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# Table of Contents

## Scripta Philosophica

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MATTHEW D’ANTUONO</td>
<td>Is There Beauty in Physics?</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URBANO FERRER</td>
<td>Polaridad dialéctica libertad-necesidad en la actividad económica</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a partir de la obra de Millán-Puelles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Dialectical Polarity between Freedom and Necessity in Economic Activity in the Light of the Work of Antonio Millán-Puelles]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARKADIUSZ GUDANIEC</td>
<td>The Existential Metaphysics of the Person. Part 1: The Classical Concept of the Person and the Metaphysical Theory of Esse</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JASON NEHEZ</td>
<td>The Moral Philosophy of Lucretius and Aquinas: Competing Ends and Means</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAVID ROSS</td>
<td>Measuring, Judging and the Good Life: Aquinas and Kant</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Miscellanea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PETER A. REDPATH</td>
<td>How to Reverse the Widespread Global Disorder That Nonsensical Principles of Utopian Socialism/Marxism Are Currently Causing</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KATHARINA WESTERHORSTMANN</td>
<td>What It Means to Be Human: Anthropological and Ethical Reflections on Navigating the Vulnerability and Fragility of Human Existence During Times of Illness</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Editio Secunda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ÉTIENNE GILSON</td>
<td>San Bernardo y el amor cortés</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Saint Bernard and Courtly Love]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Book Reviews

SAMUEL BENDECK SOTILLOS

Siena, City of the Virgin: Illustrated
by Titus Burckhardt .............................................................. 449

BRIAN M. MCCALL

Developing Distinctions of Classical Principles for Modern Constitutions:
Integralism: A Manual of Political Philosophy
by Fr. Thomas Crean and Alan Fimister ........................................... 455

BRIAN WELTER

The Heart of Culture
by Habiger Institute for Catholic Leadership ........................................... 475
Scripta Philosophica
Is There Beauty in Physics?

For the scientific layman, it is often a surprise to pick up a book or read an article written by a physicist and find a lot of talk about the beauty of physics. The general attitude regarding science is that it is cold and logical, based only on fact and experiment, expressed strictly in mathematical terms. So, appeals to aesthetics come as a bit of a shock. The average reader, as well as the philosopher and the physicist himself, would be more than justified in asking what exactly does the physicist mean when he talks about the beauty of physics. The philosopher, of course, upon learning what the physicist means when he calls physics beautiful must then press the question: Is it true that physics is beautiful? Or, more precisely: Are the theories and equations identified as beautiful actually beautiful? The physicist and the layman should also be interested in this question, but, lacking training in the appropriate field, they most likely don’t know how to frame the question or even ask it at all. More often than not, the layman is likely to pass off the question as strangely sentimental or irrelevant or else regard the beauty of physics as some secret and mysterious, perhaps even mystical, knowledge that justifies new age spirituality.

This paper takes the position of the philosopher who wants to know, first of all, what exactly is it that the physicist means when he calls physics or particular theories and equations beautiful. The physi-
cist, after all, may be saying nothing more than that he has a taste for that particular subject or that the equations happen to please him in some esoteric way. If that were the case, the study would be one more for the psychologist than the philosopher. If, however, the physicist intends to be making a true statement about the reality of beauty, then it is a matter of metaphysics, and the philosopher is back in business.

Once the meaning of the statement has been established, the task at hand is to determine whether or not the intended meaning is true or false: Is physics actually beautiful? Are there theories and equations which, in reality, measure up to some universal standard of beauty? More fundamentally, what is the nature of beauty, the standard to which the physics is being held up? Is beauty real in the first place? In short: Is there beauty in physics? This is the question this paper seeks to answer.

Here is an outline of the procedure. First and foremost, after looking at the testimony of scientists, the domain of study must be marked off. On which playing field are these questions appropriately addressed? When discussing the nature and beauty of physics, are we doing physics, science, psychology, or philosophy? To answer this question, it must be answered, what is the nature of physics? Secondly, what is the nature of beauty? Lastly, does the meaning of the physicists’ acclamations actually line up with the true nature of beauty? The reader ought to know that this paper concludes in the affirmative.

**The Testimony**

When we turn to the world of physics literature to look for quotes and examples of claims regarding beauty in physics, we stumble upon an embarrassment of riches. Put simply, there are many, many available quotes from physicists, mathematicians, philosophers and historians of science claiming beauty in physics. In fact, many even hold that beauty
is not just found in physics, but is in fact a standard for truth, as shocking as that may sound. It is not necessary to present all of the available quotations about beauty from physicists, but it is necessary to examine some of them. These quotes will also be helpful because, interestingly, the physicists who identify what is beautiful in physics manage to identify some of the key aspects of beauty from a traditional philosophical approach.

To begin with, Richard Feynman, an influential physicist of the 20th century, writes in *The Character of Physical Law*, “You can recognize truth by its beauty and simplicity.” This statement is important because it is immediately evident that Feynman is holding up beauty as a standard for truth in physics, and he also, perhaps unwittingly, identifies a characteristic of beauty: simplicity.

Werner Heisenberg, another eminent 20th century physicist, writes that beauty “in exact science, no less than in the arts . . . is the most important source of illumination and clarity.” Like Feynman, Heisenberg appeals to beauty as a standard of truth, and he identifies another characteristic of beauty: clarity. Heisenberg explains one of the reasons quantum theory was found convincing: its beauty.

Erwin Schrödinger makes a similar statement regarding Einstein’s theory of General Relativity, this time in relation to its discovery: “Einstein’s marvellous theory of gravitation . . . could only be discovered by a genius with a strong feeling for the simplicity and beauty of ideas.” Schrödinger calls Einstein’s theory of general relativity *mar-

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4 Quoted in *ibid.*
vellous, and he appeals to the simplicity and beauty of ideas. This same characteristic of simplicity was identified by Feynman.

Paul Dirac, another important modern physicist, made the claim that, “It is more important to have beauty in one’s equations than to have them fit experiment.”5 This is a bold statement, but one that unequivocally claims, not only that beauty is in physics, but that beauty is of eminent importance.

Roger Penrose, theoretical physicist and mathematician, writes, “Aesthetic criteria are enormously valuable in forming our judgments . . . A beautiful idea has a much greater chance of being a correct idea than an ugly one.”6 When writing about the judgments we form, he is speaking as a theoretical physicist. He is stating without equivocation that beauty plays a role in how physicists develop their theories.

Brian Greene, a contemporary theoretical physicist, writes in his book *The Elegant Universe*,

It is certainly the case that some decisions made by theoretical physicists are founded upon an aesthetic sense—a sense of which theories have an elegance and beauty of structure on par with the world we experience . . . especially as we enter an era in which our theories describe realms of the universe that are increasingly difficult to probe experimentally, physicists do rely on such an aesthetic to help them steer clear of blind alleys and dead-end roads that they might otherwise pursue. So far, this approach has provided a powerful and insightful guide.7

For the sake of being just to Brian Greene, he clarifies that he does not believe beauty to be an infallible guide to truth, but he does acknowledge that there is beauty in physics and that it has played an instrumental role so far.

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5 Quoted in *ibid*.
The role of beauty described by these physicists has historical support. In 1958 Richard Feynman and Murray Gell-Mann proposed a new theory of the subatomic weak interaction. Even though it contradicted nine experiments, Feynman and Gell-Mann argued for it on the basis of its beauty. Gell-Mann writes, “When you have something simple that agrees with all the rest of physics and really seems to explain what’s going on, a few experimental data against it are no objection whatever. Almost certain to be wrong.” And they were. Gell-Mann identifies the three aspects of beauty in his statement: simplicity, harmony (agreement with the rest of physics), and clarity (seems to explain what’s going on).

The quotes cited so far primarily deal with theoretical physics, but there is even beauty in experiment. Historian of science George Johnson, in his book entitled *The Ten Most Beautiful Experiments*, writes regarding his selection of the ten particular experiments discussed in the book,

> These experiments were designed and conducted with such a straightforward elegance that they deserve to be called beautiful. This is beauty in the classical sense—the logical simplicity of the apparatus, like the logical simplicity of the analysis, seems as pure and inevitable as the lines of a Greek statue. Confusion and ambiguity are momentarily swept aside and something new about nature leaps into view.

Johnson appeals to the classical sense of beauty, the sense that will be employed in this paper, and he points out the characteristics of simplicity and the clarity of revelation.

Quotes upon quotes could be added to this collection, but the witnesses that have gone before should suffice to demonstrate that physicists certainly claim beauty’s presence in physics and then more: they

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8 Quoted in Augros and Stanciu, *The New Story of Science*, 41.
seat it upon a judgment chair to be an arbiter of truth. A question for further study might ask whether or not physicists are “doing physics” when they appeal to beauty, or are they straying into the territory of a different subject? The passages presented so far also identify aspects of beauty that will be lined up with the traditional understanding of beauty: simplicity, harmony, and clarity. There can be no question about whether physicists claim there is beauty in physics. It is now time to begin the investigation regarding the truth of this claim.

Proper Genus

First things first. Small mistakes at the beginning result in large mistakes in the end, as much modern philosophy has demonstrated.\(^{10}\) This paper has a specific question, and it is necessary at the beginning to discover what species of question it is. In other words, does the question belong properly to the study of science, philosophy, or psychology? While many scientists speak often about the beauty of physics, are they speaking as scientists, philosophers, or beings possessed of a psyche?

One of these three options should be eliminated from the start. As is evident from the data of the personal testimony of scientists, assertions about the beauty of physics are not efforts to explain how the scientist feels. Indeed, there are feelings and other psychological effects, but statements about beauty posit something real in the real world. Beauty is something that is actually, somehow, present in physics itself. If it turns out, after this investigation, that beauty does not really exist in physics, or perhaps does not exist as a reality at all, then a psychological analysis of physicists is in order to find out the insanity

\(^{10}\) See Étienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (San Francisco, Calif.: Ignatius Press, 1999), and, for a more “layman oriented treatment” of the subject, Mortimer J. Adler, *Ten Philosophical Mistakes* (New York, N.Y.: Collier Books, 1987).
from which they suffer, but it should be clear that the first order of business is not one of mere psychology.

Physicist George Stanciu and philosopher Robert Augros write, “The beauty physicists seek is not the product of private or idiosyncratic emotion.” The physicists even identify consistent characteristics of beauty, as described above. They ascribe the beauty and those characteristics to nature itself, not merely to their own reactions or emotions.11 It is clear that the question of beauty in physics is not initially one of mere psychology.

So, is the question one of physics or philosophy? While both physics and philosophy have a common origin, the division between them was delineated as early as the Ancient Greeks, though the terminology is slightly different. What we call today physics often bears the same name, but what we have been here calling philosophy has been called metaphysics and sometimes theology. In book VI of his Metaphysics, Aristotle says that math, physics, and metaphysics are all speculative sciences. In other words, they seek to know for the sake of knowing. They are not practical or productive sciences. Their end is simply to know. He also describes the differences among the sciences: mathematics, physics, and metaphysics.12 Essentially, each science is separated from the other according to the level of abstraction. Physics seeks to know about the changes that occur in things and the causes of their motion. Mathematics seeks to know through the immaterial means of reasoning about limited quantities which exist in the changing world of nature. Philosophy seeks to know about what is unchangeable and eternal.

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11 Augros and Stanciu, The New Story of Science, 41–42.
12 Aristotle, Metaphysics, 1026a, trans. Hugh Tredennick. Available online—see the section References for details.
Ptolemy agrees with Aristotle’s division of the sciences,\textsuperscript{13} and Thomas Aquinas takes up a quite detailed analysis of the topic in the section of his Commentary on the \textit{De Trinitate} of Boethius often called “On the Division of the Sciences.”\textsuperscript{14} Aquinas refers to both Aristotle and Ptolemy and agrees with them. Physics studies what depends on matter for its being and for its being understood. Mathematics studies what depends on matter for its being but not for its being understood.\textsuperscript{15} In other words, physics studies the motion of matter and must study material things for the motion to be known. Experiment is a necessary part of physics. Mathematics studies limited quantity which exists in matter but can be investigated apart from matter. A mathematician can do his work with nothing but a pencil and paper. He does not have to be concretely handling what it is he studies. Metaphysics, on the other hand, deals with objects of knowledge which do not depend on matter for existence nor must they be known through matter.

This analysis of Thomas Aquinas is helpful. It sheds more light on what Aristotle meant by what is mutable and immutable. Things of matter are mutable, and so physics uses what is mutable (concrete material things) to study what is mutable. Philosophy studies first principles and causes, which are immaterial. As with all the sciences, Aristotle and Aquinas agree that we begin with the senses and abstract from them, but philosophy deals with the immaterial which is abstracted from the senses. Physics deals with the patterns of the material things themselves.

For example, Newton’s three laws of motion describe the causes of acceleration and what happens when two objects interact with one another. These are descriptions of material things and patterns in the

\textsuperscript{13} Ptolemy, \textit{Almagest}, I, 1. Available online—see the section \textit{References} for details.

\textsuperscript{14} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Super Boethium De Trinitate}, q. 5–6, trans. Armand Maurer. Available online—see the section \textit{References} for details.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.}, q. 5, a. 1.
material, concrete universe. In Aristotle’s terms, Newton’s laws tell us about what is mutable. Anything that is in motion, that undergoes any change, including change of location, is mutable. Newton’s laws are established and tested through a concrete method. Today, we would say that these laws are established and tested through experiment, and experiments need concrete, i.e. mutable, objects. The mathematics that is used in physics is immaterial, but the mathematics is only the language of physics, not physics itself. Words and ideas are also necessary for physics, but physics is not a mere matter of words and ideas. Physics is mathematics, words, and ideas about the physical world.

As an example of metaphysics, Aquinas’s idea about fundamental Being serves as an ideal model. Aquinas did not arrive at his conclusion through experiment. He conducted his analysis using the immaterial intellect and through argumentation. He uses what is immaterial to reason about what is immaterial and unchanging. There can be no experiment that will verify or disprove Aquinas’s metaphysical foundation since experiments are restricted wholly to the material world.

Indeed, it must be noted that both metaphysics and physics begin through observation and are animated by wonder. There can be no doubt that both have a common origin. Humans begin with the senses, and all the sciences grow out of what is abstracted from them.

The question of whether or not there is beauty in physics certainly deals with physics, but it deals with physics “from the outside.” If there is beauty in physics, that beauty is not one of the things that physics studies. Beauty is not one of the material and changeable things that must be studied in matter. In our terms, no experiment can be performed to determine whether or not beauty is in physics. The investigation needs a broader category: philosophy.

Now that it is clear in which scholarly house the question dwells, the nature of beauty has to be determined so that it can be more clearly identified if it is present in physics.
The Nature of Beauty

One of the issues concerning beauty that must be addressed is the fact that beauty, as a separate discipline, was not really established until fairly recently. One of the reasons this field of study had not developed earlier is that all ancient and medieval philosophers agreed on the reality and existence of beauty, and it is primarily from these philosophers that this paper will draw its understanding of beauty. Francis Kovach, in *The Philosophy of Beauty*, writes, “That which, when known, delights has always been called the beautiful.” Only in modern times has the truth of beauty been brought into question, and philosophers have given this specific study the name of *aesthetics*. Kovach defines it this way: “Aesthetics is that generic area of human knowledge within which the beauty of certain things is either the object matter or (a part of) the subject matter of the various specific aesthetic sciences.” If the question has to do with whether or not something is beautiful, then it is a question of aesthetics. Since the reality of beauty is in question, this domain is still within the confines of metaphysics, within the discipline that deals with questions regarding what is. The question about beauty in physics is located at the conjunction of metaphysics and the philosophy of science.

The first and most important thing to note about beauty in the context of society today is that beauty is real, not merely a matter of opinion or personal preference. Beauty is not only “in the eye of the beholder.” The topic of discussion is one of truth, not taste. This is important because, if beauty is to have a nature, it has to be real.

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It is true that people often disagree about what is beautiful, but that can be attributed to the fact that, as Plato writes, “Beautiful things are difficult.”\textsuperscript{19} In other words, it is not easy to understand beauty. Ko-vach, commenting on Plato, elucidates the problem, “we learn from Plato the following paradox: beauty can easily, effortlessly be recognized in aesthetic experience, since this is a matter of intuition; and yet, it is very difficult to reason out its essence.”\textsuperscript{20}

Apparently, Aristotle dealt with relativists, including those who say that beauty is only a matter of taste, in his own time as well. “To attach equal importance to the opinions and impressions of opposing parties is foolish, because clearly one side or the other must be wrong.”\textsuperscript{21} He writes that when people disagree, it is most often the case that one of them is not perceiving correctly, sometimes from the result of an unhealthy organ. The truth of the matter can be settled by appealing to the healthy organ. It is not different when it comes to truth, goodness, and beauty. “And I hold the same in the case of good and bad, and of beautiful and ugly, and of all other such qualities,” writes Aristotle,\textsuperscript{22} another aesthetic realist who recognizes that beauty is not easy.

Given the fact that so many people today consider beauty to be a subjective matter of taste, it is part of the animating wonder of this paper that recognizes that physicists talk so forcefully about beauty and also are mostly in agreement about what is beautiful and the nature of that beauty.

This paper will follow the path trodden by Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, and a few Thomistic philosophers like Francis Kovach through the dense forest of the philosophy of aesthetics in particular and metaphys-

\textsuperscript{20} Kovach, \textit{Philosophy of Beauty}, 139.
\textsuperscript{21} Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics}, XI, 1062b.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid.}, XI, 1063a.
ics in general. Even though these three great thinkers did not leave any separate treatises on beauty itself, they wrote enough to help later thinkers find their way.

Plato also gives a way of identifying beauty that would stand the test of time: “That part of the pleasant which comes by sight and hearing is beautiful.” What delights when seen is beautiful. This identification is helpful, but it is not a definition. Indeed, for the purposes of this paper, it gives very little to work with because physics is not “seen.” However, physicists and mathematicians certainly identify a kind of pleasure that comes with understanding great proofs and laws. Nevertheless, Plato identifies beauty as a “that which,” as something real.

Thankfully, Plato goes on to state even more clearly the reality of beauty in the Symposium. “Soon he will of himself perceive that the beauty of one form is akin to the beauty of another; and then if beauty of form in general is his pursuit, how foolish would he be not to recognize that the beauty in every form is and the same!” According to Plato, there is a nature of beauty.

Further on in that same work, he identifies, through the words of Diotima, some of the nature of beauty. After describing the famous “ladder of love,” Diotima claims that one who has climbed that ladder will see the essence of beauty itself: “[B]eauty absolute, separate, simple, and everlasting, which without diminution and without increase, or any change, is imparted to the ever-growing and perishing beauties of all other things.” The lack of change is a corollary of simplicity. What is without parts cannot change. So, the key characteristic of beauty, according to Plato, is simplicity, i.e. unity. This is interesting since this is

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23 Plato, Hippias Major, 299b.
24 Plato, Symposium, trans. Benjamin Jowett. Available online—see the section References for details.
25 Ibid.
a characteristic of a beautiful theory so often identified by the physicists.

The beauty that Plato describes is not some thing that anyone ever perceives. The beauty we find in a landscape, a poem, or a piece of music is an attribute of that thing, not a separate thing by itself. Whether or not beauty is a thing in itself will not be discussed in this paper. It is the nature of the attribute of beauty that is important here. What is it that makes something beautiful?

In turning attention to Aristotle, passages can be found that support the aesthetic realism of Plato and build on his description of beauty as simplicity. In the Poetics, Aristotle writes that, “A beautiful object, whether it be a living organism or any whole composed of parts, must not only have an orderly arrangement of parts, but also be of a certain magnitude.”26 Plato’s unity is found in the fact that Aristotle identifies that the beautiful object is “any whole.” Aristotle builds on Plato by pointing out that the beautiful thing must have an orderly arrangement of parts. In other words, it must have a harmony or symmetry about it. Aristotle’s point about it being a certain magnitude means only that it must be perceivable for us to identify it as beautiful. What is too big or too small cannot be seen in its whole-ness. The “orderly arrangement” recalls to mind, also, what many physicists identified as beautiful in their descriptions of beautiful theories. A thorough comparison of the claims will be carried out after clearly identifying the nature of beauty, but it is worth pointing out the similarities.

An important realization with respect to the quote from Aristotle is that an object has a more orderly arrangement the more unified it is. A lack of harmony is also a lack of unity. The orderly arrangement of a thing “flows from” the unity of the thing. Aristotle is expounding on

what it means for a thing to be a whole. Extraneous parts detract from any thing’s simplicity.

As an example of what he means, Aristotle cites the works of Homer. *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* have beauty because they “center round an action that in our sense of the word is one. . . . For a thing whose presence or absence makes no visible difference, is not an organic part of the whole.”\(^{27}\) Everything in the plot is related. The harmony of those works are an expression of their organic one-ness, their constant revolution about a single action.

Aristotle appeals to unity as what makes something beautiful in a passage of his *Politics*. In the context, he is discussing the good that results when many wise men combine their judgments into one greater judgment and when many good men combine their good qualities so that the result is a judgment or quality that is better than any one of the individuals. “The beautiful are said to differ from those who are not beautiful . . . because in them the scattered elements are combined.”\(^{28}\) The combination of those good elements into a single unity is what makes it beautiful. A whole that is comprised of harmonious parts is beautiful. The whole would not be complete if the parts were not good in themselves and orderly in their arrangement. Here, again, Aristotle points to simplicity as the key characteristic of the beautiful, and simplicity is founded on good combination.

Thomas Aquinas builds on the work of Aristotle and Plato and identifies three main characteristics of beauty in things that are composed of parts: integrity, proportion, and brightness. Integrity is another word for what has been so far described as unity or simplicity, and proportion is another word for harmony, balance, and symmetry. The har-

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27 Ibid., I, viii.
mony and the brilliance are related to the unity, so unity turns out to be
the key feature in Aquinas as in Aristotle and Plato.

Beauty includes three conditions, “integrity” or “perfection,” since
those things which are impaired are by the very fact ugly; due
“proportion” or “harmony;” and lastly, “brightness” or “clarity,”
whence things are called beautiful which have a bright color.29

Francis Kovach calls the definition of Aquinas a triadic definition30 be-
because Aquinas identifies three aspects of beauty.

It is worthwhile to look at each of these attributes identified by
Aquinas to see how they tie together. Aquinas gives a brief explanation
of each. This passage occurs in an analysis of the Trinity and how beau-
ty as an essential attribute has been appropriated in a fitting way to the
Son.

Aquinas offers the word perfection as a possible substitute for int-
egrity (integritas). Perfection means that a thing is whole or complete,
that it has finished becoming and is completely itself. The Son is called
perfect because He has the complete nature of the Father. There is noth-
ing of the Father that is lacking in the Son. In commenting on this pas-
sage Christopher Scott Sevier explains that, in this case, integrity “is a
comparative feature of objects . . . pertaining to a kind of fit between
the particular instance and its paradigmatic ideal.”31 The Son is a simple
whole because the Father is a simple whole. Therefore, in the view of
Aquinas, it is clear from this passage that “[a] beautiful object . . . is a
completed whole, lacking defect.”32

The next word, proportio, has a special meaning in this context
because the Son has no parts, and so the proportion cannot be a kind of

29 Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I, q. 39, a. 8, trans. Fathers of the English Do-
minican Province. Available online—see the section References for details.
30 Kovach, Philosophy of Beauty, 162.
31 Christopher Scott Sevier, Aquinas on Beauty (New York, N.Y.: Lexington Books,
2015), 116.
32 Ibid., 117.
harmony of parts. Aquinas explains that the proportion, in this case, refers specifically to the fact that the Son is the “express Image of the Father,” i.e., the perfect representation of the Father. He argues that even a perfect image of something ugly is still called beautiful because of the exactness of the copy. There is a balance between the thing itself and the representation. The Son as the express image of the Father is the most extreme case of this kind of balance.

Elsewhere, Aquinas also affirms the idea that proportio most commonly means a harmony among combined and different parts. In a passage about God’s government and the presence of evil in the world, he writes, “The highest beauty would be taken away from things, too, if the order of distinct and unequal things were removed.” Proportion is not only exactness of copy to original, but also the common sense way of understanding it: a rightly ordered combination of various parts. In the Summa, he writes, “Beauty consists in due proportion; for the senses delight in things duly proportioned, as in what is after their own kind—because even sense is a sort of reason, just as is every cognitive faculty.” Aquinas here appeals to the common definition of beauty: that which pleases; but he goes further and indicates why the thing is delightful: the senses delight in due proportion.

A powerful example in this case is a good harmony in music. The right combination of notes is a due proportion that brings great delight, often even to untutored ears. Aquinas gives the example of the human body and writes that its beauty consists in “due proportion of bodily members.” A body without proper proportions can be regarded as less than a complete whole. The harmony among the parts is part of the unity of the body. If one part is bigger than it ought to be or, think-

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34 *S.Th.*, I, q. 5, a. 4, ad 1.

35 *S.C.G.*, III, q. 139; *S.Th.*, II–II, q. 145, a. 2.
ing about the body from the point of view of function, if one part of the body is defective, the body is not the kind of unity that it ought to be. Proportion can be called, up to a certain point, a characteristic of unity.

The third attribute mentioned by Aquinas is “brightness or clarity,” (claritas). Sevier explains that proportion, in itself, lacks the power of self-expression even though an object must have due proportion to be known.36 Any object that is not proportioned according to its nature is less like what it ought to be. What proportion ought to be is dictated by nature, and a thing is known insofar as the nature can be ascertained. A thing that is less like what it ought to be is ugly. It lacks the wholeness it ought to have according to its nature, and thus it lacks the ability to be known that it ought to have. Something that better approximates its nature is more intelligible. The closer something is to the nature it approximates, the more true it is. Sevier explains that this idea was communicated from the neoplatonists and through Dionysius.37 Something that is beautiful is self-expressive, and it is this self-expressiveness that is called claritas. Aquinas writes, “Light makes beauty seen (lumen manifestans).”38 It is for this reason that beauty is sometimes called the splendor of truth. Beauty is the testimony of truth, a theme that comes through clearly in the statements made by physicists about beauty and the role it plays in finding true theories. The Church also teaches that “truth carries with it the joy and splendor of spiritual beauty. Truth is beautiful in itself.”39

In the context of Aquinas’s statements about the Son, it is the Son who makes the Father known. Within the Trinity, Jesus is the Father’s knowing of Himself, the splendor of his own intellect. The Son is

36 Sevier, Aquinas on Beauty, 114.
37 Ibid., 112.
38 S.Th., II–II, q. 180, a. 2, ad 3, quoted in Sevier, Aquinas on Beauty, 114.
39 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2500. Available online—see the section References for details.
the “light and splendor of the intellect.”40 The Father, who is supremely simple is also supremely intelligible, and the Son is the brilliance of that intelligibility of the Father to Himself. He also is the fullest revelation of the Father to mankind.

Regarding Aquinas’s example of the beauty of the human body, he writes that part of the beauty is “a certain clarity of color.”41 It is through color that the eyes see, and the beauty of the body cannot be seen without the clarity of that color. A lack of color would make the body unintelligible.

Even when it comes to the nature of the human person and the beauty of virtue, Aquinas says that spiritual beauty is made known through its actions and through the praise and honor of others.42 He writes that a person’s honesty is what makes someone’s spiritual beauty known. It is important to note that the particular word translated as honesty in Latin is honestum, and it means more to Aquinas than our typical English meaning of merely telling the truth. For Aquinas, honestum means virtue, rightness of action according to the nature of man.43 Spiritual beauty and a man’s conformity with the true nature of man is made manifest through his actions. Sevier outlines Terence Irwin’s argument that Aquinas’s use of honestum follows Aristotle’s use of τό καλόν, the Greek for beautiful.44 Honestum, virtue, is beauty in man.

Thus claritas is the knowability of the thing, the self-expression of something. The more whole it is, the more proportioned it is. The more well-ordered it is according to its nature, the more of a whole it is. The more like it’s nature, the more knowable it is. Simplicity, proportion and brilliance are all related to each other, and it is simplicity that

40 S.Th., I, q. 39, a. 8.
41 Ibid., II–II, q. 145, a. 2.
42 Ibid., II–II, q. 145, a. 2, ad 2.
43 Ibid., II–II, q. 145, a. 1.
44 Sevier, Aquinas on Beauty, 120.
stands as the foundation for the other two. That it is an organic whole is the most foundational metaphysical aspect of a thing. Proportion and clarity flow in being from one-ness. This study of aesthetics proves itself, indeed, to be a study of metaphysics, a study of the is-ness of things.

After a lengthy discussion of philosophical thinkers from every age and their various ideas about the nature of beauty, Kovach synthesizes a simple definition of beauty that derives mostly from the thought of Thomas Aquinas but also is based on the work of Plato and Aristotle. Aquinas holds that the most beautiful thing, in fact Beauty Itself, is nothing less than God. In the philosophy of Aquinas, God is supremely simple and has no parts. So, in this line of thought, a harmonious composition of parts cannot be part of the essential definition of beauty, but as has been seen already in this paper, proportion exists in God in another way, and proportion is an expression of the unity of a thing. Kovach concludes, “Beauty in general is order, that is, integral unity, or integral unity with or without proportionate parts.” The emphasis on order is followed by the clarification that order is really about integral unity. What is ordered, i.e. proportionate or harmonious, is beautiful, but that order is evidence of the metaphysical foundation of an integral unity.

Aristotle is one source for this definition: “Beauty depends on magnitude and order.” What Aristotle meant by magnitude has already been discussed. The important word at this point is order. Of course, Aristotle is not ignoring the importance of unity, but an ordered whole is an integrated unity.

Kovach appeals, in particular, to Aquinas, who writes that beauty is order. And it has already been seen what role order plays in unity in

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45 S.Th., I, q. 3, a. 7.
46 Kovach, Philosophy of Beauty, 215.
48 Kovach, Philosophy of Beauty, 162.
the thought of Aquinas. Kovach remains true to the philosophical tradition begun with Plato and Aristotle and elaborated by Aquinas.

In conclusion, the nature of beauty is integrated unity, a well-ordered whole. Beauty is that which being seen pleases, and what pleases the human mind is a well-ordered whole. If there are some who do not find beauty in an truly harmonious unity, it may be that the minds of those individuals are not ordered enough to see the order in the world. For example, if someone can see no beauty in Euclid’s proof that the prime numbers are infinite, it is likely that the mind of that individual is not mathematically ordered enough to recognize the beauty that is there. A guitar that is out of tune can never produce beautiful music, and an ear that is out of tune can never perceive true beauty in music. Education is the process of ordering oneself to meet the order outside. Beauty without cannot penetrate ugliness within. Order cannot be understood by disorder.

**Beauty and Physics**

So far the nature of physics and the nature of beauty have been identified. It is time to find out if there is beauty in physics. The astute reader will already surmise the conclusion since the nature of beauty so closely matches the statements by the physicists regarding what they find beautiful in physics. If the physicists were not on to something real, they could not have gotten so close to the truth about beauty. “Because most scientists are not also skilled in philosophy (nor should we expect them to be), it is notable that when the best of our modern physicists come to explain what they mean by beauty, their views are remarkably like those . . . in the perennial philosophical tradition.”49 In the quotes cited above, the physicists mention simplicity, harmony, and

clarity among the characteristics of a beautiful theory, and those are the exact same elements discovered in traditional philosophy and all related to integral unity.

A historical example may be illustrative. Ptolemy’s geocentric universe was the best model for the solar system at his time. There was simply no evidence that the earth was moving, so it made perfect sense to place the earth at the center of the other heavenly bodies as they revolved around it. The problem was that, as time went on, that model could not accurately predict the motions of the planets. So, the planets were put on circles on top of circles, known as epicycles, to make up for the difference. Hundreds of years went by, and other adjustments had to be made and more epicycles had to be added. In the terms discussed in this paper, the model suffered more and more from disproportion and disunity as more “add-ons” were introduced. Even the sun-centered model of Copernicus did not solve this problem. It is important to point out that these epicycles were, in fact, seen as a problem. There was a real sense that theories and models should be simple. When Kepler introduced his model of elliptical orbits, most people embraced it because of its vast simplicity over the model of circles and epicycles. In the world of physics, the term epicycles is now an insult to a theory that lacks simplicity and is, therefore, probably not true.

Kepler’s theory was simple because it gave all the planets a single path on which to travel without epicycles. Mathematically, this theory was much more concise. The theory was well-balanced because all the ideas harmonized well with each other. The theory was also brilliant; it had claritas because it gave a model that could accurately account for all astronomical observations. It shed light on what was happening and eventually helped Newton to formulate the theory of Un

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versal Gravitation and, thus, *why* it was happening. Those are the three aspects of something beautiful, and those are the three characteristics so often identified by physicists.

A critical point to make is that there is beauty in the theory. The theory is a model about the motion of the planets; it is something that lives in the mind of man. It is not a physical thing. It is a theory about physical things and it is verified or contradicted by concrete observations, but it is the idea itself that is regarded as beautiful. Can an idea be beautiful?

It is worthwhile to revisit some of the statements made by physicists in light of what has been established about the nature of beauty. First of all, almost every quote mentions the role beauty plays in identifying truth. Feynman: “You can recognize truth by its beauty and simplicity.”51 Heisenberg: beauty “is the most important source of illumination and clarity.”52 Dirac: “It is more important to have beauty in one’s equations than to have them fit experiment.”53 Penrose: “A beautiful idea has a much greater chance of being a correct idea than an ugly one.”54 These physicists are highlighting the characteristic of clarity, the self-expressiveness of a good idea. Beauty is the splendor of truth. An idea is beautiful because it reveals something true about nature.

The simplicity of an idea is also mentioned multiple times by physicists. Feynman, again: “You can recognize truth by its beauty and simplicity.”55 Schrödinger: Einstein had a strong feeling for “the simplicity and beauty of ideas.”56 Gell-Mann: “When you have something simple that agrees with all the rest of physics and really seems to ex-

53 Quoted in ibid.
54 Penrose, *The Emperor’s New Mind*, 544.
plain what’s going on, a few experimental data against it are no objec-
tion whatever.” The simplicity of an idea consists in the fact that there
is greater explanatory power in fewer ideas. Just as a more powerful in-
tellect understands more by means of fewer ideas, so a theory is more
powerful and beautiful if it can explain more motion with fewer ideas.

As already discussed, the Ptolemaic model, after many years with
all of its epicycles, is an example of an ugly theory; it possessed less
and less explanatory power and the ideas were increasing in number. It
lacked harmony, simplicity, and the clarity of truth. The study of beauty
in physics also includes the study of ugliness in physics, because any
subject genus includes contrary opposites. The example of the ugliness
of the Ptolemaic theory helps in the understanding of a beautiful theory.
The study of unity also includes the study of disunity.

