'homme. Cosmos et action forment un milieu ouvert de créativité; ce sont deux régions de l'advenir. L'action possède sa propre créativité et permet de mieux comprendre le monde comme émergence créatrice et comme événementialité. Elle prolonge le cosmos et sert de modèle pour comprendre la créativité cosmique. L'instauration prend la relève de la création pour la prolonger; la *poiêsis* accomplit la *physis* ou encore la *genesis*[21] . Le rôle de l'action est de prolonger l'effort du cosmos vers l'être. En d'autres termes, l'anthropogenèse et la cosmogenèse s'appartiennent mutuellement; l'action a besoin de la nature comme de son lieu d'enracinement et la nature trouve le sens de son auto-finalisation dans la

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[19]*Ibid.*, p. 300.
[20]*Ibid.*
[21]*Le temps du possible*,p. 75 suiv.,p. 187 suiv.

méta-finalité de la liberté : « [...] L'action ne peut trouver son effectivité que dans la consistance que lui procure la nature, et l'auto-finalisation de la nature ne peut trouver son sens que dans cette sorte de méta-finalité de la liberté, qui pose par elle-même un ordre des fins. »[22]

Le panorama qui se découvre ainsi est de grande amplitude : l'ensemble du réel apparaît comme un immense processus créateur, comme une vaste opération de genèse. On voit bien en quoi la pensée de Ladrière se situe à l'intérieur d'une doctrine générale de l'émergence. Elle cherche à rendre compte du mouvement du sens dans toute l'étendue de son amplitude comme un projet humain d'institutionnalisation ancré dans un originaire impossible à circonscrire mais qui pourtant ne cesse d'être présent à ce qui traverse la contemporanéité même, comme ce qui sous-tend, comme son âme même, tout le mouvement d'institutionnalisation humaine, l'ensemble des concrétisations historiques. L'instauration du monde humain s'effectue toujours à partir de son enracinement dans les expériences naturelles. Ladrière recourt à la *Lebenswelt* husserlienne pour exprimer cette présence agissante, cette créativité inhérente au réel, ce milieu de genèse, ou encore cette « source de sens, cette activité constituante anonyme » précédant et portant le processus d'instauration culturelle à la manière d'une « opérativité », d'une « énergie » agissant dans l'invisible. L'originaire que découvre la phénoménologie est en effet

> sourdement présent [...] dans l'actuel comme cette vie qui le traverse, qui lui donne sa vertu et son sens, son originalité et ses promesses, qui n'est pourtant elle-même rien de ces déterminations, mais seulement le principe de leur advenance, le pur entêtement de l'être, et sa puissance d'engendrement, ce que peut-être Bergson avait en vue lorsqu'il parlait de l'élan vital[23].

Cette opérativité est au principe d'une émergence opérant par continuel dépassement, par rapport au pôle de sollicitation ou d'attraction que représente la vie selon la liberté. La conscience historique se comprend comme provenance et comme tâche infinie, comme appel, comme devoir procédant d'une exigence infinie.

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[22]J. Ladrière, « Anthropologie et cosmologie », dans A. De Waelhens et alii, *Études d'anthropologie philosophique*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Éditions de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1980, p. 163.

[23]J. Ladrière, « Les incertitudes de la conscience historique », *Cahiers de l'École des sciences philosophiques et religieuses*, 13 (1993), p. 59-60. Voir Id., *Vie sociale et destinée*, Gembloux (Belgique) Duculot, 1973, p.19-37 ; Id., « La philosophie et les expériences naturelles », in G. Florival (éd.), *Études d'anthropologie philosophique II*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Éditions de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1984, p. 301-310.

C'est toute une vision de la culture, du politico-social, du monde humain axée sur la créativité qui se trouve ici engagée. Cette vision est particulièrement mise en lumière par la modernité[24]. En tant que vaste mouvement d'auto-instauration sous la forme d'un monde construit, celle-ci promeut singulièrement la dynamique d'émergence créatrice. Par excellence le domaine de l'invention, de la nouveauté et de l'auto-constitution, la modernité radicalise le procès de créativité culturelle en le conduisant à un degré d'intensification inédit, au point où il est possible d'y repérer l'émergence d'un type nouveau de civilisation. La grande caractéristique de la modernité est l'expansion du monde des artéfacts sous la forme d'un monde créé qui s'insinue entre la nature et l'humain, à la manière du troisième monde poppérien et qui est pour l'essentiel une rationalité du construit, un univers imprégné de rationalité. Ici encore, Ladrière associe de la dimension éthique à celle de l'instauration. La modernité est le lieu où s'affirme l'expérience d'un pouvoir croissant, refusant a priori toute limitation, mais aussi celui où s'impose l'exigence du devoir éthique. La tâche qu'elle offre à accomplir est également, et au premier chef, une tâche éthique procèdant d'une requête, d'un appel qui vient d'ailleurs. Mais la tâche ainsi perçue demeure formelle : elle ne se découvre concrètement qu'à travers ce qui à la fois s'exprime et se cherche à travers la construction des objectivités de sens caractéristiques de la modernité. La requête éthique appelle un processus de création apte à lui donner un contenu effectif. La modernité se comprend ainsi comme un processus éthique de création.

L'expérience de la créativité est intimement associée à celle de l'histoire et met directement en jeu la conscience historique. Il n'est pas de processus créateur dissocié de l'histoire; il n'est d'expérience de créativité qu'historique. Il n'est pas étonnant que la philosophie de Ladrière accorde une place fondamentale à la question de l'expérience historique. La philosophie de la créativité appelle la philosophie de l'histoire, ou plus précisément une réflexion sur l'historicité comme détermination fondamentale de l'histoire. Ladrière associe les intentionnalités constituantes qui sous-tendent les diverses expérience historiques en situant celles-ci par rapport à leurs différents horizons de constitution. Il montre ainsi comment la conscience historique se détermine dans l'épreuve d'une émergence qui l'affecte d'autant qu'elle lui demeure irréductible. L'expérience se manifeste alors comme portée par un milieu d'émergence qui la constitue elle-même en tant qu'expérience. L'expérience historique est portée par une intentionnalité opérante qui la devance sans cesse tout en ouvrant sur un avenir énigmatique. L'historicité qui la caractérise est celle d'un procès de constitution, « d'un

[24]J. Ladrière, *La Foi chrétienne et le Destin de la raison*, Paris, Cerf, 2004, p. 17 suiv., 153-154.

monde en voie d'auto-organisation, dans la démarche ambigüe d'un effort créatif »[25]. L'efficacité de la conscience historique se définit dans un rapport d'anticipation à un horizon instaurateur.

La vision philosophique de Ladrière est sous-tendue par une interprétation du temps comme « temporalité du possible », c'est-à-dire sur la dimension de l'historicité et de l'événementiel. On rejoint, par le biais d'une réflexion sur l'historicité, les vues précédemment exprimées. Si le cosmos apparaît comme une dynamique ouverte, comme processus auto-finalisant de la cosmogenèse, l'histoire humaine se présente également comme un processus créatif. Il y a ainsi une double historicité, celle de la nature et celle de l'action. Tant la science que l'histoire enseignent la contingence de l'événement. La temporalité du possible imprègne autant celle de la nature que de l'histoire. La nature se tisse à partir d'une constante interférence entre la dimension nomologique et celle de l'événementiel, guidée par une directionnalité :

> On peut dire que le processus de la cosmogenèse, entendu en son sens le plus large, est auto-finalisant. C'est sans doute la nature elle-même qui montrera son ultime vérité. Des méditations convergentes nous donnent à penser que cette ultime vérité de la nature est d'être la préfiguration de ce qui doit advenir comme la pleine manifestation du sens de la création[26].

Parallèlement, au plan de l'histoire, la créativité est assumée par la finalité éthique comme finalité irréductible à celle de la nature. L'histoire est également en attente de sa vérité ultime, de l'intégrité de son sens. Ce qui s'exprime ainsi est le rapport à une espérance. C'est une philosophie de la destinée. La philosophie de Ladrière est une philosophie de l'espérance qui situe le réel dans sa dimension d'anticipation au sens où elle postule la suspension du processus de créativité historique à un attracteur, qui « est la trace, dans la constitution du possible, de l'intention créatrice qui l'ordonne à contribuer à la réalisation d'un certain ordre réel, "l'ordre créé" »[27] Ce suspens se rapporte à une péripétie toujours en suspens et toujours à venir, de telle manière que la temporalité du possible fait ressortir

> une tension permanente qui fait de chaque instant l'imminence d'une nouvelle émergence et l'accueille dans une temporalité où le temps est en quelque sorte en avance sur lui-même. Cette temporalité est celle d'un monde qui se fait. Si l'être du possible est affecté de cette non-saturation qui est la

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[25]J. Ladrière, « Le panorama de l'Europe du point de vue de la philosophie et des sciences de l'esprit », dans P. Hünermann (dir.), *La Nouvelle Europe. Défi à l'Église et à la théologie*, Paris, Cerf, 1994, p. 59.
[26]*Le temps du possible*, p. 318-319.
[27]*Ibid.*, p. 315.

> marque de la potentialité, il est en même temps désir créatif de l'actualité, il est l'être même en tant que promesse de lui-même, advenant déjà dans cette lumière que, du futur où il se tient, il projette sur le présent de son attente[28].

S'affirme ici la dimension eschatologique de l'historicité propre à la création, dimension qui parcourt toute l'oeuvre de Ladrière comme l'un des ses axes constitutifs.

3. Ontologie et création : l'*esse* comme événement

La reprise ladrièrienne de la métaphysique de la création culmine dans la réinterprétation de la notion thomiste d'*esse* (existence) comme événement. Une telle reprise présuppose une interprétation de la notion de création comprise comme interrogation d'ordre ontologique. On retrouve chez Ladrière cette présupposition thomiste voulant que la problématique de la création ouvre sur la question de la structure ontologique du réel[29]. En d'autres termes, l'horizon approprié à une réflexion sur la création est celui de l'être. Ladrière introduit le concept d'événement qui est à la fois une composante et un présupposé du concept de création[30]. La création nous situe en effet d'emblée dans un ordre existentiel, événementiel. Ladrière a recours au concept d'événement pour exprimer la position de la différence introduite dans la trame du réel par le fait que quelque chose arrive. L'événement dit cette survenance toujours survenante, la facticité du fait comme surgissement historique. Il est l'occurrence qui produit un nouvel état de choses, qui pose la qualité comme détermination de la différence. C'est donc un opérateur de transformation, une source d'introduction d'inédit : « [...] l'essentiel de l'événement, c'est l'apparition du déterminations nouvelles; c'est pourquoi la notion d'événement renvoie à celle d'émergence, en laquelle viennent se concentrer pour ainsi dire tous les caractères de l'événement. »[31] L'événement fait voir la création comme « un surgissement radical, une position totalement discontinue »[32].

L'inscription ladrièrienne de la problématique de la création à l'intérieur du champ ontologique épouse la position thomiste. D'entrée de jeu, le champ ontologique présente une bifurcation fondamentale, qui divise la manifestation selon la dualité classique de l'essence et de l'existence. La

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[28]*Ibid.*, p. 317-318.
[29]*L'Articulation du sens II*, p. 303-305; *Le temps du possible*, p. 235 suiv.; *L'espérance de la raison*, p. 247 suiv.
[30]*Le temps du possible*, p. 2.
[31]*L'Articulation du sens II*, p. 299.
[32]*Ibid.*, p. 303.

donation en effet s'opère selon un double mouvement ou encore selon une « dualité de modes » :

> D'une part chaque chose se montre sous la forme d'une détermination singulière, qui la qualifie comme telle ou telle, selon une certaine figure, un certain style d'apparition, bref dans le mode d'un "comment". Cet aspect de la donation a été pensé sous la concept d'essence, que l'on peut comprendre comme forme déterminante qui instaure la chose dans sa différence. Mais d'autre part chaque chose se montre simplement en tant que s'imposant, non dans telle ou telle détermination qui la caractériserait, mais en tant que pure affirmation d'elle-même, se faisant valoir comme telle, indépendamment de tout "comment", et donc de toute relation à d'autres choses, dans l'autarcie d'un acte d'auto-position qui vaut par cela même seulement qu'il se pose, comme irrécusable, dans l'obstination massive de ce qui est là, comme pour toujours, absolument. Cet aspect de la donation est ce qui est visé par le concept classique d'existence [...][33].