Newton’s theory of gravitation, on the other hand, is a simple
idea expressed in a single equation of three variables that explained all
of the motions of the heavenly bodies known to his time. Not only did
universal gravitation explain all celestial motion at the time, including
the cause for Kepler’s elliptical orbits, but it also explained why bodies
fall on earth. That is an immense amount of explanatory power in a
very simple idea.

So, a beautiful theory in physics is an idea with integral unity and
simplicity that explains a wide array of physical phenomena. That is
what a beautiful theory is, but why is there a connection between beau-
ty and truth in physics? Why is there beauty in physics in the first
place? Is the beauty found in physics due to something about man who
describes or something about nature that is described?

The quote from Brian Greene gives some insight into the source
of the beauty in physics. He writes that physicists are convinced that
“theories have an elegance and beauty of structure on par with the

57 Quoted in *ibid.*, 41.
The world is beautiful, and so ideas about the world should be beautiful. The world that is explained by physics has an integral unity to it. From the perspective of Thomistic metaphysics, there is an extremely elegant Unity undergirding all of existence. So, ideas about the motion of those existing things also have an elegant unity to them.

Greene is not alone in his assertion about the beauty of nature:

Newton . . . ascribes simplicity to nature, not to man: “Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes.” And the testimony of twentieth-century physicists is clear in this matter. Feynman declares, “Nature has simplicity and therefore great beauty.” He does not ascribe the beauty to the onlooker. And Wheeler asserts, “Every law of physics . . . goes back to some symmetry of nature,” not back to a symmetry of our minds. And Max Born affirms, “The genuine physicist believes obstinately in the simplicity and unity of nature, despite any appearance to the contrary.” In a conversation with Einstein, Heisenberg once said:

“I believe, just like you, that the simplicity of natural laws has an objective character, that it is not just the result of thought economy. If nature leads us to mathematical forms of great simplicity and beauty . . . we cannot help thinking they are true, that they reveal a genuine feature of nature.”

Chandrasekhar adds, “All of us are sensitive to nature’s beauty. It is not unreasonable that some aspects of this beauty are shared by the natural sciences.” Again, the source of beauty is nature, not man. Why is beauty found in natural science? Because nature is filled with beauty. Physicist David Bohm declares, “Almost anything to be found in nature exhibits some kind of beauty both in immediate perception and in intellectual analysis.” Henri Poincare says, “The scientist does not study nature because it is useful to do so. He studies it because he takes pleasure in it; and he takes pleasure in it because it is beautiful. If nature were not beautiful, it would not be worth knowing and life would not be worth living.” And Carl von Weizsacker adds an explanation, arguing that “the often-cited principle of economy

of thought explains, at the most, why we look for simple laws, but not why we find them.\(^{59}\)

If there is beauty in physics, it is because there is beauty in nature. There is no doubt that physicists have given a prominent position to beauty in physics, but physics would not be “natural philosophy” if it did not rely on a theory’s ability to predict results of concrete experiments. Physics is about nature, and it is reasonable to conclude that the beauty of nature results in beauty in physics.

It should be pointed out that this paper has not demonstrated that nature is in fact beautiful. The metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas and the testimony of scientists have been brought to bear on the matter, but that is not a demonstration. This paper has only sought to demonstrate that there is beauty in physics. The beauty in physics suggests that there is beauty in nature, but to flesh out that argument would require a separate paper of its own.

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**Is There Beauty in Physics?**

**SUMMARY**

Given how often physicists talk about beauty, the author tries to understand what they are talking about, what they mean, and whether or not there is any truth to what they are saying. The main questions he addresses are: When discussing the nature and beauty of physics, are we doing physics, science, psychology, or philosophy? And, does the meaning of the physicists’ acclamations actually line up with the true nature of beauty? The author concludes that there can be truth in the statement that there is beauty in physics, and the physicists themselves would be able to say most authoritatively which theories are beautiful and which are not.

**KEYWORDS**

Thomism, physics, science, beauty, reality, beautiful, truth, nature, theory, metaphysics.

\(^{59}\) Augros and Stanciu, *The New Story of Science*, 44–46.
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Urbano Ferrer

Polaridad dialéctica libertad-necesidad en la actividad económica a partir de la obra de Millán-Puelles

Más acá de la teoría económica se encuentra la economía como quehacer o modo diferenciado de experiencia. Es una experiencia que no depende de una dotación humana particular, sino que está al alcance de todos, siendo de suyo tan universal como puedan serlo la experiencia moral, la experiencia estética o la experiencia religiosa, por más que movilice en cada caso y en cada época histórica unos recursos propios (la economía monetaria no es la que ha estado siempre en vigor), unas relaciones humanas peculiares (según se trate de una economía agraria sedentaria, de una población nómada ganadera o cazadora o bien de una economía industrial) y unas condiciones geográficas específicas. Antonio Millán-Puelles ha dedicado una parte apreciable de su obra a la economía a este nivel epistemológico, valiéndose de la racionalidad humana de primer orden que dirige a la actividad económica, sin llegar a entrar en el lenguaje metaeconómico de la teoría positiva. ¿Qué conceptos se ponen en juego a este primer nivel descriptivo?

Antonio Millán-Puelles (1921–2005) ha sido un renombrado filósofo español, catedrático de Metafísica en la Universidad Complutense de Madrid y que nos ha legado una abundante producción filosófica. Este texto fue escrito para una Jornada dedicada a su pensamiento con motivo de la presentación de sus Obras Completas el 30 de Mayo de 2018.
En primer lugar y en un sentido todavía por dilucidar, acude el amplio espectro de las necesidades, sobre todo de aquellas que se presentan como más perentorias o urgentes. La afirmación de Ortega y Gasset de que la vida da qué hacer, siendo por ello quehacer, se acopla muy bien al quehacer económico, como necesidad que se impone a partir de las necesidades humanas más elementales que pretende cubrir y que se plantea a su vez con ocasión de las más diversas actividades a emprender, sean culturales, asociativas, políticas, comunicativas, etc. “Todo el apremio del quehacer económico . . . consiste en la necesidad de dar satisfacción a unas necesidades que no son satisfechas necesariamente.”\(^2\) ¿Quién no necesita hacer cuentas antes de ponerse a trabajar en un marco definido?

En segundo lugar, otro concepto implícito en el hacer económico es el bienestar con toda la indefinición que le acompaña. Al igual que la felicidad o el tiempo—tal como lo entiende San Agustín—es una de esas nociones de las que se sabe y con las que se cuenta, pero mientras no se pregunte por ellas. El bienestar es aquello que pretendemos—y que por tanto no viene dado—pero que solo podemos reconocer cuando lo hemos alcanzado. Aquí podríamos decir lo inverso de lo que dice San Agustín acerca de Dios, a saber, que no le podríamos buscar si no le hubiéramos ya encontrado: el bienestar, en cambio, solo lo podemos encontrar in obliquo, es decir, si no lo buscamos temáticamente, ya que no es algo de lo que sepamos con antelación. En cualquier caso, ambas son fórmulas paradójicas que precisan esclarecimiento. Antes que nada ¿cómo puede depender todo el hacer económico de algo tan inasible y primario como es el bienestar?

Un tercer concepto recurrente en la actuación económica es sin duda la libertad en su conjunción con la necesidad y el bienestar. No

Podría por menos de serlo, toda vez que en tal actuación se ponen a prueba los distintos niveles o estadios en la libertad: libertad como indeterminación inicial, libertad como querer eficaz en la voluntad y libertad moral o liberación. “El sentirse forzado [por las necesidades económicas] es imposible si la libertad, que es su contraste, no queda a la vez vivida.”3 Justamente el modo como en este caso se articulen estos tres estadios de la libertad entre sí y con los otros dos conceptos básicos aludidos permite el acercamiento a una teoría general de la libertad desde este campo sectorial de la actividad humana. En lo que sigue nos intercaremos en las anteriores nociones siguiendo algunas de las sugerencias que ofrece Millán-Puelles en Economía y libertad.

¿Qué se entiende por necesidad económica?

Las necesidades más elementales en torno a las que gira el quehacer económico se presentan como urgencias mediadas por el cuerpo: tales son básicamente el alimento, la vivienda y el vestido, según una enumeración tomada de Karl Marx y de Pío XII en lo que tienen en común.4 De su satisfacción depende a su vez la posibilidad de hacer frente a otras necesidades ligadas a lo más específico del hombre, como son en un sentido amplio la ciencia, el arte (la cultura en general), la amistad o la religión. No es que la génesis de las segundas esté en las primeras—lo cual sería un sinsentido al negarles a aquellas su objeto propio—pero sí es verdad que sin la atención a las condiciones existenciales básicas a duras penas se tiene la holgura indispensable para dedicarse a

3 Ibid., 20.
las necesidades del espíritu. Sin embargo, ¿qué es lo que lleva a emplear un mismo vocablo para referirse a estos tipos distintos y hasta heterogéneos de necesidades? ¿No estaremos ante un término equívoco? Es cierto que en español carecemos de un término específico para lo que en otras lenguas es need, Bedürfnis o besoin, pero esto solo no justifica la equivocidad del término. ¿O más bien lo que ocurre es que la necesidad denota algo unívoco, pero genérico, anterior a la división entre las necesidades elementales u orgánicas y las de orden psíquico? Pero para ello tendrían ambas que incluir una notación lógica común. Veremos que no es así, sino que cada grupo de las mismas son necesidades de un modo peculiar, al modo de los conceptos análogos con analogía de proporcionalidad propia.

Las necesidades orgánicas también pueden denominarse funciones, en la medida en que con ellas se restablecen los ciclos funcionales del organismo: descanso/vigilia, metabolismo, protección de la intimperie, sin perjuicio de que con el vestido no se busque solo el resguardo físico, ni con la vivienda se pretenda únicamente guarecerse. En conjunto, se puede decir que son necesidades que más allá de las funciones manifiestas poseen unas funciones latentes—empleando la distinción sociológica de Robert Merton (1910–2003)—por medio de las cuales el sistema orgánico viviente se nutre y consolida. Pero la funcionalidad no es aplicable en modo alguno a las necesidades más altas, en tanto que les es inherente el sentido intrínseco por el que se reconocen, 

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5 “Exteriores quidem divitiae sunt necessariae ad bonum virtutis, cum per eam sustentemus corpus et aliis subveniamus” (Tomás de Aquino, Summa Contra Gentiles, III, Cap. 133).


7 La no-funcionalidad intrínseca de la ética y de la religión está tratada por Robert Spaemann, “La religión y su justificación funcional,” El rumor inmortal (Madrid: Rialp, 2010), 87–113. Cfr. el siguiente texto: “Una interpretación funcionalista de la incondicionalidad específica de la experiencia moral haría que se desdibujase tal experiencia como forma de incondicionalidad. . . . La inconveniencia de toda interpretación fun-
del equilibrio psíquico o de la satisfacción noble y sincera que desde luego procuran. Ahora bien, a propósito de estas últimas, ¿qué significa que existen en el hombre unas necesidades no funcionales? Para los fines de este trabajo, centrado en las necesidades subyacentes a la economía, baste con indicar que el carácter necesario de las necesidades más elevadas coincide con el de las más elementales, paradójicamente, en no ser necesitantes ni las unas ni las otras—sino apelar ambas a la libertad—y se muestra como necesario, según el modo característico de las necesidades superiores, por el lado de su objeto—ineludible, en tanto que cargado de sentido—más bien que por la intensidad psicológica, que es exclusiva del apremio que está a la base de la actividad económica y de otras semejantes ligadas a la subsistencia (análogamente a como se dice que hay necesidades lógicas, matemáticas o éticas, distintas todas ellas de las psicológicas).

Las necesidades primarias resultan ser las más necesarias en el sentido de la urgencia, mientras que las necesidades superiores son las más necesarias en cuanto son las que fundan axiológicamente a las primeras. Así lo explica Millán-Puelles, estableciendo una suerte de complementariedad o exigencia mutua entre unas y otras. Se puede decir tanto que uno se alimenta para de este modo poder vacar a otras actividades sin las que no se podría vivir humanamente, como también puede ser dicho, de modo inverso, que alguien estudia o atiende a su formación de modo que así se gana el sustento o merece un descanso.

Sin embargo, como necesidades humanas tienen todas en común el estar penetradas por el logos, manifiesto en la imaginación creadora o fantasía. Veámoslo a propósito de las más elementales. En primer lugar, su objeto se presenta de un modo indeterminado o abstracto frente a la determinación unívoca y monótona del instinto animal. Hasta ocu-

acional de la religión se puede expresar sencillamente diciendo que la relativización del Absoluto equivale a su desaparición” (ibid., 97, 99–100).
re que, cuanto más acuciantes son, su objeto se convierte en más abstracto, como cuando se tiene una fuerte sed, que se apaga con cualquier bebida potable. De donde se sigue la exigencia de que intervenga la razón práctica dando concreción a lo que de por sí queda en gran medida indeterminado. Así pues, el segundo rasgo de la necesidad humana elemental es que el objeto determinado en el que se satisface es debido a cierto artificio o industria, parcial en lo tocante a los alimentos preparados por el hombre, por cuanto se basan en unas sustancias nutricias naturales, y prácticamente total cuando se trata de la vivienda construida o del vestido confeccionado, los cuales primero han de ser ideados en la figura que al cabo adquieren. Pero ello comporta que el término de la necesidad aparezca diferido respecto de esta, en contraste con la inmediatez con que se satisface la necesidad animal instintiva. Por tanto, una tercera nota de la necesidad humana es que no es ella misma, sino el comportamiento racional que desencadena lo que lleva a cumplirla. Son, por tanto, tres vertientes manifiestas del logos las que impregnan a las necesidades humanas tanto en su curso como en su desenlace: a) su abstracción inicial y consiguiente necesidad de determinación conceptual, b) el artificio que les sigue y c) el modo de cubrirlas, con los ritos y leyes que las acompañan: de esta suerte, la comida es a la mesa, la casa es con arte y estilo propio y el vestido es a la medida de quien lo porta.

Merece la pena transcribir uno de los textos en que el autor expone este estar presente del logos en las necesidades humanas.

[S]i no son satisfechas de un modo meramente natural, es que tampoco son exclusivamente naturales en el sentido de puramente biológicas. O, dicho de otra manera: si el logos puede hacer algo en su satisfacción, es porque de algún modo ya se encuentra presente en su constitución, no en forma de voluntad, pues evidentemente estas necesidades no nos piden licencia para afectarnos, sino a través del hecho de la “relativa abstracción” con que
tales exigencias se presentan, por mucho que nos apremien, en lo que toca al modo de eliminarlas. 8

Pero hay otro modo en que también se acusa el logos en la dinámica de las necesidades económicas. Se trata de que no hay para ellas un mínimo ni un máximo previamente determinados: se puede tanto resistir al hambre o al frío más de lo que en principio se imagina como también crear ellas mismas otras necesidades indefinidamente, en consonancia con los avances en la técnica y la civilización. Es en todo caso la razón práctica la encargada de asignarles a las necesidades su medida o límite, evitando por igual el defecto y el exceso. Y el querer que va implicado en la razón práctica es lo que convierte al objeto de la necesidad en un bien determinado, voluntariamente apetecido. Es ya significativo que apliquemos el verbo querer a lo que deseamos con anterioridad a todo acto deliberativo, siquiera se base solo en una necesidad orgánica (a modo de un “querer sin querer,” según la expresiva fórmula del Profesor Millán). Pero con ello estamos apuntando al segundo concepto económico mencionado, que es el bienestar, entendido como estar-en-el-bien, esto es, como aquello querido en general cuando se atiende a las necesidades primarias y que permite su expansión indefinida.

La indefinición constitutiva del bienestar

Se puede poner el acento en el aspecto objetivo-informacional del bienestar, midiéndolo por unos logros externos registrables, pero cabe también subrayar su aspecto subjetivo, variable de unas a otras épocas y personas. K. A. Sen concluye de ahí que el bienestar no es lo uno ni lo otro en lo que tienen de excluyentes, sino que constituye un híbrido subjetivo-objetivo. No son unos contenidos objetivos lo que propor-

8 EL, 32–33.
ciona en general mayor o menor bienestar, pero tampoco es el arbitrio de cada cual lo que lo decide sin base objetiva alguna. La clave está en ver *los contenidos externos en correlación con un vector de realizaciones*, como dice el texto citado, de modo que el bienestar siga a una consecución pretendida y en tanto que pretendida, bien por uno mismo, bien por quien ejerce la tutela sobre alguien. Obviamente el bienestar no significa lo mismo para un banquero que para un docente, ni para un atleta que para quien no lo es, en congruencia con el nivel específico de las respectivas aspiraciones.

A mi modo de ver, lo que Sen está destacando primordialmente es el carácter activo del bienestar, en parte velado por las resonancias estáticas del verbo estar, cuando lo que con propiedad denota aquí es la cota que ya se ha alcanzado de él, en su escala de ascenso indefinido, y no tanto un estado. La tendencia natural al bienestar no se colma en un objetivo particular, sino que es inagotable por deberse al incremento que pone el espíritu en la constitución y satisfacción de las necesidades materiales. No es la simple subsistencia del seguir viviendo lo que se pretende con la tendencia al bienestar, sino el *vivir bien* como realización inmanente de las capacidades humanas, partiendo de una indigencia o mal-estar que reaparece de continuo y a la que se busca—de un modo también continuo—aliviar. Millán-Puelles hace patente a este respecto las variaciones ambientales en las formas de bienestar, en cuanto son signo de que no responden a un instinto ni a una tendencia meramente orgánica.

9 “La característica primordial del bienestar cabe concebirla en términos de lo que una persona puede ‘realizar’, tomando este término en un sentido muy amplio. Me referiré a varias formas de hacer y ser que entran en esta valoración como ‘realizaciones’. Tales realizaciones podrían consistir en actividades (como el comer o el leer o el ver) o estados de existencia o de ser, por ejemplo, estar bien nutrido, no tener malaria, no estar avergonzado por lo pobre del vestido o del calzado. Me referiré al conjunto de realizaciones que una persona realmente logra como el vector de realizaciones” (Amartya Sen, *Bienestar, justicia y mercado* [Barcelona: Paidós, 1997], 77).
La fluidez histórica del hombre, de la que es un reflejo la de su bienestar, supone como algo previo esa soltura o desconexión de nuestro espíritu, a la que hemos llamado una abstracción o indefinición. Si para la misma especie son posibles diversos modos del bienestar, condicionados por circunstancias geográficas distintas, es porque en realidad el espíritu humano no está condicionado enteramente por ninguna de ellas. El bienestar representa un exceso del ser humano sobre las condiciones de la existencia puramente animal.

El plus o exceso, a que alude el texto y que va implicado en el bienestar, no se agrega desde fuera a la satisfacción de las necesidades materiales, sino que resulta de la asunción de las condiciones de estas que antes se han examinado, al estar embebidas por el logos desde su inicio. No otra cosa es lo que permite su estar expuestas a las condiciones geográficas e históricas variables sin dejar de ser unas mismas necesidades. Lo que la incorporación de estas condiciones al bienestar excluye es el naturalismo instintivo. Es una diferencia paralela a la que se advierte entre la vida y la calidad de vida, en tanto que esta última no significa un añadido externo al viviente humano en sus funciones vitales, sino que más bien da cuenta del margen no cubierto que cada vez le aparece entre su vivir en acto y los logros vitales variables para los que es apto, pero que no han sido actualizados todavía.

La indefinición en el bienestar pone de manifiesto, a su modo, la libertad humana en el triple plano en que se nos ha presentado: como inespecificidad o indeterminación en los objetos que lo provocan o hacen posible, como exigencia de resolución de la conducta que ha de darles concreción fijándoles una medida y como necesidad no colmada en el objetivo particular alcanzado. Pues este triple condicionamiento o necesidad fáctica tiene, paradójicamente, como reverso positivo la li-

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10 *EL*, 46.
bertad en ejercicio en una también triple consideración: la libertad en tanto que estar libre o ab-suelto de toda atadura para poder idear aquello en lo que se resuelve la necesidad, el libre ejercicio de la autodeterminación en la conducta correspondiente y la adquisición de la libertad moral como hábito virtuoso en crecimiento irrestricto. Es lo que abordaremos en los siguientes epígrafes.

**Expresiones de la libertad en la actividad económica**

*La libertad como indeterminación latente en el dinero*

Empezaremos por examinar la primera dimensión de la libertad a propósito del dinero como factor de la economía. Cualquiera que sea su génesis, hay en él un signo de convencionalidad, impensable sin la libertad en su adopción y en su uso. Esta convencionalidad va unida a una doble abstracción: la relativa a los medios, que solo lo son en tanto que requeridos por unos fines, en este caso las necesidades primarias, presentes a su vez a un nivel de abstracción que ya ha sido destacado; y, en un estadio superior, la abstracción de todos los medios que hace valédero el dinero para transmutarlo por *cualquier* medio o mercancía. El dinero contiene de un modo cifrado los medios, cualesquiera que sean, que habré de precisar para dar salida a las necesidades que me apremian.

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12 Se han propuesto recientemente dos hipótesis, ambas igualmente verosímiles, para dar cuenta de la aparición del dinero: la una, basada en la abstracción progresiva desde el vale o pagaré por un servicio prestado hasta el billete, al prescindir tanto del nombre del beneficiario como de la contraprestación reclamada, y la otra, a partir de la exigencias de la justicia distributiva después de la caza de un jabalí usando luego marcas, traducibles a dinero, que correspondan a la parte obtenida por cada cazador (Vittorio Mathieu, *Filosofía del dinero* [Madrid: Rialp, 1984]).

13 Así lo expone Millán-Puelles en su fenomenología del dinero: “La única mercancía que está en el caso de tener por recíproca a otra cualquiera es la que llamamos el dinero. Y esto es lo que aquí se tiene en cuenta al definir a éste como una mercancía valédera para adquirir cualquier otra y destinada a realizar esa función” (*EL*, 74).
Es cierto que la unidad de cuenta calculable y manejable como tal deja en la sombra la actividad libre que la hace posible, análogamente a como el uso de unas herramientas no hace explícita la libertad que se ha empleado en montar el artificio que son las herramientas. No obstante, la libertad necesaria para la invención y disposición ulterior del dinero reaparece con el uso y manejo de este, yendo asociada a los tres vectores temporales, igualmente indeterminados por relación a la praxis. En efecto, sobre el dinero se monta la provisión del futuro indeterminado, para la que sirve de garantía;\(^{14}\) el dinero contiene asimismo en clave un trabajo acumulado en el pasado que le da consistencia y valor, y el dinero interviene también en el presente como medio de intercambio. Son tres facetas de la libertad que comparece en el dinero, respectivamente como lo que permite adelantarse indeterminadamente al futuro de un modo simbólico, como lo que autoriza a establecer continuidad entre ciertos trabajos o servicios incommensurables ya llevados a cabo y, por fin, lo que hace posible entablar relaciones contractuales entre voluntades en el presente, sin necesidad de cargar con las mercancías que indirectamente se intercambian. Hay expresiones del lenguaje común en las que asoma cada una de estas vertientes de la libertad: “esto es lo que tengo ahorrado” se refiere a las cosas futuras que puedo adquirir, “me ha costado tanto ganar este dinero” en referencia al trabajo realizado y “te pago con esto este producto” en una operación de trueque. Las funciones de ahorrar, ponerse a trabajar e intercambiar poseen una innegable alusión a la libertad económica.

Es común a estas formas de libertad el ir guiadas por una necesidad previa, ya sea la necesidad existencial de prever, ya la exigencia

\(^{14}\) “Hasta tal punto es este medio un simple medio que el hecho de interrumpir su dinamismo solo se justifica, económicamente, como un medio, a su vez, para alguna posible necesidad futura. . . . Tal es el sentido del ahorro en su estricta acepción y en conexión con la cual el dinero aparece como un instrumento de esa otra forma humana de trascender que es la anticipación o previsión del futuro” (*Ibid.*, 80).
acumulativa relativa a la funcionalidad del dinero, ya se trate de la necesidad de coordinar las voluntades en el mercado. A esta última se refiere Millán-Puelles: “Tampoco existe el dinero si no hay más que un hombre que lo piensa. La ‘subjetividad’ de este artificio, compatible con la realidad extramental que le sirve de soporte, es formalmente ‘intersubjetividad’. El dinero puede ser convencional porque tiene que ser intersubjetivo.”

Si antes llegábamos a la libertad como indeterminación a partir de las necesidades elementales, ahora, siguiendo el itinerario inverso, hemos encontrado la necesidad como condicionante de la libertad en su modalidad de indeterminada. No es, en efecto, una libertad totalmente creadora, sino que parte de una situación y de unas condiciones fácticas desde las cuales ser ejercida, análogamente a como tampoco hay unas necesidades determinantes que fueran instintos, sino que son tales que en su desplieguen hacen emergir la libertad indispensable.

**El libre albedrío en la actividad económica**

Desde luego para que el libre albedrío esté presente en el modo de afrontar las necesidades es preciso que el hombre no esté siendo inmediatamente afectado por ellas, sino que las atienda (en el doble sentido de dirigir a ellas su atención y de buscar ponerles remedio) a través de su re-presentación u objetivación, que no es una resultante necesaria de las necesidades. Es lo que Ortega y Gasset señala como paradoja fundamental de las necesidades humanas. Solo así es posible que comparezca la libertad como autodeterminación en la actividad económica, ya sea en forma de trabajo productivo, ya en cuanto al modo

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16 “[P]ara el hombre solo es necesario lo objetivamente superfluo. Esto se juzgará paradójico, pero es la pura verdad. Las necesidades biológicamente objetivas no son, por sí, necesidades para él. Cuando se encuentra atenio a ellas se niega a satisfacerlas y prefiere sucumbir” (Ortega y Gasset, *Meditación sobre la técnica*, 328).
determinado de hacerse cargo de ellas (esta doble comparecencia de la libertad interviene derivadamente dando lugar, respectivamente, a la oferta y a la demanda). En palabras de nuestro autor: “Si de verdad el hombre produce cuando está libre de la necesidad física inmediata, la libertad en la que entonces se halla no puede ser otra cosa, vista de una manera positiva, sino un efectivo ‘autodeterminarse’ en la actividad de producir.”

¿Cuál es el alcance de la autodeterminación en la acción productiva? Empecemos encarando la dificultad de que si es una actividad que genera productos externos, ¿cómo es posible que con ella se autodetermine su agente? No es simplemente que el hombre se haga a sí mismo productivo como si se tratara de una cualificación enteramente inmanente, ni en el otro extremo que se produzca a sí mismo (según la interpretación marxiana del trabajo), sino que se trata, a una, de que la producción o manufactura de cosas venga modalizada como libre. Tenemos en cuenta que para ser libre la productividad ha de reunir el doble carácter—aparentemente antitético—de recaer sobre algo externo y a la vez de determinarse a sí mismo su agente con ella desde una previa indeterminación. Pero, volvemos a la dificultad señalada: ¿cómo es ello posible? Millán-Puelles menciona algunas condiciones que explican y posibilitan tal comportamiento, como son la temporalidad inmanente de la conciencia y la existencia de alguna razón que dé cuenta de él. Las examinaremos brevemente.

Determinarse a sí mismo es posible en vista de algún objetivo representado como algo futuro, lo cual solo acontece en la conciencia humana suprainstintiva, en la que se vive en presente la anticipación del futuro, cualquiera que sea su contenido. Haciendo referencia a la pretensión y retención husserlianas, lo expone en los siguientes términos el filósofo andaluz:

17 EL, 163.
La representación del futuro a título de futuro—es decir, no tan solo de aquello que lo es, sino precisamente de su serlo—supera el conocimiento meramente instintivo . . . pues la misma vivencia del presente connota la expectativa del futuro y una cierta retención de lo pasado.\textsuperscript{18}

La autodeterminación trae consigo que me adelante en la conciencia a aquello que todavía no es efectivo y que pretendo proyectivamente que lo sea.

Una segunda condición para la autodeterminación es la inclusión de alguna razón que la justifique, pero sin operar como causa eficiente determinante, sino meramente como pro-positiva e incapaz, por tanto, de determinar de suyo la conducta lo que pasa por ser un proyecto de acción antes de su realización de hecho. Formar un proyecto es ya un ejercicio de la libertad, en el que esta se anticipa al tiempo para regresar luego de lo proyectado a los medios más próximos, en los que aquel cobra efectividad. El orden intencional entre el fin y los medios es el inverso al orden efectivo-temporal, que va de los medios \textit{hic et nunc} a los otros medios más alejados y, en último término, al fin.\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Primum in intentione, ultimum in executione}. Para Millán-Puelles la autodeterminación en la producción es viable debido a la auto-proyección que precede al producir. “En el proyecto de su actividad productiva, el hombre se auto-proyecta como trabajador.”\textsuperscript{20} En esta auto-proyección—que es a la vez un saberse del agente que la está proyectando—reside el origen del artificio que es inseparable de la actividad humana productiva, co-

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}, 166–167.

\textsuperscript{19} “[E]n la realización final los medios funcionan como causas y el fin como efecto. De este modo se refleja claramente la ley categorial básica: el nexo final es dependiente del nexo causal; solo puede entrar en acción cuando este ya existe” (Nicolai Hartmann, \textit{Ética} [Madrid: Encuentro, 2011], 704). Siendo ciertas, las consideraciones hartmannianas dejan en la sombra, no obstante, la conversión de las causas en oportunidades, dependientes no tanto de nexos causales como de la inventiva humana, por ejemplo, al convertir un palo en una flecha o en una jabalina.

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{EL}, 169.
mo también se basa en ella el modo artificial según el cual, como se vio, se satisfacen sus necesidades orgánicas o primarias. Con ello Millán-Puelles quiere subrayar que la producción no es un proceso que se pueda explicar solamente por la particular especialización—o falta de especialización—orgánica de su agente.

Pero también la libertad psíquica se presenta en economía bajo la forma de opción/rechazo ante varias alternativas. Lo cual hace posible definir la economía como asignación de recursos a usos alternativos. No se trata meramente de la libertad de aceptar o rehusar algo, sino de crear y diligenciar oportunidades de acción con los recursos de que se dispone. Como son recursos escasos, hay que aprovecharlos y extraerles rendimiento. El apremio que antes advertimos por el lado de las necesidades económicas, ahora lo encontramos también en función de los recursos disponibles y en primer término en función del tiempo que tenemos, que siempre es limitado. *Ars longa, vita brevis.* Pero las posibilidades que se nos abren son indefinidas, con la apertura de la libertad, que se difracta en los múltiples usos ideados de modo alternativo. Un abrigo, una piel de león, un gabán o un chaquetón son distintas maneras de resguardarme, cuya confección y elección dependen de la libre inventiva de su confeccionador y usuario. Igual cabría decir de la marca de coche empleado para los desplazamientos, etc.

¿Cómo es posible adquirir la libertad moral mediante actos económicos?

De entrada, parece inviable el intento de acoplar la libertad moral como hábito adquirido en la voluntad con los actos económicamente prescritos, si es que se trata de áreas de actividad regidas por leyes distintas. A este respecto, no han faltado planteamientos explicativos del comportamiento del homo oeconomicus que obedecen íntegramente a una dinámica propia (sea la de la mano invisible de Adam Smith o la autorregulación del mercado), de modo que toda restricción moral re-
sultara impertinente. La búsqueda del beneficio actuaría como incentivo psicológico suficiente para propulsar la actividad económica y crear la riqueza de las naciones. En la misma línea se ha llegado a decir por B. Mandeville que los vicios privados son virtudes públicas.

Frente a tal separación vamos a esclarecer por el momento algunos motivos de convergencia entre economía y moral. En primer término, la moral comporta una suerte de administración o economía en el tiempo como bien disponible, pero escaso; y, de modo inverso, entendemos como vicioso el malgastar o consumir inútilmente el tiempo. Las connotaciones económicas también se reflejan en la prudencia, la cual, como generadora de las virtudes morales (*genetrix virtutum*), incluye la previsión ante los medios, que, si bien no se resuelve en un cálculo cuantitativo, empieza por tomar distancia ante ellos y sopesar sus ventajas e inconvenientes buscando acertar. Indudablemente, si el tiempo no fuera para el hombre escaso, es decir, no prolongable *in infinitum* y necesitado, por tanto, de regulación y aprovechamiento, la ética carecería de sentido, ya que cualquier decisión moral podría ser aplazada *sine die*. Pero lo cierto es lo contrario. En este sentido, por ejemplo, el enfoque de Leonardo Polo:

> Desde el punto vista temporal del hombre, la ética es el modo de no perder el tiempo. Vivir éticamente es vivir sin perder el tiempo. Dicho de modo positivo: es el modo en que el hombre gana tiempo... La ética es aquel modo de usar el propio tiempo según el cual el hombre crece como un ser completo, no solo somáticamente.21

Diríamos que la ética afronta el reto del tiempo—consistentemente en un desgaste continuo—dándole la vuelta y sacándole rendimiento mediante el crecimiento. Crecer es caminar en el sentido opuesto al tiempo, no solo neutralizando el desgaste o pérdida que trae consigo, sino incluso obte

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que es una amenaza ante un peligro en la virtud de la fortaleza como hábito creciente. Hasta aquí la similitud entre ética y quehacer económico, entendidos ambos como modos de aprovechamiento.

Otra noción que enlaza estrechamente la economía con la ética es la de bienestar, en la medida en que este no está sólo en el trasfondo de los actos económicos, sino que también forma parte del *bonum hum-num* como objeto de la ética. Es, pues, un concepto-puente entre ambas. Así lo entiende Millán-Puelles: “Por tanto, sólo en virtud de que el quehacer económico tiende *intrínsecamente* al bienestar, puede ser este el objeto de una cuestión común a la economía y a la ética.”22 Ciertamente, sin el bienestar se haría imposible la economía, al animalizarse el acto de consumo en que desemboca la satisfacción de las necesidades, pero también se malograría el bien humano, que tiene en el bienestar, como representativo del exceso humano sobre sus condiciones materiales, uno de sus componentes. “De aquí que no haya ningún excesivo bienestar nada más que si el hombre, no por humanizar los medios de los que se sirve en su existencia, sino por la manera en que lo logra y por el uso que realmente haga de las posibilidades conseguidas, se comporta de modo que descuide los más altos valores.”23 El bienestar material ha de hacerse éticamente compatible con los otros componentes superiores del bien humano, residiendo en ello, y no intrínsecamente en su noción, las exigencias éticas relativas a su limitación. Estas exigencias se resumen para nuestro autor en la humanización en el trato con las cosas que se manejan como bienes económicos o, según también dice, en poseerlas en vez de ser poseídos por ellas y en la apertura al bien común de aquellos que concurren en la misma actividad económica, de modo que conformen entre unos y otros un bien común sustantivo (no una convergencia más o menos aleatoria de bienes individuales), con-

22 *EL*, 262.
trariamente a toda reclusión en el individualismo egoísta, que llevaría a perseguir el bien individual a toda costa.

Si bien obedeciendo a unas leyes propias de tipo económico, los actos económicos no son una excepción dentro de los actos humanos, a los que no fueran aplicables los principios éticos. Con todo, tal aplicación ha de contar con las circunstancias económicas de hecho, análogamente a como la actuación política tampoco deriva de unos principios éticos abstractos, sino que está mediatizada por el bien político específico que trata de promover. ¿Cómo ejercer, entonces, la normatividad sobre una actuación que está ya sometida a una normatividad específica, en este caso en vista de los recursos escasos y la necesidad de ellos para la manutención de todo hombre? La respuesta de Millán-Puelles está en otorgar un sentido extrínseco y negativo a los principios morales normativos en relación con las reglas de la actividad económica, en el sentido que a continuación veremos.

En suma: la afirmación según la cual el uso de la moral para el quehacer económico es tan sólo el de una ‘norma negativa’, resulta forzosamente del carácter autónomo de la economía en su esfera propia y específica . . . De ahí también que sea extrínseco, tanto a la economía como a la técnica médica, el uso de la moral en calidad de norma negativa, pues lo que ello en sustancia significa es que la Economía y la Medicina carecen de competencia para ordenar moralmente sus aplicaciones a la práctica, de suerte que una tal ordenación solamente es posible en la medida en que les viene de fuera. Lo cual no quiere decir que las normas morales sean externas a los economistas o a los médicos.24

Creo que no se entiende bien este tipo peculiar de subordinación de la economía a la ética si no se la advierte dentro de aquella actividad humana que está inserta según la misma subordinación en ambos terrenos: tal es el trabajo. Con el examen de las dos dimensiones, objetiva

y subjetiva, que concurren en el trabajo poniendo de manifiesto respectivamente su carácter productivo y perfeccionador del agente que lo realiza, concluiremos estas consideraciones.

La vertiente objetiva del trabajo reside en aquello constatable desde fuera y en lo que el trabajo se acredita: “esto es mi trabajo.” Pero también le va asociada una faceta subjetiva, por la que me esfuerzo al elaborarlo: “es el trabajo que me cuesta.” Ambas son indisociables, de modo que sin unos resultados externos se convertiría en un juego, con su componente de ilusión, o en un entrenamiento en orden a . . ., y sin el afán o superación internos equivaldría a una creación desde la nada. Pero si la primera posibilidad no llega a ser trabajo productivo, la segunda sobrepasa las capacidades humanas.

También se las puede denominar dimensiones inmanente y transitiva o transeúnte del trabajo, en atención a sus lados interno y externo. La dimensión inmanente se traduce en los hábitos intelectivos y volúptuarios adquiridos con su realización: tales son la destreza o habilidad correspondiente, la diligencia en emprenderlo, la perseverancia en su puesta en práctica, la paciencia en tanto que hay un sobreponerse a las dificultades . . . Por otra parte, el tiempo, antes aludido como motivo ético-económico, re aparece asimismo en el trabajo productivo, ya que, a diferencia de la contemplación, como actividad máximamente integrada que goza ya de su término, el trabajo tiene a este a distancia, y esta distancia, progresivamente salvada, es temporal, participando a su vez de la contemplación a medida que va eliminando tal distancia y gozando por adelantado de su término. A mi juicio, en esta estructura del

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25 La distinción entre las dimensiones objetiva y subjetiva del trabajo y la subordinación de la primera a la segunda están formuladas con toda precisión por Juan Pablo II en su Encíclica Laborem Exercens (1981), de donde la hemos tomado.

26 Rafael Alvira lo explica del siguiente modo: “Si la actividad es ya final, actividad ‘en el reposo’, no hay trabajo. Por eso mismo, el trabajo tiene que ver directamente con el tiempo, pues la distancia, desde el punto de vista de la actividad, no la mide el espacio, sino el tiempo. Hay que observar que a las actividades que no son trabajo no las mide
Dialectical Polarity between Freedom and Necessity in Economic Activity in the Light of the Work of Antonio Millán-Puelles

SUMMARY
In the light of the work of Antonio Millán-Puelles, the article seeks to discuss the correlations between human needs, welfare and freedom in their most basic forms of economic praxis. The reason for such correlations lies in the corporeal mediation of economic activity which is already present at the level of their subsistence; this mediation is that on which the very fact of economic experience depends. Following the phenomenology of economic activity, the article also discusses the consciousness of designing, previous to production, and the self-determination of a designer. It concludes that the correlations between human needs, welfare and freedom are all based on anthropology that does not reduce man to a mere body or a mere cogito.

KEYWORDS
Antonio Millán-Puelles, welfare, needs, freedom, money, work, economics, morality.

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esencialmente el tiempo” (id., “¿Qué significa trabajo?,” Estudios sobre la Encíclica Laborem Exercens, F. Fernández (coord.) [Madrid: BAC, 1987], 186).
Arkadiusz Gudaniec

The Existential Metaphysics of the Person. Part 1: The Classical Concept of the Person and the Metaphysical Theory of Esse

The question of the status of the person still turns out to be one of the most important problems of the contemporary world. Both the theoretical question of “what is the human being?,” of key importance to philosophical anthropology, as well as important for humanity of all times, the existential version of that question “who am I?,” have accompanied man or woman since the dawn of their intellectual reflection on the nature of the world and the meaning of their own life. They have always been so, and nowadays they are probably more important to humankind than ever due to the important socio-cultural, ideological, legal, etc., aspects, with their more or less clear consequences in the practical life of individuals and societies.

This paper is a brief presentation of a research project aimed at introducing the idea of the existential metaphysics of the person. Firstly, the roots of this concept will be discussed in the light of the classical concept of the person and, in particular, of the philosophical theories of St. Thomas Aquinas, as well as a contemporary version of the metaphysics of the person devised within the Lublin Philosophical School in Po-
Against this background, secondly, an attempt will be made to show the philosophical breakthrough that the concept of personal existence (esse personale) can and should bring about, with an indication of the most important theoretical consequences of its adoption.

Classical Concept of the Person

In the culture of ancient Greece, the awareness of the spiritual greatness of the human being came to the forefront for the first time so that it became important and significant for the subsequent course of history. Since then, the sense of human uniqueness, which is crucial in the history of our culture, has manifested itself in all areas of intellectual activity, from art, through science, to religion and the concept of education (here, in particular, the ideal of Greek paideia). This pattern has found its significant and creative continuation in various currents which had been developing in European culture since the Middle Ages, through the Renaissance, up until modern times.

Particularly noteworthy are the concepts of several outstanding philosophers, which have become milestones in the development of understanding the uniqueness of the human person. In Plato’s thoughts, the awareness of the explicit distinctiveness of the human being was echoed most significantly, which in turn gave rise to the path of idealism that posed the threat of marginalizing the real context of life to a

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1 This article adopts the name “Lublin Philosophical School,” although other versions of this name, such as “Lublin School of Philosophy” or “Lublin School of Classical Philosophy,” are also encountered in the literature. See Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik and Paweł Gondek, “Preface to the English Edition: Faithful to the Truth – Faithful to Reality,” in The Lublin Philosophical School. History – Conceptions – Disputes, ed. Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik, Paweł Gondek (Lublin: KUL, 2020), 10–11 [hereafter cited as: The Lublin Philosophical School]. The decisive factor in choosing this version was the fact that this is the title of the first monograph on the subject in English: Mieczysław A. Krapiec, Andrzej Maryniarczyk, The Lublin Philosophical School, trans. Hugh McDonald (Lublin: PTTA, 2010).
greater or lesser extent, and of detaching the human subject from reality.

Aristotle, undertaking his considerations essentially in the background of discussions with Plato, sensed a similar distinctiveness of the person—for instance, in the concept of friendship, where a friend was understood as a good in itself. In the scientific explanation of the human being as an empirically given fact, Aristotle focused on the natural and empirical dimension of the human being, at the same time looking for reasons for its rationality which is the principle of cultural activity and the basis for the pursuit of moral and cognitive perfection. A deeper analysis of intellectual cognition revealed the uniqueness of the nature of intellect as the supreme power of the human being, which—in order to make possible the necessary and general cognizance of the particular objects of the material world—must be immaterial. Taking into account the profoundly realistic stance of the Stagirite thinker, it can be assumed that the lack of a final systemic solution to the problem of the theory of the nature of intellect converging with the human unity thesis resulted from understanding the proposed explanation to be only an in-

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3 Moreover, it should be remembered that the concept of the human being in the thought of the Stagirite thinker was constructed in opposition not only to Plato’s dualistic explanations, but also to the extremely naturalistic theories of atomists, in the light of which the human being was understood as a purely physical being, completely subject to the principles of the natural world and did not differ significantly from other physical beings.

4 Among other things, the Stagirite thinker was confronted with the problem of two ways of defining the human being: on the one hand, the human being is defined by the form alone (i.e., the rational soul), and on the other hand, the human being is defined as a whole composed of soul and body. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1037a, in *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, vol. 17 & 18, trans. H. Tredennick (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1933).
tuitive perception of the correct interpretation path, which needs to be supplemented and continued.\(^5\)

Thus, despite the fact that Aristotle’s essentialism and the concept of separating the intellect from the soul prevented the emergence of a concept of the person on the grounds of classical Greek philosophy, in the following centuries, on the basis of his intuition, a classical concept of the person was developed, based on the hylomorphic unity of the human being and the concept of the human soul as a substantial form. In the period of Christian antiquity and the Middle Ages, the radical distinctiveness of the person (persona, hypostasis, subsistencia, etc.) was noted in a variety of ways, especially by St. Augustine, Boethius, Richard of St. Victor and St. Thomas Aquinas (as well as other Scholastics). The definition of the person in the basic Boethian wording (rationalis naturae individua substantia)\(^6\) in Richard of St. Victor became: rationalis naturae incommunicabilis existentia,\(^7\) replacing the Aristotelian term substantia with existentia, indicating on the unique way of the person existence. The version given by St. Thomas Aquinas, individuum subsistens in rationali natura,\(^8\) in turn draws attention to a new, in comparison to the previous descriptions, relationship between

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5 This subject is addressed in my article: “Ludzka natura podstawą rozumnego działania,” in O metafizyce Arystotelesa, ed. Andrzej Maryniarczyk, Natalia Kunat, Zbigniew Pańpuch (Lublin: PTTA, 2017), 295–315.


8 “Persona significat id quod est perfectissimum in tota natura, scilicet subsistens in rationali natura” (Thomae Aquinatis, Summa Theologiae, I, q. 29, a. 3 [hereafter cited as: S.Th.]); “Oportet quod persona divina significet subsistens distinctum in natura divina, sicut persona humana significat subsistens distinctum in natura humana” (id., Quaestiones disputatae de potentia, q. 9, a. 4); “Res autem subsistens in intellectualibus naturis vocatur persona” (id., Summa contra Gentiles, IV, cap.10, no. 6). The collection of Aquinas’s works in the original, Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia, is available online—see the section References for details.
The Existential Metaphysics of the Person

the individual and nature, which is expressed not by the genitive (*rationalis naturae*), but by the adverbial (*in rationali natura*), which subsequently reduces the dependence of an individual on nature. Moreover, the active form of the verb (*subsistens*) used here points to the subject as an autonomous being, to a greater extent. Aquinas’s modification of Boethius’s definition, as can be judged on the basis of a cursory grammatical analysis of the term, proceeds more clearly than its previous versions to highlighting the specificity of personal *esse*.

It should be noted that in the contexts outlined above, actually apart from the intuitions expressed in the modifications of the definition of the person performed by Richard of St. Victor and St. Thomas Aquinas, there was a lack of an account of the person which emphasized the specificity of their existence. The proof thereof is the Boethius’s definition of the person, adopted almost universally in the theological and philosophical writings of those times, indicating the common holding of human nature as a distinct sort of substance. Upon discovering the uniqueness of the human person in many themes of Greek-Latin-Christian culture, the absence of theoretical justification for this phenomenon nonetheless constituted a serious shortcoming. In this sense, an important role was played by new ideas which emerged in early modern philosophy, placing a strong emphasis on the sphere of subjectiveness. Despite the excessive emphasis and even the absolutization of subjectivity, which occurred within the realm of epistemologically oriented philosophy of the subject, the legacy of the period nonetheless may constitute a

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9 However, one must consider the theological context of medieval disputes about the person which refer to the term *esse personale* in Aquinas’s writings (among others in *Super Sententiarum* III, *Summa Theologiae* III, *Summa contra Gentiles* IV). While discussing the problem of the personal existence of God (Christ), it was pointed out that God assumes the form of a human being, not becoming another act of existence, but thanks to personal existence God may assume a human nature. This context, although focused on considerations concerning the person of Christ, allowed one to emphasize the meaning of *esse personale* also in the case of the human being which the Son of God becomes.
valuable background for personalistic reflection. However, it is worth noting that reaching for these achievements from the cogito perspective introduces the theories of a person into the area of subjectivist-oriented considerations, which are burdened with numerous theoretical difficulties.  

**St. Thomas Aquinas, the Esse Theory and the Theory of the Person**

According to the so-called existential interpretation of Thomas Aquinas’s metaphysics, a being consists of its existence (esse) and conceptually perceivable essence which becomes real thanks to esse: existence is an act in relation to essence which functions as an ontic potentiality. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec noted that:

According to Aquinas, existence is not an accident of being (as a separate substance); the substantial order does not exist first as some sort of pure content or possibility that would then be realized by “grafting” existence to it, and existence would basically change nothing in the thing. . . . In such a conception of the being, existence was outside of its brackets—it could be or not be, and being would still be intelligible as the result of the apprehension of its necessary connections that are constituted by substantiality and the content of being. . . . The conception of being that Thomas Aquinas formulated is the exact opposite of the conceptions of being that were before him. While Aquinas did accept Aristotle’s intuition, he saw that it applied only to the substantial order. The truth is that being “is composed” of act and potency, and that this act in being is its substantial form, which gives un-

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derstanding and content-meaning to being, since the content by itself of being is not yet a full being. For a being to be a real being, it must exist. The possession alone of determined content does not distinguish being from so-called nothingness, but the fact of real and concrete existence does.\textsuperscript{12}

Applying the concept of \textit{esse ut actus essendi} to the problem of a person as such allows one to raise the subject of the specificity of personal existence in anthropology. One can find harbingers of anthropological personalism in many of Aquinas’s works, in which the problem of the person is posed in a universal perspective, i.e., independently from a theological context. Examples include the following texts: “The existence of being belongs to the subsisting person, inasmuch as it has a relation to such a nature;”\textsuperscript{13} “Existence belongs to the very constitution of a person . . . and therefore the unity of a person requires the unity of existence itself, which is complete and personal.”\textsuperscript{14}

The emergence of the metaphysical concept of \textit{esse} ultimately led to a significant modification of the theory of act and potency, and hence also of the theory of the hylomorphic unity of the human being. The absolute novum of Thomas Aquinas’s anthropology which still has not been sufficiently examined, is the thesis that assigns the soul its own act of existence, which it provides to the body, while being the substantial form thereof:

The soul communicates that existence in which it subsists to the corporeal matter, out of which and the intellectual soul there re-


\textsuperscript{13} “Ipsum esse est personae subsistentis, secundum quod habet habitudinem ad talem naturam” (\textit{S.Th.}, III, q. 17, a. 2, ad 4). Own translation. Cf. M. A. Krąpiec’s interpretation: “a person is . . . an existence which is appropriate and proportional with regards to a concrete individual nature” (Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, \textit{Ja – człowiek} [Lublin: RW KUL, 1991], 414).

\textsuperscript{14} “Esse pertinet ad ipsam constitutionem personae . . . Et ideo unitas personae requirit unitatem ipsius esse completi et personalis” (\textit{S.Th.}, q. 19, a. 1, ad 4). Own translation.
sults unity of existence; so that the existence of the whole composite is also the existence of the soul. This is not the case with other non-subsistent forms. For this reason the human soul retains its own existence after the dissolution of the body; whereas it is not so with other forms.  

The case of the human being is therefore a distinct case in all of nature and indicates the uniqueness of the human being, the basis of which is the uniqueness of the human soul, uniquely possessing its own existence (esse). This soul, while acting with regard to the body as a substantial form, grants the body its existence. Thus the human body and the entire human person exists through the existence of the autonomous soul which is capable of transcending matter and creating its own body. The entirety of the human being, including both human spirituality and corporeality, is therefore permeated by the same personal esse, attributed to the autonomous soul. It is worth paying attention to the fact that we are dealing with a certain type of internal participation: the body participates in the existence of the soul, thanks to which it is a human body, i.e., a body constituting an essential element of a person, a body “elevated” from a purely natural level up to the level of personal living.

The soul’s own act of existence presents also a perfectly unitary subject (esse is a unitary act), the most identical with itself, existing within itself. A person is a distinct subject described with the term subsistentia (subsistent being). A subsistent being means the most perfect substance and exemplary type of existence.  

15 “Anima illud esse in quo ipsa subsistit, communicat materiae corporali, ex qua et anima intellectiva fit unum, ita quod illud esse, quod est totius compositi, est etiam ipsius animae. Quod non accidit in aliis formis, quae non sunt subsistentes. Et propter hoc anima humana remanet in suo esse, destructo corpore, non autem aliae formae” (S.Th., I, q. 76, a. 1, ad 5).

16 The interpretive procedure of contrasting the person, as subsistence, with non-personal entities, which are merely substances, is encountered. While appreciating the intentions of such a distinction, it should be emphasized, however, that a human person

being, the substantial subject has its foundation in a distinct sort of existence which not only permits the perfect ontic unity of the corporeal and spiritual spheres, but is also the principle of self-awareness and inner experience, a peculiar kind of person’s core. This subject is the autonomous author of their own actions and is focused on fulfilling the goals cognized by themselves. According to Vittorio Possenti:

The *in se* character of personal existence simply means that the person exists as an autonomous and completely singular being rather than as a mode or a property of some other being. The foundation of a person’s independence, autonomy, and freedom lies in his being a substantial whole, for which reason he has value in himself and not because he exists as some part of an overarching totality. This is precisely why being a person is so paradoxical: on a purely naturalistic level, the person appears as nothing more than a minute particle within a vast cosmos; but if we take a moment to reflect ontologically on the person, he shows himself to constitute an entire universe.17

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is a specific type of entity, and therefore a being-substance. Instead of contrasting “subsistent being” with “substantial being,” which can lead to a radicalization of human nature, e.g., by turning toward angelism, it seems that on the ground of St. Thomas’s philosophy, the analogical use of the term “substance” is more adequate. Its particular type is a subsistent being which is a personal manner of substantial existence.

17 Possenti, *Nihilism and Metaphysics*, 286. Moreover the author notices that: “Interiority is a property exclusive to persons as subjects capable of returning to themselves, reaching within themselves, deliberating, and opening themselves to relations with others. Interiority, therefore, is not just a particular psychological aspect having something to do with consciousness and memory; rather, it constitutes a modality of being. It is a ‘revelation’ of the fact that not everything lies at the superficial level of extension and duration; personal being has a more profound and intimate dimension. It is not by *extensio* that man reaches out toward the temporal and changeable, nor is it through *distensio* that he opens up toward spatial otherness; it is rather through *intentio* that he focuses on the ‘inner’ and on the ‘focal point’ that we call interior existence . . . interiority is the universal category through which the person reawakens to himself and to the truth.” *Ibid.*, 284.
The Distinct Features of the Philosophical Anthropology of the Lublin Philosophical School

Anthropological inquiries conducted within the Lublin Philosophical School refer both to Thomas Aquinas’s metaphysics of the human being and to the accomplishments of the early modern age as well as to contemporary times with regard to describing and comprehending the subjective realm in human experience. Attention was drawn (especially by Karol Wojtyła) to the necessity of deepening the subject-oriented aspect of the understanding of a person, in contrast with the object-oriented understanding which dominated classical philosophy. For this purpose, among others, important attempts to harmonize these aspects were undertaken, perceiving this process not only as a methodological requirement for conducting anthropological inquiries, but as a fundamental element of perceiving the very essence of a person.¹⁸

Karol Wojtyła drew upon the achievements of the philosophy of the subject and the phenomenological method when describing human internal experience. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, in turn, largely modernized classical metaphysics, moving the emphasis from the concept of the soul to the personal “I” given in experience. These approaches turn out to be complementary in demonstrating the essence of the human being—for instance, in revealing the person in the act, i.e., in what the person expresses themselves most fully as a person (as described by Karol Wojtyła) thus leading to the revealing of personal existence, which converges on the grounds of metaphysics (elaborated upon by Mieczysław A. Krąpiec) with the existence of the immaterial soul, as fulfilled

¹⁸ On the Lublin Philosophical School, see: Krąpiec & Maryniarczyk, The Lublin Philosophical School.
through spiritual acts for which it requires the participation of the body.¹⁹

Despite philosophical anthropology being parallelly practiced in two different ways—as the metaphysics of the human being (Mieczysław A. Krapiec) and as the phenomenology of the moral subject (Karol Wojtyła)—the inquiries conducted in the Lublin Philosophical School converged in performing a common research task, the result of which was an original philosophical concept of the person.²⁰ Different ways of carrying out this task should be considered as its essential and significant element—also expressing the openness of this sort of personalism to modification and additions. Common features that distinguished the metaphysics of the person devised in the Lublin Philosophical School include: realism, the concept of experience, the pursuit of ultimate (metaphysical) reasons, the utility of metaphysics in the theory of the person, and the ontic status of the person as revealed through internal experience (“I”). The most important properties of these features are as follows:

1. **Realism.** The human being from the start is analyzed as a real being, cognized in the context of other beings which surround them, and also in the context of the specifically human experience of themselves. Realism assumes an objective order of reality which is the point of reference for the philosophical explanation of any fact or phenomenon. Personalism in the Lublin Philosophical School is a realistic concept, hence the person is understood as a real being, cognized in a commonsense manner and at the same time is accessible via distinct internal experience.

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¹⁹ More on this topic can be found in my book: *U podstaw bytowej jedności człowieka* (Lublin: PTTA-KUL, 2016), 263f.

²⁰ More on this topic can be found in my article: “Metaphysics of the Person: The Specificity of Personalism in the Lublin Philosophical School,” in *The Lublin Philosophical School*, 121–141.
2. The concept of experience. The realistic approach requires one to take into account all discernible aspects of cognition. Within the Lublin Philosophical School it was acknowledged that the primal experience of the human being must be comprehensively understood; it cannot be reduced either to phenomenalism or rationalism. The concept of experience assumed in classical philosophy is based on pre-scientific cognition, which guarantees cognitive autonomy and the independence of philosophy from the sciences and the assumptions thereof.\textsuperscript{21} The human being is given in the entirety of experience: the cognition of the external world actually occurs within the human being, the subject in turn recognizes itself as someone that exists in the world, as one of the beings of the world.

3. The pursuit of ultimate reasons. The pursuit of the ultimate reasons of investigated facts comes from the common heritage of classical philosophy. The path from experience to understanding, i.e., to a theory of the person, must lead through metaphysical analysis. The objective of philosophical reflection should be to accurately expose and adequately explain what is directly given in order to thus show the personal nature of the human being.\textsuperscript{22} On account of this, the purpose of anthropology is to ultimately explain the human being as a real fact, i.e., as a being and subject given in the primordial experience of oneself

\textsuperscript{21} Krąpiec criticized the assertion, proposed already in his time, that the basic fact of philosophical anthropology is an image of the human being derived from the particular sciences. However, this image is only apparently homogenous. Moreover, out of necessity it contains numerous cognitive implications in the form of assumptions referring to a particular philosophy or theory of science. See Krąpiec, \textit{Ja – człowiek}, 57.

\textsuperscript{22} Cf. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, \textit{"Man in The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy"}, \textit{Studia Gilsoniana} 7, no. 4 (October–December 2018): 638–639. The human being, while experiencing directly their own existence, still does not know whom they are. This means they do not know their essence. The analysis of the acts recognized as “mine” in the dynamics of this particular direct experience is aimed at comprehensively cognizing that whom someone is, that is cognizing the essence of the experienced “I,” and thus this “I’s” nature, understood as the source of determined action.
The essence of personalism in the Lublin Philosophical School is thus the pursuit of the human (personal) essence in a metaphysical sense.

4. The utility of metaphysics in the theory of the person. The metaphysics of the person, created within the Lublin Philosophical School, is founded on a synthesis of the distinct personal experience described at the point of departure and a metaphysical explanation achieved on the path of justification. The pursuit of the ultimate justification of the person is a pursuit of the ontic grounding of personalism, thanks to which personal experience becomes to a certain degree correlated with metaphysical theories. This sort of justification is the essence of adequately understood metaphysics of the person.

5. The ontic status of the person. The person is a subject in a metaphysical sense, i.e., a substance, and at the same time is a self-aware subject, i.e., a unique and unrepeatable “I.” Personalism within the Lublin Philosophical School is a realistic conception, hence a person is understood as a real being, cognized in a commonsense manner and at the same time is accessible by distinct internal experience. Realistic metaphysics of the person is a strictly rational and philosophical conception, often going against contemporary approaches focused on explaining the human being only in an eclectic or methodologically inconsistent manner. This personalism guides the way for an ultimate explanation of the person and leads to revealing the person’s deepest dimension which can be reduced neither to a purely empirical level nor to a purely immanent one.

The personalism of the Lublin Philosophical School undoubtedly was influenced by the times in which it was formed. It provided crucial theoretical support in the struggle against communist ideology and was a serious voice in the philosophical dispute with Marxism, materialism and utilitarianism. Nonetheless, the role of the concepts it developed is not reducible solely to historical-cultural or social-ideological issues. As was the case with other accomplishments of the Lublin Philosophi-
Arkadiusz Gudaniec

The School, the historical and social context became a crucial impulse to meticulously elaborate universally significant concepts. As a result of anthropological inquiries, an original and unique model of metaphysics of the person was formed, which constituted a firm foundation for subsequent investigations and confrontations. The need for the continuation and theoretical verification of the acquired results is to a large extent a result of the spirit of classical philosophy itself, which is open to all sorts of additions and modifications, even corrections; as a form of cognition it continuously improves upon itself and is verified in its deciphering of objective states of affairs.

Conclusion

A theoretical model of metaphysics of the person should therefore be perceived as a distinct research project, which on the one hand has precisely determined foundations, and on the other hand—is open to modifications and requires continuation. This particularly refers to the effort made in developing basic argumentation, discovering new research paths and aspects, and strengthening the rational grounding of the system of hypotheses as well as empirically visualizing them. The foundation for such a continuation includes an assumption that this model has not become outdated, but rather turns out to be remarkably useful and creative, especially in times of a genuine crisis of rational thinking about the human being and culture. However, in order to demonstrate its potential, one should most of all confront the model with other currently debated propositions and expose it to contemporary theoretical challenges.

The uniqueness of the metaphysics of the person, presented in this paper as the existential metaphysics of the person, consists in the particular role played within it by the category of personal existence. The concept of esse personale in its rudimentary and non-systematic
form emerged, in a variety of ways, in the anthropological inquiries conducted by Karol Wojtyła and Mieczysław A. Krąpiec. Their attempts to a large extent refer to those undertaken by Thomas Aquinas to combine existential metaphysics of being (esse ut actus essendi) with the theory of the person as the most perfect type of existence. The concept of esse personale should be considered as a particularly profound and prospective element of the metaphysics of the person: based on Aquinas’s ideas and focused on developing and modifying them. This is precisely what the concept of esse personale is: the theoretical core of the metaphysics of the person. It is also the foundation for further work on a more complete and adequate understanding of the person. An outline of the project—some essential elements of the existential metaphysics of the person—will be presented in the second part of the paper.

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The Existential Metaphysics of the Person. Part 1: The Classical Concept of the Person and the Metaphysical Theory of Esse

SUMMARY

The article is the first part of a brief presentation of a research project aimed at introducing the concept of the existential metaphysics of the person—a contribution to classical anthropology based on so-called existential metaphysics. Firstly, it discusses the roots of this concept in the light of the classical concept of person and of the philosophical thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. In particular, it discusses Aquinas’s significant achievement in combining the philosophical-theological concept of the person with the metaphysical theory of existence as an act of being (esse ut actus essendi). Secondly, it presents the theoretical model of the metaphysics of the person, developed in the Lublin Philosophical School in Poland, as a modernized version of Aquinas’s concept. The particular core of this theory is the concept of personal existence (esse personale), opening the way for new ground-breaking interpretations.

KEYWORDS

Lublin Philosophical School, Thomas Aquinas, Karol Wojtyła, Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, man, human being, person, philosophical anthropology, philosophy of man, metaphysics of the person, metaphysical personalism, existence, personal existence,
esse personale, esse, esse ut actus essendi, realistic metaphysics, existential metaphysics, definition of the person.

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Jason Nehez

The Moral Philosophy of Lucretius and Aquinas: Competing Ends and Means

Should a firearm be considered accurate, if after it had been fired, the marksmen were to draw the bullseye, which had not previously existed, around the place in which the projectile struck? While a sufficient explanation could be provided for why the firearm was able to hit dead center each time it was fired, something would seem to be missing, or artificial, in the results calculated thereafter. The true desire or measure for accuracy of a firearm is that it reaches the desired end at which it is aimed. Therefore, it is the end or projected final result that defines the start of the consideration of the firearm and its measure of its good or bad operation.

Analogously, the human person and the actions of the person must be for some end for which a measure can be made whether the operation has been done accurately. Misunderstand the end, and you will end up with artificial results. Deny the end and you will deny the thing itself! This presentation aims to consider contradictory and competing ends. The first, that of Lucretius, an atomist of the first century BC, finds where the projectile has struck in common human experience and draws his bullseye of atomism around the experience. St. Thomas on the other hand, following the philosophy of Aristotle, aims to perfect understanding by wisdom and the ordering of ideas to make an accurate
portrayal of the science of moral philosophy that hits its target by proper aim to proper ends.

In the following presentation we will first explain wisdom and its importance to moral philosophy. We will follow with a consideration of the nature of things and the soul as told by Lucretius (for a discussion of natures is needed to understand Lucretius’ ethics and moral philosophy). We will then present a brief summary on St. Thomas understanding of soul and how his faculty psychology is a superior explanation of moral philosophy. We’ll conclude by showing how Lucretius’ ethical system fails and to attain true happiness we must take up a faculty psychology aimed at virtue and the perfection of the soul, the principle form of the human person.

Crucial is at the start of any good endeavor to set a framework and intent of the topic of consideration. In this way we will follow the lead of St. Thomas as he considers Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* and use this understanding in a comparison of his ethics to that of Lucretius and the atomists. St. Thomas’ method is that of wisdom and order. As St. Thomas writes,

[I]t is the business of the wise man to order. The reason for this is that wisdom is the most powerful perfection of reason whose characteristic is to know order. Even if the sensitive powers know some things absolutely, nevertheless to know the order of one thing to another is exclusively the work of intellect or reason.¹

St. Thomas wisely identifies that our senses may know some things absolutely or immediately as they are. It is the power of the intellect and reason to know and order one thing to another. He goes on to say that there are two ways to order: parts to a whole and things to an end. Ordering things to an end is the greater because ultimately all parts to a

whole are inclined to the ends of that whole. This will be especially
critical as we consider the differences between Lucretius and St. Thom-
as on nature and ethics.

St. Thomas then offers four ways reason is related to order. One
way considers not what reason establishes but merely beholds the na-
ture of things. This way we would call natural philosophy and meta-
physics. The second way is reason in establishing its own acts of con-
sideration. We might describe the second way as the arrangement of
concepts, ideas, and signs as we do in rational philosophy or logic. The
third, and primary consideration of this presentation, is deliberation in
the operation of the will. The third way is the order of voluntary acts
which is moral philosophy. To complete the list, the fourth way reason
relates to order is in establishing external things. The fourth way might
be called the mechanical arts or those things related to building and
making.

Moral philosophy does not consider just any human acts ordered
to an end, but only those subject to will and reason. Those acts that hap-
pen ‘automatically’ or naturally such as generation, growth, or breath-
ing are natural actions ordered to an end and not considered under mor-
al philosophy. All men desire the good which is a proper end. Some
might say that there are not a few men who desire evil. St. Thomas
writes, “There is no problem from the fact that some men desire evil.
For they desire evil only under the aspect of good, that is, insofar as
they think it good. Hence their intention primarily aims at the good and
only incidentally touches on the evil.”²

St. Thomas demonstrates that even those who desire evil really
desire an apparent good. They desire some action they think will pro-
cure some good for them. In reality, the action is evil not only because
of the desire but because of the disconnect with the reality of the nature

of the thing. In other words, the action is evil because it misunderstands some order to the reality of the thing. The desire is inclined to some good, whether real or apparent, for the one who acts rightly and the one who acts according to evil. The evil is differentiated because it acts toward an evil end. The one who acts evil acts toward an ‘apparent’ good. The one who acts evil acts according to something that only subjectively appears good to their inclination but in reality is not good. Therefore, we can begin to infer that good will have to consider some end for its achievement.

Having considered order and wisdom and how it pertains to moral considerations, I’d like to spend some time presenting Lucretius’ view on the nature of things. The order of things as they pertain to the whole is the way that we arrive at wisdom. If we have different understandings of the whole we may arrive at different conclusions of what constitutes the parts of that whole, what constitutes an appropriate end, and how we arrive at that end. Lucretius, as he represents the atomism of Democritus and his subsequent ethical theories, will demonstrate a considerable contrast to the metaphysics and ethics of Aristotle and St. Thomas. To understand how the two ethical theories diverge we first must understand the underlying foundation from which they begin.

In Lucretius’ main work, *De Rerum Natura*, or *On the Nature of Things*, we discover his views on the principles of all things including ethics. Very early on Lucretius writes,

> And now, since I have taught that things cannot
> Be born from nothing, nor the same, when born,
> To nothing be recalled, doubt not my words,
> Because our eyes no primal germs perceive;
> For mark those bodies which, though known to be
> In this our world, are yet invisible.  

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Lucretius’ principle ontology and primary first principle is that nothing is created from nothing neither is anything that is destroyed reverted back into nothing. All that is made up of matter has always been and will never pass away.

But we may respond that clearly some things have been that are no more, are they not? The saber toothed tiger, the city of Troy, and the poet Shakespeare can all be considered things that in some way are no longer. So what did Lucretius mean when he says that nothing can be created nor destroyed?