Toute la question ontologique consiste à comprendre cette relation duale :

> La corrélation [...] de l'existence et de l'essence implique entre ces deux termes une dépendance réciproque : l'existence est l'acte par lequel la chose se pose comme réelle, mais cet acte, en lui-même pure position, irréductible à une propriété, a besoin en quelque sorte de la détermination, donc de l'essence, pour se poser, et la détermination de son côté a besoin de l'acte pour se réaliser[34].

L'interprétation de Ladrière réitère le primat thomiste de l'existence sur l'essence : « L'existence ainsi entendue est ce par quoi les déterminations sont réelles : elle précède donc l'essence. »[35] L'originalité de Ladrière réside dans l'interprétation de l'existence en termes d'événement. L'existence est un acte posant irréductible, en sa pure facticité, à tout ce qui établit l'étant dans ses déterminations essentielles. Cet acte est l'affirmation réitérée de l'existence même en tant qu'incessante victoire sur la possibilité récurrente du non-être. C'est pourquoi l'existence apparaît comme durée, comme processus et plus spécifiquement encore, comme événement :

> L'auto-position qu'elle [l'existence] est n'est pas la fixation dans le stable d'un intangible qui n'aurait d'autre vertu que d'être-là, c'est l'incessante venue à l'espace de la manifestation de ce qui ainsi s'affirme, la victoire toujours précaire et toujours recommencée sur la pure adversité de la non-existence.

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[33]*L'espérance de la raison*, p. 249.
[34]*Ibid.*, p. 256. Voir *Le temps du possible*, p. 221.
[35]*Ibid.*, p. 250. Voir p. 256.

> Elle est donc acte au sens le plus fort, et en tant que telle elle est survenance, advenir, nouveauté, surprise, instauration, discontinuité, péripétie, émergence singulière, conjuration de l'improbable, bref événement[36].

Ladrière précise le caractère non temporel de ce processus qu'est l'existence :

> [...] l'existence, comme durée, est l'événement toujours recommencé d'un advenir par lequel l'existant s'élève, à partir du néant, et se tient dans le suspens de sa propre sustentation [...] Elle est elle-même origine, en tant que condition de toutes les déterminations , préalable radical [...] L'existence est origine en tant qu'origination d'elle-même[37].

Or la corrélation est elle-même d'ordre événementiel. Il est clair que cet événement coïncide chez Ladrière avec l'acte d'être thomiste. L'événement désigne l'*esse*, l'existence comme acte et pure position d'elle-même, et partage la même préséance :

> Dans la manifestation, il y a, certes, la figure, présentification de l'essence, moment singulier dans la constitution toujours émergente du cosmos, lieu concret à partir duquel s'élève et auquel renvoie toujours le mouvement de la signifiance. Mais ce qu'il y a de plus central dans la manifestation, ce n'est pas ce qui donne à la figure sa détermination, c'est-à-dire sa participation à l'essence, mais c'est ce qui lui donne sa concrétude factuelle, ce qui en fait une occurrence effective, un événement au sens fort, c'est la force d'auto-affirmation qui est en elle et qui lui donne de se poser dans sa singularité et sa différence d'une manière pour toujours incontestable.[38]

Nous atteignons ici l'acte posant en sa positivité absolue, comme pure émergence pure, comme pure fulguration de l'être se posant lui-même en sa singularité mais aussi comme inépuisable profusion. L'existence est processuelle, elle est incessante venue dans l'être. C'est en ce sens que Ladrière peut écrire que « que la véritable événement, c'est le surgissement toujours advenant du monde, cette sorte de pulsation instauratrice en et par laquelle le cosmos ne cesse de se produire et de s'acheminer vers ce qui, de lui, est toujours encore à se constituer. »[39] Ceci nous conduit au-delà du champ de la présence vers celui de la trajectoire : l'être est ce qui sans cesse advient, à la manière d'une trace hors de toute substance, au-delà de la

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[36]*Ibid.*, p. 251.
[37]*Ibid.*
[38]*L'Articulation du sens III*, p. 236.
[39]*L'Articulation du sens II*, p. 298.

figuration et du fondement. La création appelle une ontologie de l'événement et de l'advenant[40].

À partir de là, il est tout à fait possible de reprendre l'argumentation thomiste conduisant de l'existence comme acte d'être à l'acte d'être pur compris comme *ipsum esse subsistens*[41]. On retrouve la définition thomise de la création mais relue à la lumière de la problématique philosophique contemporaine et instruite des développements de la science comme des potentialités nouvelles offertes à l'action humaine.

Conclusion

La réflexion de Ladrière sur l'idée de création témoigne de l'influence déterminante qu'exerce la pensée de Thomas d'Aquin sur le philosophe de Louvain. Cette influence opère en profondeur, à ce niveau de radicalité qui rejoint non seulement la lettre mais l'esprit de l'oeuvre de l'Aquinate. C'est pourquoi la pensée de Ladrière est une relecture de la métaphysique thomiste de la création, et non sa simple exégèse. Ce faisant, Ladrière montre la pertinence actuelle du concept de création ainsi que la puissance inspiratrice de l'ontologie thomiste.

En relisant le binôme création-acte d'être, entendu à juste titre comme le noeud de toute l'ontologie thomiste, à la lumière du concept d'événement – l'*esse*-création s'identifiant désormais à l'événement–, Ladrière reprend la vision thomiste en la radicalisant dans le sens d'une pensée de l'historicité et l'insère du même coup au plein coeur du champ philosophique actuel. Dans cette perspective, l'aspect d'historicité de l'être apparaît de façon particulièrement remarquable en tant que dimension ontologique constitutive. Une telle mise en relief résulte de l'effet produit par la mise en relation, par

[40]« En un sens il s'agit d'une recherche [l'ontologie] qui est la tentative de dire un événement, à savoir la venue dans l'espace de la présence de ce qui mérite d'être enrôlé sous la dénomination de l'étant [...] Et en un sens aussi il s'agit d'une recherche qui est la tentative de dire la structure [...] Ce qui est visé par le terme d'être, c'est à la fois cet événement et cette structure, ce qu'il y a de plus marquant, de plus central dans tout processus, l'événementialité de tout événement, et ce qui est sous-jacent à toute apparition, ce qui est au terme de toute régression. Les deux aspects s'appartiennent. L'être est ce qui donne à tout advenir d'être événement, il est donc événementialité, et il l'est en tant qu'il est lui-même événement premier, événement par conséquent qui advient en un sens plus fondamental que tout événement particulier [...] C'est là l'événement fondamental par quoi l'être affecte l'étant; l'être est lui-même, dans l'étant, cet événement même, toujours advenant. » (*Le temps du possible,* 220-221). Voir encore *Ibid.*, pp. 250-290.

[41]*L'Articulation du sens III*, p. 39; *L'Articulation du sens II,* p. 305, *Le temps du possible*, p. 236-238.

l'entremise de l'idée unificatrice d'être, des concepts d'acte-action, de créativité-création et d'événement. Ces diverses mises en relation s'appellent l'une l'autre et s'appuient mutuellement. La mise en relief de cette interconnexion contribue fortement non seulement à mettre en lumière mais surtout à approfondir l'idée classique de création comme réalité événementielle. Par le même mouvement, elle contribue non moins fortement à mettre en relief la dimension d'historicité inhérente à l'être. Ladrière se trouve ainsi à radicaliser la problématique classique de la création qui consiste pour l'essentiel à mettre en valeur la réalité finie en tant que réalité finie. Ce faisant, il inscrit résolument la problématique thomiste de l'être à l'intérieur du champ philosophique contemporain et manifeste ainsi la philosophie de Saint Thomas comme moment clé de cette tradition de pensée qui a conduit à l'émergence moderne de la problématique de l'historicité. Il montre que la métaphysique thomiste, en tant qu'ontologie de la création comme *esse*, est une étape essentielle sur le chemin conduisant au problème ontologique central de notre époque, et qui est celui de la corrélation entre l'être et le temps. L'oeuvre de Ladrière manifeste qu'assumer la tradition thomiste aujourd'hui, c'est apprendre à mieux poser la question de l'être dans l'horizon de la temporalité, c'est-à-dire reprendre, dans les conditions qui nous sont imparties, la question portant sur l'être comme ce qui requiert encore et toujours notre responsabilité vigilante.

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Some Reflections on Thomism, Modern Chemistry, and the Four Causes

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Introduction

In this paper, I will be operating in the domains of the philosophy of nature and of experimental science. I will carry out a brief exploration of modern chemistry in the framework of Thomistic philosophy, making specific use of the Aristotelian concepts of nature and of the four causes – the intrinsic causes, material and formal; and the extrinsic causes – efficient and final. I will then build back out to the areas of ethics, epistemology, metaphysics and aesthetics.

In this process, I will be drawing on Maritain's *La Philosophie de la nature – essai critique sur ses frontières et son objet.*[1] I will also be calling on the more recent work of Father William Wallace, o.p., especially *The Modeling of Nature – Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Nature in Synthesis*.[2]

I will be making three general points. First, that Thomists have not ignored the emergence of 20th Century science and chemistry. Second, that Thomism is indeed a "natural" choice for those who value chemistry and the experimental sciences. And third, that a reflection on chemistry can open onto the major facets of Thomistic philosophy, whether they are ethical, epistemological, metaphysical, or aesthetic.

Thomists and 20th Century Chemistry and Science

Recent history testifies to the importance of chemistry. One needs only to look at key events such as the flowering of organic chemistry at the turn of the 20th Century, the elucidation of the chemical structure of DNA in the

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1 See Jacques Maritain, *La Philosophie de la nature – essai critique sur frontiers et son objet* (Paris: Téqui, 1935).

2 See William Wallace, o.p., *The Modeling of Nature – Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Naturre in Synthesis* (Washington D.C: SCatholic University of America Press, 1996).

1950's, and the pharmaceutical "miracle" of the last few decades. For good or for ill, chemistry has taken on "heavyweight" status among the factors shaping modern humanity.

This shaping includes our culture. In his widely-read work, *Le hasard et la nécessité*, [3] which appeared in 1970, Nobel laureate and biochemist Jacques Monod has disseminated a fundamentally reductionist and materialist approach to the world of the living. That same decade also saw the widespread dissemination of recreational chemicals in Western society. Is chemistry everywhere? Is everything reducible to chemistry? Are we only bags of organic molecules produced by random evolution? What of the Thomistic viewpoint on these matters?

An appropriate starting point for our inquiry might be the turn of the 20th Century, when organic chemistry was just beginning to flex its powerful muscles. The encyclical *Aeterni Patris* had recently been issued by Pope Leo XIII. Following on this call to return to saint Thomas in matters of philosophy and theology, Pope Leo directed the founding of an institute of Thomistic philosophy at Louvain, Belgium, under the direction of Cardinal Mercier.

During the last decade of the 19th Century and the first four of the 20th, Louvain's classrooms, libraries and laboratories would be the scene of a collective effort at integrating Thomistic principles and experimental science – including chemistry. For example, the years 1900 to 1910 saw intense debate over the question of the unity of substantial form and the retention of elements in chemical mixtures. But Louvain faced some rather challenging chemical reactions of its own. The school was sacked and burned in World War I, and bombed again at the outset of World War II. It is ironic that the great masters of organic chemistry – the Germans – were the principal actors in these tragic developments at Louvain.

In the English-speaking world, the likes of De Koninck, Maritain, Gilson, V.E. Smith, Jaki, Connell, Wallace, Ashley, our own Father Dewan, and others have maintained Thomist reflections on chemistry, physics and biology. This uninterrupted line of scholarship is chronicled in three periodicals in particular: *The Thomist, New Scholasticism* (now the *A.C.P.A. Journal*), and the *Modern Schoolman*. A rich francophone line has also continued to nourish this reflection on science – with precursors like Duhem, Meyerson, and Nys; De Koninck, Maritain and Gilson – this time in their mother tongue – and Simon and Daujat. The *Revue Thomiste* and the *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* are two periodicals that have chronicled this line of thought. Similar traditions are present in the Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese-

[3] See Jacques Monod, *Le hasard de la nécessité* (Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1970).

speaking academic communities. These scholars have addressed both general questions on the relationship of science and philosophy, and specific issues such as causality, substance, hylomorphism, prime matter, substantial form, and final causes. Although they may not be well-known outside of their own circles, 20th Century Thomists have certainly taken account of modern science, including modern chemistry.