Lucretius hints at the tail end of the quote above that there are invisible things which have impact on our world. Not everything that moves is as a result of something visible to our eyes. He further describes those things in the following passage,

Then too we know the varied smells of things
Yet never to our nostrils see them come;
With eyes we view not burning heats, nor cold,
Nor are we wont men’s voices to behold.
Yet these must be corporeal at the base,
Since thus they smite the senses: naught there is
Save body, having property of touch.  

Here Lucretius describes that there are varied things in the world that are not visible to the eyes yet have their impact on us. Examples are sight, sound, hearing, and some forms of touch. By observation and analogy he hopes we will conclude from these everyday common experiences that are nonetheless invisible to sight to equally trust in his theory concerning invisible principles to all material things. Lucretius is assured we will agree with him because we would in no way doubt these examples.

Lucretius notices that were all things completely solid there could be no movement. We would have one large heap of material incapable
of locomotion. He is able to overcome this challenge to his theory by identifying another physical principle, an antithesis to body: the void.

There’s place intangible, a void and room.
For were it not, things could in nowise move;
Since body’s property to block and check
Would work on all and at times the same.
Thus naught could evermore push forth and go,
Since naught elsewhere would yield a starting place.  

According to Lucretius, this void is the space found around things which is what allows a physical thing to move. The void is also found within composite things. In other words, no composite thing is entirely made up of a solid, or a space, but a combination of body and void.

The only place one does not find void are in non composite things. In Lucretius’ theory these are the primal germs or seeds. These seeds are what we might today call atoms. These are the eternal void-less initial building blocks of all things. Lucretius theory of all things and ultimately his theory of ethics will rest on this physical metaphysics of the world. Therefore, it has been and will be worthwhile to spend some effort in understanding his theory of nature.

Lucretius will unite all three of his principles: (1) nothing comes from nothing and its inverse something cannot return to nothing, (2) primal germs or body are solid, (3) and void to conclude that these initial building blocks must be eternal.

Thus if first bodies be, as I have taught,
Solid, without a void, they must be then
Eternal; and, if matter ne’er had been
Eternal, long ere now had all things gone
Back into nothing utterly, and all
We see around from nothing had been born—
But since I taught above that naught can be
From naught created, nor the once begotten
To naught be summoned back, these primal germs

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Must have an immortality of frame.
And into these must each thing be resolved,
When comes its supreme hour, that thus there be
At hand the stuff for plenishing the world.\textsuperscript{6}

Lucretius solidifies his understanding of the cosmos in this passage. The primal germs are eternal. These seeds have always been, flowing in the void, coming together into composite things by inclination to attachment to other seeds and breaking back apart into the initial building blocks and returning to the flow of the void.

The following passage provides an even more detailed look into Lucretius’ understanding of the primal seeds’ influence on the world,

And beaten backwards to return again,
Hither and thither in all directions round.
Lo, all their shifting movement is of old,
From the primeval atoms; for the same
Primordial seeds of things first move of self,
And then those bodies built of unions small
And nearest, as it were, unto the powers
Of the primeval atoms, are stirred up
By impulse of those atoms’ unseen blows,
And these thereafter goad the next in size;
Thus motion ascends from the primevals on.\textsuperscript{7}

The evershifting, movement of primeval atoms build to our visible composites, like a snowball collecting snowflakes while rolling down a hill. Crucial it will be later to consider how this fundamental understanding of the cosmos influences Lucretius’ ethical considerations.

Before proceeding into Lucretius ethics we must first understand two more components in his metaphysical considerations. In observation of the world there are not a few peculiar happenings that require an explanation by any theory that aims to consider fundamental natures.

\textsuperscript{6} \textit{Ibid.}, Loc. 203.
\textsuperscript{7} \textit{Ibid.}
Firstly, what is the life principle that seems to be in certain things and not in others? For example, what makes the tree grow and the rock not? What is this ability of animal and human creatures to act of their own accord with no direct external influence, such as locomotion? And what of the unique human ability of rationality? Secondly, any theory considering nature must also consider the seemingly universal experience of something beyond ourselves. Are we all there is or is there something or someone more or greater beyond? To truly appreciate Lucretius’ approach to questions of the good we must also understand what is Lucretius’ understanding of the soul and what is Lucretius’ understanding of the gods.

Firstly, we will consider Lucretius’ understanding of the soul. He writes,

Wherefore no less within the primal seeds
Thou must admit, besides all blows and weight,
Some other cause of motion, whence derives
This power in us inborn, of some free act.—
Since naught from nothing can become, we see.
For weight prevents all things should come to pass
Through blows, as ‘twere, by some external force;
But that man’s mind itself in all it does
Hath not a fixed necessity within,
Nor is not, like a conquered thing, compelled
To bear and suffer,—this state comes to man
From that slight swervement of the elements
In no fixed line of space, in no fixed time.
Nor ever was the stock of stuff more crammed,
Nor ever, again, sundered by bigger gaps:
For naught gives increase and naught takes away;
On which account, just as they move to-day,
The elemental bodies moved of old
And shall the same hereafter evermore.⁸

Initially, Lucretius acknowledges the problem we mentioned above. Besides those things that act externally on a person there seems to be some internal and innate source of motion in man. This source of motion, commonly referred to as the mind behaves of its own accord without external influence. Lucretius seems to admit at least some free will. In the latter half of the excerpt above Lucretius gives his explanation for the apparent free will of man.

Lucretius indicates that the source of this motion is in the structure or type of primal germs or atoms that makeup the mind or soul of man. These elements have characteristics that permit them to move in ways not fixed. Lucretius also puts special emphasis on their quantity and whether they are great or slight in number. In other words, the soul is material albeit a very unique material that allows for life, movement, and rationality. According to Lucretius, the soul is not some immaterial actualizing principle but an additional set of material atoms that happen to have the characteristics of motion, sense, thought, etc.

Secondly, we will consider Lucretius’ understanding of the gods. He writes,

When they feign
That gods have established all things but for man,
They seem in all ways mightily to lapse
From reason’s truth: for ev’n if ne’er I knew
What seeds primordial are, yet would I dare
This to affirm, ev’n from deep judgment based
Upon the ways and conduct of the skies—
This to maintain by many a fact besides—
That in no wise the nature of the world
For us was builded by a power divine—
So great the faults it stands encumbered with:
The which, my Memnius, later on, for thee
We will clear up.⁹

⁹ Ibid., Loc 519.
Lucretius provides a two pronged assault on the idea that the world is divinely created. His first argument which is unarticulated but implied is that the understanding of the primordial seeds leads us to an understanding that all things are material. Therefore there is no room in this world for immaterial divinities. It is possible that Lucretius leaves a small window open for another separate world of divinities later in his writings.

His second argument, is a kind of argument from evil. There appears to Lucretius so many faults in the world that attribution to the divine for the creation of things seems ridiculous. If the divine is perfect and if this perfection created the world it would assuredly create it perfect. But the world is far from perfect. Therefore the world must not have been created by the divine. While the consideration of the divine is not initially necessary for the discovery of moral philosophy its presence or lack thereof certainly has influence on a theory.

While this is not a presentation of the competing metaphysical and physical theories of the traditions of Aristotle and Aquinas against Democritus and Lucretius it does seem necessary to at least demonstrate in a brief way the counter arguments of Aristotle and Aquinas so that it can be seen their respective ethical theories originate from different principles. Differing initial principles serve as a kind of symptom indicator that perhaps there are different ends guiding the whole of the aim. As argued above Lucretius, and his predecessor Democritus, believed that all things were made up of atoms and void. Therefore, nothing came from nothing and no thing could ever be created that never was previously in act. Aristotle and St. Thomas believe that the atomists misunderstand a crucial part of being and non-being.

In his commentary on Aristotle’s physics, St. Thomas writes against the premises of the atomists,

All of these philosophers were deceived because they did not know how to distinguish between potency and act. For being in
potency is, as it were, a mean between pure non-being and being in act. Therefore, those things which come to be naturally do not come to be from nonbeing simply, but from being in potency, and not, indeed, from being in act, as they thought. Hence things which come to be did not necessarily pre-exist in act, as they said, but only in potency.  

The act-potency distinction is one that becomes crucial when considering these two contrasting theories. St. Thomas is trying to say here that something does not come from nothing per se but can per accidens. In other words, pure non-being does not have any causal power but being which has a privation of form is being-in-potency to the act of form. The example often used is the statue to bronze. A block of bronze is only raw material but has potential to be a figure. The figure, the form in this scenario, is that which appears after the artist applies the art of his craft to the bronze. The statue then did not come from non-being but rather from the potency of bronze to the form or figure of the art. 

Analogously, material beings stand in potency in prime matter to act or actual existence. Therefore, not every primal seed need be in motion or moving to produce something. Neither need there be any being in act to produce a new being in act. Rather, those things only need exist potentially. St. Thomas says it more clearly later,

And this is clear for two reasons. First, matter is non-being accidentally, whereas privation is non-being per se. For ‘unshaped’ signifies non-being, but ‘bronze’ does not signify non-being except insofar as ‘unshaped’ happens to be in it. Secondly, matter is ‘near to the thing’ and exists in some respect, because it is in potency to the thing and is in some respect the substance of the thing, since it enters into the constitution of the substance. But this cannot be said of privation. 

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11 Ibid., Bk. 1, # 126.
In this passage we see a clearer picture of St. Thomas’ explanation. Our *per se* non-being is the unshaped, the lack of form. But the material is non-being only accidentally. The bronze exists in potency to a form that only need be applied. Analogously, the man exists in potency to prime matter, the actualizing form need only be applied.

In addition to act and potency we must consider substance in relation to things. St. Thomas says that every thing must be some whole that can be maintained through motion. Motion here signifying any change and not strictly locomotion. There must be a subject unifying the contrary opposite things as it moves toward something. As the caterpillar goes through metamorphosis into the butterfly, there must be one subject that maintains the unity from that form of the species to the next. That unifying thing is the substance. The substance or the subject is first what is and in what the accidents inhere.

Now we can know that any living subject must be a composite. Some material or body is composed with an activating principle, something that causes motion and the material that makes up the thing in motion. As the shape to the bronze, the activating principle is to the composite. In his commentary on *De Anima*, St. Thomas writes,

> Since, then, there are three sorts of substance: the compound; matter; and form; and since the soul is neither the compound—the living body itself; nor its matter—the body as the subject that receives life; we have no choice but to say that the soul is a substance in the manner of a form that determines or characterises a particular sort of body, i.e. a physical body potentially alive.\(^\text{12}\)

The soul then is the substantial form which gives “shape” to the body. It is the active principle that brings into being the potency in the material body.

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The implication in St. Thomas’ writings is both that the soul cannot be material and also that it cannot be separate from the whole that is the living thing. Firstly, it cannot be material, for if it were it would be present in the material already. But something separate must inform the material to unify in such and such a whole. Lucretius would have us believe that the atoms just behave that way because they have from all eternity and we really should not question that fact or first principle. But it is crucial to ask what is the one unifying substance to the thing? How can that unifying substance, if material, know itself? Sight cannot see itself seeing, nor hearing hear itself hearing. There is an ability of soul toward a self reflection that lies unexplained by a strictly material make-up.

Secondly, just as the form of the statue is not separate from the bronze but is a part of the composite substance of the statue so the form of the living thing, the soul, cannot be separate from the whole organism. It is an all or nothing composite in actuality. Soul and body together make the man. Remove the soul and you have a corpse. Remove the body and you have a disembodied spirit.

At this point ready are we to consider what impact this understanding of the soul has on the study of the good, or ethics. To direct our course, let’s refer to Peter A. Redpath’s work, *The Moral Psychology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, in which the author writes,

St. Thomas understands moral principles to grow out of a facultative moral psychology (faculties of the human soul naturally seeking facultative perfection and the perfection of the human soul and the entire person). More: Even a correct understanding of St. Thomas’s teaching about the nature of philosophy and science essentially presupposes, and grows out of, his teaching about the faculty psychology of the human person.¹³

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Redpath shows us that the understanding of St. Thomas is that moral principles are the result of the formal principle of the human person seeking perfection in its facultative abilities. So any theory that purports to get right moral considerations must first get right the understanding of the soul.

In initially understanding the soul we must understand how it integrates or stands in relation to the body. We experience certain acts which seem integral to material experience and the effects of the body but whose results impact the soul. These acts are those between organizations and objects through relation.

For example, the act of hearing, walking, or conversing is the effect of a coincidence of opposites: of being able to unite two opposites into an organizational whole. For instance, the act of hearing is the effect caused in the power to hear by an external stimulus (which St. Thomas calls a “formal object”) that we call “sound.” Hence, St. Thomas says that powers (faculties) are distinguished by their acts and acts by their formal objects. By this he means that acts are effects generated within organizations through a relation that unites an ability and an external stimulus.¹⁴

The abilities of our soul are inclined by external objects. The acts that occur from these inclinations are those that can have moral consequences as we consider their relations to ourselves and to others.

This stands in contrast to Lucretius who claims that it is the internal structure of the primal seeds that provokes a thing to motion and consideration. And so it will benefit for us once more to take up the thought of the atomists to consider how their metaphysical and physical theories grow into their ethical theories and whether there is any wisdom in the theory. The first text I’d like to consider that begins our inquiry into the ethical considerations is the following from Lucretius’ *On the Nature of Things*,

For summits of power and mastery of the world.
O wretched minds of men! O blinded hearts!
In how great perils, in what darks of life
Are spent the human years, however brief!
O not to see that Nature for herself
Barks after nothing, save that pain keep off,
Disjoined from the body, and that mind enjoy
Delightsome feeling, far from care and fear!
Therefore we see that our corporeal life
Needs little, altogether, and only such
As takes the pain away, and can besides
Strew underneath some number of delights.15

Firstly, Lucretius laments the plight of man. He beckons us to consider a common human experience. Namely, that every member of the human species has one life to live and that life seems far too short. Immediately following Lucretius makes an ethical statement. He says that we (our corporeal life) need only that much that takes pain away and gives delight. He believes this because “Nature . . . barks after nothing.” It is thus possible to understand him to be saying that the primal germs, in their constant flow, amalgamated to produce you, and at some point they will return to their former un-combined state. Therefore, in their combination there is no combining whole that desires some further perfection but instead just the freedom from pain (disintegration) or the reception of pleasure (increase in combination). This begs the question of how a material set of atoms, no matter the makeup, would understand it to be a whole and to experience pain or pleasure? There is no explanation from Lucretius other than the mere observation that there are wholes juxtaposed to a commitment to atomism. He draws the target around where experience has struck to justify his theory.

In response to the consideration of evil, Lucretius writes,

Nor may we suppose
Evil can e’er be rooted up so far
That one man’s not more given to fits of wrath,
Another’s not more quickly touched by fear,
A third not more long-suffering than he should.
And needs must differ in many things besides
The varied natures and resulting habits
Of humankind—of which not now can I
Expound the hidden causes, nor find names
Enough for all the divers shapes of those
Primordials whence this variation springs. 16

To his credit, Lucretius seems to have an accurate observation of the
human condition and how it is inclined to pain, pleasure, good, and evil. But as has been argued throughout this presentation, Lucretius attributes these differences to the varied shapes of the primordial elements. As we have shown and will demonstrate further later, the divergence of the opinions of the two authors, Lucretius and St. Thomas, is in a kind of meta-ethical consideration (to use more modern terminology). Their differing initial conditions will lead them to differing conclusions, as with any scientific consideration the end guides the initial course.

We have demonstrated thus far that Lucretius considers the motion of sense not to be within an immaterial soul whose faculties seek perfection but rather in the motion of sense caused by those motions of the primordial seeds.

Their elements primordial are confined
By all the body, and own no power free
To bound around through interspaces big,
Thus, shut within these confines, they take on
Motions of sense, which, after death, thrown out
Beyond the body to the winds of air. 17

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16 Ibid., Loc. 1038.
17 Ibid., Loc. 1132.
At the loss of life is the loss of the soul. For the soul is a corporeal part. Just as corporeal as a hand or foot or eye. Not only is the soul corporeal but the I, the self aware person, that participated in the awareness generated by this material soul, will cease to exist and be no more. Lucretius does not believe in the permanence of self beyond death. His argument is that if the soul is immortal we would remember our soul’s life before birth. We cannot remember a time before birth, therefore the soul must not be immortal.

And, even if time collected after death
The matter of our frames and set it all
Again in place as now, and if again
To us the light of life were given, O yet
That process too would not concern us aught,
When once the self-succession of our sense
Has been asunder broken. And now and here,
Little enough we’re busied with the selves
We were aforetime, nor, concerning them,
Suffer a sore distress. For shouldst thou gaze
Backwards across all yesterdays of time
The immeasurable, thinking how manifold
The motions of matter are, then couldst thou well
Credit this too: often these very seeds
(From which we are to-day) of old were set
In the same order as they are to-day-
Yet this we can’t to consciousness recall
Through the remembering mind.18

According to Lucretius, the seeds that make up me were perhaps capable of arrangement identical to ours in some time past. Additionally they are even capable of the same arrangement we would consider to constitute our very being sometime in the future. But when the motion of sense is ceased, the succession of memory ceases. Memory then lies in the motion of the primordials and not in a faculty of the soul to retain images of sense data. And memory, the storing of images as a

18 Ibid., Loc. 1251.
result of sense experience, is how our substance is sustained through
time. No answer is provided concerning that this memory is also just
the striking of atoms one to another and how these atoms would know
they have had such an experience.

To his credit Lucretius follows his theory to a logical conclusion
concerning death. He writes,

Nothing for us there is to dread in death,
No wretchedness for him who is no more,
The same estate as if ne’er born before,
When death immortal hath ta’en the mortal life.\(^19\)

No hope for the immortal is given to our bodies nor even our intellect.
We have been arranged and one day we will be de-arranged by the etern-
al flow of the primordial seeds and the void.

To my surprise, Lucretius expects his readers to come to two
conclusions: (1) be not afraid of death for it is literally nothing (“There-
fore death to us / Is nothing, nor concerns us in the least, / Since nature
of mind is mortal evermore.”\(^20\)), (2) find some comfort in death as it is
the rest of your toils and burdens in life. The second conclusion is illus-
trated in the following passage,

For if thy life aforetime and behind
To thee was grateful, and not all thy good
Was heaped as in sieve to flow away
And perish unavailingly, why not,
Even like a banqueter, depart the halls,
Laden with life? why not with mind content
Take now, thou fool, thy unafflicted rest?
But if whatever thou enjoyed hath been
Lavished and lost, and life is now offence,
Why seekest more to add— which in its turn
Will perish fouly and fall out in vain?
O why not rather make an end of life,

\(^19\) \textit{Ibid.}, Loc. 1261.
\(^20\) \textit{Ibid.}, Loc. 1247.
Of labour? For all I may devise or find
To pleasure thee is nothing: all things are
The same forever. Though not yet thy body
Wrinkles with years, nor yet the frame exhausts
Outworn, still things abide the same, even if
Thou goest on to conquer all of time
With length of days.  

Difficult is to see how one can define good and evil if there is nothing to achieve, nothing to seek after the expiration of one’s soul. If the end of oneself spells the end of everything, why not seek the end sooner by one’s own hand in times of ill fortune? Why not expire those in extreme suffering as a kind of mercy, whatever mercy may mean in a context of complete dissolution? Happiness then seems unachievable since all things are of temporary value.

If happiness is unachievable there does not seem to be any sense in virtue (or vice) for why would someone try to achieve a habit for the perfection of a nature that can have no perfection? You had no control of the arrangement of the primordial seeds that make up your constitution and you will have no control of their future un-arrangement. What matter is it at the moment to try to be better arranged? Therefore, arriving at Lucretius’ logical end we are left wanting for a consistent and coherent understanding of morality, ethics, and the human person. In search of the missing elements in Lucretius’ thought, then, let’s turn now to the considerations of St. Thomas and Aristotle.

As we have shown above, the soul according to St. Thomas is the formal cause of the human person. In contrast to Lucretius who says that we are what we are by the chance combinational behavior of primordial seeds, St. Thomas believes that in fact our sense organs grow out of the soul to aid the soul and not the other way around.

Thomas finds neither explanation viable because the powers do not, by nature, exist to help the organs; the organs exist to service

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21 Ibid., Loc. 1288.
the faculties. Human beings do not have different sense faculties because we have different sense organs. We have different sense organs because we have different sense faculties. The organs are naturally adapted to assist the faculties perform their proper operations; not vice versa. In the same way, he adds, the natural order of the universe provides different media within which the senses operate, according to the compatibility of the acts to the powers. Moreover, the human intellect (better, the individual person), not the sense organs or sense faculties, know.\footnote{Redpath, \textit{The Moral Psychology of St. Thomas Aquinas}, 93, Loc. 1522.}

Here is where Lucretius will be turned on his head and the diverging of theories will occur. As Redpath shows, St. Thomas indicates that our souls have proper operations. Those faculties in seeking to perform their operation inform the body to produce the sense organs for proper facultative operation. Herein lies a possibility for a better and a worse. The better, the good habit leading to perfection and culminating in happiness, will be virtue. The worse, the bad habit leading to disunity, will be vice. Better is still to say that not the faculties but the organizational whole or the human person is the one who knows and performs the operations. There will be a few more faculties than the sense faculties for us to consider before concluding our discussion of St. Thomas.

In addition to the sense faculties of the soul St. Thomas identifies four interior senses as well. The common sense, imagination, estimative or cogitative sense, and sense memory. The first two are for the reception of sensible forms. The common sense brings together all the individual sense data into one unified whole known as a form. The imagination stores these forms for later use. The estimative power in animals and its analogue in humans, the cogitative power, is the faculty of soul that apprehends forms that cannot be conveyed by external sense qualities. These might be something like danger or difficulty. The sense memory then stores these forms for later recall. The imagination is to
the common sense what the sense memory is to the estimative or cogitative sense.

Crucial for us to consider is why the estimative and cogitative sense are different and called by different names in animals and humans. In animals we call this the estimative sense because it senses a good and an evil by a kind of natural instinct. But humans have an intellect, therefore we discover good and evil by the relation of ideas to self preservation.

The intellect then also has an intellectual memory that works "'syllogistically', as it were, seeking for a recollection of the past by the application of individual judgments." This is crucial because St. Thomas identifies that forms incline the intellectual soul toward something. Therefore, the intellectual soul must have an appetitive faculty.

The appetitive faculty is significant in our discussion because in this power of the soul man is inclined to pursue the good and avoid evil. Therefore, it is the soul or the whole person that pursues good and evil or her own free will. This stands in contrast to the movement of tiny material particles that incline the corporeal to avoid pain and to seek pleasure proposed by Lucretius. Instead St. Thomas demonstrates that the actualizing and individuating form, the soul, is inclined to seek what is really and truly good for itself.

How then does this faculty of the soul operate? Redpath writes,

In a human being, Thomas maintains, the sense appetite of the intellectual soul needs to be divided in two: 1) an appetite through which the intellectual soul inclines to seek what is suitable, according to the senses and intellect, and to flee from what is hurtful (St. Thomas calls this the "concupiscible" appetite); and 2) another appetite whereby a human being resists attacks that hinder getting what is suitable, humanly good, and harms a human being (St. Thomas calls this the "irascible" appetite). He immediately adds that, because its tendency is to overcome and rise a-

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23 Ibid., 100, Loc. 1634.
bove difficulties that can hurt a human being, the proper object of the irascible appetite is something difficult, dangerous.\textsuperscript{24}

Redpath explains of St. Thomas that all forms have a virtual quantity, or an intensive quantum greatness, to incline the intellectual soul. In one way the soul is inclined to pursue what is good and beneficial and flee what is bad and harmful. This power is called the concupiscible appetite. This can be compared to what Lucretius identified in animal and human life to seek pleasure and avoid pain but it differs greatly in its origin and intent. The concupiscible appetite for St. Thomas inclines the soul to what makes it greater, more perfect, according to its nature. What inclines the soul for Lucretius is what relieves some slight pain in the miserable short existence of an arrangement of material parts.

St. Thomas identifies another species of the appetite which he calls the irascible. This is an essential consideration because it makes sense of things that may at first be difficult but ultimately lead to good. Examples may be long study to achieve a degree for better career advancement, or a long journey to arrive at a desired location, or extreme physical exercise to achieve some physical goal like military service, mountain climbing, or the olympics. This appetite then is a resistance to hindrances for achieving goods. If some hurdle stands in the way, the irascible appetite inclines the person to overcome the obstacle to achieve that which the concupiscible appetite is inclined. “For this reason, he adds, all the emotions of the irascible appetite rise from those of the concupiscible appetite and ultimately terminate in them.”\textsuperscript{25}

Right action is the proper use according to reason of these inclinations or appetites that arise from the faculties. Redpath explains its order,

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Ibid.}, 104, Loc. 1697.
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid.}, 105, Loc. 1710.
Hence, to clarify his point, he makes an analogy. He says that just as in syllogistic matters we draw particular conclusions from universal principles, premises, so in matters relating to the relation between higher and lower faculties and appetites, universal reason directs the sensitive appetite (for example, just like a CEO directs middle management). Because the sense appetite divides into concupiscible and irascible, *in obeying particular reason this whole appetite and its parts obey universal reason.*

Just as we draw particular syllogistic conclusions from universal principles, we also draw particular moral and appetitive conclusions from universal principles.

Does just any particular conclusion that follows from a universal principle become a moral action? St. Thomas answers in the negative and shows that it is the appetite as it operates toward the good. He writes,

> The reason for this is that moral virtue pertains to the appetite that operates according as it is moved by the good apprehended. When the appetite operates often, therefore, it must be often moved by its object. In this the appetite follows a certain tendency in accordance with the mode of nature, as many drops of water falling on a rock hollow it out. Thus it is obvious that the moral virtues are not in us by nature, nor are they in us contrary to nature. We do have a natural aptitude to acquire them inasmuch as the appetitive potency is naturally adapted to obey reason. But we are perfected in these virtues by use, for when we act repeatedly according to reason, a modification is impressed in the appetite by the power of reason. This impression is nothing else but moral virtue.

St. Thomas impresses on us that we are not naturally perfect nor are we naturally evil. As we are inclined to the good and obey universal and particular reason to achieve the good, a modification takes place in the soul to continue to act according to right principles. This modification he calls moral virtue.

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27 Aquinas, *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, # 249.
If the root of our proverbial tree is the appetite in the soul, the very place where St. Thomas diverges from Lucretius and properly considers moral faculty psychology, then virtue is its fruit that the science is in fact true. For both philosophers start their endeavor to explain and order according to the pursuits of wisdom. What other reason is there for order of man than happiness? As we described Lucretius would have you rest in the fact that one day all your pain will go away because it will be as if you were never born. But St. Thomas gives us a different path to happiness, one that lies through the work of virtue. Here he describes,

If, therefore, man’s proper role consists in living a certain kind of life, namely, according to the activity of reason, it follows that it is proper to a good man to act well according to reason, and to the very good man or the happy man to do this in superlative fashion. But this belongs to the nature of virtue that everyone who has virtue should act well according to it, as a horse with good training or “virtue” should run well. If, then, the activity of the very good man or the happy man is to act well, in fact to act to the best of his ability according to reason, it follows that the good of man, which is happiness, is an activity according to virtue. If there is only one virtue for man, his activity according to that virtue will be happiness. If there are a number of such virtues for man, happiness will be the activity according to the best of them. The reason is that happiness is not only the good of man but the best good. 28

St. Thomas connects the reality of the soul to the appetitive faculties and to the reality and desire to do those acts according to the good. These actions done well and the results of such actions is in fact the perfection and happiness of man. Without the reality of the soul we could not arrive at the end. Without knowing the appropriate end, at least in a first obscure way, we can not begin our inquiry in the proper way.

28 Ibid., # 128.
St. Thomas even goes so far to say, “It is universally true that virtuous operations are pleasurable to virtuous persons who love virtue.” Acting according to right reason because one desires to do such actions is universally pleasurable to those people who have those inclinations. Therefore, sufficient is the consideration up to this point of St. Thomas understanding of the soul and faculty psychology to at minimum demonstrate its superiority to Lucretius’ atomism and subsequent ethical theories. At best we have shown St. Thomas’ teaching is a still very rich and viable understanding of the human person and moral philosophy today.

Before concluding our investigation crucial is to consider Lucretius’ other contention about the world that may have had some impact on his ethical theories. If we recall, Lucretius gave two arguments against any divine origin for the world, any virtue, nor any eternal happiness. St. Thomas comes to a different conclusion but one that better follows his premises to a proper conclusion. Let us consider the following text,

He says first that if the gods (i.e. beings called gods by the ancients) make gifts to men, it is reasonable that happiness be the gift of the supreme God because it is the most excellent of human goods. It is obvious that a thing is led to a higher end by a higher virtue or power, for instance, man is led to a higher end by military art than by bridle-making. Hence it is reasonable that the ultimate end, happiness, should come to man from the highest power of all, the supreme God.

There is not enough space here to consider Aristotle nor St. Thomas demonstrations for God’s existence. Both authors nonetheless take for granted their demonstrations or the audience acceptability of the divine. They therefore conclude it is not outside of reason that the highest gift come from the highest source. If virtuous activity leads to

29 Ibid., # 155.
30 Ibid., # 167.
man’s ultimate happiness it should not be ruled out at the start, as Lucretius did, that it may come from God. On the contrary, it seems more reasonable to think that such a gift would come from God.

Already anticipating a counterargument, St. Thomas writes,

First, the fact that happiness has a human cause does not do away with its chief characteristic, that it is most excellent and divine. He says that if happiness is not a gift sent directly by God but comes to men by virtue as a thing acquired by habit, or by study as a thing to be learned, or by exercise as a thing to be had by training, nevertheless it seems to be something especially divine. The reason is that since happiness is the reward and end of virtue, it follows that it is something most excellent and divine and blessed. A thing is not called divine only because it comes from God but also because it makes us like God in goodness.\(^{31}\)

St. Thomas anticipating an objection that virtue is not in us naturally and rather that it comes by work, education, and trials still maintains a divine origin. He can still hold to his position because of the consideration of the end. Even if it is not given directly by God in some supernatural encounter the end of virtue is happiness which is the highest end and therefore most apt to be called divine. Therefore, that we end in virtue’s perfection in the divine is sufficient to say that it is reasonable to consider a divine origin.

In conclusion, it is the aim of the wise man to order in both speculative and moral matters. We demonstrated that although perhaps internally consistent, Lucretius atomism and the following ethical theories it produced leave much to be wanted. No satisfactory explanation is provided for what constitutes the good, what motivates us to avoid evil, and how to arrive at true happiness. In stark contrast, St. Thomas following Aristotle, with advanced scientific precision takes up all of the above considerations and provides accurate answers to these most pressing questions of natural and ethical considerations. As the pursuit

\(^{31}\) Ibid., # 169.
of happiness comes to the attention of all who share the human experience, happiness as acquired through the virtue that is a result of an understanding of faculty psychology as proposed by St. Thomas and Aristotle seems superior to that of the atomism and material psychology of Lucretius. That we have a soul and it inclines to the good and perfection of its nature appears to hit the target for which we are aiming for a proper explanation of moral philosophy.

The Moral Philosophy of Lucretius and Aquinas: Competing Ends and Means

SUMMARY

The author first explains wisdom and its importance to moral philosophy. Secondly, he follows with a consideration of the nature of things and the soul as told by Lucretius. Then he presents a brief summary on St. Thomas understanding of soul and how his faculty psychology is a superior explanation of moral philosophy. The author concludes by showing how Lucretius’ ethical system fails and to attain true happiness we must take up a faculty psychology aimed at virtue and the perfection of the soul, the principle form of the human person.

KEYWORDS

Lucretius, Thomas Aquinas, end, means, atomism, Thomism, wisdom, moral philosophy, human nature, soul, faculty psychology, ethics, happiness, virtue, human person.

REFERENCES


Measuring, Judging and the Good Life: Aquinas and Kant

The question of the Good Life and what it means to live well has a rich philosophical history. When, for example, we compare the teachings of moralists, such as the Pharisees, in the New Testament with the teachings of Jesus, we see two different ideas of what it means to live the Good Life. For the moralists, perfect obedience to the Law was the way in which one lives the Good Life. It is for this reason that Jesus responds rhetorically to the rich young ruler who asks how to inherit eternal life, “You know the commandments,” and he lists a few of the well-known ones, only for the young ruler, unable to give up his riches, to walk away sorrowfully (Luke 18:18).¹ Yet privately to his disciples, Jesus teaches something different about eternal life, saying, “Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ.” (John 17:3)

For Jesus, knowing God was the way in which one lived the Good Life—the way one inherits eternal life, because, while the moral law is good, it is not man’s ultimate end. These two conclusions about man’s ultimate end—either living morally or knowing God—is one that plays out when we compare the work of Immanuel Kant with St. Thom-
as Aquinas. For Kant, man’s ultimate end is to live morally, while for St. Thomas, man’s ultimate end is to see and know God.

This paper argues that, when we compare and contrast Kant’s and St. Thomas’s views of measuring and judging, particularly measuring and judging beauty, we see that the differences between Kant and St. Thomas are rooted in their understanding of the relationship between the intellect and the subjects in the world, and that two striking and interrelated inevitable outcomes result. The first of these outcomes is whether goodness has anything to do with beauty and philosophy at the highest level. The second outcome is St. Thomas’s and Kant’s different conclusions about the end and highest achievement of man.

For Kant, subjects in the world cannot be known, goodness has nothing to do with beauty, the moral law is the governing principle of man and the highest achievement man attains is to live morally. But for St. Thomas, subjects can be known, concentrated goodness is beauty and the highest achievement man attains is knowing the good and God. These respective outcomes will be demonstrated first, by considering the root of their differences, second, by examining their respective understandings of measurement and judgment, third, by considering their particular understanding of measurement and judgment in relation to beauty and fourth, by outlining how their respective differences in beauty relate to their understanding of man’s end and highest achievement.