Maritain's Distinction Between Science and Philosophy

Before delving into chemistry, it would be wise to give ourselves an idea of how it might differ from philosophy. According to Maritain, the philosophy of nature follows an ontological mode of conceptualization, which targets the intelligible essence, or nature of things. By comparison, experimental science targets measurable phenomena; it does not, and cannot progress to the essence or nature of things. [4]

We can now distinguish between "philosophical" chemistry and "experimental" chemistry. On the one hand, a philosophical approach to chemistry would study substantial change in terms of essences, the four ontological causes, and the like. As for chemistry as an experimental science, it would focus on measurable and observable factors in substantial change (using proper instruments): the electronic structure of the atom, bonds between atoms, the configuration of molecules, reaction mechanisms, etc.

A Thomist Discourse on Chemistry [5]

Now that we have defined "philosophical chemistry," let us proceed to see if we can examine "chemical being" in a Thomistic framework. This we will do in terms of Aristotle's notions of nature and the four causes. Aristotle's concept of nature is defined as the internal principle of change (or rest) in a particular thing. This principle will carry us through our exploration of chemistry and ultimately back to the other branches of philosophy. [6]

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[4] Maritain, *Philosophie de la nature,* p. 132. The River Forest School has developed a more "science-friendly" approach, which we will not have the liberty of exploring in this paper.

[5] Clearly, a proper treatment of this question would tap more fully into the scholarly commentary on Aristotle's works – *On Generation and Corruption*, in particular, and on St.Thomas' *De Principiis Naturae,* and *De Mixtione Elementorum.* These two last works are the subject of a recent translation and commentary by Joseph Bobik in his *Aquinas on Matter and Form and the Elements* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997).

[6] Here, we are following the lead of Father Wallace in his 1985 paper, "Nature as Animating: the Soul in the Human Sciences," *The Thomist* (49), pp. 612-648.

The Intrinsic Causes: Formal and Material

We will start our investigation with matter and form – the hylomorphic theory of substance. And we will work with a chemical substance that is both simple and familiar: water.

Experimental chemistry informs us that the water molecule is constituted of one atom of oxygen and two atoms of hydrogen. In the synthesis of water, we combine hydrogen molecules and oxygen molecules; we break bonds between atoms and form new bonds and new molecules.

In terms of Thomistic categories, we can recognize that molecules are substances - they are not a characteristic of another being – they are their own being. So each molecule has its own substantial form. Mix two kinds of molecules – hydrogen and oxygen - light a spark, and you have combustion. Through the breaking and reforming of chemical bonds, a new substance emerges – water - with its own substantial form.

In the change from oxygen and hydrogen to water, what has happened to the substantial forms of hydrogen and oxygen? They have gone from actuality to what we call a virtual or potential state. The forms of hydrogen and oxygen are not actually expressed in water. They are only present in a potential or virtual sense. [7]

As for the material cause understood in its original Aristotelian sense, it is far more difficult to speak of. We might be tempted to think of matter as the individual atoms, protons and electrons involved in molecules. But these are observable and measurable – using appropriate instruments - and so they are the objects of experimental chemistry (or experimental physics). Aristotelian prime matter – that indeterminate principle which receives the form – is, by definition, unobservable. In our quest for prime matter, we will naturally drill down to smaller and smaller entities or particles, leading us into the domain of physics. And here we will come up against Heisenberg's principal of indeterminacy: that the position and velocity of an entity such as the electron cannot be simultaneously measured. We find that the electron displays both particle and wave characteristics.

In *Physics and Philosophy*, [8] Werner Heisenberg specifically links his principle of indeterminacy to the notion of Aristotelian prime matter. A similar reading of wave-particle duality can be made. Prime matter will never be observed, since it belongs to the unobservable, universal, and ontological

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[7] The substantial form of water is strictly its principle of unity – that which gives it its identity. Substantial form cannot be reduced to the geometric shape of a scientific model. This point becomes crucial in any further exploration of form and matter in relation to science.

[8] Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy* (New York, 1958), pp. 148 and 160, as cited by Father Wallace in *The Modeling of Nature,* p.9.

realm of philosophical principles. We could say that our experimental journey towards more and more fundamental particles follows an asymptotic path – with the unreachable axis representing Aristotelian, philosophical prime matter.

Efficient and Final Causes

Having briefly explored the notions of form and matter in the context of chemistry, we will now explore questions of purpose and agent - Aristotle's efficient and final causes - the "extrinsic causes."

The Efficient Cause

Chemicals act one upon the other – this much is evident to the chemist. He will state that it is in their very nature to react chemically. But the explanation "things just come together and react," is not fully satisfactory. What of the previous chemical agents? What of the series of previous chemical agents and conditions? Is it an infinitely complex series – and if so, is it still intelligible? In his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle provides us with an argument against such infinite regress (leading to the notion of the Prime Mover).

We might still ask what intermediate agents brought these chemicals into being? And what agent brought chemical nature itself, into being? Can all of this be explained by cosmogenic mechanisms such as the Big Bang? This can perhaps be done at the level of experimental science. A series of secondary causes would account for chemical nature, chemicals, and all of the particular chemicals in the world. But efficient causality addressed in this way is basically unsatisfactory. Something is missing. In *The Modeling of Nature*, [9] Father Wallace likewise points out this basic difficulty in our understanding of efficient causality.

The Final Cause

The fourth cause is Aristotle's "that for the sake of which." And so we may ask, "What purposes are chemicals serving? Are they directed to an end?" This is a thorny question. In order to address it, Father Wallace will distinguish between three meanings of final causation, in line with Aristotle's original treatment and with Saint Thomas' commentary.

The first meaning of final cause would be the end of a natural process – especially if that end is stable.[10] Coming back to our example of the synthesis of water, we would say that as oxygen and hydrogen combine to form water,

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[9] See *Ibid.,* pp. 13-15.
[10] See *Ibid.,* p. 16.

the process naturally comes to an end when the reagents are used up; the end product, water, is stable.

"A second meaning of end or goal adds to the idea of terminus the notion that it is somehow a perfection or good attained through the process." [11] But the difficulty remains for chemistry: "In inorganic changes it is difficult to see in what sense a compound is better than an element…" [12]

As for the third meaning of finality, it adds the notion of intention or aim.[13] This clearly presupposes an intelligent agent. And molecules clearly do not intend anything. So we may ask: are we getting anywhere with this notion of purpose in chemistry?

How do we deal with the profound integration of matter and form into the very nature of molecules – an integration that is so complete that it leads us to conclude that molecules act "automatically?" It is tempting to go along with Jacques Monod and say that molecules simply act automatically, mechanistically; to suspend questions of origins or ends. In fact, such an interpretation does not appear to have interfered with the impressive developments of modern chemistry (we will have more to say on this later in our section on ethics).

The Four Causes Work Together

One solution to our quandary is to follow Aristotle and Thomas' lead, and argue that the four causes can only be understood together – under the direction of the final cause. According to this argument, if the final cause is supposed, the other three causes become fully intelligible and necessary. "…Throughout the entire order of nature, *if* particular ends are to be achieved (and therefore on *their* supposition), determinate agents are required to act on specific matters to bring the appropriate natural form into being." [14]

Let us apply this "suppositio" model of causation to our water molecule. In particular, let us suppose an ambitious purpose for the substance in question: to provide a medium for the support of life (this is an argument in the line of the "anthropic principle.")

This is a tall order. First of all, life calls for a concentration, rapidity and complexity of interactions only found in the liquid state (the gaseous and solid states cannot support life processes in themselves). Second, life calls for a substance that will support a tremendous mixture of constituents – in other words, a universal solvent. Third, life calls for a liquid that does not sink when it solidifies – but one that floats, in order to form pools of stable

[11] *Ibid.,* p. 17.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] See *Ibid.*
[14] Wallace, *The Modeling of Nature*, p.13.

temperature on the surface of the planet. The list of demanding characteristics continues on and on.

Experimental science informs us that only water meets these requirements. In terms of philosophical chemistry, we can say that only the combination of water's substantial form with prime matter, driven by the appropriate agents, will satisfy the end in question.

We have now gained a better understanding of the water molecule from a philosophical point of view. Wrapped up together in this way, the four causes appear to form part of a cogent discourse on chemical natures. [15]

Chemistry and Ethics

The above developments suggest that modern chemistry – understood in terms of philosophy - speaks of a world of specific natures. Such a world would be compatible with an ethics of natural law. Here, what is good for something is what meets its proper purpose – itself determined by the nature of the thing. What "is" shapes what "ought" to be.

In the natural law conception of Aristotle and Thomas, the world consists of a vast interlocking hierarchy of naturally determined goods or purposes, ultimately culminating in the Final Good. Aristotle and Thomas would not hesitate to affirm that our water molecules are an integral part of this world, and that their existence is ultimately ordered to the Final Good. In addition, the very study of chemistry would be ordered to a higher good – beyond itself.

But this view of "chemical ethics" is far from universal. Experimental chemistry appears to have no need for final (or even formal) causality. It seems that the battle cry sounds across laboratories around the world: "Pure science for the sake of science!" But again, chemistry is no deity, and chemists are not gods. Chemistry and chemists serve higher purposes whether they acknowledge them or not.

Working from our natural law position, we could expect that if chemistry followed its proper purposes, it would produce ordered fruit. And that if it followed improper purposes, it would lead to disordered fruit that clash with the order of nature.

What do we find when we examine the record? It would seem that chemistry has turned against the profound order and finality of the natural world. It appears to have served less than noble ends as evidenced by chemical weapons, pesticides that cause profound damage to humans and the environment, toxic pharmaceuticals, and the unsettling rise of corrupt science.

[15] This kind of discourse might not sit well with Maritain, in view of his insistence on the distinction between the ontological and the sensible.

One could say that chemistry, led by improper ends, has followed a disordered path through the garden of knowledge. Organic chemistry has given us a host of what Aristotle would call "monsters" – beings that were not intended by nature. Running ahead of itself, it has unleashed a wild variety of chemical species wielding great power over both inanimate and animate matter, without having built up the knowledge necessary to responsibly predict, understand, and control the effects of these chemicals. Such chemicals include the vast array of chlorinated and fluorinated compounds which are causing profound neurological, reproductive, and atmospheric damage on planet Earth. These compounds are profoundly "unnatural" in an Aristotelian sense: they are at fundamental odds with the dynamics of our ecosystem. One could thus argue that this fundamental disorder in chemistry has contributed in large part to the present environmental and health crisis. [16]

Chemistry and Metaphysics

Again referring to Aristotle and Thomas' world-view, we note that what is "chemical" is located at an interesting point in the hierarchy of being. It is intermediate between the highest forms and the most fundamental level of primary matter. On the one hand, modern chemistry undergirds the realm of the living, where we find a most special kind of form: the one we call a soul. And among the souls of these living things, we find subsisting souls – called to commune with the Form of Forms – the Divine. A poetic rendition of this situation would be as follows: through man, chemistry communes with God - the highest Form, or Pure Act. On the other hand, chemistry rests on the edifice of modern physics. This discipline, in its tentacular attempts to grasp the foundation of material being, moves in the shadowy world of quantum indeterminacy. A world associated with pure potency, dixit Heisenberg himself.

We have now bracketed the upper and lower limits of the hylomorphic "environment" of chemistry; in combination with our previous analysis of chemistry and the four causes, we might say that we have made some minor inroads into the "metaphysics of chemistry."

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[16] This is a far different take from that of Lynn White's 1967 essay, "*The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis,*" *Nature* (155), pp.1203-07). White blames religion, and in particular, the Book of Genesis, for the Western World's despoliation of nature. The environmental movement has taken Lynn White's thesis quite far in its criticism of the Judeo-Christian tradition. It may be possible to reconsider such matters in the light of an Aristotelian understanding of "nature."

Chemistry and Epistemology

Both Thomism and experimental chemistry are fundamentally "realistic" in their approach to the world: both posit the basic intelligibility of the nature of things. Thomism affirms that form is the basis of this intelligibility – a form present in all beings. Chemistry, for its part, affirms that the observable and measurable phenomena of "substantial change" (which it considers to be its proper object) follow on regular, intelligible laws that express the chemical nature of things. Without such a realistic outlook, chemistry could not proceed. And so, in effect, we find a "natural" compatibility between Thomism and chemistry. It is no mere semantic compatibility. If chemists ever fundamentally doubted their senses or the intelligibility of the world, they would have to abandon the laboratory.

But the epistemological challenge remains: form and matter are difficult concepts to grasp, especially in the modern philosophical setting. This is a setting that dates back to the foundation of modern science with Newton and Descartes. Here, Wallace's observation cuts to the quick: "René Descartes presents a good example of a philosopher who never was able to comprehend matter and form as ontological co-principles…His insistence on 'clear and distinct ideas' as a starting point effectively blocked for him access to the concepts of protomatter and substantial form." [17]

Etienne Gilson, in a 1971 letter to Maritain, also tags Descartes with the responsibility of doing away with substantial form – and of thus virtually closing the door to dialogue between Thomists and experimental scientists. [18] One of the purposes of this paper on chemistry and philosophy, is to demonstrate the possibility of such dialogue.

Chemistry and Aesthetics

We bring our philosophico-chemical explorations to a close with a note on aesthetics (we have left the best for the last). In the above treatment, we have leaned quite heavily on the notion of finality. This notion is also central to aesthetics as understood by Maritain and Saint Thomas: what is beautiful is what is proportioned and meets its end.[19]

Anyone who has studied chemistry with a passion, knows that its real draw on the heart and the mind lies in its promise of beauty and truth. Such is its draw on the hearts and minds of all teachers of chemistry – from the most humble schoolteacher to the most exalted Nobel Prize-winner. Here, we find

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[17] Wallace, *The Modeling of Nature,* p. 18, note 13.

[18] As cited by Fr. Lawrence Dewan in an unpublished paper, ***St.Thomas, Metaphysics and Human Dignity***, 2002.

[19] See Jacques Maritain, *La responsabilité de l'artiste* (Paris : Librairie Arthème Fayard, Paris, 1961).

community with our erstwhile opponent Jacques Monod, author of *Le hasard et la nécessité.* Monod's aesthetic sense was finely developed; his love of truth and beauty were fundamental character traits. [20]

It is my hope that the love of beauty – as understood in its sense of proportion and purpose - will be a true guiding light in all matters of chemistry and philosophy. And that as a result, both disciplines will avoid the seductive mirage of ethical neutrality or purposelessness, and instead, be enriched in the direction of authentic natural purpose.

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[20] See Jean-Pierre Soulier, *Jacques Monod: le choix de l'objectivité* (Paris : Éditions Frison-Roches, 1997).

St. Thomas, John Haldane and Mind

Robbie Moser

Wittgenstein wrote that the procedure of induction is a procedure with "no logical justification but only a psychological one."[1] One interpretation of this passage is that our cognitive procedure for classifying or grouping things together is dependent not on rules that guide us infallibly from world to mind, but rather on our various purposes, preferences and practices. Within these practices we set out what we prefer to count as an object for our purposes, and only once the boundaries are set can we begin to classify accordingly. Cognitive classification of things into kinds, on this view, is preference all the way down. Certain proponents of this sort of view, however, may not want it to sound overly idealistic. They do not want their view to rule out the material, empirical world by limiting our cognitive access *only* to conceptual constructions (even though without these conceptual constructions there could be no knowledge of such a world). At this point they might invoke sense perception to vindicate their realist urgings; being natural creatures, we are given access to nature through our natural faculties of sense. And as a result the structure of nature is in some sense isomorphic with the structure of thought. We are, in Jacques Maritain's words, brought "from the level of sensible and material existence to the level of objects of thought … to the order of intelligible being, or of *what things are*."[2]

John Haldane has been suggesting for some time that the trend for those holding such a view is their moving farther away from conceptualism and much closer to the realism envisioned by Thomas Aquinas. Conceptualism, Haldane thinks, rules out objective knowledge, since it denies the need of determinate natural essences in things to account for knowledge of the world. However, Haldane also thinks that Aquinas' full position on objective knowledge is unacceptable because it cannot explain how we attain

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[1] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* tr. by David Pears & Brian McGuinness (London: Routledge, 2002), § 6.3631.

[2] Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge,* 4th ed., tr. by Gerald B. Phelan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), p. 30.

knowledge of general kinds of things in the world. Aquinas denies that general (i.e., universal) essences exist in nature; rather, "individualized" essences exist as forms of each particular object.[3] Haldane worries that if individualized essences are entirely distinct individuals, then our grouping of things into kinds cannot be objective and so our knowledge of the world is dependent on our personal and relative classifications. Thus Aquinas' realism collapses into a "conceptualism" similar to the view outlined above.

To maintain the spirit if not the letter of Aquinas' realism, Haldane modifies Aquinas' theory to preserve realism and avoid the slip into conceptualism. In this paper I am not concerned with the details of Haldane's modifications.[4] Instead, I will focus on what I take to be the reasons Haldane departs from Aquinas' view. I begin with Haldane's rejection of Thomas' account of sense perception. I then discuss Haldane's worry of Thomas' conceptualist collapse, which I relate back to the rejection of sense perception. What I hope to show is that there is no need to modify Aquinas to escape the conceptualist charge, nor to assist Thomistic engagement with contemporary realist philosophies.

To begin, Haldane is suspicious that Aquinas' theory of sense perception is "self-contradictory" on account of two implausible distinctions.[5] First, Aquinas distinguishes two modes of immateriality to account for the way mental images (phantasms) secure a referential relation between sense perception and intellect. Second, Aquinas distinguishes between two modes of formal existence, *esse intentionale* and *esse naturale*, to account for the referential relation between mind and the real nature of an object. Haldane suggests that Aquinas' introduction of a "perfect" immaterial existence for intelligible forms and a "half-way" immaterial existence for sensible forms is a "vain attempt" to have phantasms both guarantee reference and make an impression on the immaterial intellect. For Haldane, only if we understand the phantasms as material can they be a plausible candidate for a causal-referential guarantor. Further, given Aquinas' doctrines that (i) universals exist only in the mind, and that (ii) objects have real natures that the intellect correctly recognizes as common, Haldane suggests that Aquinas' use of the

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[3] The terminology is from Peter Geach, in his and Elizabeth Anscombe's *Three Philosophers* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), pp. 79-81.

[4] Haldane's modified view is set out over the course of various papers here cited, but especially clearly in "Forms of Thought," in *The Philosophy of Roderick Chisholm,* ed. by Lewis Edwin Hahn (Illinois: Open Court, 1997); and in "A Return to Form in the Philosophy of Mind," in *Form and Matter: Themes in Contemporary Metaphysics,* ed. by David S. Oderberg (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 40-64.

[5] See John Haldane, "Aquinas on Sense-Perception," *The Philosophical Review*, v 92, 2, Apr., 1983, p. 238.

distinction between universals (*in esse intentionale*) and common natures (*in esse naturale*) "collapses into a version of *universalia in rebus*" that cannot account for our knowing the real nature of an object.[6] Accordingly, Haldane's work in the philosophy of mind is largely devoted to making plausible sense of the position he thinks will save St Thomas, namely, the view universal natures somehow exist in things.

The phantasms play an important role in Thomas' account of how the immaterial mind can know material objects. Since the mind is affected by sense organs from which it eventually forms concepts, there must be a bridge between the stimulation of the sense organs and cognition of the object. Haldane thinks Thomas was ambiguous as to the exact composition of the phantasms, however, and so he rejects Thomas' distinction between modes of immaterial existence.[7] Haldane's problem is that if the phantasm is immaterial, it would be stripped of its individuating material conditions and thus, says Haldane, it would be universal.[8] As universal the phantasm would not be guaranteed to correspond to any individual, and so the abstracted intelligible species could not be guaranteed to have been gained by any causal-or-otherwise referential link to the world. Alternatively, if the phantasm is material, it would have individuating conditions and thus be a candidate for referential relation; but it would not be able to interact with the immaterial intellect in the way Thomas intended.

Thomas was aware of this problem. He is clear, though, that the senses receive forms immaterially, and yet the phantasms are always of particulars.[9] In his commentary on the *De Anima* Thomas distinguishes two "modes of being" (*gradus*) of the same form, or two ways in which the same form may exist.[10] These modes are "material" and "immaterial," which do not correspond exactly to Haldane's understanding of the distinction between *esse naturale* and *esse intentionale*. The material mode is matter organized by a substantial form: it is an individual object. The immaterial mode is form not inhering in any matter, and further involves two degrees or modes of immateriality: "perfect" (*penitus*) in the intellect, in which forms exist without

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[6] See *Ibid.,* p. 237.

[7] Haldane's suspicion is that at times Thomas can be read as if sensation involves a non-physical event (the 'spiritual' reception of a sensible form), where an immaterial phantasm corresponds to a physical alteration in the sense organ. In other places he can be read as if the reception of a sensible form is a physical event, and results in a *physical* phantasm. See Haldane, "Aquinas on Sense Perception," p. 234.

[8] See *Ibid.,* p. 237.

[9] *Aristotle's De Anima in the version of William of Moerbeke and the Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas*, tr. by K. Foster and S. Humphries (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), III.13, § 792; 794. Hereafter referred to as *InDA*.

[10] See *Ibid.,* II, 3, *lectio* 5, § 284.

their material individuating conditions and apart from a material organ, and "half-way" (*medium*) in sensation, in which forms exist without matter, but *not* without their individuating conditions nor apart from a bodily organ. On this view, the "half-way" mode is capable of both being informed by material sensation and being engaged by the immaterial intellect.

But Haldane rejects the distinction between modes of immaterial existence, since he argues that it cannot do any work for *sensation* securing reference to an object's nature. For Haldane, the only way a nature can exist *qua* universal is when it does not inhere in an individual, i.e., when it is abstracted from its individuating material conditions. Since matter is the principle of individuation, and since universals are not in any way individual, then anything immaterial must be universal. Thus Haldane concludes that if a phantasm is to secure reference to individual natures it must be material.

So much the worse for Thomas' doctrine of universals since that too may be incoherent. Haldane thinks Aquinas "postulates an active power of concept-formation involving the abstraction of common natures received through experience."[11] But this view "appears to make sense only on the basis of an assumption it denies," namely, naturally existing similarities among particulars.[12] If, as Thomas would have it, individuals are specifically alike and numerically distinct, then distinct particulars must somehow have the *same* nature. The problem is that if there are many and distinct natures, we have no ontological basis for grouping things. It follows that the association of particulars under a general nature must be the work of the deliberate mind by some inductive process, which is conceptualism, not realism.

Haldane thinks that Aquinas' realism works only if we discount the suggestion that generality is nowhere to be found outside of thought.[13] That

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[11] John Haldane, "Life of Signs," *Review of Metaphysics* 47, March 1994, p. 460.

[12] See Haldane, "Forms of Thought," p. 152.

[13] Haldane noted in 1993 that he was "less confident" about this, noting that for Aquinas, a nature is neither particular nor general in itself, but particular-in-nature and general-in-the-mind. Yet, his following work aimed to develop a *univeralia in rebus* view. See John Haldane, "Mind-World Identity Theory and the Anti-Realist Challenge," in *Reality , Representation and Projection,* ed. by John Haldane and Crispin Wright (Oxford, 1993), 22; 36n18. Thomas expresses the view as follows:

> It is clear, then, that universality can be predicated of a common nature only in so far as it exists in the mind: for a unity to be predicable of many things it must first be conceived apart from the principles by which it is divided into many things. Universals as such exist only in the soul; but the natures themselves, which are conceivable universally, exist in things. That is why the common names that denote these natures are predicated of individuals; but not the names that denote abstract ideas. Socrates is a 'man', not a 'species' – although 'man' is a 'species'. (*InDA*, II.5, lectio 12, § 381).

is, "we need to recognize that if the presumption of realism is to be vindicated then the conceptual structures exercised in full-blown perception must correspond to the natures of things."[14] According to Haldane, positing 'essences' in nature is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for a realism that avoids Hume-style inductive scepticism. We also need an account of our ability to be in some way *en rapport* with these essences through sense perception: "In order to secure reference we need to invoke some principle of classification *supplied by concepts* expressed by the use of general terms."[15] Since the significance of an image is not intrinsic, but depends on concepts, i.e., something prior to the image's being used to represent anything, it follows that perception itself "involves selective attention and presumes activity."[16] But, since "concepts must be naturally and not conventionally linked to what they signify,"[17] Haldane insists that we must have perception of naturally-existing generality. Because of the unbridgeable gap between the material phantasm and the immaterial intellect, Aquinas cannot account for how we perceive generality. Accordingly, Haldane concludes that "what is common to world and thought cannot be something the existence of which necessarily involves the organization of matter as does a Thomist essence."[18] Haldane thus remains a Thomist by name while dealing in a modified theory of cognition, one that posits generality in nature.