The Root of the Differences between St. Thomas and Kant

It should come as no surprise that the root of the differences between St. Thomas and Kant has to do with their respective views of the intellect and its relation to the outside world. It seems impossible for the root to be anything other than this. Kant believes the outside world is unknowable in itself, and instead there are representations of sub-
jects (\textit{phomena}) but the subject in itself (\textit{noumena}) cannot be known. St. Thomas and Aristotle, on the other hand, both accept that reality can be known, that the internal and external senses are legitimate sources and foundations of knowledge and that human beings are ordered to truth which is achieved through the act of science or philosophy.\footnote{Throughout this paper, the terms subject and object will be used in the Thomistic sense—a subject being in the world while an object being an object of the intellect—even while discussing Kant’s view, though Kant changes these terms in his own writing. The only time Kant’s definition of these words is employed is in direct quotations of Kant.}

While the bulk of this paper is based on Kant’s \textit{The Critique of Judgement}, perhaps one of the clearest descriptions of Kant’s view is one he gives in his \textit{Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics}, in which he writes:

\begin{quote}
There are many laws of nature that we can know only by means of experience, but conformity to law in the connection of appearances, i.e., in nature in general, we cannot discover by any experience, because experience itself requires laws that underlie its possibility \textit{a priori}. . . . Even the main proposition expounded throughout this section—that universal laws of nature can be distinctly cognized \textit{a priori}—naturally leads to the proposition: that the highest legislation of nature must lie in ourselves, i.e., in our understanding, and that we must not seek the universal laws of nature in nature by any means of experience, but conversely must seek nature, as to its universal conformity to law, in the conditions of the possibility of experience, which lie in our sensibility and in our understanding.\footnote{Immanuel Kant, “Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics,” sect. 36, in \textit{Modern Philosophy}, trans. Paul Carus (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2009), 691. Note that throughout the quotations of Kant, unless otherwise noted, no italicizing is mine. Also note that the original spelling of “judgement” with an extra “e” has been retained in quotations.}
\end{quote}

This becomes where the roads of Kant and St. Thomas diverge. For Kant, there is neither knowable unity in subjects nor unity between the

\footnote{Thomas Aquinas, \textit{De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas}, ch. 1, n. 1. Available online—see the section \textit{References} for details.}
knower and the thing known. Instead, there is only the unsurpassable chasm of the *noumena* and the *phenomena*. For Kant, the knower is caught in the thick of Cartesian dualism and all that is real and can be truly known are found solely in Kant’s idea of an intellect\(^5\)—if it can be found at all.

For St. Thomas, however, the world is understandable. This is because the truth and unity of the subject are real and correspond to the truth and unity of the intellect, and in this way, subjects are understood. For St. Thomas, human faculties are activated by formal objects stimulating the faculties, such as color stimulating sight.\(^6\) And the external and internal sense faculties of the knower act as philosophical principles to replicate imaginative likenesses that are active in the subject, or thing known, so that the knower can make judgments about the subject.\(^7\) The knower and the subject known constitute a single genus, and both the knower and the thing known measure each other. As St. Thomas writes, “For the intellect and the intelligible object must be proportionate to each other and must belong to the same genus, since the intellect and the intelligible object are one in act.”\(^8\) For St. Thomas, sensory

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\(^5\) What is interesting about this is that it is the same move as Plato, except instead of putting all knowledge in a separate world of Forms in the heavens, all knowledge is put in a kind of separate compartment in the intellect within. It is no wonder that both views cannot but lead into skepticism.

\(^6\) Peter Redpath, “How the substance known and the scientific knower are related to a scientific genus; the chief causes of the hierarchy of the sciences; and how the human person is a first principle of all science, philosophy” (lecture, PHS 731: *The One and the Many*, Holy Apostles College & Seminary, Cromwell, Conn., 20 October, 2020).


perception is a reliable knowledge of particulars and the intellect comprehends universals.⁹

When we compare Kant’s view with St. Thomas’s view, we see that the Kantian notions of noumena and phenomena result in absurdity because, for St. Thomas, a true understanding of subjects is the foundation of metaphysics. From St. Thomas’s perspective, Kant did not write a prolegomena to metaphysics, he destroyed metaphysics by claiming that subjects in themselves are unknowable. And by destroying metaphysics, Kant cut off the very branch on which he sits, for metaphysics is the measure of all scientific knowledge.¹⁰ Without a knowledge of a subject found in the real relationship between the knower and the formal object, metaphysical abstraction is impossible. And since, for St. Thomas, metaphysics is the queen of the sciences that governs and measures all other sciences, by eliminating metaphysical abstraction and knowledge, Kant eliminates all knowledge, including his own.

Thus, the introductory groundwork has been laid as we proceed to the bulk of this paper, for all of this is essential to understanding measurement and judgment. If one cannot understand the world, then one cannot measure the world and one cannot judge the world. And if, like Kant, one only has a kind of lens through which the world is perceived, then the highest principle of that lens becomes the device by which one measures anything in order to make judgments. Although we have just demonstrated that, from St. Thomas’s perspective, Kant undermines any foundation for knowledge, let us grant him his perspective in order to move forward in comparing and contrasting his understanding of measurement and judgment with St. Thomas’s understanding of measurement and judgment.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Peter Redpath, “Why metaphysics is the queen of the sciences” (lecture, PHS 731: The One and the Many, Holy Apostles College & Seminary, Cromwell, Conn., 10 November 2020).
St. Thomas’s and Kant’s Respective Understandings of Measurement and Judgment

Both for St. Thomas and for Kant, we make judgments based on measurements. For example, the quality of a musician is judged by measuring the intensity of the applause of the audience.11 This is true not only of the arts but of many scientific tools: the thermometer measures the temperature of the individual, and based on this measurement, we judge whether or not the individual is running a fever; or the stopwatch measures the time of the athlete’s activity, and we judge whether or not the athlete’s activity attains a level of excellence or greatness. Judgment, therefore, is impossible without some kind of measuring and measurement without judgment is an ununified multitude of raw data. It is for this reason that Dr. Redpath teaches that judgment is a kind of measuring.12 While both St. Thomas and Kant agree that judgment is based on measurement, they do not agree on judgment itself.

For Kant, “Judgement is the faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the universal.” But the universal, or laws, are given a priori. However, in Kant’s work, there are two kinds of judgment: determinant and reflective. The difference between the two depends upon which is given: the universal or the particular. If the universal is given, then the judgment about the particular is considered determinant judgment. But if the particular is given, and the universal must be acquired, then the judgment is considered reflective. In both cases, however, Kant

11 Ibid.
12 Peter Redpath, “The essential connection of the metaphysical principles of virtual quantity and privation to being a measure and widespread and analogous predication of unity, plurality, and measure” (lecture, PHS 731: The One and the Many, Holy Apostles College & Seminary, Cromwell, Conn., 6 October 2020).

With determinant judgment, Kant’s *a priori* claim seems easier to swallow: the *a priori* universal is in the intellect and it is through this law that judgment about the particular is made. This is easier to swallow in the sense that it is consistent with his notion of understanding the world based on *a priori* laws through which the world is interpreted. With reflective judgment, however, this becomes trickier. To explain this, Kant writes:

> The reflective judgement which is compelled to ascend from the particular in nature to the universal stands, therefore, in need of a principle. This principle it cannot borrow from experience, because what it has to do is to establish just the unity of all empirical principles under higher, though likewise empirical, principles, and thence the possibility of the systematic subordination of higher and lower. Such a transcendental principle, therefore, the reflective judgement can only give as a law from and to itself.\footnote{Ibid.}

While both determinant and reflective judgment are *a priori*, in determinant judgment, the universal law is already in the intellect, while in reflective judgment, the universal law is, in a sense, “generated” by the intellect when the intellect is confronted by the particular in nature, and is still, therefore, *a priori*.

Again, for the sake of this paper, we will give Kant a pass on this. But it is important to point out that Kant here seems to claim that reflective judgment gives itself that which it is, since judgment is based on a unity of universal principles or laws, and the reflective judgment, which is universal *a priori* principles, “generates” a universal law. In other words, the judgment of the intellect is passive to itself as itself—it
is its own potency as itself—rather than being passive to itself as other. Consider this in light of Aristotle, who considers this metaphysically impossible when discussing potency in *Metaphysics*, claiming, “insofar as something has developed as a natural whole, it cannot be passive to itself, since it is one thing and there is no other.”\textsuperscript{15}

There are two important points to keep in mind that Kant has just revealed. The first is that judgment is divided into two types of judgment: determinant and reflective. But both divisions of judgment, and therefore all judgment, is acted upon *a priori*. This is an essential point to keep in mind as we continue this paper, and it is for this reason that this paper begins by demonstrating that this is the foundation of the differences in St. Thomas’s and Kant’s conclusions.

The second important point is Kant’s emphasis on maintaining the unity of principles in the intellect, as he wrote in the above quotation. This is one of a number of places of (at least some) agreement between Kant and St. Thomas. For Kant, measuring subjects and making judgments correspond to intellectual unity. However, for Kant, the intellectual unity does not correspond to the true unity in nature, but rather nature has the appearance of unity because we comprehend by means of intellectual unity as seen through the unity in the intellect.

Let us move on to St. Thomas’s view. For St. Thomas, as was already stated, the world is knowable, and this alone marks the difference between St. Thomas and Kant on the nature of what it means to measure and to judge. In fact, without a real knowledge of real subjects, measuring becomes impossible. As Dr. Redpath remarks in his lecture: one always measures subjects in terms of that which is actual because it is by virtue of that which we know to determine a subject’s identity.\textsuperscript{16}


\textsuperscript{16} Peter Redpath, “The relation between equal and unequal qualitative measurement, contrary opposition, and analogous predication to understanding the division and meth-
However, to get deeper into St. Thomas, we read:

[I]n every genus there must be one first thing which is the most simple in that genus and is the measure of all the things in that genus. And because a measure is homogeneous to the thing measured, such first indivisibles will vary according to the diversity of genera.\(^{17}\)

Therefore, St. Thomas recognizes that there are a variety of measures as there are a variety of genera—genera which can be known and exist in the world. Let us hold onto this thought concerning the first and most simple of a genus, as this will illuminate Kant’s perspective.

More than this recognition that the first in a genus is the measure in relation to genus and essence, and therefore to unity, St. Thomas teaches that “we judge anything chiefly according to the definition of its essence.”\(^{18}\) For St. Thomas, genus and essence are not unrelated. As Dr. Redpath writes:

A scientific genus, or nature, is an essence considered as acting as a generating principle, or *proximate cause* of a multitude that it assembles, unifies, as parts of a whole in relation to further generation, through specific cooperation of parts to the whole, of a complete act to satisfy an organizational aim or end.\(^{19}\)

It is for this reason that it is mentioned above that there is some overlap between St. Thomas and Kant concerning unity since both recognize it to be important in some way. But, as was already mentioned, for St.

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\(^{17}\) Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s “Posterior Analytics,”* bk. 1, lec. I, trans. Fr. Fabian R. Larcher, O.P. Available online—see the section *References* for details.

\(^{18}\) Thomas Aquinas, *The Division and Methods of the Sciences,* q. 6, a. 2, trans. Armand Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986), 77.

\(^{19}\) Peter Redpath, “How the generic subject of philosophy, science, is properly divided into species and how this division affects the nature of speculative philosophy, science, and philosophical, scientific, predication” (class notes, PHS 731: *The One and the Many*, Holy Apostles College & Seminary, Cromwell, Conn., 15 September 2020).
Thomas, the intellect (knower) measures the subject (known) as the subject in return measures the intellect, and in this regard, the two become one genus measuring each other. It is because there is unity in the intellect that corresponds to the unity in the subject that this is possible. Here we may turn to Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* for a proper explanation of this:

And we speak of knowledge or sense perception as a measure of things for the same reason, because we recognize something by means of them, although they are measured more than they measure. But what happens to us is just as if, after someone else had measured us, we recognized how big we are by the ruler’s having been held up to us so many times.  

It is essential to appreciate the importance of unity in regard to measurement and judgment and how St. Thomas and Kant differ on this. Consider the following:

1. In every genus there must be one first thing which is the most simple in that genus.
2. That which is most simple is the measure of all in that genus.  
3. A genus is an essence considered as a generating principle that unifies a multitude into parts of a whole based on a common aim or end.
4. Therefore, the common aim or end is essential to the unity of the genus, and without this, there is no unity, and thus no measuring or judging.

Although it is true that there is some overlap between St. Thomas and Kant regarding unity, even here there is an important distinction to be made. First, as this paper has argued, this distinction is rooted in their respective understandings of the relations of the intellect to subjects in

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20 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, X, 1, 1053a31ff, 188.

21 In an email sent on 9 October 2020, Dr. Redpath clarifies that, although within a genus all parts or species can be a measure, the best measure is the maximum in the genus because we use perfection—the maximally good or best—as the chief measure.
the world. Second, only in St. Thomas’s work is there true unity in the subject. This is because St. Thomas acknowledges the reality of aims.

For Kant, there is no real unity in subjects because there are no aims in subjects. Kant writes:

Now the concept of an object, so far as it contains at the same time the ground of the actuality of this object, is called its end, and the agreement of a thing with that constitution of things which is only possible according to ends, is called the finality of its form. . . . The finality of nature is, therefore, a particular a priori concept, which has its origin solely in the reflective judgment.

The last statement, “which has its origin solely in the reflective judgment,” is particularly important. This means the reflective judgment, which “generates” universal principles from particulars, is the originator of our Kantian concept of the end and finality of the forms of subjects. According to Kant, then, there is no end or finality of form in the subject, since this has its origin solely in the reflective judgment, and without the reality of aims, there is no true unity in the subject measured.

Therefore, although there is some overlap in recognizing the necessity of unity between St. Thomas and Kant, here we see an important breaking point. For Kant, unity exists a priori in the intellect alone. But for St. Thomas, without aims, no organizational unities can exist, for if there were no aims, then there would be no organizations operating toward anything. And without a unified operation, there are only multitudes instead of parts of wholes.

In Kant, then, measuring and judging become illusions, in a sense, and the act of measuring and judging is the intellect measuring and judging itself, since aims in subjects are kinds of illusions (or “rep-

22 Except for man, as we will address in the next section: “St. Thomas’s and Kant’s respective understandings of measurement and judgment in relation to beauty.”

23 Kant, The Critique of Judgement, 467.
resentations”). But for St. Thomas, we measure by means of organizational perfection and completeness, which is only possible with the reality of aims. Without real organizational perfection or unity, there are no genera or species, and thus, for St. Thomas, Kant measures nothing but himself. As we will see, since, for Kant, man is the only subject that has an aim, this last statement is truer than it immediately appears, and it is why Kant concludes what he concludes.

To bring this back to this paper’s thesis, the quotation from St. Thomas earlier, in which he cites from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* X, 1, not only gives us important information concerning the way in which we measure, but St. Thomas gives one reason Kant comes to the conclusion that he does concerning the way beauty is measured. This is because Kant, in keeping consistent with his *a priori* concept of the unity of intellectual principles, considers, as St. Thomas says we do, the highest of the *a priori* intellectual principles to be that by which even beauty is measured. Kant, unaware of St. Thomas’s near total apprehension of the human intellect a few hundred years in advance, could not see that he concluded in the absurdity in which St. Thomas predicted he would.

Since, in Kant’s view, all that can be truly known is one’s intellect (since there is unity only in the intellect without the reality of aims in subjects apart from man), and in this all of nature becomes, in a sense, parts of the genus of the intellect (rather than various knowable genera), then the measure of all things in nature will be found in that which is first and most simple in the intellect of man, which, for Kant, is the moral law. To put it another way, while in St. Thomas’s view the

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24 Another reason is because Kant makes a mistake that St. Thomas addresses, which is addressed in the later section of this paper: “The Respective Differences of St. Thomas’s and Kant’s Foundation and Understanding of Beauty Lead to Their Understanding of Man’s End and Highest Achievement.”

25 Kant’s conclusion about man here seems eerily similar to Aristotle’s conclusion in *Metaphysics* XII about the divine intellect thinking itself.
knower and known constitute one genus, for Kant, the knower alone, in a sense, constitutes one genus, since what the knower knows is the knower’s *a priori* intellect. And the moral law, being the highest aspect of the organization of the intellect, is closest to the organizational aim and communicates this to the rest of the genus, or intellect.

It is here that we see important framework for Kant’s foundation and inevitable conclusion: that aesthetic beauty is measured and judged by the *a priori* moral law, and that the highest achievement man can attain is to live morally.

**St. Thomas’s and Kant’s Respective Understandings of Measurement and Judgment in Relation to Beauty**

*The Critique of Judgement* is divided into three major parts: the Introduction, the Critique of Aesthetic Judgement and the Critique of Teleological Judgement. The second part is further divided into two sections: the Analytic of the Beautiful and the Analytic of the Sublime. In order to maintain a tight focus, this paper draws its material almost entirely from the first major part, the Introduction, and from the first section of the second part, the Analytic of the Beautiful, though there are important passages that will be referenced in other areas of the work. Here, we will begin to take what we have seen about St. Thomas and Kant in regards to measuring and judging and compare and contrast the two specifically in regards to beauty.

In examining Kant’s perspective in order to compare his work with St. Thomas, for the sake of space, there are only two main aspects of measuring and judging beauty on which we will focus. The first is that, for Kant, beauty has nothing to do with the good when the good is understood as a Kantian concept. As the text progresses, Kant doubles down harder and harder, emphatically denying that goodness has anything to do with beauty.
Consider the following three excerpts.

Excerpt 1:

This pleasure is by the judgement of taste pronounced valid for every one; hence an agreeableness attending the representation is just as incapable of containing the determining round of the judgement as the representation of the perfection of the object or the concept of the good.\(^{26}\)

Excerpt 2:

*Objective* finality can only be cognized by means of a reference of the manifold to a definite end, and hence only through a concept. This alone makes it clear that the beautiful, which is estimated on the ground of a mere formal finality, i.e., a finality apart from an end, is wholly independent of the representation of the good.\(^{27}\)

Excerpt 3:

Now, just as it is a clog on the purity of the judgement of taste to have the agreeable (of sensation) joined with beauty to which properly only the form is relevant, so to combine the good with beauty . . . mars its purity.\(^{28}\)

The reason Kant denies that the good has anything to do with beauty is because, for Kant, the good is only “represented” as a subject about which we universally (thus *a priori*) delight over as a concept (in the Kantian sense) which, for Kant, cannot be said about beauty.\(^{29}\) This is because, as we will see, beauty is not in the subject itself, but instead subjects are judged to be beautiful by us, and we enforce this upon others because beauty is a symbol of morality and the morally good (which is separate from the good as a concept). Thus, here we have the first

\(^{26}\) Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 484.

\(^{27}\) Ibid., 486.

\(^{28}\) Ibid., 488.

\(^{29}\) Ibid., 480.
main aspect that is important in comparing St. Thomas with Kant: for Kant, the good and the beautiful have nothing to do with each other.

The second important aspect in examining Kant is that the beautiful is a symbol of and measured and judged by morality. It is important here to point out that Kant is referring specifically to that which is aesthetically beautiful as being a symbol of morality, and not merely that which is virtuously beautiful, even though Kant refers to it as a symbol of morality. This is an idea that comes up in Aristotle. For example, Joe Sachs, in his translation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, comments:

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle divides all goods into the beneficial, the pleasant, and the beautiful (1104b31), and identifies the beautiful as the aim of all moral virtue (1115b13). This is not an “aesthetic” sense of beauty, which would just be one kind of pleasure, but what we mean when we speak of something as a beautiful thing to do, one in which everything is right.30

Because Kant considers beauty as a symbol of morality, one might be forgiven for thinking that Kant is merely referring to “a beautiful thing to do,” as Sachs writes. But this is not merely what Kant means. Kant is referring to aesthetic beauty. However—and why the term “merely” has been used—this distinction is important for solving the impasse about the beautiful as the morally good but not as the good as a concept. This is because Kant confuses the “beautiful thing to do” with beautiful subjects in order to be consistent with his view of the relationship between the intellect and the world. So in one way, Kant is referring to “a beautiful thing to do,” and in another way, he is not. This is because, for Kant, “a beautiful thing to do” is at the root of aesthetic beauty.

Before we blend all of this together, consider this, which is essential to this discussion of the beautiful as a symbol and measure of

morality. Throughout the Aesthetic of Beauty, Kant repeatedly refers to one seeing something beautiful, declaring it to be beautiful and then demanding that others agree. It is in this way that the moral law, as the highest in the genus, manifests and guides our view of beauty, in Kant’s understanding. This can be seen in a number of passages, such as the following:

> In all judgements by which we describe anything as beautiful, we tolerate no one else being of a different opinion, and in taking up this position we do not rest our judgement upon concepts, but only on our feeling. Accordingly we introduce this fundamental feeling not as a private feeling, but as a public sense. Now, for this purpose, experience cannot be made the ground of this common sense, for the latter is invoked to justify judgements containing an “ought.” The assertion is not that every one will fall in with our judgement, but rather that every one ought to agree with it.  

The framework and foundation for Kant’s thoughts on this are beginning to take shape with all that has been said. For Kant, the highest principle for man is the a priori moral law. And when one encounters particulars, the universal law is “generated” a priori. Thus, one encountering a beautiful particular has “generated” an a priori principle, which is guided by the highest aspect and aim of man. And thus, that which is declared beautiful can only be declared as such in accordance with what is most known to man, namely, the moral law. It is no wonder, then, that Kant focuses his attention on the human behavior of adamantly demanding allegiance and agreement with what is declared beautiful rather than considering the intrinsic beauty of the subject, which requires a Kantian concept but, for Kant, is both rooted in feeling and projected onto phenomena, and therefore cannot be known and cannot have anything to do with the good.

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Also, in further establishing this framework and foundation, Kant writes that “all elaborate work of the faculties must unite in the practical as its goal.”\(^{32}\) These are the faculties of man’s intellect, and here we see what has been mentioned a few times already, namely, that man is the only subject with an aim or end. Although, for Kant, the pleasure of the beautiful is in no way practical,\(^ {33}\) this does not mean that judgment about the beautiful is engaged apart from the practical, which is how judgment of the beautiful becomes wrapped up in man’s end and the moral law. For, although it was earlier shown that Kant does not admit of ends in nature, there is one end that can be known: man’s end. For Kant, only man, out of everything in nature, has some kind of real end and it is for this reason that only in man is there an ideal of beauty. Kant writes:

> Only what has in itself the end of its real existence—only *man* that is able himself to determine his ends by reason, or, where he has to derive them from external perception, can still compare them with essential and universal ends, and then further pronounce aesthetically upon their accord with such ends, only he, among all objects in the world, admits, therefore, of an ideal of *beauty*, just as humanity in his person, as intelligence, alone admits of the ideal of *perfection*\(^ {34}\).

With all of this in mind, it is no wonder that Kant concludes that the beautiful is a symbol of the morally good. Kant writes:

> Now, I say, the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good, and only in this light . . . does it give us pleasure with an attendant claim to the agreement of every one else, whereupon the mind becomes conscious of a certain ennoblement and elevation above mere sensibility to pleasure from impressions of sense, and also


\(^{34}\) *Ibid.*, 490.
appraises the worth of others on the score of a like maxim of their judgement.\textsuperscript{35}

But here our earlier mentioned impasse arises: why is Kant so adamant that the good has nothing to do with beauty, as previous quotations demonstrate, and yet concludes that the beautiful is a symbol of the morally good? This is because Kant is here referring to the good will, which is distinguished from a good concept, since this is a “feeling” as noted in the above quotation. In a sense, as was noted earlier, Kant is confusing Sachs’s and Aristotle’s notion of “a beautiful thing to do” with judging subjects as aesthetically beautiful by means of imposing a priori reflective judgments about the subject and then judging whether or not others agree with our judgment about a subject’s beauty, thus conflating beautiful subjects with beautiful, morally good actions.

Although, as was said, pleasure is not practical, the moral aspect is, and “all elaborate work of the faculties must unite in the practical as its goal.” This is consistent with the a priori moral law guiding man to consider beauty, because, for Kant, beauty is less about one judging a subject to be beautiful and more about one judging others based on whether or not they agree with one’s judgment. Thus, one’s judgment becomes an ought by which one measures the judgment of others. In this sense, beauty is a symbol of morality—beauty is measured and judged by the a priori moral law—and, by judging the subject as beautiful, one in turn measures and judges the judging capacity of others based on whether or not they agree with one’s judgment. In this way, beauty is a symbol of the morally good, and the human intellectual faculty, with the moral law as its chief guide, is oriented toward the practical, and in this is how one measures and judges beauty from Kant’s perspective.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 547.
Let us now turn our attention to St. Thomas. We will consider two areas in which St. Thomas writes about beauty in two replies to objections of his work regarding goodness. For St. Thomas, beauty and goodness are identical fundamentally because they are both based on the form. In the first reply, he writes:

But they [goodness and beauty] differ logically, for goodness properly relates to the appetite (goodness being what all things desire); and therefore it has the aspect of an end (the appetite being a kind of movement towards a thing). On the other hand, beauty relates to the cognitive faculty; for beautiful things are those which please when seen. Hence beauty consists in due proportion: for the senses delight in things duly proportioned, as in what is after their own kind—because even sense is a sort of reason, just as is every cognitive faculty. Now since knowledge is by assimilation, and similarity relates to form, beauty properly belongs to the nature of a formal cause.\(^{36}\)

In the second reply, St. Thomas writes that beauty is measured and judged by its pleasantness to apprehend and beauty is apprehended by reason. For St. Thomas, the senses which chiefly regard the beautiful are those which are the most cognitive and ministering to reason: sight and hearing. Thus, one does not speak of beautiful tastes or beautiful smells. St. Thomas summarizes this by writing, “Thus it is evident that beauty adds to goodness a relation to the cognitive faculty: so that ‘good’ means that which simply pleases the appetite; while the ‘beautiful’ is something pleasant to apprehend.”\(^{37}\) It is for this reason that Dr. Redpath says that beauty is a kind of intensive quantity of goodness, a shocking presence of the right quality in a particular type of subject that

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\(^{36}\) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 4. Available online—see the section *References* for details.

arrests the attention of people, and why he argues that it is not a separate transcendental.\(^{38}\)

By introducing St. Thomas’s concept of beauty and goodness and the relation to the two, we can return to St. Thomas’s notion of measurement as it pertains to unity to introduce some important points. For St. Thomas, the measure is a sign of unity and unitative greatness and the measure is the means through which unity is communicated. As a principle of knowledge, the measure signifies the level of goodness or greatness a subject has, and thus how much unity and resistance to division it has.\(^{39}\) Thus, for St. Thomas, when we judge and measure a subject as beautiful, we perceive the real unity in the subject, for measuring and judging are ways of perceiving unities and wholes. And the intensity of unitative greatness is apprehended by the intellect through the senses most oriented toward reason, and the subject is apprehended as striking in its intensity of goodness and beauty.

Although St. Thomas does not write as extensively on beauty as Kant does, what St. Thomas writes gives us enough material to compare the two and to continue the thesis of this paper. For Kant, beauty is measured and judged \textit{a priori} based on man’s highest and most simple aspect of the genus of the \textit{a priori} intellect, which is the moral law. This is “generated” by the reflective judgment when man is confronted with the particular. Beauty is unrelated to goodness as a concept, but is a symbol of the morally good. Thus man, whose faculties are oriented toward the practical, is oriented toward that which is highest and most known in his faculties (the moral law) by that which can only be known (the intellect, since all subjects are \textit{phenomena}). And when confronted

\(^{38}\) Redpath, “The relation between equal and unequal qualitative measurement, contrary opposition, and analogous predication . . .” (lecture, 13 October 2020).

\(^{39}\) Peter Redpath “Why the whole of philosophy, science, is chiefly a study of organizations involving overcoming oppositions so as better to know organizational truth” (lecture, PHS 731: \textit{The One and the Many}, Holy Apostles College & Seminary, Cromwell, Conn., 17 November 2020).
with beauty, one measures and judges the subject to be beautiful based on the moral law (which is how it is a symbol of morality), and this judgment based on the moral law then inevitably bleeds into and manifests by judging and measuring others based on whether or not they agree with one’s judgment (the a priori imposed moral ought). All of this is rooted in man’s being stuck in his own head and perceiving the world through the a priori intellect.

For St. Thomas, beauty is goodness, a kind of concentrated and shocking dose of the good. Beauty is perceived by the knower because of the true unity and resistance to division that exists in the subject known. Beauty satisfies reason, as the senses that are oriented toward reason are those which perceive beauty. And while St. Thomas may agree with Aristotle about “a beautiful thing to do,” this does not mean that, like Kant, the morally good is the only good in relation to beauty. For St. Thomas, beauty properly belongs to the nature of the formal cause, which is inextricable from the real final cause, and thus beauty can properly be said to have this relation to the good, which is related to the end of man who perceives beauty as a satisfaction of reason. All of this is rooted in man’s real relationship to real subjects that are truly unified and perceived by the unity of man’s intellect.

Thus, as we have seen, both St. Thomas and Kant have the foundations of their understanding rooted in the intellect’s relationship to subjects in the world. This determines their respective understanding of measuring and judging. And when we look closely at the particular example of measuring and judging beauty, we see two fundamental differences. The first difference is beauty’s relationship to the good. For St. Thomas, beauty and the good are the same and differ only in certain aspects. For Kant, the good (as a concept) has nothing to do with beauty.

The second difference is Kant’s insistence upon beauty as a symbol of the morally good, and that the a priori moral law guides how we
measure and judge beauty as well as our measurement and judgment of others who either agree or disagree with our pronouncement of beauty. These differences are interrelated in that they both pertain to man’s ultimate end and highest achievement. This is most pertinent to our argument and follows us through to the next section because in this we see that both St. Thomas and Kant regard the measurement and judgment of beauty as related to man’s aim or end, in one respect or another, since, for St. Thomas, beauty is related to the good, and for Kant, beauty is related to the moral law.

The Respective Differences of St. Thomas’s and Kant’s Foundation and Understanding of Beauty Lead to Their Understanding of Man’s End and Highest Achievement

Let us turn our attention to St. Thomas’s and Kant’s understanding of man’s end and highest achievement. That man has an aim or end is common both to St. Thomas and to Kant. Both agree that man is the highest end of creation and both agree that man, as the highest of creation, has what might be called a high aim. Although this subject matter may be argued on its own, it is interesting that both St. Thomas and Kant find that their respective understandings of man’s end weaves its way through beauty.

For Kant, man is regarded as the highest of creatures and what makes man the highest of creatures is man as a moral being. Kant writes, “It is, then, only as a moral being that we acknowledge man to be the end of creation.”40 In Kant, man’s a priori moral law is what separates man from animals—and not only separates man from animals, but places man on the higher end of the hierarchy of created beings.

Earlier, we touched upon aims. For Kant, aims do not exist in subjects but find their origin a priori in the intellect. However, there is

40 Kant, The Critique of Judgement, 592.
one unique exception to this: man. For Kant, man has an aim or an end, and man finds his highest end in the moral law. Kant writes:

The whole question, then, is reduced to this: Have we any ground capable of satisfying reason, speculative or practical, to justify our attributing a final end to the supreme cause that acts according to ends? For that, judging by the subjective frame of our reason, or even by aught we can at all imagine of the reason of other beings, such final end could be nothing but man as subject to moral laws, may be taken a priori as a matter of certainty . . .

Therefore, in Kant, the moral law is the leader and guiding principle of man as a substance, an organization, and man’s unified operational aim is to live morally.

This is why, as has been pointed out a number of times, that in Kant’s work, “a beautiful thing to do” is confused with beauty as understood in St. Thomas’s work. For Kant, man, whose faculties are united in the practical and whose end is found in the governing a priori moral law as man’s aim, sees beauty as a symbol of morality. Thus, beginning in the foundation of man’s intellectual relationship to subjects, winding through beauty and terminating in man’s ultimate aim, we see that, for Kant, the moral law is the highest aspect of man, it is that which can be most known being a priori in the intellect and it carries us through beauty and into this conclusion.

It is for this reason that we note earlier that St. Thomas, who has a clear grasp of the human intellect, predicts Kant’s conclusion. St. Thomas writes:

When several things are ordained to one thing, one of them must rule or govern and the rest be ruled or governed, as the Philosopher teaches in the Politics. This is evident in the union of soul and body, for the soul naturally commands and the body obeys. The same thing is true of the soul’s powers, for the concupiscible and irascible appetites are ruled in a natural order by reason. Now all the sciences and arts are ordained to one thing, namely,

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to man’s perfection, which is happiness. Hence one of these sciences and arts must be the mistress of all the others, and this rightly lays claim to the name *wisdom*; for it is the office of the wise man to direct others.42

For St. Thomas, because Kant believes that the moral law is that to which man’s intellect is ordered, it is no wonder that Kant concludes what he does. In fact, for Kant to conclude otherwise would be illogical. In Kant’s world, the moral law is the one ruling or governing aspect under which the intellectual (and, for Kant, practical) faculties are oriented, and thus, with the intellect (or soul) governing in this way, the body must follow.

On the other hand, for St. Thomas, the good and God are man’s highest end and this is because man—who is not the highest and moral creature but the highest and rational creature—is ordered not merely to the moral law but to truth, which includes the satisfaction of our rational capacity, our understanding of unity, the good, the beautiful and God. In his *Summa contra gentiles*, St. Thomas brilliantly begins by demonstrating that every agent acts for an end, which is the good, and man, as an intellectual creature, is ordered ultimately to know God, in whom man’s happiness lies.43

These different conclusions find their starting points in the roots mentioned earlier. Since, for St. Thomas, the world is knowable, man can be ordered to truth. But for Kant, since the world is full of *phenomena* and *noumena*, man cannot be ordered to truth and to be ordered to truth would be a cruel joke. Instead, man is ordered to what he can know for certain: the moral law, which is the highest aspect of all that can be truly known, namely, man’s *a priori* intellect and the lens through which man sees the world.

42 Aquinas, *Commentary on “Metaphysics,”* Prologue.
Thus, just as Kant’s highest view of man as a moral creature leads him through beauty and concludes in moral living, for St. Thomas, man, the rational creature, is oriented to truth and goodness, and beauty, which is no different than the good and is apprehended intellectually, is related to man’s ultimate end. Man’s ultimate end, then, for St. Thomas, is to apprehend goodness, which climaxes in the Beatific Vision. Only in this does man fully understand himself, as an intellectual being, whose aim is to apprehend ultimate goodness, which is God. St. Thomas writes:

Hence, since God is the cause of all created intellectual substances, as is clear from the foregoing, it is necessary that separate intellectual substances, in knowing their own essence, should know God himself in the manner of a vision, for only something whose likeness exists in the intellect is known through knowledge of vision, just as the likeness of a thing seen bodily is in the sense of the one seeing. Therefore, any intellect that grasps separate substance, knowing of it what it is, sees God in a higher way than in any of the previous types of knowledge of him.44

Before wrapping this up, in the earlier section, “St. Thomas’s and Kant’s Respectious Understandings of Measurement and Judgment,” we noted that St. Thomas addresses a mistake that Kant makes. Kant makes two mistakes, in fact, according to St. Thomas. Here we will turn our attention to this. In his *Summa contra gentiles*, St. Thomas specifically deals with man’s end. Both mistakes are addressed in St. Thomas’s conclusion that man’s end and ultimate good (or happiness) does not lie in acts of the moral virtues.