Haldane is faithful to Aquinas' metaphysics on the whole, admirably combining insights of analytical philosophy with as much of Aquinas as he can preserve in his modified view. But it seems to me that, on this issue at least, Aquinas need not be modified. In what follows I suggest that Haldane's modification grew out of an initial confusion between the nature of immateriality and the nature of generality. I begin with a defense of Thomas' view of the phantasms as immaterial.

Haldane's argument against the immateriality of the phantasms establishes that any universal must be immaterial. But he moves from this to the converse conclusion that all immaterial things are universal, which does not follow. Granting that all universals are immaterial, there may be immaterial things that are not universal, namely, the phantasms. Given that nothing material can

[14] John Haldane, "Insight, Inference and Intellection," in *Insight and Inference, e*d. by Michael Baur (New York: ACPA, 2000), p. 42.
[15] Haldane, "Forms of Thought," p. 152, my emphasis.
[16] Haldane, "Insight, Inference and Intellection," p. 43. And cf. "perceptions presuppose the exercise of concepts in determining their [perceptions'] content," (Haldane, "Life of Signs," p. 459.)
[17] Haldane, "Life of Signs," p. 469, and cf. Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 16a3-8, that the affections of soul and the actual things are the same for all.
[18] Haldane, "Forms of Thought," p. 161.

interact (in an efficient causal way) with something immaterial, there needs to be an intermediary action to get from one to the other, which Thomas calls abstraction. But neither can abstraction be from something material to something immaterial, thus the immaterial active intellect abstracts the intelligible species from the individuated *form* received in the senses, which is not of material but of "half-way" immaterial existence.

Thomas takes Aristotle to have offered a good model of "half-way" immaterial existence in Book II of *De Anima*, in which both the distinction between material and immaterial modes, and the distinction between modes of immateriality are demonstrated. Aristotle writes:

> It must be taken as a general rule that all sensation is the receiving of forms without matter, as wax receives a seal without the iron or gold of the signet-ring. It receives an imprint of the gold or bronze, but not *as* gold or bronze.

On which Thomas comments:

> [Whenever] the material disposition to receive form does not resemble the material disposition in the agent … the form is taken into the recipient 'without matter', the recipient being assimilated to the agent in respect of form and not in respect of matter … the form having, in the sense, a different mode of being from that which it has in the object sensed. In the latter it has a material mode of being [*esse naturale*], but in the sense, a cognitional and spiritual mode [*esse intentionale*].
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> … the wax takes a likeness of the gold seal in respect of the image, but not in respect of the seal's *intrinsic disposition* to be a gold seal … for the sense is assimilated to the sensible object in point of form, not in point of the disposition of matter.[19]

If the sensible form were assimilated to the sense organ in point of *matter* it would have to be as the ancient materialists thought, that an object comes to exist materially in the sense organ. In fact, only the *form* (*species*) of the object comes to exist *in the matter of the sense organ* in the way the impression of the signet ring comes to exist in the wax; "not *as* gold or bronze." Thomas writes:

> This, however, would seem to be common to all cases of passive reception; every passive thing receives from an agent in so far as the agent is active; and since the agent acts by its form, not its matter, every recipient as such receives form without matter, thus sense is no exception.[20]

[19] *InDA*, II.12, lectio 24, § 553, 554.
[20] Ibid., II.12. lectio 24, § 551.

The form in the senses exists individually in corporeal matter, in virtue of which it exists differently from the form existing in the object. And the form in the senses exists differently from the form subsequently existing in the intellect. Accordingly, Thomas points out that it is not the identical form which previously was in the phantasm that then moves to the passive intellect ("as a body transferred from one place to another"), but that the active intellect abstracts the intelligible species from the phantasm's individuating, referential conditions, after which it applies a universal concept.[21]

That the agent "acts by its form" picks out what Thomas means by formal as opposed to efficient causality:

> obviously the soul is not simply identical with the things it knows; for not the stone itself, but its formal likeness exists in the soul. And this enables us to see how intellect in act *is* what it understands; the form of the object is the form [*species*] of the mind in act.[22]

When Thomas says the formal likeness of the thing comes to exist in the soul, what comes to exist is the same form in a different mode of existence. In the object this form exists materially and is only potentially intelligible, but in the sense and intellect, as he says above, the form exists in a cognitional or actually intelligible form. And, according to the distinction between modes of immateriality, the form exists as the intelligible species in the intellect, and analogously, as the sensible species in the sense organs. Note that it is in point of form that the intellect knows that natures are general. Individual natures are distinct numerically (in virtue of their inhering in different quantities of matter) but the same formally (in virtue of their instantiating the same nature). Since generality is a property of intellect, their sameness exists only in intellect, not in nature; generality is the range of application of an immaterial species.

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[21] In Question 85 of the *Summa Theologiae* Thomas writes:

> [P]hantasms, since they are images of individuals, and exist in corporeal organs, have not the same mode of existence as the human intellect, and therefore have not the power of themselves to make an impression on the passive intellect. This is done by the power of the active intellect which by turning towards the phantasm produces in the passive intellect a certain likeness which represents, as to its specific conditions only, the thing reflected in the phantasm. It is thus that the intelligible species is said to be abstracted from the phantasm; not that the identical form which previously was in the phantasm is subsequently in the passive intellect, as a body transferred from one place to another. (*Summa Theologiae*, the version of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 1920, Hereafter referred to as *ST*.)

[22] *InDA* III.8, lectio 13, § 789.

Haldane understands this differently. Haldane understands the abstraction of natures as the coming into existence of *concepts* for reasons related to his conceptualist worries.[23] Further, Haldane is disapprovingly aware that the process of abstraction is often described as follows. The senses provide the raw material for the operation of the intellect, but sensory information is not itself sufficient for knowledge, so the agent or active intellect abstracts "the intelligible species from its material conditions,"[24] via the phantasms, and this is how sensory information is "made actually intelligible."[25] There is a tendency to construe the process of abstraction as a stripping away of the material conditions and getting at the "bare kernel" of intelligibility, the essence or nature of the object.[26] But suggesting that an object's nature is hidden away to be sussed out by the intellect's "focusing its attention on the object's nature" is a position that has come to be chastised as metaphysical confusion since Wittgenstein likened it to looking for "the real artichoke" by divesting it of its leaves.[27] This sort of worry suggests that the notion of an object's "essential nature" is incoherent,[28] and that the term "object" needs to

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[23] E.g., Haldane says that Aquinas "is well aware that the concepts (*intelligible species*) cannot be particular instances of the form that have been somehow translated into the mind. Rather, they are what make it possible for an instance of *F* to be thought of as such, i.e., they are abstracted *universals*" (Haldane, "Aquinas on the Active Intellect," *Philosophy* 67, 260, 1992, p. 208). Again, in "Life of Signs," Haldane distinguishes Ockham's theory of cognition from Aquinas' by saying that, unlike Aquinas, Ockham wanted "a theory of how a thought (*conceptus*) can have content, *without* appealing to conceptual universals (*species intelligibilis*)" (Haldane, "Life of Signs," p. 460). The equation of 'concept' with 'intelligible species' is pervasive in Haldane's work on Aquinas' theory of cognition.

[24] *ST* 1.79.3.

[25] *ST* 1.84.6.

[26] In his *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature* (New York: Cambridge, 2002), Robert Pasnau construes abstraction as the intellect's "focusing its attention on the object's nature, ignoring its irrelevant accidental features," p. 316, referring to *ST* 1.85.1 *ad* 1. For Pasnau, essential natures are the "necessary, unchanging core of external particulars … accessible through a process of stripping away the object's contingent, accidental features … [and] qualitatively the same from object to object even if it is not numerically the same", p. 301. The agent intellect "pays no attention to the individuating material conditions that distinguish one member of a species from another … [and] [s]ince 'the intellect cognizes only universals', phantasms are not actually intelligible," p. 312.

[27] SeeLudwig Wittegenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford, Blackwell: 2001), §164.

[28] See Hilary Putnam, "Comment on John Haldane's Paper," in *Hilary Putnam: Pragmatism and Realism*, ed. by James Conant and Urszula Zeglen (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 108.

be defined in a given language or science before using it to pick out and classify things in the world. This defining is an arbitrarily purposive process, and so the notion that the intellect recognizes *natural* essences in the world must be abandoned.[29]

This is precisely Haldane's worry, especially central in his debates with Hilary Putnam on metaphysical realism. Putnam (a defender of the view I mention at the outset) and Haldane both recognize the Wittgensteinian point that deriving meaning from perception requires an activity on part of the thinker, a sort of "conceptual attentiveness."[30] Putnam charges that the medievals believed abstraction to bypass such an attentiveness, allowing the extraction of a fully intelligible kernel, which is a problematic *universalia in rebus* view. And Haldane has long held that if Aquinas' view is to be coherent, it must be modified to accept its fate as just such a doctrine and deal with problems accordingly. Thus for Haldane the first order of business is to clarify that abstraction is not an occult capacity based on obscure mediaeval psychology. Against an occultist (representationalist) view, which sees thought as a sub-personal process going on inside the thinker, Haldane thinks that Aquinas' view of thought is "the exercise of a cognitive capacity of the person as he or she absorbs intelligible aspects of their material and social environment,"[31] and that Aquinas understands concept-formation as "an activity of the *thinker* and not of some sub-system."[32] The second order of business is to correct Aquinas' deficient account of how this activity guarantees objective concepts.

Depending on what is meant by "sub-system" and how negative its connotations, I think Thomas would allow that sense perception is such a system. However, on Haldane's view, the product of sense perception is a material phantasm that itself requires interpretation to be meaningful. Haldane knows that Thomas is not advancing a view at all like the empiricistic "causal theories of knowledge" that both he and Putnam criticize, such that the reference of a thought is guaranteed just in case it is caused in the proper way by the proper kind of thing. Thomas believes in the efficacy of the senses to

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[29] This position is defended, for example, by Hilary Putnam, in his *The Many Faces of Realism* (Illinois: Open Court, 1987), particularly chapters 1 and 2.

[30] Haldane holds that "concepts invest thoughts with their intentional contents, just as properties provide particulars with their characters," *Insight, Inference and Intellection*, p. 21 and, since adopting a more direct-realist theory of sense perception, Putnam thinks that there is no sharp 'property/concept' distinction (See Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, p. 108).

[31] John Haldane, "Whose Theory? Which Representations?", *Pacific Philosophical Quarterley* 74, 1993, p. 254.

[32] Haldane, "Aquinas on the Active Intellect," p. 208.

assure their proper objects,[33] but he is clear that universals exist only in the intellect,[34] so generality is not something gained through the senses in the same way that the intelligible species is so gained. Unlike species, outside the intellect there is no general nature that exists in more than one thing; outside the intellect there are only the natures of particular objects. Some of these natures, however, are formally identical, and this is a doctrine of common natures *in rebus* according to which it makes no sense to talk of "commonality" apart from the mind's understanding of it. In fact, it makes no sense to talk of an object *per se* apart from the mind's understanding of it; for Thomas a nature *per se* is neither particular nor general, but rather, as Haldane puts it, "particular-in-nature and general-in-the-mind."[35] I think that Haldane's insistence on the *universalia in rebus* view comes from his being unable completely to come to terms with this view of natures.

A nature *per se* is only potentially intelligible, and the cognitive act renders it actually intelligible. Without a cognitive act such as abstraction there would be, if anything, merely something like the unadorned feeling of some object, leaving us lacking any ability with which properly to classify it. Thomas recognizes that we need an account of how intellect can get to an object's

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[33] Cf. *ST.* 1.78.3 *ad* 3: "The senses, however, are passive capacities, naturally suited to be impressed upon by an external sensible quality. Therefore the external cause of this impressing is what the senses perceive per se...". I am indebted to Antoine Côté for drawing my attention to this passage. According to Thomas' position on how forms are brought into existence, forms don't preexist in humans in actuality (contra Plato), but rather in potency. Forms are reduced to actuality through a proximate external agent. These potencies "[pre]exist in us in certain natural inclinations," analogous to virtues or dispositions, and after being operated on by external agents are "brought to their proper completion" (*De Veritate*, 11.1). On this account, there must be (i) some power or principle 'on-the-ready' within us to be brought from potency to act, and, (ii) this principle must need some external activating cause, or it would not be in potency but fully in act. There are two ways of existing in potency: First, in 'active and completed' potency, such as an intrinsic principle of healing. Our bodies are always 'on-the-ready' to be healed, and need only an external '*accidental*' cause, like medicine, for the active healing principle to release. Secondly, there is 'passive potency', which isn't sufficient to bring itself into actuality by its own intrinsic principle. In this case, an external agent is the '*principal*' cause of the change from potency to act (*De Veritate* 11.1). For Thomas first principles must be in 'active and completed' potency, since if humans always needed an external principal cause, we couldn't account for our native ability to learn by ourselves, which Thomas calls 'discovery'. Unlike the principles of knowledge, the principle of sense cognition exists in *passive potency*, such that the external object is the principal cause of the change from potency to act.