The first mistake, according to St. Thomas, is Kant’s view of man as the end of creatures, or the highest animal. This in and of itself is not an error and it is a conclusion with which St. Thomas and Aristotle agree.45 However, For Kant, it is the moral law that separates man

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44 Ibid., III, 41, 286.
45 Not including angels.
from the animals. The definition of man, for Kant, is not a rational animal but a moral animal. But, as St. Thomas writes:

Therefore his ultimate happiness must be sought in that good which is the most proper of all the human goods in contrast to the other animals, and the acts of moral virtues are not that, for some animals partake in something of liberality or courage, but no animal partakes anything of intellectual activity.\footnote{S.C.G., III, 34, 278.}

As St. Thomas notes, when we consider the moral law and moral virtues, we find that animals in some respects partake in them. This, in fact, does not separate man from animals enough to give us a proper definition of man. For St. Thomas, Kant’s conclusion is illogical even under his own terms because, in Kant’s logic, man is the only being with an aim, which is supposed to separate him from animals (since all other aims are \textit{a priori} in the intellect). However, man’s aim does not separate him from animals, which are supposed to have no aim, since both partake in morality. So it does not follow that man is separate from animals if man is separate by having a moral aim, since animals partake in aspects of morality. Kant, therefore, has no good reason for denying that animals have aims and no good reason for defining man as a moral animal. This is Kant’s first mistake.

The second mistake Kant makes is that, as St. Thomas notes, the moral law is not an end since it is the means to something further. For St. Thomas, the end or aim of man is an activity, and on this he and Kant agree, but the activity, in order to be a proper end, must terminate as an end. St. Thomas writes that all moral activities are ordered to something further, such as courage in warfare is ordered to peace and victory and that justice is ordered to keeping the peace among men.\footnote{Ibid.} What is interesting about this is that Kant in \textit{The Critique of Judgement} unknowingly agrees with St. Thomas. This is evident when we consider
Kant’s view of beauty. For Kant, beauty is a symbol of morality, and yet it is ordered to something further: it is ordered to measuring and judging whether or not other people are moral in their agreeing with my declaration of the beautiful object. So even for Kant, the moral law as a measure and judge of beauty is not an end but leads to something further, namely, measuring and judging others based on whether or not they agree with one’s declaration of beauty.

**Conclusion**

Thus it is that these two thinkers, St. Thomas and Kant, both have views of man’s end that begin in whether or not subjects in the world can be known, that weave their ways through their respective understandings of beauty and terminate in their understanding of man’s aim or end. The foundation of each of these thinkers begins with whether or not subjects in the world can be known, and thus be measured and judged. This affects their respective understandings of beauty.

For Kant, beauty is not found in subjects but is a symbol of the moral law, which is the highest aspect of man’s intellect, the guiding principle by which man measures and judges beauty. For St. Thomas, beauty is found in the goodness of subjects. For both of these thinkers, this directly relates to their respective understandings of man’s highest aim or end. For Kant, the end of man is to live morally. For St. Thomas, the end of man is to apprehend intellectually goodness and ultimately God. Let us put it like this: for Kant, the highest achievement of man is to live the moral life, while for St. Thomas, the highest achievement of man is to see and know God. These two different understandings of man’s ultimate end are rooted in whether or not man is stuck inside his own head, knowing only that which is highest within the intellect or whether man can ultimately know that which is totally Good, totally Beautiful and totally Other.
Immanuel Kant here finds himself on the side of the moralists and the Pharisees. For Kant, in order for human beings to live the Good Life, they must mature and develop toward perfect morals. But for St. Thomas, and for Jesus, the Good Life is richer than this. The Good Life, although including morals and virtues, is one in which human beings know God. In Kant, the world is closed off, it is known only through representations and daily life consists in an *a priori* list of dos and do nots. And this list permeates so much of who a human is that even beauty itself is merely a representation of this list. But in St. Thomas, the world is open to us, beautiful subjects can be known as beautiful and all that is in the world is oriented toward God and orients us as knowers toward God.

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**Measuring, Judging and the Good Life: Aquinas and Kant**

**SUMMARY**

This paper examines St. Thomas Aquinas’s and Immanuel Kant’s notions of measurement and judgment, particularly measuring and judging beauty, to demonstrate their respective conclusions about the highest achievement of man. For St. Thomas’s view, I draw from a variety of St. Thomas’s writings as well as rely on Peter Redpath’s research into St. Thomas’s understanding of measuring and judging. For Kant’s view, I focus on Kant’s perspective as written in *The Critique of Judgement*. In this paper, I argue that by examining the way both St. Thomas and Kant measure and judge beauty, we can see that, for Kant, man’s highest achievement is to live the moral life, while for St. Thomas, man’s highest achievement is to know the good and God. Interestingly, for both philosophers, their conclusions about man’s highest achievements wind through their understanding of beauty and the way beauty is measured and judged.

**KEYWORDS**

Thomas Aquinas, Immanuel Kant, measurement, judgment, beauty, aim, end, genus, morality, intellect.
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Miscellanea
Peter A. Redpath

How to Reverse the Widespread Global Disorder That Nonsensical Principles of Utopian Socialism/Marxism Are Currently Causing

Toward the start of his treatise entitled On the Heavens,¹ the great ancient Greek philosopher, tutor of Alexander the Great, and master of common sense and commonsense philosophy, Aristotle, sagely cautioned students that small mistakes in the beginning of a study tend greatly to multiply as the investigation continues. By this he meant that every human investigation naturally grows out of a commonsense knowledge of proximate first principles, starting points, of knowing: something an investigator should know best (principles of understanding) from which reasoning then proceeds. Today, physical scientists often call these evident commonsense, first principles “assumptions.”

As a master of common sense, evident to Aristotle was that to reason, become educated (educē by analysis or synthesis) about how some composite-whole organization is put together or can be taken apart, we must first understand, immediately induce, precisely what is the organizational whole, or subject/genus, we chiefly want to study (are interested in) and about which we are wondering, talking, and rea-

¹ Aristotle, On the Heavens, 1, 5, trans. J. L. Stocks: “[T]hat which was small at the start turns out a giant at the end.” Available online—see the section References for details.
soning. For we can only reasonably wonder, talk, and reason about what we know, not about what we do not know.

For example, competent engineers, those with common sense, who want to build a bridge do not start by mistaking the principles of grammar for those of engineering. They do not think that applying principles of grammar to some multitude of material could possibly cause that material to become a structurally-strong bridge. They understand, assume, that a bridge is a general and specific kind of organizational whole (real genus) that essentially demands application of principles of mathematics and physics to construct. And really professional engineers (people actually interested in studying engineering) would reasonably consider any so-called engineer who understood otherwise to lack common sense, be a fool, fake.

Aristotle’s observation tells us is that, worse than bad reasoning in helping (educing) someone to become educated, or educated, is not to understand precisely: 1) the subject (genus/or ganizational whole) about which we are wondering, talking, reasoning, and 2) what actually can or cannot cause it to come to exist as an organizational unity and operate the way it does. In addition, Aristotle realized that an organizational whole (genus) considered simply as an organizational whole (genus) and considered as a subject demanding analysis or synthesis (one that interests us, that we psychologically wonder about, at this or that moment) immediately becomes somewhat of a qualitatively different kind of subject for us than, strictly speaking, it is considered in itself.

For example, considered as organizational wholes (genera), a human being, married man, father, car driver, firefighter, and a bowler are essentially and qualitatively different, real organizational wholes, or subjects/real genera. John Smith the married human person is essentially, qualitatively, different relationally and psychologically from John Smith the human being, husband, father, automobile driver, firefighter, and bowler: a being with essentially, qualitatively differently related, specif-
ic organizational parts, such as physical and psychological, faculties, capabilities, and talents.

Failure to recognize these distinctions on a daily, even moment-to-moment, basis will cause John Smith and others all sorts of personal and professional problems. Analogously, it will cause all sorts of difficulties for any educator trying to analyze or alter John Smith’s behavior in this or that situation or set of circumstances.

When an educator, or any knower, studies a subject genus (organizational whole), an educator or knower does so as a qualitatively different knower of a qualitatively different subject known. Considered as a studied-subject (a subject of study), psychological examination (examination by the human psyche) is not identical with, is specifically and qualitatively different from, a subject considered simply as a subject.

For example, in a way, both a biologist and a heart surgeon study and do not study the human heart. Generically considered, both study the human heart. But specifically considered, the biologist does so as a life-scientist chiefly intellectually and volitionally (psychologically) interested in the human heart as life-generating while the heart surgeon does so, medically, as someone specifically, intellectually (psychologically), wanting to know about the human heart as health-generating.

While really existing as organizational wholes independently of a knower, considered as specifically-known and understood educational subjects, psychological subjects of interest, these organizational wholes are always situationally, circumstantially, interest-considered subjects. According to Aristotle and St. Thomas: 1) situations, circumstances, always enter into the specification of an act; and 2) a real genus, organizational whole, essentially exists in and grows out of, is generated by, the harmonious unity of relationships of the specific actions of its many, hierarchically-ordered, qualitatively more-or-less perfect, specific parts that constitute its real, not logical, proximate principles/causes.
For example, the habit of music considered as a real genus is not a logical premise. It is a real proximate principle/cause that exists only in and through specifically different individual actions of habits of qualitatively, unequal, more-or-less individually-talented musicians (like classical, jazz, orchestral, and so on) as more or less perfect ways of relating sounds into organizationally-pleasing wholes—pleasing sounds more or less beautiful to, and fostering, healthy human hearing in human beings. Every operational organizational whole (which is all that a real genus is) exists in and through the harmonious unity of its principles: its specific and individual parts. As a result, a totally unharmonious organization is no organization at all, and is no more conceivable as such than is the concept of a square circle. Consequently, educational subjects (genera, species, and individuals existing within genera and species) are, and can only be, subjects of this or that specific and individual human, psychological interest: Subjects that interest this or that person as a psychological subject of wonder in this or that way (circumstantially, situationally) as concretely existing at this or that time, or considered as abstractly existing apart from any time or place like the genera, species, and individuals that interest logicians.

The truth of what I am saying becomes glaringly evident if we analyze the difference between John Smith the day-to-day firefighter and John Smith the weekend-bowler. If John Smith the firefighter goes out on the weekend with fellow firefighters and a fire breaks out at the bowling alley, the behavior of these individuals in this situation would not likely be to throw bowling balls at the fire. Sane, adult human beings, investigators, with common sense would consider such behavior in this situation (set of circumstances) to be irrational, out of touch with reality, lacking in common sense. To make sense out of, make intelligible, understand, anyone’s behavior at this or that time, or apart from any specific and individual place and time, requires that anyone with common sense consider who or what (efficient cause) is doing what
(formal cause), to what (material cause), with what (instrumental cause), where (place), why (final cause), when (time), and how (quality): the specific parts of what Aristotle and St. Thomas considered to be essential parts of an individual human act. As both Aristotle and Aquinas rightly recognized, as completely as possible understanding any specific and individual act essentially demands recognizing at work Aristotle’s famous 4 causes, the intrinsic property of quality, and the external conditions and opportunity of time and place—all of which, considered as a whole, *specify and individualize an act within a real genus, or organizational whole.*

**The Nonsensical Psychological Disposition of Utopian Socialists/Marxists and Their Topsy-Turvy Understanding of Human Beings and Education as Essentially Lacking Concrete/Real Common Sense**

I raise the above points at the start of considering the nature of the nonsensical principles of Utopians Socialism and Marxism and how to reverse their influence to drive home to readers an essential difference between the abstract way in which, like logicians and ideologues, a Marxist considered as a species of Utopian Socialist (Enlightenment intellectual), *someone sorely lacking in concrete (real) common sense,* tends to look at education. He or she does not tend to do so in the concrete, commonsense fashion I have described above in which, better or evidently-understood truths must first be known before reasoning happens and science can be achieved.

A Marxist does so in the contrary opposite way; and consistent application of this topsy-turvy manner of viewing human beings and human education is the chief cause that turns healthy children into little Marxists and older adults into big ones. As a political ideologue devoid of real common sense, but driven by an intense desire to be logically consistent (abstractly commonsensical), through use of a fairytale hist-
tory he or she borrows from Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s educational treatise Émile, or Abstract Man, he or she transforms the real, concrete nature and history of human education into an abstract, fictional, imaginary epic similar to Homer’s Odyssey. In this fictional tale, consciousness in the form of the god Humanity emerges in a systematically-logical fashion from a backward state of individual, emotional selfishness rooted in a pre-logical, pre-cultural, and prehistoric state of awareness. In this prehistoric, pre-cultural, and pre-logical state Humanity shows no sign of having a conscience, logic, or social consciousness. He is a greedy, uncultured, barbaric, anti-social, unscientific, insincere, intolerant, bad-willed individual who fights other such individuals in pursuit of possession of private property, not the historic, cultured, systematically-logical and enlightened sincerely-selfless, property-less, tolerant, Social-scientific Good Will into which he seeks to emerge.

According to this fairytale theological epic (metaphysical and moral educational history), once upon a time there lived a prehistoric god named Humanity who would someday emerge from being a train of logically-blind, selfish, individualistic, warring emotions into the systematically-logical idea of human freedom creating human history as the grand narrative, autobiography, of the poetic spirit of free creation of the human imagination. He is poetic free spirit (Absolute Spirit/Humanity), emerging from a state of backward religious consciousness (Subjective Spirit) in prehistoric and later, backward, different cultural times and geographical locations finally to become at the end of human history progressive scientific self-awareness of himself as Perfect Social-scientific Good Will.

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2 Cf. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Émile, or Concerning Education, trans. Eleanor Worthington (Boston: D. C. Heath & Company, 1889), 14: “We must then take a broader view of things, and consider in our pupil man in the abstract, man exposed to all the accidents of human life.”
As the story goes, long-long ago in a far off place in prehistoric/pre-cultural/pre-logical time, before logic and selfless, sincere, tolerant-of-all-difference (except intolerant, hateful difference) social-science and conscience had existed, supposedly an illogical, unenlightened human consciousness had existed as an irrational, selfish, greedy, insincere, intolerant, individualistic, train of hate-filled, conscience-less, anti-social, brute emotions that talked in hate-filled, anti-social, selfish ways. Somewhat like the ancient Israelites wandering in the desert and René Descartes wandering about Europe in search of a clear and distinct idea of himself and true science, Humanity (aka, Abstract Man) had roamed the Earth with no clear and distinct, concrete, scientific idea of who he truly was: the only real creator God.

Wanting to get a perfect idea of himself, but not knowing that he was the only cause of everything, all differences, Humanity decided to create a logic generated by the idea of progress, or development, that would give him a systematically-logical plan to enable him to emerge out of himself to hunt for perfect understanding of his true identity. Essentially, this logical plan consisted in creating a fairytale, or fictional narrative in the form of a human history of himself as a backward, unenlightened, selfish will, or train of emotions, engaged in an odyssey of projecting his emotions in contradictory ways historically, qualitatively onward and upward more perfectly, in different geographical regions of the Earth at different times. Humanity planned to do this to see whether he could recognize himself as the epic poetic idea of perfect freedom (the Spirit of Human Freedom as Scientific Will) always and everywhere progressing out of himself from a primitive, infantile, abstract, logically-unsystematic, train of emotions (abstract general ideas) into a concrete, adult, logically-systematic, train of ideas—the one and only social self and Scientific Will/God of metaphysical poetry that is the only real Creator of all Things: The One, True, God.
Every time he concretely did so, however, *Humanity* only saw some slight likeness of himself in those emotions. No one, or train, of them ever perfectly captured his likeness, clearly and distinctly with the thrilling, lively-enthusiastic, emotional clarity of a scientific likeness of the train of emotions containing systematic logic within it that he was convinced was identical with himself as a Perfect, Pure, Social-science Good Will containing all scientific understanding and real differences.

In their fantasy world (to which they often refer as a “narrative”\(^3\)), this is the way Marxists, as Enlightenment intellectuals and Utopian Socialists, look at human history. They claim that, prior to emerging into one single consciousness of oneself as systematic, logical, social-science will, the only thing that exists is a human consciousness as a weakly-connected train of thoughts in the form of atomic-like, discrete, feelings, rationally-blind, rationally-un-integrated, un-trained emotions. Transformation from being atomized, rationally (logically)-blind emotions into being a logically systematic train of emotions that constitutes the nature of an enlightened, or social-science feeling (knowledge/perfect science as identical with Pure Social-science Good Will/God ) only comes from a *train of thought possessing* a qualitatively higher form of social-political intelligence (what an ancient Greek would call higher *gnosis*). And they maintain, further, that this mysterious gift of qualitatively higher intellection is no act of intellect at all. Instead, it is an act of pure social/political, Sincere Good Will, or Socially-perfect Willpower.

In short, in contrast to the commonsense wisdom of Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, and most ordinary, intellectually-healthy human beings (who maintain that truth is a psychological activity located within the human faculty of a human intellect and naturally-knowable even to

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\(^3\) For the Marxist approach, see Luc Herman, Bart Vervaeck, “Ideology and Narrative Fiction,” in *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. Available online—see the section *References* for details.
young children), strictly speaking, Marxists think that the truth is actually a sociopolitical, construct caused to a train of thoughts by economic relations. These economic relations, in turn, are supposedly caused by social-science relations that are only possessed by people (systematic trains of thought) of sincere/tolerant or insincere/intolerant feelings (good will [love] or bad will [hate]): people like themselves with sincere, socially-consciousness, healthy, tolerant, political feelings who, more than anything else, love humanity, or people like property developer Donald Trump, who love petty-bourgeois-philistine-individualism-individualists, and selfish possession of personal property.

As Gilbert Keith Chesterton once quipped about such individuals, these are people who tend to love humanity, but hate their next-door neighbor\footnote{See Chesterton’s poem “The World State,” in Gordon Mursell, 	extit{English Spirituality: From 1700 to the Present Day} (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 431.}: people who psychologically inhabit a world to which Chesterton referred as “Topsy-turvydom,” one in which everything is upside down. As intellectual descendants of Georg Hegel (someone Chesterton had considered to be a mad\footnote{Cf. G. K. Chesterton, 	extit{St. Thomas Aquinas} (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, Inc., 2009), 94.}), why Marxists should inhabit such a world is easily understandable. As Utopian Socialists, all Enlightenment thinkers inhabit this intellectual world in which emotions, feelings, have/cause people; people do not have/cause emotions.

Whether or not Hegel was actually mad, I do not know. That he lacked real common sense, I do know; and that Marxists are even more lacking in real common sense than was Hegel and Hegelians, I also know. While Marxists claim to stand Hegel on his head, they do not do so to get out of his nonsensical teachings. They do so more fully to imbibe them. Hegel, at least, pretended to make a distinction between matter and spirit. Marxists conflate the two with each other and with
human consciousness: humanity. Doing so is the chief cause of all their personal problems and all the problems they cause for those around them. Precisely how they got to be the way they are is an issue with which I will deal in a second essay related to the Topsy-turvy world of Marxism.

**Marxism as a Secularized Christian Heresy: How It Came to Be and Its Precise Nature**

As some Marxists readily admit, Marxism is a religion, or a secularized version of one: Christianity. As scholars like Eric Voegelin have well documented,\(^6\) Hegelians and Marxists are full-blown, secularized Christian heretics: neo-Gnostic millenarians who conflate in their nature principles of neo-Pelagianism, neo-Catharism, and neo-Albigensianism (the three being pretty much identical). They tend to consider this conflation to be *true science (as opposed to the hate-filled, backward thinking and rhetoric of science-deniers).*

Heavily influenced by the millenarianism of the 12\(^{th}\)-century Catholic monk, Joachim of Flora (aka, Joachim of Fiore), the neo-Averroistic dream of 14\(^{th}\)-century Italian humanist, Francesco Petrarcha (Petrarch) to unite poetry, philosophy, and theology into a humanistic/historical social science capable of reviving the cultural greatness of Rome in a Christianized form, and the neo-Gnostic spiritualism of 18\(^{th}\)-century Enlightenment intellectual, like Rousseau, all Enlightenment thinkers incline to divide human history into 4 ages, one of which they consider to be prehistoric/pre-culture, and pre-social science:

1. Prehistory (an initially barbaric, pre-socialist age of war of individual human being against individual human being; for Hegel, *Hu-

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2. The first age of human history (imperfect social science, under the Old Law, from the time of Adam to Christ), characterized by a heavy influence of external formalism on human consciousness and behavior (*Humani*ty/Absolute Spirit wandering around the Far East, China and the environs for Hegel).

3. The second age of human history in which human consciousness achieves greater perfection in historical consciousness as social-science (in the sense of being a more universal and deeper emotional love of humanity) human consciousness, under the New Law, by the entrance of Spirit into human history within the context of the administrative Catholic Church (the Greek and Latin Age for Hegel).

4. The final age of human history, the Age of the Eternal Gospel, of Perfect Social Science in which the influence of Spirit perfects human behavior so widely, deeply, and intensely that no need any longer exists for a Church administration or organized religion (the Lutheran/Germanic Age and end of history for Hegel during which, for the first time in human history, conscience and all science come into being and humanity becomes aware that it is identical with Perfect Social-science: Perfect Good Will Consciousness/God).

Sometime after his death, Europeans started to refer to followers of millenarianism of Joachim of Flora as “Joachitic enthusiasts” and often called their teaching “Joachitic enthusiasm.” As is evinced in his famous work, *The Education of the Human Race*, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing was one of these millenarians. So, too, under his educa-

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tional influence, were 18th-/19th-century Enlightenment intellectuals Immanuel Kant and Georg Hegel.

After the crumbling of the Berlin Wall (9 November 1989) and dismantling of Soviet communism toward the tail end of the 20th-century, the period celebrated by Western liberal elites and popularized by Francis Fukuyama was supposed to be “the end of history,” in the sense of being the time in which enlightened liberal democracy would finally transcend the transitional period of communist dictatorship and eradicate from the world the influence of backward religious consciousness.9

To understand the euphoric, Joachitic enthusiasm, that overtook Western Europe during this time and fully comprehend the nature of Marxism, Enlightenment Utopian Socialism in general, and neo-liberal, atheistic democracy (like that of John Dewey), crucial is the contemporary, neo-Averroistic form into which the Joachitic enthusiasm became transformed by the neo-Averroistic, religious, educational humanism of Petrarch unwittingly devolving, through the 19th-century neo-Averroistic social science—with its three stages of social evolution: 1) theological, 2) metaphysical, and 3) positive/scientific—proposed by Auguste Marie François Xavier Comte, into the secular educational humanism of the 20th- and 21st-century West.

During a late Medieval, academic battles about the relationship between philosophy and theology that the great Islamic scholar Averroes (ibn Rushd, 1126–1198) had with a previously-existing Islamic scholar named al-Ghazali (who died in 1111 and had considered philosophy to be inferior to theology and fake science), Averroes had countered Ghazali’s reductionist claim that the whole of truth is contained in the Qu’ran, by, knowingly or not, reviving a threefold distinction about the hierarchy of human knowing first introduced centuries before by Plato through his famous analogy of a divided-line of learning in which

Plato had made a distinction among 3 lower and higher forms of knowing: 1) the qualitatively-lowest being belief (which Averroes would later identify as a mindset common to poets); 2) the qualitatively higher one, being a kind opinionated imagining (that Averroes would later maintain is proper to theologians); and 3) the highest one being science (which Averroes would later reserve for Aristotelian philosophers). According to Averroes, while the whole of truth is contained in the Qu’ran, only the Aristotelian philosopher knows how to read, unravel the hidden truth, meaning of, what the Qu’ran actually says.

Seizing upon the critique by Averroes, Petrarch made the mistake of buying into an esoteric interpretation of philosophy/science as a hidden teaching, or body, or scientific system, of knowledge, known only to an enlightened group of intellectuals. In so doing, he treated philosophy/science as if it were reducible to a dialectical logic apprehensible only by some spiritually-elect group. While Petrarch hated Averroes (had called him a “mad dog”\(^\text{10}\)) and was no fan of Aristotle, in criticizing Averroes, unwittingly he came to 1) adopt the understanding Averroes had promoted that philosophy is a hidden teaching, or body of knowledge known only to some enlightened individuals and 2) pass this understanding on to posterity.

Unhappily, to paraphrase and alter a bit a commonsense-gem of wisdom from Étienne Gilson, *We think, and choose, the way we can, not the way we wish.*\(^\text{11}\) Outraged by Averroes’s disdain for poetry, because Petrarch made the mistake of doing no more than dialectically turning Averroes’s teaching on its head and not essentially changing it, *unwittingly,* by so doing, in effect he adopted in his own principles a kind of neo-Gnostic understanding of philosophy/science for which he


\(^{11}\) Cf. Étienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1950), 302.
would become a conduit to intellectual posterity. He assumed and popularized among humanists of the Italian Renaissance that philosophy/science is an esoteric metaphysical and moral teaching, or body of knowledge, that was first given by God to Moses. Subsequently, to protect this teaching from being ridiculed by unenlightened, vulgar, illiterate masses, Petrarch and other Italian Renaissance humanists claimed true philosophy/science had been intentionally buried in the works of epic poets like Homer, Hesiod, and Virgil and esoterically transmitted to other enlightened poets.

Over the several centuries that comprised the Italian Renaissance, this Petrarchan popularization of philosophy as an esoteric teaching, or body of knowledge (which was to become a general assumption about philosophy held by Italian Renaissance humanists) became the popular understanding of philosophy that entered into Western Europe around the time of the Father of Modern Philosophy, 16th-/17th-century René Descartes. Disliking the poetic nature of the Jesuit education he had received, and much more favoring logic than poetry as the only sort of knowing worthy of being called philosophy/science, Descartes had maintained that the whole of truth is a body of knowledge buried, hidden, in some train of obscure thought of wandering images seeking to become a clear and distinct idea that he called a “mind,” human consciousness.

Descartes had claimed, further, that this hidden teaching was apprehensible not by poets, but only by a person of exceptionally strong logically-regulated will-power focused on the idea of a Perfectly-Good God capable of stabilizing the wandering imagination common to poetic types so as to be able to see truth to consist in a systematic train of ideas so clear and distinct that a strong, logical human will (one with which Descartes apparently had identified common sense) cannot deny their reality, including that of a human person being a totally-disembodied mind or spirit. In short, centuries before 18th-/19th-century Frie-
drich Nietzsche, Descartes had moved truth, and with it common sense, out of the human intellect and placed it in some logically-systematic train of ideas or feelings, thoughts, he called a human “will.”

In so doing, however, as the more poetically- and historically/humanist-inclined Rousseau had immediately recognized, Descartes had cut off philosophy/science, and with it, common sense, from human wisdom and what the Petrarch and Italian Renaissance humanists in general had considered to be its historical roots as a somewhat obscure religious body of knowledge first given by God as true philosophy/science to the Jews from whom all true culture and cultural institutions were born and passed on to posterity as historical descendants from its original race.

In so doing, Descartes had done more than entirely destroy the nature of philosophy/science, and real common sense, as a somewhat social-science history, or historical, educational humanist enterprise. The principles he had laid down for the nature of philosophy/science as a real genus had included the clear and distinct conviction he had inherited from Petrarch and Italian Renaissance humanists that the Jews were the historical conduit, historical race/genus from which all false philosophy/science and subsequent philosophical/scientific mistakes, intellectual and cultural backwardness, foolishness, lack of common sense, and sins had historically descended upon Europe and the world prior to the coming of Descartes and the later Western Enlightenment.

Unwittingly, Descartes had become a conduit who would later cause Rousseau’s educational principles, in his critique of Descartes’s teachings, become a conduit for later forms of anti-Semitism as an essential principle of Nazi forms of philosophy/science. This would include making the Jews a scapegoat for all Europe’s prior socially- and culturally-caused problems, evils, and sins.

In a similar way, through teachings of Rousseau critiquing him, Descartes would unknowingly become a historical conduit passing a-
long to posterity the mistaken notion that a real and scientific species is identical with a race historically-descended from original parents (instead of being part of an organizational whole that generates, proximately causes, organizational action: a division/part of a generic whole, or substance). In truth, a real genus only exists in a real species, and a real species only exists in real individuals. As Gilson once quipped, in the present, real species of animals exist only in real animals, such as those in zoos, not in historical descent or transmission, which no longer exists.\textsuperscript{12} If real species were historical descendants of ancestral species, since ancestors cannot historically-descend from themselves, the absurd consequence that would follow would be that historical ancestors could never belong to the same species as their historical descendants!

Worse. The only way we come to know anything is in and through defining it. Doing so, however, essentially involves locating some being within a genus and species. By becoming conduits for essentially racializing the concepts of genus and species, Petrarch, Italian Renaissance humanists in general, Descartes, and Rousseau became an essential part of the historical conduit that brought into existence the contemporary enlightened Woke, anarchic, youth generation, “useful idiots” (who tend not to be able to distinguish real from apparent, logical or not logical anything, much less genera and species).

Rousseau contributed to this current fiasco in part by rightly criticizing Descartes for cutting off philosophy/science, and education in general, from its historical roots. While he admitted with Descartes that philosophy/science is a hidden body of knowledge, he denied that it (and with it, real common sense) is esoterically buried in an individual mind.

Instead, Rousseau maintained that philosophy/science/real common sense is/are a historical project of discrete, disconnected, emotions to assemble themselves into a historically-driven, social-science consciousness: perfect humanity. In addition, he denied Descartes’s distinction between matter (which Descartes had conceived as inert extension) and mind (which Descartes had identified with thought, spirit).

According to Rousseau, only spirit exists. Matter is simply unconscious thought/spirit. And, in a way, clear and distinct ideas (clear and distinct, more progressive genera and species), historically and progressively descend from one time to another (earlier emotions being historic ancestors of later, more progressive, enlightened ones somewhat resembling historical, backward ones, like later races historically descending from and somewhat resembling ancestral parents). After Rousseau, the idea of a real substance or nature, and real genera and species in the commonsense way that Aristotle and Aquinas had conceived them to be (as organizational wholes possessing faculties like intellect, will, and emotions) became replaced in the West by essentially different ideas of human beings, genera, species, individuals, and real common sense.

According to Hegel, for example, human beings are born as essentially illogical, un-systematic trains of unscientific, barbaric, emotions historically driven to project themselves and come into conflict with other historically driven, illogical, unscientific, barbaric emotions that (much like the savage Fuegians that the cultured, Enlightened-socialist Brit, Charles Darwin would later encounter on his first voyage on the Beagle) inhabit a wild geographical region (genus) so as eventually, at the end of history, to unite together into a systematic, or logical train of scientific, self-understanding qualitatively-higher emotions (species): perfect humanity, a Scientific, Pure Good Will in which all complete truth and perfect religion and perfect/science/wisdom will coincide in nature. Understanding human beings in somewhat this way, in
his educational tome Émile, or Abstract Man (humanity), Rousseau wedded a Western neo-Gnostic, millenarianism to a neo-Pelagianism on a historical march to become Perfect Social-science Consciousness aware of itself as such: God!

In so doing, like ancient Pelagius, Rousseau denied the reality of original sin as part of humanity as pre-historic, selfish, barbaric, uncultured, abstract man: someone like conscience-deprived, crude, vulgar, selfish, intolerant, insincere, socially and culturally backward, brute Donald Trump, emerging into concrete, selfless, socialistic, domesticated, cultured, sincere, tolerant, historic-scientific man: someone like neo-Gnostic, neo-Averroestic, double-truth-advocate Catholics Joe Biden, Nancy Pelosi, Mario and Andrew Cuomo. And Rousseau did so for precisely the same reason that, as neo-Gnostics spiritualists, all Enlightenment intellectuals incline to do so: They are, as he was, and as Chesterton rightly recognized about Hegel, Monomaniacs.

Like all the Enlightenment descendants he spawned, including Auguste Comte and his followers, Rousseau denied the evident, real, commonsense truth that real multitudes (real organizational wholes, natures), exist independently of something he understood to be social consciousness. To him and them, reality is social consciousness: the consciousness (systematic, scientific train of thoughts that once was blind emotions that has become Pure Social-Science Good Will). In actuality, for Enlightenment thinkers (the contemporary Woke culture) only one being is real, only total unity exists. Unity and social consciousness are identical and constitute what Marxists and all contemporary Utopian Socialists and neo-liberals call humanity, which they consider to be God. Hence, their often-repeated claims to be theists, good Catholics, and so on, not atheists or heretics.

The psychological constitution of a Marxist causes him or her to think that humanity is real, but John Smith is not. Like Hegel, the Marxist thinks that John Smith is simply where Absolute Spirit (which
Hegel identified with God, which he conflated with *Humanity*) happens to be conscious of itself at this or that historical moment. Reality to a Marxist is consciousness historically, progressively, realizing that only humanity—collections of socially-conscious feelings, emotions (consciousness feeling itself historically to be growing into self-awareness of being scientific feeling: Perfect, Pure, Sincere, Good Will)—is real. Anything apart from humanity considered in this way is an illusion caused by disordered economic relations (the cause of all cultural illusions).

Quite frankly, if seriously maintained intellectually, to a sane human being, one with actual common sense, such a way of looking at reality would be considered sociopathic. Nonetheless, this way of looking at reality is a fundamental assumption, non-negotiable, Marxist and Utopian-Socialist, Enlightenment educational first principle—an essential part of Marxist and Enlightenment self-definition, self-identity, and self-understanding. And education for both begins with and remains throughout its operation, application of this psychological principle behaviorally to modify the psychology of students. Knowingly or not to a Marxist and all Enlightenment Utopian Socialists, their educational principles essentially demand that they drive out from the psyche of their students any scintilla of real common sense.\(^\text{13}\)

**Marxism as Secularized Christian Heresy:**
**How to Reverse Its Pernicious Mis-Educational and Anti-Cultural, Anarchic Influence**

To combat the mis-educational and anti-cultural, anarchic influence of Marxism, crucial for its opponents to understand is the nature of

\(^{13}\) For more about the need for a renewal of the West by recovering common sense, see Peter A. Redpath, “The Nature of Common Sense and how We Can Use Common Sense to Renew the West,” *Studia Gilsoniana* 3, supplement (2014): 455–484.
common sense (especially real common sense) and where, as Utopian Socialists, Marxist principles must incline Marxists to begin to: 1) drive out real common sense from the souls of children and replace it with a fictional narrative devoid of real common sense; 2) promote humanistic atheism, the notion that humanity is God, and, especially, anti-Semitism; 3) mistake ethnic races for real genera and species; 4) and deny the evident existence of real natures with internal principles of organization, powers/faculties/capabilities within things in general and human beings especially.

All these effects are pernicious and are driving the contemporary West and the world toward total madness. Once again, the Enlightenment West is turning the Jew into a cultural scapegoat onto which it inclines chiefly to fix all its cultural and individual problems and blame for all its cultural and individual failings. In addition, by denying the reality of real natures, including human nature, no human faculties can exist in which human habits exist, in which unequal virtues and talents can and do exist. As a result, apart from temperance and courage, the cardinal moral virtues of justice (especially distributive justice based upon individual talent can be recognized to exist) and prudence (upon which, together with the other cardinal virtues sound leadership essentially depend), cannot exist at all, much less flourish.

Beyond this, denying the existence of really-existing organizational wholes (real substances), the principles of conceptual and behavioral contradictions and non-contradictions become incomprehensible. Conceptually, contradictory opposites involve the impossibility of some one substance or parts/properties of a substance having essentially opposite differences. If real substances do not, cannot, exist, neither can the principle of conceptual non-contradiction. Worse, neither can behavioral non-contradictions. The concept of really, or naturally, doable or undoable deed becomes intellectually incomprehensible. And if nei-
ther conceptual nor behavioral contradictions are comprehensible, nei-
ther are common sense, truth, or language.

In addition, because they lack any commonsense ability to recog-
nize the reality of unequal talent and justly reward it as a contribution to
a community or society, Utopian Socialists tend to do several things: 1) reduce the whole of justice to commutative justice, exchanges of equal
value of benefit or damage, such as monetary exchanges of equal or un-
equal goods and services; 2) explain inequality of distribution of goods,
wealth, not to reward for talent, virtue, but to exploitation, taking ad-
vantage, of the weaker (victims) by the stronger (victimizers); 3) reduce
what remains of justice to being tolerant/sincere (good-willed), and in-
justice to being intolerant/insincere (bad-willed); 4) claim that all hu-
man inequality is based upon social victimization of innocent, sincere
(good-willed), tolerant, sinless, just victims, by insincere (bad-willed)
unjust, sinful victimizers; 5) always attempt to remedy the disastrous,
impoverishing effects that application of this flawed understanding of
justice/injustice has on a community/society by periodically reversing
within a community/society the roles of victims and victimizers—at one
period making the victims one social group or another (such as, black
males, females, religion, this or that religion, white males, and so on)
and at another time reversing these victims/victimizers roles.

Setting aside the evident absurdities and cultural evils with which
Enlightenment Utopian Socialism and, especially, Marxism has infect-
ed the West, evident to readers by now should be that a Western and
global return to sanity related to understanding the nature of truth and
language essentially depend upon the ability of Western and world
leaders to restore real common sense to national cultures. To do so,
these leaders must, as precisely and quickly as possible, understand the
nature of common sense considered in general, and especially real
common sense.
Happily, through the examples and descriptions of it I have given in this essay, and especially through examples of its contrary opposite, a more or less precise definition of common sense appears easy to give. When we first consider the idea of common sense in relationship to examples of people who are more or less psychologically-healthy adults, it appears to be simply what most of us would call *common knowledge*, or *common understanding*.

In English, we have an expression we often give to people who say something evidently true, something everyone knows—“That goes without saying.” By this we mean that what a person just said was so evidently true that no need existed to say it. The term *common sense* expresses this concept. In it, the word *sense* is synonymous with the word *knowledge*, or, more precisely, *understanding*.

In general, a person with common sense is someone possessed of what Aristotle and St. Thomas had identified as the natural and acquired intellectual habit (*habitus*) and virtue (*virtus*: virtual, or intensive quantity [quality]) of understanding. Such a person is someone who, in relation to observational (what Aristotle and St. Thomas had called *speculative* or *theoretical*) knowledge immediately understands (induces, intuits) some thing or action to be what it is, or be true; or, in relation to practical and productive knowing, through practical or productive experience at living, immediately induces (intuits), understands, what something is or is not, or that it is right or wrong to choose.

Aristotle and Aquinas had maintained that all human beings are born with natural *habitus* (qualities they imperfectly have). These include all the natural moral and intellectual qualities, virtues of temperance, courage, justice, prudence, art, philosophy/science, understanding, and even wisdom, and their contrary opposites. While not perfectly so, even young children are somewhat (at least naturally inclined to be) courageous or cowardly, hopeful or fearful, sensitive to pleasure/pain, more-or-less artistic, even prudent, wise, possessed of understanding
and common sense. The truth of this claim is evident from the fact that, at times, children are more prudent, wiser, than some adults. In addition, some are precocious: masterful musicians, painters, mathematicians, and so on.

To become perfected in such psychological qualities, however, Aristotle and Aquinas were convinced human beings need repeatedly to apply prudence and wisdom (common sense/understanding in its more perfect form) to their increasingly-perfected understanding to add perfecting qualities (virtues) to their naturally-possessed habits. In its most perfect form, common sense is simply the perfected, naturally-possessed habit of understanding (the virtue of understanding) applied to this or that subject in this or that situation that makes the nature of some subject immediately intelligible!

Following St. Augustine, some contemporary Christians, including Pope Francis, have recently started to refer to this quality of common sense in the form of wisdom/prudence in immediate understanding by use of the term discernment. No need exists for a discerning person, someone with common sense in this form, to reason to the conclusion that this something exists, or about: what it is, whether it is true, false, or fake; or whether it is good or bad, right or wrong, to pursue or avoid. The answers to such questions are immediately evident to this person. And so, too, is the adequate self-knowledge of personal nature and abilities immediately to draw this conclusion.

Consequently, especially in relation to productive and practical matters, healthy, adult human beings commonly identify a person with common sense as being someone possessed of the habit of good decision making, a good judge, either in general, or related to some particular subject. A person with common sense is a person possessed of common knowledge, common understanding: what everyone else who knows a subject understands about this subject in general or particular. The example I gave toward the start of this article related to an engineer
who claims to be an engineer mistaking the principles of grammar for those of engineering is a fitting, suitable, one to use to help make intelligible, understandable, to an audience what I am chiefly talking about, the chief intellectual point I want to make, related to the nature of common sense.

As opposed to the person possessed of common sense, the person lacking it, the fool, is devoid of knowledge of what everyone else knows, or should know about some subject. In a way, this person lacks knowledge of some principle of measuring, known truth, that comes to people possessed of the virtue of common sense immediately from observation or from common sense-experience at living.

As a result, the person who lacks common sense is often publicly ridiculed, is the butt of jokes. University professors, people who tend “to live in ivory towers,” especially some logicians (those with little practical experience at living), incline to be such individuals. In college, I had a friend like this to whom I used to refer as an “encyclopedia open to the wrong page.” While he was terrific in some forms of academic work, he tended to have no practical skills, or if he did, not know when and/or how to apply them.14

Aristotle actually had a word he used to describe such individuals that came close to, but did not completely capture, the nature of a person lacking common sense: “asinine.” In ancient Greek, this was the person lacking synēsis, someone who had the personal quality of a-synēsis, a species of foolishness (non-synēsis/sense) that caused a person to be a bad imaginer, conceptualizer, judge, estimator, evaluator, especially of what a person should know in this or that situation.

To make intelligible to others more precisely the understanding (which he apparently acquired from Socrates) that wisdom is more or

less identical with common sense, in his masterful work in moral psychology, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, when talking about the nature of prudence and working as a physician of the soul (behavioral psychologist), Aristotle went out of his way to explain that the person possessed of wisdom (of which prudence is a species) combines in his or her nature all the essential elements needed to be an excellent judge.

Recall that in Plato’s dialogues the stone-mason/philosopher Socrates had repeatedly maintained that what, more than anything else, got him into trouble was an ordinary kind of wisdom he possessed, one unlike that of the professional orators and poets of his day. Unlike their wisdom, Socrates claimed that his was the ordinary kind of human wisdom, examples of which, to the chagrin of professional sophists like Thrasymachos, Gorgias, and Callicles, he constantly gave examples in reference to people like cooks, medical doctors, sailors, home builders, shoemakers, and tailors.

Psychologically, Aristotle claimed that this sort of wisdom, which someone like the prudent man Socrates possessed, combines in its nature four different qualities of excellent judging that, when rightly combined with the psychological quality of understanding, give to its possessor a generic, psychological quality of virtuous shrewdness, of which prudence, and apparently wisdom in general (whether practical, productive, or contemplative/speculative/theoretical/metaphysical) are species: 1) *eubulia* (excellence in deliberating); 2) *eustochia* (being a lucky guesser, somewhat excellent at being able to determine precisely the right thing to do at the moment: a good evaluator/estimator); 3) *synēsis* (right judgment about what happens in the majority of cases, what is really doable and not doable); and 4) *gnome* (right judgment about what is equitable in this or that situation).

Special difficulty understanding the nature of common sense arises at times from two facts about it: 1) to some extent, all human being possess some of it, are familiar with it; and 2) when we talk about
it, we generally do so the way we talk about anything real: concretely, in terms of qualitatively unequal relationships to that of which it is said—that is, analogously.

Regarding this first fact, understanding common sense presents a difficulty similar to that which in Book 11 of his Confessions, St. Augustine admitted he had related to the concept of time: When someone does not ask him what it is, he is so familiar with it that he has no trouble knowing what it is; but when someone asks him what it is, he appears not to know. Common sense has a similar nature. When someone does not ask us what it is, we have an implicit knowledge of it as the virtue of understanding applied to this or that subject in this or that situation that makes the nature of some subject immediately intelligible. On the contrary, when someone asks us what is common sense (common synēsis), initially we tend to become tongue-tied, do not know how to reply.

As far as fact 2 is concerned, when we talk about a subject, apply objects of sentences to their subjects to identify them in relation to a subject, we always do so indirectly, according to relational meanings. We never do so directly; and the way logicians and ordinary people, as well as real scientists/philosophers, do this essentially differs. In their everyday, commonsense way of talking, philosophers/scientists and ordinary human beings do so by noting qualitative, nuanced (chiefly causal) distinctions, differences in relation that they immediately recognize exist between and among these relational meanings as they say, refer, them to a subject.

For example, in the ordinary course of conversation, two people might note that Mother Theresa was more of a human being—in the sense of being qualitatively more perfect metaphysically and morally

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How to Reverse the Widespread Global Disorder

(psycho logically, in her soul)—than was Joseph Stalin. Such a state-
ment would strike a logician thinking as a logician as nonsensical, like-
ly as an ad hominem attack violating the well-known, commonsense
logical cannon that words, terms, definitions said of subjects must al-
ways have one, absolutely-fixed meaning, definition—when put in the
technical jargon of a logician, must always be predicated univocally,
ever predicated equivocally.

For example, if I call Socrates and Plato men, a logician working
as a logician naturally inclines to assume I mean that Socrates and Plato
are equally men, that whatever the definition of man signifies is equally,
not unequally, in one and the other—that Socrates is not more man
than is Plato. Both are equally men.

If, on the other hand, a medical doctor says that John is not as
healthy as Mary, in some way he is saying that, while John is healthy,
the quality, or nature, of health is causally related to John as one that
exists less in John than it does in Mary, that some cause called health
exists more in Mary than it does in John. In addition, if I call bread or
exercise healthy, in the first case, generally I mean that, when eaten,
bread tends nutritionally to cause, promote retention and increase of
bodily health; and in the second case, generally I mean that exercise
tends to cause, promote retention and increase of muscular coordina-
tion and stamina/ strength.

While, to some extent, all human beings tend to have a difficult
time understanding the nature of analogy, my experience is that logi-
cians generally have an especially difficult time doing so. Since anal-
ogy dominates the language of everyday life, especially productive and
practical matters, logicians often have a difficult time understanding the
psychological disposition of business people and ordinary people with
real, not syllogistic, common sense. Since logicians tend to think in one
fixed way, they also often have a hard time understanding comedy, not
understanding jokes. This is especially true of Enlightenment logicians,
Marxists in general, and the contemporary *Woke* crowd of anarchists, who deny the reality of real natures. Since real *common sense* is chiefly said, referred to subjects analogously, Enlightenment intellectuals in general have a hard time grasping its nature.

Be this as it may, *common sense* mainly refers to common, evident intellectual understanding or knowledge that some person possesses in general, or related to a specific or individual subject as a natural or supernatural faculty or habit of the human soul. Analogously, people often extend, transfer use of, apply, this term to other human faculties (like will, memory, imagination, hearing, and so on); and even to subjects and circumstances, situations such as time and place in which they do not directly exist, but to which, somehow, they are relationally connected. For example, adult human beings throughout the world often say that performing this or that action generally, particularly, or individually *makes sense* or is *commonsensical*, or is nonsensical, makes no common sense. For instance, someone in the third century B.C. making plans to create a ship to fly to Mars would be planning something that most people today would say makes no common sense for that person; but they might likely agree that it could make common sense for Elon Musk seriously to consider.

St. Thomas Aquinas went so far as to locate moral prudence, and with it all practical and productive prudence partially on the sense level in an internal sense faculty that he analogously identified with the estimative intelligence, instinct, and brute animals. He called his faculty *cogitative*, or *particular, reason*. Together with the virtue of intellectual understanding, all the other cardinal and intellectual virtues and moral virtues, the integrated activity of all these faculties and their habits and virtues, plus whatever supernatural grace can add to these, appear to
comprise the whole of common sense in its most perfect form: perfect human wisdom.\textsuperscript{16}

Crucial to understand today about Marxism, Enlightenment Utopian Socialism in general, and all the mis-named cultural institutions they have created over the tenure of their existence is that all of these are intentionally (or at least in principle) designed to drive common sense, especially real common sense, out of the human soul, the psychological constitution of individual persons; and to do so at the earliest age and throughout an entire lifetime in every aspect of human life.

A good example of this mis-educational influence are faculty members and administrators who are miserable human beings living miserable lives. Hating themselves, they tend to hate anyone who is not as miserable as they are. As a result, by intentionally influencing them to adopt the same nonsensical principles they use to direct their choices in life, they intentionally seek to make students as miserable as they are.

Other good examples considered in general of it are contemporary middle-management executives, corporate human resources executives/managers, and college/university administrators, ministers of education, all of whom, having been mis-educated in common sense at Enlightenment mis-educational institutions, tend to think univocally, not analogously; and tend to be sorely lacking in real common sense as I have described it. While, considered as human beings they might be wonderful, kind people, as administrators, Western colleges and universities and educational institutions that have been influenced by their Enlightenment mindset have pretty much driven out of their administrative psychology any comprehension of prudence, and common sense in general, and justice, especially distributive justice, which (instead of race,
sex, political influence, diversity, and so on) is the chief just measure of equitable distribution of rewards for quality of work contribution to an organization).

The net result of the disordered educational psychology inhabiting cultural institutions throughout the contemporary West and world is that pretty much all of these institutions, and especially those of higher education (colleges and universities), have become ships of fools mistakenly thinking of themselves as creating local, national, and global world leaders, while they often tend to do precisely the opposite. Consequently, expecting most contemporary college and university faculty members and administrators to come up with a plan to reverse the current dire cultural situation in the West and globally, including their own, makes no real common sense. Doing so defies their natural and acquired abilities, which, related to such a feat, are largely disabilities, job-application disqualifiers.

For this reason, as colleges and universities increasingly begin to go out of business, collapse, on a global scale, colleagues of mine and I have decided that some institution of higher education, a Commonsense Wisdom Executive Coaching Academy (CWECA)—one that immerses its students in commonsense wisdom from all parts of the Earth—must immediately, on a global scale, be created to replace the disordered, miseducational, intellectual institutions (colleges and universities) that Enlightenment hatred for commonsense has caused to come into being culturally and civilizationally increasingly to wreck the West and the world. Anyone seriously interested in discovering more about this project and perhaps joining, supporting, us in this effort is more than welcome to do so by checking out the nature of CWECA at:

https://www.aquinasschoolofleadership.com/announcements
and emailing us at: peterredpath@aquinasschoolofleadership.com
How to Reverse the Widespread Global Disorder That Nonsensical Principles of Utopian Socialism/Marxism Are Currently Causing

SUMMARY

This article considers the nature of Marxism as a species of Enlightenment Utopian Socialism, the relation of both these to a denial of nature of common sense properly understood. It argues that underlying all species of Enlightenment Utopian Socialism are psychological principles that deny the reality of evidently known first principles of understanding that are measures of truth in all forms of psychologically healthy human knowing and reasoning. In addition, it maintains that, as a result of these essentially anarchic psychological first principles inherent in its nature, any attempt to apply any species of Utopian Socialism to develop healthy social organizations and cultural institutions—such as forms of human communication and educational and political institutions—is doomed to fail. Utopian Socialism will always destroy common sense in whatever it infects with its disordered habits of understanding and reasoning.

KEYWORDS

Socialism, Marxism, common sense, wisdom, prudence, human nature, human person, the West, moral psychology, education, Thomas Aquinas.

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Katharina Westerhorstmann

What It Means to Be Human: Anthropological and Ethical Reflections on Navigating the Vulnerability and Fragility of Human Existence During Times of Illness

People normally experience the effects of illness as something negative\(^1\): as suffering and a restriction of well-being, as a limitation in mastering daily tasks or even as a real attack on their physical integrity. If one reads bio-ethical or general writings in the area of the humanities over the past years on the topic of “illness,” one can often note that the goal of the reflections consists in gaining something positive out of the illness or the fact of being ill.\(^2\) Usually the issue is about seeing a meaning in the illness or about presenting the fundamental anthropological fact of vulnerability, including being prone to illness, as part of what it

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means to be human. This is meaningful—to discover a positive value from a negative condition of illness—and not obvious.

Thus it requires previous intensive meditation on the human condition while, at the same time, personal confrontation with the situation of being ill in order to discover an existential significance or meaning. This can ultimately only be done by the persons themselves, even though the help of family members, caring personnel, doctors or pastors is certainly to be desired so as to look at the whole of human life.³

This contribution is intended to consider whether human vulnerability as manifested in the situation of being ill can perhaps be accepted as a profound human limitation in life that contributes to a deeper understanding of what it ultimately means to be human—to learn not only to live with suffering but to live through it. A further horizon, which will be looked at more closely from philosophical and theological points of view, is to be drawn by understanding one’s own being as gift.

**Facing Illness and Suffering: A Challenge**

When a person becomes seriously ill or suffers from a chronic disease, the person is faced with the direct challenge of “dealing” with this situation. Of course, it is possible to try to ignore the suffering into which one finds oneself, at least until the confrontation becomes inescapable. However, it surely always requires personal strength and honesty to face what is happening, especially when, for example, an irre-

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versible degenerative illness hardly seems to permit any hope of improvement or survival. For long-term or lasting illnesses that do not threaten life, the wide-spread attempt at “coping” as a strategy for coming to terms with the illness has in the meantime proven to be effective. As regards chronic illness with which a patient is frequently confronted throughout his or her life, this way of proceeding with one’s own illness is meant to make possible “a successful, positive and not only neutral reaction to problems and crises.” For von Engelhardt, precisely the look at the whole of life, independently of health and illness as absolute criteria, opens up a chance to experience one’s own life as successful in spite of the illness and even as a result of it.

The search for meaning in the illness is, however, something that the patients must do themselves, and it usually remains inconclusive. This cannot be required by the doctor, by family members or by a pastor as a prescribed way of dealing with illness, nor can it degenerate so far as to make the person who is ill feel that he or she is now under the additional pressure of having to look for the (mostly hidden) positive value of the illness. Correspondingly, the coping strategy at times really does look like a “tyranny of the successful life” by threatening to intensify even more the burden presented through the illness. “With the demand to give meaning, dealing with illness comes under the pressure of being successful, and people who are ill are burdened with what no healthy person would accept regarding illness, namely that meaning can be gained from it.” For this reason, Viktor von Weizsäcker already highlighted that “the meaning of illness” can “only be seen by the per-

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son who is ill; the doctor may not require it.”⁷ Truly, one must not encourage a trivialization of the suffering of others through a rush for solutions from the outside to the problem of illness.⁸ Nonetheless, heavy demands made by the reality of being ill require sensitive, appropriate support; otherwise, “support” may make the situation worse.

**Sick People as Models in the Art of the Good Life**

Even though people who are ill are limited in their bodily and sometimes also in their mental strength, they may become models for how to deal with adversity. “Successful” dealing with illness most often calls forth deep admiration on the part of outsiders. The German writer Reinhold Schneider, for example, was considered on the one hand to be a “difficult patient,” and at the same time he impressed people by the “patient way in which he bore his suffering.”⁹

The German-Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929) can also give stimulus through the way he confronted illness, since one can see in him how the sick person does not remain exclusively passive in the process of the illness, becoming merely the object of therapy and medical care, but rather can behave actively despite illness. Rosenzweig became ill in 1921 at the age of thirty-six with amyotrophic laterosclerosis (ALS). Progressive paralysis of all muscles is the consequence as well as the loss of the ability to speak. In spite of the limitations, Rosenzweig continued to work, first still using his own strength, then later

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⁸ Cf. Marianne Gronemeyer, *Das Leben als letzte Gelegenheit. Sicherheitsbedürfnisse und Zeitknappheit* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2009), 69. According to Schockenhoff, this is particularly true regarding religious reflection on illness, which can only be done by the person who is ill. Cf. Eberhard Schockenhoff, *Ethik des Lebens, Grundlagen und neue Herausforderungen* (Freiburg et al.: Herder, 2009), 339.

with the help of people who wrote for him and above all with the support of his wife, who by reading eye signals, made it possible for him to communicate with the outside world until shortly before his death. Nevertheless, Rosenzweig did not describe his illness as a detriment but rather neutrally as a “condition,” and in this condition he said that it was possible to experience not only suffering but also joy. “A condition into which one has gradually slid and to which one has therefore become accustomed is not a suffering but precisely a condition. So something in which there is room for suffering and joy, as in every other condition.”

This way of seeing his illness made it possible for him not to despair in spite of the hopelessness of his situation, but rather to continue working intensively and to take his illness with the greatest possible calm. Above all, something positive about his illness opened up to him. While some people turned away because too much was asked of them, others with whom there had been no previous contact were now drawn to him and wanted to be with him, so that Rosenzweig, who in the meantime was completely paralyzed, commented:

Thus life does not become poorer. That is my strangest experience. Just as much as is taken from a person is given. That is not a law, one cannot count on it beforehand, it does not remove fear and hope from the heart, but one has experienced it; after the event it is an infinite consolation and an inexhaustible reason for giving thanks.

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11 *Ibid.*, 1128: “If I didn’t work at all, I would simply be horribly bored.” Cf. also *ibid.*, 1187.

Contingency as Part of the Conditio Humana

If one approaches in a more fundamental way the question how the human being can stand up to illness and suffering, looking at “contingency” can open up a first horizon that gives meaning. Philosophy and theology have always recognized the fact that the human being can become ill, can suffer and even die, not only as a consequence of a “coincidence,” but of the “contingency” of human life. According to the classical definition, contingency has to do with the domain of what is not necessary (nec necessarium) or with what could always be different (quod potest aliud esse), and thus contingency becomes the “variable” of what is possible. According to the ethical discourse, contingency means all unforeseen, non-necessary events, as well as conditions that can be found both at the beginning and at the end of life. It is about the non-availability of the conditions and of the arrangement of situations that on the one hand, the human person both finds through his and her ability to reflect, and that on the other hand are at the same time given to the human person. Already by his and her existence, the person is given the task of reflecting on what happens to him and her in life and somehow


to make these events fruitful.\footnote{Cf. Böhme, \textit{Leibsein als Aufgabe}, 211.} “The contingency of human life and the experience of it, as well as the task of coping with it . . . represent . . . an anthropological constant.”\footnote{Carl Friedrich Gethmann et al., \textit{Gesundheit nach Maß? Eine transdisziplinäre Studie zu den Grundlagen eines dauerhaften Gesundheitssystems} (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005), 14.} Life’s circumstances, the unforeseen, catastrophes and accidents belong in the domain of contingency and are perceived as such above all when they cannot show a “happy end,” so did not “end well,” but on the contrary, became a source of pain and suffering or imposed themselves through the approach of death.\footnote{Cf. Johannes Brantl, \textit{Entscheidung durch Unterscheidung. Existentialethik als inneres Moment einer medizinischen Ethik in christlicher Perspektive} (Münster: LIT, 2007), 237. Interestingly, the experience of positive contingency, for example of \textit{fortuna} in winning the lottery or of coming to an improved living situation with the help of a lucky coincidence, leads far less frequently to reflection on the fundamental facts of human life than is the case in times of need, illness and suffering.}

**Modern Medicine and One’s Own Contingency**

The new techniques in modern medicine are also not able to get rid of human contingency but attempt to make everything that is contingent available and autonomous, and they give rise to new contingencies, so that it is possible to speak of a dialectic regarding the “areas having to do with birth and mortality.”\footnote{Anzenbacher, “Aufhebung der Kontingenz?,” 26. Cf. also \textit{ibid.}, 29.—“Because the consequences of one’s own planning and acting cannot be made available, people must try to keep up with . . . the progress of making and must develop techniques for living with newly produced experiences of contingency.” Ulrich H. J. Körtner, \textit{Unverfügbarkeit des Lebens? Grundfragen der Bioethik und der medizinischen Ethik} (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2001), 31. Cf. also Brantl, \textit{Entscheidung durch Unterscheidung}, 220.} It must be seen as an accomplishment of modern medicine that in the meantime many diseases can in fact be “healed” or avoided (e.g., through vaccination or prevention) and have thus lost their life-threatening nature. Thus the attempt is fre-
quently made to give the impression that the total liberation of human beings from suffering is only a matter of time (or of sufficient money be made available to research).\textsuperscript{19}

“It is the task of science to offer the prospect of getting rid of a suffering, and in no time, the suffering becomes a scandal, ‘meaningless suffering’, the removal of which is ethically commanded for the sake of human dignity. This philanthropical hypocrisy encourages the lack of moderation in striving to take control.”\textsuperscript{20} Thus, in spite of great efforts, overcoming the \textit{insecuritas humana} as a fundamental fact of human existence has not yet been successful. Accordingly, Gethmann gives the diagnosis for our time: “Behind the hopes and visions guiding the efforts to overcome illness, there is often more or less explicitly the idea of a human life without the need even to bear and to deal with experiences of contingency.”\textsuperscript{21} So it seems that unconsciously many not only want to experience relief from concrete suffering, but ultimately to eliminate completely from human experience the shock of the first sign of mortality. Thus, “overcoming death or at least delaying it as long as possible . . . [becomes] the goal of medico-technical activity.”\textsuperscript{22} The climate of society also seems to be marked more and more by the perspective of being able to make things happen, whereby the gift-character of

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\textsuperscript{19} On the other hand, on the part of the patients, excessive demands can be observed: “With the expanse of the possibilities of medical intervention and of the claims of competence, the demands made of medicine by the individual and by society at the same time also increase. Today, health . . . is considered to be life’s highest good.” Körtner, \textit{Unverfügbarkeit des Lebens?}, 41. According to Körtner, giving too much value to health goes even further: “In modern society, health is really a religious value” (\textit{ibid.}, 41f).

\textsuperscript{20} Gronemeyer, \textit{Das Leben als letzte Gelegenheit}, 70.


human life threatens to be entirely lost from sight. Thus, for instance, in the discussions around State rulings regarding assisted suicide, a certain suppression of contingency can also be observed.

Here, let us now ask whether the present tendency to ban illness and suffering as far as possible from human life in order to be able to live without suffering and ever longer, possibly prevents a positive-creative dealing with the fragility of one’s own existence, and thus causes one to overlook the positive potential of the experience of contingency, especially contingency experienced as suffering.

**Regarding the Desire to Live without Suffering**

The idea that one day the human being will have gained complete power not only over nature, but also over his and her own body seems at first glance to be exaggerated. However, if one looks more closely, present-day developments on the medical “market” show that it is clearly a matter of reaching this aforementioned goal, when the human being has enough control over his and her life and environment so that life is no longer dependent on outside influences, but only on their will and life plans.

The discrepancy can be seen particularly clearly between the desire to have control over one’s own life and the experience of the actual

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23 Cf. Rapp, *Destructive Freiheit*, 83–89. Körtner, *Unverfügbarkeit des Lebens?*, 31f. “In the extreme case, we are approaching a model which wants to totally control vital functions that can be controlled and repaired like those of a machine. Servicing this machine depends on the availability of money, competence and technology and is thus a matter of the power to decide.” Walter Lesch, “Mit Grenzen leben. Anthropologische Hintergrundtheorien bioethischer Konzepte,” in *Theologie und biomedizinische Ethik: Grundlagen und Konkretionen*, ed. Adrian Holderegger et. al. (Fribourg: Universitätsverlag / Freiburg: Herder, 2002), 197.

24 List calls wanting ultimately to remove this “typical modern strategy for dealing with contingency,” and therefore speaks of the “denial of contingency.” List, “Behinderung als Kontingenzerfahrung,” 110.
circumstances at the beginning and then above all also at the end of life. This can be seen for example regarding the possibilities of prenatal diagnostics and the selection through PID that is often connected with it, as well as above all through the new blood tests for trisomy 21. Like a symptom, these possibilities betray the desire behind them not only to avoid suffering (one’s own or that of the child), but also to “correct” life in its lack of clarity, to make more “security in planning” possible for the individual for the insecure moments in life, and thus perhaps to be able to turn away the unexpected, that which overtaxes a person.

The Response to Contingency: Understanding Being as Gift

In spite of all threat and fragility of human life, it is entrusted to the human person as gift, since it comes from Another. Whether the individual person experiences themselves and their life concretely as a gift in the fateful experiences at the beginning and end of life, or he and she experience their life’s circumstances as overtaxing, depends fundamentally on their understanding of what it means to be human. The understanding of being as “gift” is to be found above all in the philosophy and theology of the 20th century and is inspired by dialogical philosophy. The fundamental idea that his or her life is entrusted to the

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27 Cf. among others Ferdinand Ulrich, Homo abyssus. Das Wagnis der Seinsfrage (Einsiedeln: Johannes-Verlag, 1998); Stefan Oster, Mit-Mensch-Sein. Phänomenologie und Ontologie der Gabe bei Ferdinand Ulrich (Freiburg/Munich: Alber, 2004); Kurt Wolf, Philosophie der Gabe. Meditationen über die Liebe in der französischen Gegenwartsphilosophie (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006). Later, this can also be found in its beginnings with Sandel, Plädoyer gegen die Perfektion, 123.
What It Means to Be Human

human person as gift and task can imply understanding of the gift as a fundamental anthropological constant: the human person comes to himself or herself and “forms” his or her own being only in receiving the gift—accordingly, gift is to be understood ontologically—and the gift shows a personal (dialogical) content, which connects the giver of the gift and the one who is given the gift. 28 “Thus, because the human being is the goal of the event of giving being, and because at the same time it is given him as task to subsist, which is to say, to carry out the ontological difference as person, everything now depends on how he interprets being, which is to say, how he experiences and receives himself in it and thus lives freedom.” 29

This makes it possible to understand life phenomenologically as gift and to say “yes” to life (which assumes contingency). 30 In order to receive the gift, the active acceptance of (passive) receiving is necessary in the human person, which presupposes trust in the goodness of what is given. 31 The question regarding the giver of the gift remains central, as all the contingent individual gifts cannot otherwise be grasped in a total meaning. However, such “total meaning” of the being that is given usually becomes accessible to the human person only in faith or through a trusting “leap” from “existence to transcendence” (Ricoeur), which is to say to the (wholly) Other. 32 Basically, recognizing one’s own life as a gift is above all a matter of being humble as regards oneself and of acknowledging that which is greater and in which one trusts as regards total meaning. The Creator as infinite and perfect being brings other being into existence and thereby gives it a limited part in His own fullness of being. Acknowledging one’s own life as an

29 Oster, Mit-Mensch-Sein, 223.
30 List, “Behinderung als Kontingenzerfahrung,” 112.
31 Cf. Wolf, Philosophie der Gabe, 103f.
32 Ibid., 104.
undeserved gift and thereby taking on responsibility for a life that is good according to the given possibilities, on the one hand exonerates the individual, and on the other hand places him or her within the larger frame of reality as a whole.

So either human persons already know in faith that he and she are in relation with their Creator, or it is necessary that he and she embark on a personal-divine encounter, face to Face. This leap into “being a creature” brings things that are deliberate and that are not deliberate, things that are sought and things that are given in the “gift” of being, which can be taken and recognized (with gratitude) as “task” and response to a call. Thus the phenomenological starting point for “being as gift” can be appropriate for bringing into balance modernity’s one-sided orientation toward the subject. However, not only understanding being fundamentally as gift but ultimately also really accepting death can probably only succeed by looking with hope toward a coming better life or by giving oneself for the life of another.

**Being as Gift: A Theological Entry?**

Understanding being as “gift” not only presupposes that the human being cannot give himself and herself life, but that there is always Another who is the giver of that gift of life. The attempt to take hold of the gift, to use it for oneself and to control it must therefore fail. A

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33 Cf. *ibid.*, 105.
34 Cf. *ibid.*, 109.
35 For Körtner a necessary “contribution of Christianity” correspondingly consists in “pointing towards another possibility of dealing with contingency . . . It is the ethos of letting be that is based on the fact that the human being does not owe himself to himself or bring himself into the world.” Körtner, *Unverfügbarkeit des Lebens?*, 31.
36 “Today, living unrestrainedly is considered to be the highest goal, whereas in reality, only meaningful self-limitation and the acceptance of boundaries can lead to real fulfillment.” Rapp, *Destruktive Freiheit*, 187.
What It Means to Be Human

Theological entry to this reality allows one to deal with illness in a way that goes beyond the anthropological starting point. The meaning of existence as such can only become apparent to the human being in relationship with God as the fullness of being. Thus already in the Old Testament, there results “through the efforts of Israel’s faith to accept the decrease of life in suffering and death, a new possibility on the background of this relationship with God also to give meaning to suffering and death, the horizon of which is not simply identical with the limitations of life on this side of the boundary of death.”