[34] "Universals as such exist only in the soul; but the natures themselves, which are conceivable universally, exist in things," *InDA* II, 5, lectio 12, § 380.

[35] Haldane, "Mind-World Identiry Theory and the Anti-Realist Challenge," p. 36.

nature *prior to* the exercise of concepts without which there would be no *cause* for their formation and so neither for their exercise. Thomas writes that understanding involves two likenesses of the thing understood: the intelligible species and the concept. The intellect must form the concept in order by its use to understand a thing. The intelligible species, on the other hand, is the principle of the act of understanding corporeal things. Neither the intelligible species nor the concept is that which the intellect understands, but they are not ipso facto identical. It is easy to think, as Haldane does, that they are the same thing: both are immaterial, universal, and that by which a thing is known. Given their similarity, it would seem plausible not to have redundancies, and so think that the concept is the intelligible species.

Aquinas, however, distinguishes between the concept and the intelligible species since they play different roles in the process of abstraction. Abstraction may occur in two ways: by composition and division, and by way of simple and absolute apprehension:

> Thus for the intellect to abstract one from another things which are not really abstract from one another, does, in the first mode of abstraction, imply falsehood. But, in the second mode of abstraction, for the intellect to abstract things which are not really abstract from one another, does not involve falsehood, as clearly appears in the case of the senses.[36]

One mode of abstraction is a deliberate power, and another is a non-conscious power (what we might call "applicative" and "apprehensive" abstraction, respectively).[37] Apprehension is the *reception* of the intelligible species upon presentation of an object, and it occurs by degrees according to which the second act of intellect (applicative) can make increasingly more accurate judgments. For Thomas, the possible intellect is informed by the intelligible species after it is abstracted from the phantasms. So formed, intellect itself forms a concept with a view to judging about external things. Similarly, Jacques Maritain wrote of the *entitative* and *intentional* functions of the

[36] *ST* 1.85.1 *ad* 1.

[37] When the mind "becomes its object," Aristotle writes, "the intellect is said to be in act. This comes about as soon as [someone] is able to operate of himself. It [intellect] is, then, in way, still in potency, but not in the way it was before it learned or discovered. And then, too, it is able to think itself," on which Thomas comments that the mind is only in potency to its ideas [*intelligibilia*] at first, but "when the mind reaches the degree of actual apprehension of intelligibles that is found in the knowledge habitually possessed by a man of science, then it can already be called an intellect in act; and that degree is reached as soon as one is capable of producing, on one's own initiative, the intellectual activity called understanding. For the actual possession of any form is coincident with the ability to act accordingly," *InDA* III.4, lectio 8, § 700.

concept. Understood entitatively, the concept is "a modification or accident of the soul"; understood intentionally, the concept is "a formal sign of [a] thing and in which the object is grasped by the mind."[38]

Now we are in a position to see the distinction between immateriality and generality. A *species apprehended* (entitative) is immaterial, a *species applied* (intentional) is universal, and we call this latter the exercise of a concept. Concepts are not things we possess like kernels of intelligibility, but are acts of intellect that reside in us as dispositions to act according to the individual knower. The concept is *used* universally, whereas the intelligible species is *received* immaterially; it is the cause of understanding, as its trigger.[39] Accordingly, the intelligible species and the concept correspond to two levels or parts of cognition. Thomas writes:

> truth belongs to that in the intellect which the intellect says, not to the act whereby it says it; for it is not requisite to the truth of the intellect that the mere act of understanding be equated to the thing, but what the mind says and knows by understanding must be equated to the thing.[40]

Further, Thomas distinguishes between two ways of understanding the word "universal":

> It can refer to the nature itself, common to several things, in so far as this common nature is regarded in relation to those several things; or it can refer to the nature taken simply in itself.[41]

When the universal is "regarded in relation to several things" it is in active application, referring to a concept, and when the universal is considered 'in itself', it is entitative, referring to the intelligible species (which is an immaterial species understood as universal only when "regarded in relation to several things").

What emerges is a two-tiered account of cognition. There are two distinct abstractive activities, one for apprehension of a nature and another for making

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[38] Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 121.

[39] In Fr. Dewan's words the intelligible species "has control of the situation" (Lawrence Dewan, o.p., "St. Thomas and Pre-Conceptual Intellection," *Études maritainienne,* no. 11, 1995, p. 226). Fr. Dewan also writes that "the universality of our intellective cognition of material singulars stems from the universality of the SI" (p. 226). I suggest that "stems from" here means that reception of the intelligible species by first abstraction (apprehension) enables us, in second abstraction (application), to use the principle universally, and further, that this sort of act refers to a 'concept'.

[40] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* 1.59, tr. by Joseph Rickaby, S.J. (London: Burns and Oates, 1905).

[41] *InDA* II.5, lectio 12, § 378.

judgments about that nature.[42] What is apprehended is the intelligible species and what is exercised is the concept. Truth or epistemological justification applies only to the latter, the composition and division of propositions.[43] Apprehensive abstraction is not inductive justification but rather some non-inferential cognitive process, analogous to the way in which sensation is a non-inferential process.[44]

Not that there isn't textual evidence to suggest Haldane's view that the universal must somehow be in the thing and given in sense perception. Thomas does say that we arrive at the first general principles by induction, in the familiar sense of induction: "that is the way, i.e., by way of induction, that the sense introduces the universal into the mind, inasmuch as all the singulars are considered."[45] For Aquinas, cognition (i.e., sense perception and abstraction) in some way presents us with generality by being of the nature itself.[46] But against Haldane's proposal, we do not need an account of how we abstract knowledge of universals from singulars *by induction*; induction is a

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[42] *ST* 1.16.2.

[43] Nor is this something of which Haldane is unaware; see "Mind-World Identity Theory and the Anti-Realist Challenge," p. 22.

[44]

> There are two operations in the sensitive part. One, in regard of impression only, and thus the operation of the senses takes place by the senses being impressed by the sensible. The other is formation, inasmuch as the imagination forms for itself an image of an absent thing, or even of something never seen. Both of these operations are found in the intellect. For in the first place there is the passion of the passive intellect as informed by the intelligible species; and then the passive intellect thus informed forms a definition, or a division, or a composition, expressed by a word. Wherefore the concept conveyed by a word is its definition; and a proposition conveys the intellect's division or composition (*ST* 1.85.1 *ad* 3.)

Stephen Theron puts the point nicely: "To know the universal is not always to know it *as* universal… knowledge of the *universal* principle of non-contradiction will require induction from many particular judgments. And even if it did not and one instance sufficed, the mental operation of universalization (i.e., induction) would be required for the universal to 'come to rest in the soul', " in his "Meaning in a Realist Perspective," *Thomist*, v. 55, no. 1, 1991, p. 50.

[45] In Book II.20.14 of *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics*, tr. by F.R. Larcher, op (New York: Hamilton Printing Co., 1970), p. 239 — hereafter referred to as *InPostAn*.

[46] "it is clear that sensing is properly and *per se* of the singular, but yet there is somehow even a sensing of the universal … if it were in the very nature of things that sense could apprehend only that which pertains to particularity, and along with this could in no wise apprehend the nature in the particular, it would not be possible for universal knowledge to be caused in us from sense-apprehension," *InPostAn* II.20.14, p. 239.

matter of deliberate application, and it stands in need of inferential justification. Haldane wants generality to be perceived so it can create a concept. But the concept is created only in its *application*, not by how it is *caused*. Generality is not something received by the senses in a causal way. Generality is something *done* by the mind; a species is *applied* generally or universally. A concept arises in (or just is) our deliberate use of the intelligible form as applicable to various particulars with which we are presented. Aquinas writes that "the actual possession of any form is coincident with the ability to act accordingly," and this action (judgment) is conscious and conceptual.[47] In judgment we intellectively extend the species abstracted from one particular case over many others. Over time we learn to narrow its field of applicability, approaching fullness of understanding.

Putnam and Haldane are misapplying Wittgenstein's point about conceptual attentiveness. Wittgenstein was concerned not with how we *acquire* concepts but with how we *use* concepts.[48] Concept use is an epistemological, normative matter. Concept-acquisition is a metaphysical matter. Aquinas made the point before Wittgenstein. Aquinas knew that mere imagining is not judging,[49] and he knew that imagery doesn't give a thought its reference but rather the intellect gives meaning to the imagery by *using* it in a certain way.[50] As for the kernel of intelligibility, the "real artichoke," Thomas is clear that a particular nature existing *in rebus* is the object of the intellect and only insofar as it is abstracted from that object, i.e., rendered

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[47] See *InDA* III.4, lectio 8, § 700. As Fr. Dewan describes the relationship between the reception of the intelligible species and the discharge of a concept, "[once we have been] 'programmed' as it were, by the form of the thing [the intelligible species], we perform an operation which is entirely thing-oriented," in "St. Thomas, Ideas, and Immediate Knowledge," *Dialogue*, 18, 1979, p. 399.

[48] Fergus Kerr, o.p., makes a similar point with respect to why Wittgenstein did not include certain parts of Augustine's passage in the famous first section of the *Philosophical Investigations*. In this exposition of concept-formation, Wittgenstein leaves out any mention of divine illumination, and Kerr suggests that this was done to displace a theological account with a naturalistic one. This may well be true, but I suggest another reason for the omission is that Wittgenstein was concerned to expose a prevalent mistake in our understanding not of concept *formation*, but rather of what a concept *is*. See Kerr's, "Aquinas After Wittgenstein," in *Mind, Metaphysics and Value in the Thomistic and Analytical Traditions,* ed. by John Haldane (Indiana: Notre Dame, 2002), p. 15.

[49] See *InDA* III.13, § 793.

[50] Anthony Kenny and Stephen Theron have each noted this same point about Thomas in relation to Wittgenstein. See Kenny's "Intentionality: Aquinas and Wittgenstein," in his *Legacy of Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984); See Theron, "Meaning in a Realist Perspective," p. 36.

actually intelligible.[51] Accordingly, apprehension is not a judgment in need of inferential justification, but rather is the action of the intellect on its proper object, which is a metaphysical doctrine about the nature of persons and the nature of things. For Thomas, concept use and concept acquisition correspond to two distinct parts of abstraction. The charge of occultism, of vainly looking for the real artichoke, would hold if Thomas held that first abstraction, concept-formation, is a deliberate and conscious process of "reading off" intelligible species from nature itself: as Maritain says, "this would surely be chemistry at a bargain."[52] But the distinction between modes of abstraction deflects the criticism. Applicative abstraction, concept-use, is something very much like induction; but apprehension is not, and is entirely prior to the use of concepts.

There is a tension in Haldane's modified account of Thomistic cognition.[53] Haldane wants universals to exist naturally in things to avoid conceptualism, and he wants the product of abstraction to serve as our justificatory criterion for classification. As I have suggested, his suspicion of conceptualism comes from restricting his view of abstraction to its applicative mode, and the ensuing worry that the abstracted form must be inferentially justified comes from his equating the intelligible species with the concept. As regards the latter, we can see their distinction if we see that the intelligible species is apprehended in a single act of sense perception and intellection, and that being informed by the intelligible species disposes us to act in a manner that we call applying a concept. Ultimately, Haldane's taking concepts for intelligible species is a result of his taking generality for immateriality. As a result of his initial equation of generality with immateriality, he thinks that the apprehension of a species must be general, instead of restricting generality to being unique to our application of the immaterial species. To think that the general is the immaterial will lead us to confound the mode of act and the

[51] "…even though [the essence] is one outside the many according to the intellect's consideration, nevertheless in the sphere of existents it exists in all singulars one and the same: not numerically, however, as though the humanity of all men were numerically one, but according to the notion of the species," i.e., according to the intellect, *InPostAn* II.20.14, p. 238.

[52] Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 30.

[53] On the one hand, Haldane recognizes the significance of Aquinas' doctrine that mind and world are formally identical in the act of intellection, and that "concepts are formed under the influence of that which they (re)present," (Haldane, "Life of Signs," pp. 469-70). He also is aware that we need to distinguish the pre-conceptual grounds for cognition from intentionality and its proper objects. But on the other hand, Haldane thinks that "even the most partial apprehension involves subsuming what is given to the sense under some form of intelligibility," and so a principle of classification must be supplied by concepts (Haldane, "Insight, Inference and Intellection," p. 42).

mode of existence, the concept and the intelligible species, and the distinction between the apprehensive and applicative modes of abstraction.

Abstraction according to its mode of apprehension does not stand in need of normative justification. Without this in mind there is tendency to view the intelligible species as a kernel of intelligibility, ultimately, as a sort of sensible object. Against Haldane's project of accounting for generality in thought by positing generality in nature, for Thomas "generality in nature" is a term without sense; it is, as Maritain says, "an utterly imaginary notion."[54] Only the concept is general since it is applied universally, and the intelligible species is immaterial since it exists in the intellect. And, *pace* Haldane, immateriality does not imply universality. Something is universal only if it is applied by a mind as universal. Hence, universality exists only in the intellect, not in nature. In this case, looking for something in nature to explain the existence of it in mind wrongfully combines Aquinas' doctrines of empiricism and mind-world identity in such a way that persuades us to account for thought by a Wittgensteinian "isomorphism."[55] As Maritain notes, however, Thomas' account of cognition views a deeper unity between mind and thing than that between model and transfer.[56] When Wittgenstein was seemingly of this view, his view of induction as "psychologically justified" was the sort of thing Thomas meant by the applicative mode of abstraction. It was later that Wittgenstein recognized the error in restricting ourselves to this view of induction to account for true intellectual insight. When giving justifications for one's concepts, one's actions, there comes a point at which we simply say "this is how I see it," and that is where our spade is turned.

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[54] Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 99.
[55] Cf. Haldane, "A Return to Form in the Philosophy of Mind,"; and see his "Realism with a Metaphysical Skull,'' in *Hilary Putnam: Pragmatism and Realism,* ed. by James Conant and Urszula Zeglen (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 97-104.
[56] See Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 86.

Socialism, the Self and the State

Will Brown

The subject of this essay is: socialism, the self, and the state. Our beliefs about the self provide grounding for political philosophy. Therefore, if socialism is a kind of political philosophy, we cannot evaluate socialism without a theory of the self. But there are at least two such theories: namely, the theory of a "social self" and the theory of social "atomism" or individualism. One must decide which of these is to be the starting point, and then one can philosophize about socialism. In the first part of my discussion, then, I decide in favour of the "social self" theory. The social self is seen to have a moral aspect, and this is crucial; for, based on what the social self is, I proceed to argue that there is a problem with socialism. My presentation will treat socialism under the aspect of government, or, the role of a socialist state. I want to say that social atomism and socialist government reinforce the worst aspects of each other. Bosanquet is a key source of ideas in this regard.

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"Social atomism" has been called the doctrine that *each person is a distinct entity who does not overlap with others*.[1] "Systematic self-centredness" might be another good name for this theory. It is an Epicurean view of life, based on self-interest. We seem to find this view in Hobbes, who says that each individual human being is driven by his passions. The appetites and aversions of the individual determine for him what is good and what is evil.[2] The fact that every individual seeks his own conservation leads to mistrust of others. "Hell is other people," as it says in a play by Sartre, called *No Exit*.[3] The idea is that I seek happiness, as if there were no connection between my own well-being and that of others. The individual is like a monad in the

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[1] Prof. Leslie Armour. Notes for Philosophy 5160, Dominican College, Ottawa, the week of November 16, 2005, p. 137.

[2] See Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 5. (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne 1959), pp. 31-32.

[3] "Eh bien … je comprends que je suis en enfer … l'enfer, c'est les Autres" (Jean-Paul Sartre, *Huis clos suivi de Les Mouches* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), p. 75.

philosophy of Leibniz,[4] with each monad being "windowless" – that is, the state of one monad in no way influences the state of another. If happiness in life were like this, then egoism would be true.

But, against this kind of atomism we have a statement in Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*: he says, "I…have the existence of my personality in the *being of other persons*, in my relation to them and in my recognition by them, which is thus mutual."[5] One reason for this is the fact of conscious awareness and memory in human beings. I do overlap with others, because other people are aware that I exist and they remember me. This allows me to project a version of myself, which becomes an object in other minds. Indeed, the mere fact that I have a name is sufficient to prove that I have a social self. My name, just by itself, signifies and calls to mind many good and bad ideas for other people. In this way, therefore, part of me is outside myself, because my personality is a public object.

Another argument against egoism or atomic individualism would be Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. A central idea in the theory is the concept of sympathy. Smith says it is obvious that we often derive sorrow from the sorrow of others.[6] The sentiment of sympathy is a *first principle* for Smith's theory, because sympathy is found in everyone to some degree – that is, sympathy is a universal sentiment of human nature. If this is true, then self-interest is not the only factor in human life, because sympathy has a social character. When we sympathize with someone, we use our imagination to place ourselves in the other person's situation. This sentiment involves going outside of oneself, and so, the being of one person overlaps with the being of another.

It is natural, then, for human beings to live in mutual relationship, instead of being isolated from each other. As Leslie Armour says, the reality of an individual consists partly in his relations with others.[7] Given our account of human nature, it makes sense that people would form a collective reality, which we call society. And because *rationality* is the key to human nature, society will be *organised* in some way or other. The organisation of society is not meant to hinder the well-being of individuals; rather, society is a kind of instrument used in order to serve the pursuits and activities of the individuals.

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[4] See Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 4, (New York: Image Books, 1994), pp. 308-309.

[5] Georg W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Mind*, tr. by Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971 [Reprinted 2003]), § 490, p. 244.

[6] See Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 5, p. 356.

[7] See Prof. Armour, Notes for Philosophy 5160, p. 137.

Each member of society, according to Bosanquet,[8] has a conception of himself and of his well-being *through participation in an organised whole*, which is the actual society. In real life, my happiness *is* connected to my participation in society. I do have a social self and, hence, my future is bound up with people and institutions in the external world.

So far, we have argued against atomic individualism. Every man for himself – *i.e.* each individual's particular will set in selfish enmity against all other individual wills – is not the right grounding for political philosophy. Nevertheless, the individual will must remain primary, in some way. Otherwise, the *summum bonum* would be for the individual will to surrender to the will of the community; morality would be reduced to submission, thereby. So our political philosophy requires a moral theory that integrates these two notions: (i) the community is not to "win a victory" over the "self" or person. We do not want to undermine the value of the individual. A man's will should originate from within himself: he should be his own person. At the same time, (ii) being one's own person should not entail regarding all others with mistrust, as in Hobbes. The relation between self and other is to be a positive factor toward the well-being of an individual. The social self, then, takes part in the reality of others without ceasing to be a self in the true sense. If this is the kind of theory we are looking for, it would be useful to examine Bosanquet's ideas of moral socialism and real will.

Bosanquet speaks of moral socialism "in the sense of actual or theoretical recognition that man's moral being lies in his social being."[9] Whether a man is good or bad depends on his way of interacting or dealing with others in society. For example: Is he truthful? Does he keep his promises? Will he take action and speak against evil, or just look out for his own conservation? The essential thing is for the common good to be included in the moral purpose of the individual. Morality consists in the social constitution of the individual will; "the presence of some element of the social purpose as a moving idea before the individual mind."[10] If I am a person of good moral quality, I have regard for more than my peculiar advantage – I consider the well-being of others when I give direction to my will and actions.

So far, so good. Bosanquet, however, adds a necessary qualification. When we think about a child, we realise that to have moral regard for others is not in the child spontaneously. A child is a true egoist: his appetites and

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[8] See Bernard Bosanquet, "The Principle of Private Property," from *Aspects of the Social Problem*, in *The Philosophical Theory of the State and Related Essays*, ed. by Gaus and Sweet (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2001), p. 348.
[9] Bosanquet, "The Antithesis between Individualism and Socialism Philosophically Considered," in *The Philosophical Theory of the State and Related Essays*, p. 326.
[10] *Ibid.,* p. 328.

aversions determine for him what to seek and what to hate. *Ceteris paribus*, he will grab at whatever he wants. It is only by receiving discipline that a child is trained to show concern for others. He will refrain from acting selfishly because of the bad experience (punishment) he had, last time he behaved that way. The disciplinarian has placed some "trace" of the social purpose into the child's mind; or, at least, the behaviour of the child will appear to originate from good will toward others. But this case does not exemplify the "social constitution" of the individual will, because the child only acts *as if* he has a moral purpose that includes the common good.

The reality is that the child is even still following his appetites and aversions. To promote the common good is not his reason for behaving unselfishly. Rather, it has to do with the force of "compulsory motives or sanctions"[11] – the disciplinarian. The sanctions derive from a source external to the child, and the final result is *phenomenal* civility,[12] because the child operates all the while on egoistic motives. This, for Bosanquet, is not *real* socialization of the will. An individual's ethical nature is not confined to – cannot be reduced to – what his actions look like. For morality "consists in the social purpose working *by its own force* on the individual will."[13] The qualification, adding *by its own force*, makes all the difference. The idea is that a disciplinarian may have the social purpose in view, and through sanctions he may get the child to carry out this purpose, but the purpose would be working on the child's will only indirectly, not by its own force.

When the social purpose is working *from within* each individual will, there exists what Bosanquet calls the social organism: a "true co-operative structure," a system of interlocking wills or minds.[14] Consciousness and freedom are necessary features of the socially-constituted mind. It must be possible for the individual "consciously to entertain the social purpose as a constituent of his will,"[15] which is not the case with a child.[16] The social organism cannot exist except as "a structure of free individual wills, each entertaining the social purpose in an individual form."[17] A man should include the common good in his moral purpose, not through being coerced or feeling that he has no other choice; rather, he should do so because his other choice *is* a real possibility, but one that does not meet his will.

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[11] *Ibid.,* p. 329.
[12] That is, "civility" in the sense of courtesy.
[13] Bosanquet, "Antithesis," p. 329, my italics.
[14] See Bosanquet, *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. 80.
[15] Bosanquet, "Antithesis," p. 335.
[16] The social purpose was in the consciousness of the disciplinarian as a constituent of *his* will, but the child was not conscious of the social purpose in this way.
[17] Bosanquet, "Antithesis," p. 334.

This brings in the distinction between (a) what we want or "wish for" at different moments and (b) our real will. A man's wish at one moment is subject to reservations, because of other goals in his life. Therefore, he readjusts what he presently wants, based on what he wants at all other moments; "and this cannot be done without also correcting and amending it so as to harmonize it with what others want,"[18] because the nature of human reality is that one man's life participates in the lives of others. Thus, with each person manifesting a will that meshes with others (and this accords with our proper rationality), there does emerge the natural organic unity of society – the system of cohering wills, which reveals the real will. Hence, "the moral purpose has power to take care of itself throughout the general life of society."[19]

Bosanquet's idea is about letting nature (human nature) take its course. If the individual is allowed to make his will a reality in the conduct of his life, he will be able "to entertain the social purpose as a constituent of his will." It is as Aristotle had said: "man is a social creature and naturally constituted to live in company."[20] We have come a long way from the kind of "atomism" we considered earlier.

But how far should we go? It is possible for the social reality to dominate the individual, so that the individual loses the ability to pursue his own interests. This happened in a story called *Nineteen Eighty-four*, by Orwell. The main character's name was 6079 Smith;[21] he had been reduced from a person to a *number*, really. This leads into a discussion about socialism. If "atomic individualism" leaves the social nature of the individual out of account, socialism goes wrong for another reason: that is to say, socialism does not understand the *moral* reality of the individual. Socialist theory is not adequate to the needs of the individual as a free person. We can see this in the development of a socialist theory of the "state."

To begin a discussion of socialist theory, we turn – of course – to Marx. Marxist theory might be characterized as – to borrow a phrase from Prof. Armour – "Replacing the power of individuals with that of the state."[22] In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels outline a socialist agenda that includes the following: application of all rents of land to *public* purposes; a

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[18] Bosanquet, *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. 134.
[19] Bosanquet, "Antithesis," p. 330.
[20] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, tr. by J.A.K. Thomson (London: Penguin, 1976), 1169b18, p. 304.
[21] See George Orwell (Eric Blair), *Nineteen Eighty-four* (Toronto: Saunders, 1949), p. 37. As the story goes, 6079 Smith lived in a state called Oceania. The political system there was called English Socialism, or Oligarchical Collectivism.
[22] Prof. Armour, Notes for Philosophy 5160, p. 137.

heavy progressive or graduated income tax; centralization of credit *in the hands of the state* by means of a national bank with *state* capital and an exclusive monopoly; centralization of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the state; and extension of factories and instruments of production *owned* by the state.[23]

One argument against this agenda is that "state ownership and control of the means of production and distribution" implies or contains the idea of paternal government. Paternal government is a government that functions or operates like a father whose responsibility is to provide for his family. If the role of a socialist state is to give people jobs and places to live and food to eat, then a socialist state functions like a household, with the government occupying the position of the father. Before Marx, Plato had suggested the idea that a state is the same kind of thing as a household. We can see this in Plato's *Statesman* or "Politicus" – the alternate, Latinised title. In this dialogue, a geometry student, whose name happens to be Socrates, listens to the anonymous, visiting philosopher from Southern Italy, and responds to his questions. The visitor asks:

> […]
> *VISITOR*: Then shall we posit the statesman and king and slave-master, and the manager of a household as well, as one thing, when we refer to them by all these names, or are we to say that they are as many sorts of expertise as the names we use to refer to them?
>
> […]
> *VISITOR*: Next, a household manager and a slave-master are the same thing.
>
> *YOUNG SOCRATES*: Of course.
>
> *VISITOR*: Well then, surely there won't be any difference, so far as ruling is concerned, between the character of a large household, on the one hand, and the bulk of a small city on the other?
>
> *YOUNG SOCRATES*: None.
>
> *VISITOR*: So, in answer to the question we were asking ourselves just now, it's clear that there is one sort of expert knowledge concerned with all these things; whether someone gives this the name of expertise in kingship, or statesmanship, or household management…[24]

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[23] See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, tr. by Samuel Moore, *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 50, 1952, p. 429.

[24] Plato, *Statesman*, tr. by C.J. Rowe, from *Complete Works*, ed. by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 258e-259c, pp. 297-298.

So the idea is that looking after a state is the same as looking after a household. This is a fundamental mistake in principles, and Aristotle noted this in *Politics*, book 1.[25] There is an essential difference between governing a state and managing a household. This is because the family is absolutely distinct from the state. Why? For one thing, a certain feeling of trust exists in the family, which does not exist in the state. This "trust" is due to a moral attachment found particularly among family members, who share their personal and private interests.

As an illustration, you do not put down the name of a family member as a reference on your resume. Recommendation by a family member would be considered a conflict of interests, because family is "the embodiment of natural feeling in the form of love," to use Bosanquet's words.[26] On the other hand, recommendation from a member of the same state would not be considered a conflict of interests, because there is not that same moral unity among fellow citizens, however patriotic they may be. As Bosanquet says:

> In the nation, indeed, a tinge of natural affection … survives… But the distinctive character of the State is clear intelligence, explicit law and system, and so the natural basis of feeling, though necessary to be preserved and spiritualised, achieves these needs in the family as a special organ, and not in the State as such. All those theories, therefore, which tend to assimilate the State to a family by a sort of levelling down of the former or levelling up of the latter (Plato's *Republic* … paternal government, and the like) involve for Hegel a mere confusion of relations.[27]

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At this point, I can sum up the argument I have been making about the role of a socialist state:

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> Those who think that a statesman, a king, a ruler of a household, and a master of slaves are all the same do not speak well, for they hold that these [rulers] differ not in kind but with respect to the number of their subjects. Thus they regard a master as a ruler of few, a householder as a ruler of a somewhat greater number, and a statesman or a king as a ruler of a still greater number, as if there were no difference [in kind] between a large household and a small state… Now these views are not true (Aristotle, *Politics*, tr. by Apostle and Gerson, from *Selected Works*, third edition [Grinell: The Peripatetic Press, 1991], 1252a10).

[26] See Bosanquet, *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. 244.

[27] *Ibid.,* p. 244. Bosanquet here is commenting on Hegel's book, *The Philosophy of Right*.

1. State ownership and control of the means of production and distribution implies paternal government.
2. Paternal government involves a confusion of relations.
3. State ownership and control of the means of production and distribution involves a confusion of relations.

Contrary arguments, however, can be raised; we shall consider one possible objection and then reply to it. Here is the objection: “All right, there are significant disanalogies between the family and government. Socialist government is paternalistic, in some ‘bad’ sense. But the ‘benefits’ of socialism outweigh the bad effects, from a consequentialist utilitarian point of view. So we should opt for state ownership and control of the means of production and distribution, as more conducive to general human welfare.”

In order to reply, we must consider that happiness for man is not just a function of economic goods. Bosanquet would say that happiness requires moral socialism, whereas socialist government carries with it social atomism. Earlier,[28] we said that morality consists in the social purpose working *by its own force* on the individual will. However, socialist government is an arrangement for getting the social purpose carried out “not by its own force, but by the force of those compulsory motives or sanctions which are at the command of the public power.”[29] Again, we said that a structure of free individual wills (each entertaining the social purpose in an individual form) is necessary for the social organism to exist. But socialist government is “a *substitute for* the life of that organism, intended to operate on the egoistic motives of individuals.”[30] Therefore, state collectivism naturally rests on atomic individualism among the constituent “units.” Socialist and welfarist schemes reinforce the passivity, which hinders the development of moral agency and the citizen mind.

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[28] See *supra,* p.5.
[29] Bosanquet. “The Antithesis,” p. 329.
[30] *Ibid.,* p. 330, Bosanquet’s italics.

Book Reviews

Autonomy and Sympathy: A Post-Kantian Moral Image. **By Filimon Peonidis**. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 2005, 98 pp., Paper ISBN 0-7618-3080-4, $19.00

Irene Switankowsky, University of Wales, Lampeter

Filimon Peonidis's *Autonomy and Sympathy* is an important book about the need for a resurgence of Kant's practical philosophy in our modern society. There has never been a time in history when there was such a need for human beings to become more thinking, rational, and feeling agents who are responsible and autonomous. Today, there is ample evidence that there is a resurgence of Kantian inspired philosophy, a resurgence due mostly to the acknowledgment of Kant's historically significant contribution to the shaping and evolution of concepts and conceptions that deeply concern all human beings. Rawls has been the driving force behind this revival of interest in Kant's practical philosophy. Despite the importance of Kant's philosophy, many philosophers have emphasized that some key aspects of his philosophy are counterintuitive and therefore cannot form a normative account that is relevant to modern thinkers. Thus, Kant's practical philosophy must be rethought so that it is applicable to some of the modern challenges that human beings face.

Peonidis rethinks Kant's principles of practical reason by combining autonomy and sympathy into a coherent moral theory. He starts by outlining four major objections to a strictly Kantian position. First, at a normative level, it is difficult for modern day philosophers to accept "perfect duties" since currently, individuals must deal with an infinite variety of complex moral situations in which various conflicting values are at stake. All values cannot cooperate in the same way since different situations may lead to different value orderings. Second, the categorical imperative is too abstract for it to be relevant to today's society and individuals. The kingdom of ends has to be recast in favour of a less abstract approach. Third, Kant identifies autonomy with voluntarily subjecting oneself to the moral law that is innate in all rational beings. Autonomy becomes understood as choosing maxims that can become moral laws and it becomes the "sole principle of morals." However, today an autonomous individual is conceived as an individual who is in charge of his or her life and tries to resist any external intervention or internal constraint that may hinder him or her from exercising rational discernment. Fourth, Kant takes for granted that the moral law is something that is revealed to each rational individual and makes its imperatives known through a process

of self-reflection. However, we need stronger evidence to accept or reject a moral fact of reason. There are many acceptable motives that do not include the categorical imperative. Reason can only provide individuals with the means for fulfilling certain ends.

Through a process of self-reflection and self-observation, the post-Kantian moral subject discovers that (s)he is capable of acting autonomously. To act autonomously is to successfully carry out plans of action which an individual has freely chosen and approved. Approval concerns the control which individuals exercise over their beliefs and desires that are involved in the formation and execution of significant short-term or long-term plans of action. The autonomous individual is interested in the epistemic process that underlies certain basic beliefs which can be determined by scrutinizing the origins of such beliefs in order to revise those beliefs which are derived from distorting mechanisms, such as self-deception and biases. In other words, autonomous individuals endorse the reasons which justify their beliefs, taking great efforts to determine the causes of those beliefs and obtaining an overall assessment of their fulfillment.

The post-Kantian moral subject must genuinely value another individual's autonomy. The moral value of autonomy is an emotional substratum that should motivate individuals accordingly and enable them to approach others, to discover what evil has befallen them, and to do something to rectify the situation. In other words, individuals can show respect for another individual's autonomy only when they are capable of sympathetic concern for the other. Peonidis rethinks Kant's dismissive view of sympathy by arguing that sympathy is crucial to autonomy and especially an individual's obligations to others. The moral value of sympathy is not exhausted in its contribution to the endorsement of moral principles. The manifestation of sympathy is intrinsically valued when it is exemplified in forms of altruistic behavior which is a necessary precondition for acknowledging a principled moral framework.

For Peonidis, six autonomic obligations are necessary in order for one to act as a moral individual. First, an individual must respect human life and bodily integrity since they constitute the *conditio sine qua non* of autonomous thinking and acting. Second, individuals must be truthful since, by deliberately misleading other individuals, they establish a defective relation to their environment and often are led to make decisions which they would not have made if they had had true information. Third, forcing individuals to act in a certain way undermines their autonomy. Fourth, an individual must exercise tolerance by not harming individuals merely because they do not agree with their views or preferences. Fifth, an individual must not deprive others of the means necessary for the pursuit of their autonomously chosen plans. Lastly, an individual must not vilify another individual on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or social status, since discriminating in these ways destroys any self-respect, self-confidence and resolve which an individual requires for choosing and pursuing significant plans. These autonomic obligations must have normative priority for the individual.

In conclusion, Peonidis's book was a joy to read in that his views coherently bring together both autonomy and sympathy into a complete post-Kantian account of human behavior that is applicable for individuals today. Peonidis's book will be of special interest to modern ethicists and philosophers who believe that Kant's philosophy can be used to reconcile some of our current social and political difficulties. Peonidis's work is

also important because it provides a resurgence of "sympathy" as an important ethical concept since he argues that if individuals are sympathetic with the suffering of others, they will ensure that their autonomy is respected. This is not merely an idealized form of moral theorizing but an account of human behavior which is applicable to ordinary people in all circumstances. This is the type of ethical theory which is most relevant for this century.

God and Other Spirits: Intimations of Transcendence in Christian Experience, **By Phillip Wiebe.** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, vi + 259.

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Wiebe's goal in this book is to address the question of "whether evidence exists for some of the invisible beings or powers that Christianity has traditionally endorsed." His focus is not primarily on the existence of God, but rather on finite transcendent agents such as angels and demons. His intention is not to provide a fully developed defense of Christianity, but rather to argue that religious experiences of a certain type cannot be easily accommodated into a naturalist metaphysic, inasmuch as they strongly suggest the existence of finite transcendent entities. Establishing this, would, in Wiebe's view, be an important element in defending the rationality of Christian belief, since he believes that "the primary theological question facing Western society at present ... is whether a transcendent order of any kind exists." (121)

A great strength of this book is Wiebe's careful and sophisticated treatment of the phenomena that he takes to provide empirical evidence for the existence of finite transcendent entities. He avoids superficial dismissal or deconstruction of such phenomena in the interests of accommodating naturalism, but equally insists that any move to interpret the phenomena as providing evidence for transcendent entities is subject to critical appraisal. The method of appraisal that he advocates is that of abduction or inference to the best explanation. His judgment is that there is a good deal of evidence supporting belief in transcendent entities such as angels or demons that cannot be adequately explained on the various naturalistic hypotheses available.

I think Wiebe is right in suggesting that there is a good deal of evidence for the existence of finite transcendent entities and that this evidence provides a challenge that has not been adequately dealt with by advocates of naturalism. I am less persuaded by the amount of emphasis that he places upon this line of evidence, as compared to other challenges faced by naturalism. His discussion of natural theology seems unduly pessimistic and the suspicion he entertains regarding the fundamental principles underlying the arguments of natural theology may well prove applicable to the abductive method on which he relies. One hopes that Wiebe will take up in his future writing the question of how his defense of finite transcendent entities fits into a broad apologetic for the Christian world-view to which he is committed.

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