Also, according to the Old Testament testimony, the God of Israel has compassion with human beings (cf. Macc 6:34), so that the promised Messiah is at the same time someone who suffers, who is in solidarity with every individual human person. “He bore our infirmities and carried our diseases.” In Christianity, the human being then encounters in the Messiah the incarnate God who “took upon Himself this suffering.” By the fact that in Christ, God took upon Himself the contingency even to its ultimate consequence—even unto death—the believer’s own experience of illness and suffering changes. Because God reveals God’s own self as Love, and because God invites human beings to eternal communion with God (cf. 1 Jn 4:16), in the resurrection of the Son the final horror is finally taken from death. The incurably ill or dying person can entrust him- and herself in their fragility and limitation to the infinite God, and thus find consolation in illness and approach death through the suffering of Christ, faith in an ultimate mean-

38 Isa 53:4.
39 Brantl, Entscheidung durch Unterscheidung, 238.
40 Cf. ibid., 237f.
ing of existence and hope for an indestructible future with God.\textsuperscript{41} According to Fraling, this means concretely: “Where human life comes up against its boundaries, for the believer the \textit{chances of going beyond} gradually open up . . . of a hope in the future.”\textsuperscript{42} The Christians may know in his and her experience of suffering at the same time that he and she are in communion with the crucified Christ, and they for their part receive a share in the saving suffering of their Lord.\textsuperscript{43} In his second encyclical, \textit{Spe Salvi}, Benedict XVI impressively summed up this connection:

\begin{quote}
It is not by sidestepping or fleeing from suffering that we are healed, but rather by our capacity for accepting it, maturing through it and finding meaning through our union with Christ, who suffered with infinite love.\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

For Reinhold Schneider, illness therefore became the experience of God’s concrete turning toward man and of God’s care. “The glory of God is to be revealed in the sick person: the miracle that God works in him. Illness is the visitation of grace.”\textsuperscript{45} Without faith in a personal and loving God, this thought is more difficult to comprehend. Nevertheless,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[41] “In Jesus, the ‘yes is realized’ . . . fullness of life is promised for the future.” Fraling, “Leben und Freiheit vor dem Horizont der Endlichkeit,” 117.
\item[42] Ibid., 119.
\item[44] Benedict XVI, \textit{Spe salvi} (Rome 2007), # 37.
\end{footnotes}
on the background of being as gift, the possibility of dealing with illness and suffering in accordance with the being of the human person can open up for the non-believer as well, even when the question regarding the giver of the gift remains ultimately unanswered. Various forms of constructive stimulus from theology certainly also offer enrichment for a modern philosophical image of the human being:

Being in the image of God thereby becomes the idea of a divine core of being in every human person: the idea of his immortal soul. Being the child of God becomes the idea that our life is a gift from which, as with every gift, obligations flow that limit our being able to dispose of ourselves. Of course, the soul is thereby also thought as gift; it is not acquired by the human being, but rather created by God and “breathed into” the human being.  

This starting point thus makes possible a “new articulation of this idea [of gift] for everyone, believers as well as non-believers.”

**Understanding Oneself as Constituted Bodily**

There are times when our physicality as such only becomes an object to be dealt with personally when it so to speak draws attention to itself through complaints. “Illness and handicap are events that inevitably confront one with the fact of being a body. It is they that make us realize that our way of being is to exist bodily.” Gadamer calls this the “hiddenness of health,” which only becomes conscious the moment it is lacking. Otherwise, the human being in his and her nature is always

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47 Ibid.
49 “I know only too well how illness can make us insistently aware of our bodily nature by creating a disturbance in something which normally, in its very freedom from disturbance, almost completely escapes our attention. Here it is a matter of the methodological primacy of illness over health. But of course it is the state of being healthy which possesses ontological primacy, that natural condition of life which we term well-
already in a body, even if they do not reflect on this. Thus, becoming ill as well as suffering because of this means becoming conscious that as persons who are constituted bodily we must face the unavoidable fact that there is illness. Also, it means being confronted with “an important stimulus to become conscious of one’s own bodiliness, weakness, neediness, finiteness.”⁵⁰ Thus, illness can be taken by the human person as an opportunity to look more deeply at questions concerning what it is to be human “and thereby perhaps even forms one of the essential origins of philosophical thinking as such.”⁵¹

### Using Illness to Reflect on One’s Priorities and One’s Own Temporality

At first glance, this of itself does not necessarily suggest that illness can also be a point on the way toward the human person’s “healing.” When a person suddenly experiences being torn out of his or her professional life through an acute serious illness such as a stroke or a heart attack, and perhaps not only for a few weeks but many months of rehabilitation and convalescence, the fact of being placed into such a challenging new living situation can open up entirely new perspectives for shaping one’s life. For instance, at times a perfectionism that is lived in one’s professional or private life is corrected and life is no longer judged according to criteria of accomplishment or success. For such a new orientation to succeed during an illness, various factors are necessary such as the fundamental willingness to look at the time of illness as

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⁵¹ Ibid.
What It Means to Be Human

a “total loss of function” and to accept one’s own limitations. However, not only the person who is ill needs to be open as regards the physical limitations that life brings with it. The surroundings in the family, the employer, simply society as a whole can only do justice to the human person and his or her well-being when the individual’s limitations are respected by them.

Similarly to old age, which demands that the human person slow down in his and her life’s processes and which limits mobility, illness also frequently forces the human being to go more slowly. But constant speeding up is also not automatically a characteristic of good health; rather, it certainly includes characteristics that make one ill, so that many people in Western societies suffer from various physical symptoms due to the constant shortage of time, the excessive amount of work and the over-exploitation of one’s own strength. A manual advises tersely, “More time for the essential” in the sense of a cleverly devised management of time, as well as a “slowing down” in all areas.52 This is particularly important in dealing with older people, since these usually need help in accepting both their own situation and the ambivalent sense of time. On the one hand, in old age, time feels like it goes by even faster than before. At the same time, one’s own ability to move and one’s time to live is in fact decreasing; mobility also diminishes. Thus, in a society that is primarily oriented toward work, accomplishment and success, the buzzword about “slowing down” applies both to the fact (for people with limitations) and to the need to maintain “spaces” for personal development, to take time for relationships, cultural offerings and gratuitous experiences of nature.

Deeper encounters between people who are ill and those who at present are not ill, between people with special needs and those who are

not handicapped (inclusion) are also made possible more simply on the basis of a common social foundation, so that those who cannot keep up with the speed of working life are no longer excluded.

**Illness as “Motor” for Solidarity and the Humanization of Society**

The growing individualization of human beings, which in political debates is usually spoken of as “autonomy” and judged to be positive, often goes together with isolation and growing loneliness. At times the human person as subject of his or her decisions and desires experiences only through situations of limitation, of special needs, or illness the fact that he or she is not sufficient unto himself or herself. This is where the relevance of personal relationships becomes manifest, so that illness in the best case also means a social challenge.

Therefore, when a person experiences during times of illness that he or she has limited mobility or a decreased ability to take things in mentally, this can be not only painful for the person himself or herself; at the same time, it can sharpen his or her sense of the situation and condition of other people who are ill, as well as of people with special needs. The normal experience of the suffering of others usually remains more external, and even with real commitment, it leads only to a very limited sense of what is happening to the sick, the handicapped or simply the old person. The needs of people in a condition that is generally limited by illness, special needs or old age suddenly become plausible for the person who himself or herself has become ill, even though

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the difference between individual perception still represents a limitation in feeling with the other.

Thus, an illness that is accepted as part of human life can open the eyes for the needs and circumstances of the life of those who cannot participate in what society has to offer in the same way as healthy people do. Therefore, effort is needed to foster understanding and to humanize society by means of growing sensitivity for those who are at a disadvantage. Not only those who are ill need healthy people at their side who support them; the healthy also need those who are ill, so that it is really a matter of reciprocity and of being with one another and not exclusively a question of being for one another, the one (who is healthy) for the other (who is ill). Society as a whole also cannot go without those who are ill, the elderly and those who live with a special need, as well as their contribution, so as not to risk what is human, but rather to maintain this and at the same time to keep alive the memory of specific needs and of what is needed as means of support.

“The measure of solidarity that a society brings to the weakest of its members is the decisive measure of humanity. The real dangers emanate not from genetic defects, but rather from moral defects, one of which is the emptying of the concept of solidarity. What we need is not an ‘anthropo-technology’, but the renewal of a culture of solidarity.”

Dealing in this sense in a positive-creative way with illness that occurs and is limited in time or with a special need can thus—understood as a fundamental human attitude—contribute to greater solidarity. If fostering the understanding of the vulnerability and susceptibility of human beings is successful, this could contribute to a mental “climate change” in which illness is interpreted not only as a “curse” but as a help toward an indispensable feeling of solidarity.

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55 Körtner, Unverfügbarkeit des Lebens?, 33. Cf. also Sandel, Plädoyer gegen die Perfektion, 111.
Conclusion

No one has succeeded “in understanding suffering as a whole.”\footnote{Mieth Dietmar, “Die Sehnsucht nach einem Leben ohne Leiden. Ein Recht auf Nicht-Leiden?,” in \textit{Kriterien biomedizinischer Ethik. Theologische Beiträge zum gesellschaftlichen Diskurs}, ed. Konrad Hilpert & Dietmar Mieth (Freiburg: Herder, 2006), 144.} And yet it has been possible to show a strange connection between the experience of one’s own vulnerability and what can be given to the human person in it and through it. Being thrown into illness and suffering challenges people to turn to what is essential in life, to reflect about being human as such, to recognize the value of solidarity and of relationships between human beings, and also to follow the path of the metaphysical circumstances of life. Life as such manifests itself in this dialectic of longing for a secure existence on the one hand, and the need to remain on the journey on the other hand, so that illness can at times become the catalyst for really finding oneself as a human being. “Thus one may perhaps . . . rightly say that the same human person who is seeking his or her happiness must under certain circumstances break through the protective circle of daily security in order to expose himself or herself to the risk of external insecurity.”\footnote{Wust, \textit{Ungewißheit und Wagnis}, 31.} For those who are healthy, this means at the same time the necessity to develop sensitivity for the needs of people who are ill, to form solidarity and a sense of being a fellow human being, and not to determine the value of a human life too quickly based on the person’s lack of good health.

Even if the sick person lacks the strength to reflect on his or her situation, the human person keeps the original feeling of a longing for meaning and for answers. It could unquestionably not be the goal of these reflections to give a simple solution to the great question concerning suffering, the meaning of illness and pain. Nevertheless, it perhaps becomes clear that perspectives can be shown for a “successful,” mean-
What It Means to Be Human

What It Means to Be Human: Anthropological and Ethical Reflections on Navigating the Vulnerability and Fragility of Human Existence During Times of Illness

SUMMARY
This paper is intended to consider whether human vulnerability as manifested in the situation of being ill can be accepted as a profound human limitation in life that contributes to a deeper understanding of what it ultimately means to be human—to learn not only to live with suffering but to live through it. Also a further horizon, which is looked at more closely from philosophical and theological points of view, is drawn by understanding one’s own being as gift.

KEYWORDS
human being, human person, vulnerability, illness, suffering, being as gift, solidarity.

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Étienne Gilson

San Bernardo y el amor cortés*

Es difícil estudiar a san Bernardo sin plantearse al menos algunos de los numerosos problemas relativos a su influencia literaria. No reten-dremos aquí más que uno solo: ¿su mística ha ejercido algún influjo sobre el amor cortés? Cronológicamente hablando, los dos movimientos son casi contemporáneos. Diez hace remontar el comienzo del arte de los trovadores alrededor de 1090, y J. Anglade admite que su período más floreciente se ubica hacia el fin del siglo XII. Podemos pues admitir que la obra de san Bernardo se ubica en el comienzo de su época más brillante, pero poco después de sus inicios. En cuanto a la poesía de los trovadores, no da al amor cortés su expresión definitiva sino en la segunda mitad del siglo XII y durante el transcurso del XIII. No se puede admitir pues que san Bernardo haya contribuido al nacimiento de la poesía cortesana, pero puede haber influenciado en su desarrollo. La cuestión que se plantea es pues saber simplemente si esta posibilidad efectivamente se realizó.¹ No tenemos la competencia requerida para tra-

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¹ Personas criteriosas están persuadidos de ello. E. Wechssler hace notar que la actividad de san Bernardo y de Hugo de San Víctor comienza hacia 1120–1130, y que a mediados del siglo XII aparecen los primeros grandes poetas cuyas obras contienen elementos místicos: Jaufré Rudel, Bernard de Ventadour y Pierre de Rogier: “Dieses Zusammentreffen war kein Zufall” (Eduard Wechssler, Das Kulturproblem des Minne-


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tar un tema tal *ex professo*; carecemos para ello particularmente de un conocimiento profundo de la literatura cortesana. Por lo tanto, no se encontrará en las páginas que siguen más que las observaciones de un lector familiarizado con la obra de san Bernardo y sus reacciones al contacto de los poetas cortesanos que ha tenido la ocasión de leer. Los especialistas estarán tal vez bien fundados para objetar estas observaciones, en nombre de otros testigos que el autor no ha tenido en consideración.

Tal vez no esté sin embargo prohibido al *indoctus* que se arriesga sobre este terreno resbaladizo, tomar desde el comienzo algunas precauciones defensivas. Las discusiones relativas al amor cortés son conducidas a veces según los métodos más discutibles. Se diría que, desde los primeros trovadores hasta Dante, los autores y los textos son intercambiables. No lo son. Dante, que escogerá a san Bernardo como el guía supremo hacia el éxtasis, está evidentemente bajo la influencia de su doctrina. Que se lo muestre, nada mejor; pero el hecho de que su arte sea el desarrollo supremo del de los trovadores no autoriza a sostener que sus ideas son el desarrollo suprema de sus ideas. Remontar desde sus textos a los de ellos, suponer que, dado que los prolonga poéticamente, los prolonga también doctrinalmente, es una petición de principio que nada justifica. Dejaré pues a Dante completamente fuera de discusión para dedicarme a los trovadores y a los troveros propiamente dichos. Aceptaré, por el contrario, el testimonio de André le Chapelain, pues si este teórico ha puesto en su tratado mucha más escolástica y mística que los poetas mismos, sin embargo es su concepción del amor lo que pretende codificar.

Un segundo equívoco, casi inevitable de ahora en adelante, debe sin embargo ser reconocido como tal. Cuando hablamos de mística cis-

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terciense, sabemos de qué hablamos: no hay más que una doctrina del amor en san Bernardo, la del amor divino. Pero ¿qué es el “amor cortés”? Estrictamente hablando, es el amor tal como se lo ha concebido en las cortes, como la filosofía escolástica es la que se ha elaborado en las escuelas. Falta mucho para que esta concepción del amor sea una; ella varía de poeta a poeta y, según sus humores, en el mismo poeta. De derecho, todo lo que han escrito para las cortes estos poetas debería entrar en la definición del amor cortés; de hecho, los historiadores realizan extracciones, eliminan la grosería muy cruda de ciertos poetas o de ciertas piezas y construyen así, por vía de selección, el tipo ideal de una cortesía caballeresca, cuyos elementos están tomados prestados de la realidad histórica, pero que se presentan en sus libros de manera muy diversa a la historia. El método es peligroso, pues corre el riesgo de falsear el sentido de los elementos que toma en consideración, separándolos del resto.

Se ve bien en los argumentos que los historiadores se oponen entre ellos. Uno prueba el “desinterés” de los trovadores; el otro cita allí contra un trovador cuyos apetitos son de naturaleza muy positiva; la respuesta será que ese trovador no es un testigo del amor cortés. En la obra de un poeta que pasa por haber cantado el amor cortés, si se citan textos de una extrema crudeza, serán rehusados de la misma manera: ese día, el poeta no cantaba el amor cortés. ¿Y si es en el mismo fragmento de una composición? Cambio de humor, se dirá; la doctrina ideal permanece a salvo. Permanecerá así siempre gracias a estos procedimientos.2

Es verdad, pero se la reduce así al estado de abstracción. La verdad es que habría que proceder por monografías de escuelas e incluso de poetas, extraer las ideas de cada uno de ellos y rehacer una defini-

ción del amor cortés al final de esa investigación, en lugar de colocarla completamente hecha al comienzo y de escoger en la historia los textos que la justifican. No estamos aún allí; al menos podemos, mientras a-guardamos, no prohibirnos esclarecer los textos por todos los contextos; ganaremos al menos no tomar como entusiasmos de ascetas los entu-siasmos de fiesteros, como Thibaut de Champagne, cuya obesidad fue el principal obstáculo que debió superar para elevarse al amor perfecto.

**La mística cisterciense y el amor cortés:**
**La hipótesis de la filiación**

*Objeto del amor*

No se puede dudar sobre el objeto y la naturaleza del amor mí-s-tico tal como lo concibe san Bernardo; es un amor espiritual, por oposi-ción a todo amor carnal. Su doctrina es sobre este punto de una intran-sigencia tal que la duda no está permitida. En un sentido, ésta es toda su doctrina: el amor carnal es algo que debe ser extirpado, allí donde nace de la concupiscencia, y que, incluso en el orden espiritual, debe ser su-perado.

Existe sobre este punto una ilusión muy extendida, que les presta a los trovadores y a los troveros una actitud del mismo género. Es lo que ha sugerido la hipótesis de una influencia del amor místico sobre el amor cortés. De hecho, para comenzar por lo más evidente, el amor cortés es una concepción “mundana” del amor. Se dirige a las criaturas, y si fuera verdadero que fue una divinización de la mujer, sería a los ojos de un Cisterciense una caricatura del amor divino, la más horrible de-formación del amor sagrado, en una palabra, un sacrilegio. Thibaut de Champagne habría llegado hasta allí, si hubiera que tomar a la letra al-gunas de sus expresiones:
Si me vaudroit melz un ris  
De vous qu’autre paradis (71, 53–54).³

Pienso que Bernardo no hubiera transigido con semejantes bromas; incluso si concedemos su parte a la licencia poética, está claro que estamos aquí en las antípodas del amor cisterciense.⁴

Esta divinización de la mujer ¿traduce al menos una influencia al revés, una suerte de inversión del amor místico, que se hubiera trasladado del Creador a la criatura? Podría ser, pero ¿qué diferencias en la manera en que Cistercienses y poetas corteses aman el objeto de sus deseos!

A veces parece imaginar el amor cortés como un amor puramente espiritual y, en el sentido vulgar de la palabra, platónico. Si esto pudiera ser probado sería de una extrema importancia. Tendríamos entonces el derecho de suponer que, al contacto con el amor místico, esos poetas llegaron a no amar en la dama sino su alma, es decir su inteligencia y su virtud; que, si han celebrado su belleza, fue a la manera en que Platón quería que fuera amada: como el símbolo y el signo de una belleza puramente inteligible, moral, espiritual. A decir verdad, esta representación popular del amor cortés, no ha sido nunca aceptada sin reservas por quienes han estudiado su expresión en los textos; pero como tiene siete vidas, hay que decir claramente que nada la autoriza. Es un punto desagradable sobre el cual lamento tener que insistir.

En el capítulo IV de su libro sobre Les Troubadours, donde estudia La doctrine de l’amour courtois, J. Anglade nos muestra poetas extremadamente discretos: “No es que fuesen muy exigentes en amor; se contentaban con poco, lo aseguran al menos. La mayoría pide a su da-

³ Axel Wallensköld, Les chansons de Thibaut de Champagne, roi de Navarre (París: Champion, 1925).
ma aceptarlos como su servidor, sin más, aceptar sus homenajes poéticos."\(^5\) Sin duda, era así cuando la dama era absolutamente inaccesible por su rango o como resultado de circunstancias fortuitas, pero el poeta cortesano, al igual que el poeta de cualquier época, no se contenta con eso sino a falta de algo mejor. Ama sin recompensa, mientras no pueda hacer otra cosa. El ciclo de sentimientos que experimentan esos enamorados es el de todos los poetas. La dama es virtuosa, tiene pues razón en hacerse desear; pero si hace aguardar por mucho tiempo el corazón que la ama, se convierte en una cruel, incapaz de experimentar el sentimiento del amor; entonces cede; durante algún tiempo, está rodeada de un reconocimiento infinito, que se expresa en alabanzas cuyo lirismo no conoce ninguna reserva; pero pierde todas sus virtudes el día en que el poeta decepcionado se da cuenta que entrega sin escrúpulos a "otros cien" lo que le ha hecho aguardar por tanto tiempo como el favor más raro. Nada en todo esto que no sea simplemente humano y suponga el menor esfuerzo hacia una espiritualización del objeto amado. La dama es un ser real, de carne y hueso, y lo más que se puede decir a favor de los poetas cortesanos sobre este punto es que no han ignorado el arte, tan útil a los simples mortales, de hacer de necesidad virtud.

Si hay que llegar a las últimas precisiones en una materia tan delicada, recordaré antes que nada la grosería de algunos de esos poemas. Hablando de Marcabrun, Anglade escribe que hay en su obra sátiras contra el amor "de una crudeza intraducible."\(^6\) Notemos de paso, y antes de volver sobre esto, que no vamos a encontrar nunca una sátira contra el amor divino en los Cistercienses; y en cuanto a la crudeza, jamás dejó de tener un lugar en esta clase de poesía. Contemporánea al Conde de Poitiers, persiste hasta pleno siglo XIII. El Trovador Jaubert de Puycibot se expresa en términos tales, que su traductor está obligado

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a recurrir a un artificio en muchos puntos. Pero el texto es demasiado claro por sí mismo. Y muchos Trovers [improvisadores] siguen a los Trovadores en este punto.

Entre las obras de Thibaut de Champagne, existen versos tales que no podríamos ni citar ni traducir, pero si se quiere saber qué piensa a veces de la cortesía y de su valor, medí tense estos versos:

Baudoÿn, assez trueve l’en
Vieilles plus laides que nuns chiens
Qui on cortoisie et gran sen,
Mais au touchier ne valent riens (125, 33–36).

Es Thibaut mismo el que habla aquí; vemos entonces que cuando tiene que elegir entre la cortesía y las realidades palpables del amor, no duda un instante. Admiramos de paso la influencia de esas ideas recibidas en la paleografía. En presencia del mismo texto, Jeanroy había leído fríamente: “Pero para encamarse no valen nada.” Dudando ante esta palabra que le parece “grosera” y “fuera de lugar en este contexto,” Wallensköld hace notar que la diferencia entre una c y una t es tan tenue en un manuscrito que nada prohíbe preferir una u otra lectura. ¡Qué conste!; pero si hay que llegar a estas discusiones paleográficas, esta-

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remos de acuerdo en que, desde el punto de vista del amor espiritual de san Bernardo, la diferencia entre touchier (tocar) y couchier (encamarse) no es sensiblemente más considerable que la de una c y de una t para los ojos experimentados del paleógrafo. Al igual que la paleografía, la moral tiene sus sutilezas, pero no hay que verlas donde no las hay.

Dejemos ahí el capítulo de las crudezas; ellas no ofrecerían ningún interés, si no ayudaran a precisar ciertos pasajes que los historiadores de la literatura parecen haber leído olvidando los rasgos permanentes de la naturaleza humana, todo para su honra, pero que no deja de señalar una de esas pequeñas deformaciones profesionales a las que todos estamos expuestos. Es difícil creer que tantos pasajes en que los poetas corteses declaran que la vista de su dama o, como máximo, un beso, les es suficiente, no deban ser leídos a menudo según la regla medieval: minus dicens et plus volens intelligi11 “dice poco y quiere que se entienda más” [a buen entendedor, pocas palabras].

11 Incluso el poeta de la Princesa lejana, el etéreo Jaufré Rudel, se hace comprender para el que quiere oírlo. Cf. Alfred Jeanroy, Les chansons de Jaufré Rudel (París: Champion, 1915); los sueños de Jaufré son tan eróticos como lo serán los de Thibaut de Champagne (I, 3, 2); su “amor de tierra lejana” si alguna vez lo alcanza, espera que ha de ser «dinz vergier o sotz cortina» (II, 2, 4; cf. V, 6, 14–15), lugares poco propicios a la metafísica (cf. VI, las justas observaciones de Jeanroy contra C. Appel, ¡que creé que este poema está dedicado a la Virgen!); la famosa “alegría” que se relaciona a veces con el “gaudium” místico es de un carácter muy preciso: III, 5, 7–8. Lo menos que se puede decir de la canción IV es que es equívoca (est. 5–7, 11–12) y arroja una luz muy turbia sobre las costumbres del poeta. Cercamon es más brutal: Alfred Jeanroy, Les poésies de Cercamon (París: Champion, 1922), IV, 7, 13–14, sin piedad por los maridos a los cuales hace lo mismo que ellos hacen a los otros; la canción de dudosa atribución que se le agrega a la recopilación de sus obras, sea de él o de otro, expresa claramente lo que esos poetas aguardan de su amor: VIII, 9, 29. Peire Vidal no está hecho de otra madera que Jaufré o Cercamon; cuando no triunfa en un ambiente, se va a otro: Joseph Anglade, Les poésies de Peire Vidal (París: Champion, 1923), VIII, 19–23; su preferencia va a las jóvenes Castellanas, que coloca muy por encima de las viejas ricas (VI, 6, 15–16) o, como lo dice menos amablemente en otra parte, que mil camellos cargados de oro (XVI, 6, 49). Esta opinión se puede defender, pero si hay allí espiritualidad, es seguramente de la más pobretona. Cf. XVII, 8, 55; XX, 2, 62–63; XXXIX, 6, 124; XL, 5,
Se ha exagerado mucho el carácter “desinteresado” del amor cortés. Seguramente, el amor no “juega a la guerra” (guerredonne) siempre, pero a Thibaut le gustaría más bien que “jugara a la guerra” (guerredonnât) más a menudo:

\[
\begin{align*}
S’amor vosist guerredoner autant  
Come elle puet, mult just ses nons a droit,  
Mès el ne veut, dont j’ai le cuer dolent (92, 16–18).  
Nule paine, qui guerredon atent;  
C’est aese, qui bien le set entendre (46, 17–18).
\end{align*}
\]

¿Cómo lo entenderemos pues? Hace falta mucha buena voluntad para dejarse engañar allí:

\[
\begin{align*}
S’a ce je puis venir  
Qu’aie, sanz repentir,  
Ma joie et mon plesir  
De li, qu’ai tant amee,  
Lors diront, sanz mentir,  
Qu’avrai tout mon desir  
Êt ma queste achevee (50, 38–44).
\end{align*}
\]

¿Queremos precisiones? La mitología y la leyenda medieval vienen en nuestra ayuda:

\[
\begin{align*}
Pleüist a Dieu, pour ma dolor garir,  
Qu’el fu Tisbé, car je sui Piramus;  
Mès je voi bien ce ne puet avenir;  
Ensi morrai que ja n’en avrai plus (69, 11–14).  
Douce dame, s’il vos plesoit un soir  
M’avriez vos plus de joie doné  
C’onques Tristans, qui en fist son pouoir  
N’en pust avoir nul jor de son aé (80, 32–35).
\end{align*}
\]

A menos de reformar seriamente nuestra concepción de los amores entre Isolda y Tristán, no podemos tener dudas sobre la naturaleza

128. Si la mitad de lo que narra este seductor, presumido y un poco perturbado o enca- prichado, es verdadero (ibid., 162–165), nunca debió haber leído lo suficiente los escritos místicos de san Bernardo.
verdadera de los sentimientos de los que Thibaut está animado. Se explica por otra parte tan claramente en otras ocasiones, que la duda no podría subsistir:

\begin{quote}
Par maintes foiz l’ai sentie  
En dormant tout a loisir,  
Mès quant pechiez et envie  
M’esveilloit et que tenir  
La cuidoie à mon plesir  
Et ele n’i estoit mie,  
Lors ploroie durement  
Et melz vousisse en dormant  
Li tenir toute ma vie (118, 28–36).
\end{quote}

Las invocaciones a Dios, cuando se las encuentra, no tienen en manera alguna por objeto atraerse las “visitas” del Verbo, sino algo más prosaico y con lo cual Bernardo no hubiera quedado ciertamente edificado:

\begin{quote}
Mais je l’aim plus que nule riens vivant,  
Si me doint Deus son gent cors embracier (10, 19–20).
\end{quote}

La situación es clara: ante una poesía de esta clase, Bernardo no hubiera experimentado más que horror. El culto de la sensualidad, la apoteosis de la codicia (cupidité), ahí está precisamente aquello contra lo cual dirigió una lucha implacable, y no es en la poesía cortesana que se pueda buscar el testimonio de su éxito.\footnote{Thibaut de Champagne está tomado aquí como ejemplo, pero se podrían hacer las mismas constataciones a propósito de otros textos. Ver Arthur Langfors, \textit{Recueil général des jeux-partis français} (París 1926), no. XX, t. I, 20–22. Como Thibaut, a quien cita, Jehan Bretel prefiere la belleza antes que la inteligencia: XXVII, 5, 100, y sus interlocutores no parecen delicados en la elección de sus amores: XXXVI, t. I, 133–135; pero no se contentan con palabras: XLVII, t. I, 175–177. Sería ingenioso analizar desde este punto de vista una recopilación, por otra parte tan instructiva, pero donde todo idealismo amoroso está tan completamente ausente. Si había un Don Quijote en los trovadores, hay un Sancho Panza en los autores de estos juegos de competencia de un epicureísmo tan llanamente burgués: CIV, t. II, 18–20 (Lambert Ferri), CXIII, t. II, 51–54 (Adam de la Halle). Hasta los monjes pierden su virtud: CXXVII, t. II, 104–106 (Guillaume le Vinier).}
Naturaleza del amor

Resta preguntarse sin embargo si la concepción cortesana del amor, aunque orientada en sentido inverso a la concepción cisterciense, ¿no estaría acaso calcada sobre ella, al menos en algunos puntos? Una parodia es una imitación, atestigua el éxito del original. El amor cortés ¿atestigua acaso de esta manera el éxito de la mística cisterciense?

Para responder a una pregunta de este género, es preciso primero desconfiar de las similitudes aparentes y descender al grado de precisión querido. E. Anitchkof, en su libro sobre Joaquín de Fiore, no duda en hablar de la “filiación de ideas y de sentimientos que vincula el amor místico de san Bernardo con el amor cortés.” Es una fórmula muy audaz, si sólidas pruebas no la acompañan. Recordar con san Bernardo, que en un ser nacido de la concupiscencia, el amor comienza por ser carnal, eso no prueba nada, porque el amor cortés es la expresión poética de la concupiscencia, en cambio, ella es lo que san Bernardo se propone eliminar. Es pues probar una filiación por una oposición fundamental. En cuanto a lo que Anitchkof considera como lo esencial: el hecho de que en ambas doctrinas el amor tiene sus grados, parecerá difícilmente más convincente.

Guiraut de Calanson ha admitido que el amor tiene tres grados y nos dice que nadie le presta atención: ¡qué escándalo! Pero en primer lugar, como hemos visto, Bernardo admite que el amor tiene cuatro grados: la prueba pues cae por tierra. Pues en fin, si el hecho de que a-

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14 Ibid., 105.
15 El problema por cierto ya ha sido estudiado por Wechssler, *Das Kulturproblem des Minnesangs*, Cap. XIV, 316–317. Cita a este propósito la división tripartita de Guiraut de Calanson en: 1) amor celestial, 2) amor natural (de los padres por los hijos), 3) amor carnal. Wechssler agrega esta otra división cuadripartida de Malfre Ermengau: 1) amor de Dios y del prójimo, 2) amor de los bienes temporales, 3) amor del hombre y de la mujer, 4) amor de los hijos por los padres. Es cierto que estas dos divisiones suponen una influencia del Cristianismo sobre el pensamiento de los poetas, pero está lejos de
cuerdan en tres de los grados probar una filiación de uno al otro, el hecho de que uno cuente tres y el otro cuatro debe probar lo contrario. Pero sigamos: admitamos que coinciden en el número de grados; ¿de qué grados se trata? En un caso, del amor sacro, en el otro, del amor profano, del que el primero es la negación radical. ¡Si al menos los grados de uno correspondieran con los del otro! Pero no hay nada de eso; estos grados no son sólo de sentidos opuestos, ni siquiera son los mismos; en ninguna parte, hasta aquí, se ha encontrado en un poeta cortedano la clasificación de los grados del amor en siervo, mercenario, filial, nupcial; sería preciso sin embargo encontrarla, o al menos algo lo

relacionar el de Guiraut con el de san Bernardo, pues sus divisiones tripartitas no se corresponden de ninguna manera.

Existen, hasta donde sabemos, cuatro divisiones del amor en san Bernardo: dos en tres, una en cuatro, una en cinco.

1) División en tres: a) Amor dulcis, prudens, fortis: *De diversis*, sermón XXIX, I; t. 183, c. 620; b) Carnalis, rationalis, spiritualis: C.C., XX, 9; t. 183, c. 871–872.
2) División en cuatro (por lejos la más importante): a) amor sui; b) amor Dei propter se; c) amor Dei propter ipsum; d) amor sui propter Deum tantum. *De dil. Deo*, cap. VIII–X; t. 182, c. 987–992.
3) División en cinco: a) amor parentum; b) amor sociorum (socialis); c) amor generis humani (generalis); d) amor inimicorum (violentus); e) amor Dei (sanctus). Estas cinco clases de amor corresponden a los cinco sentidos. *De diversis*, sermón X, 2–4; t. 183, c. 568–569.

La única división tripartita de Bernardo que podemos comparar con la de Guiraut para satisfacer a Anitchkof, es la división 1°, a. Ahora bien, las dos divisiones no tienen ninguna relación, por la simple razón de que la de Guiraut es una división del amor en general, en tanto que la de Bernardo es una división del amor divino. Habría que leerlas pues así:

GUIRAUT—Amor: Celeste, Natural, Carnal.
BERNARDO—Amor celeste: Carnal, Racional, Espiritual.

Las dos divisiones pues no se corresponden en manera alguna. En Guiraut Riquier, por el contrario, el amor espiritual se afirma netamente, pero estamos a fines del siglo XIII, y J. Anglade ha señalado, con mucha razón, que el advenimiento del amor religioso en la poesía de la Edad Media marca el fin de la edad de los trovadores (*Les troubadours*, 296–297); Guiraut Riquier comenta y refuta a Guiraut de Calanson: declara pues la agonía del amor cortés, y si se quiere contar este texto entre las pruebas de la influencia mística experimentada por el amor cortés, hay que decir que la mística lo ha influenciado destruyéndolo. Esta, al menos, parece una afirmación prácticamente inobjetable, en lo que concierne a las literaturas provenzal y francesa.
suficientemente aproximado para que el paralelismo de los grados pue
da soportar la hipótesis de una filiación doctrinal tal como la que acaba-
os de ver afirmada.

Anitchkof no ha dejado de sentir la dificultad. A la objeción de que san Bernardo ha hablado exclusivamente del amor respecto a Dios, responde con una magnífica seguridad: “Los trovadores han transformado ciertas concepciones teológicas en ideas literarias.”16 La cosa no tiene nada en sí misma de imposible y pensamos incluso que la doctrina de san Bernardo ha sido usada por escritores profanos, pero se trata de saber si lo ha sido por los Trovadores. Para probarlo, habría que establecer que la concepción cortesana del amor es una interpretación sen-
sual de la concepción mística del amor desarrollada por san Bernardo. Siempre tendría a su disposición tantos sofismas como se quiera para justificar semejante tesis, pero seguirá siendo un sofisma, y por una ra-
zón muy simple: el amor místico, al ser la negación del amor carnal, no puede tomar prestado la descripción de uno para describir al otro; no basta con decir que no tienen el mismo objeto, se debe agregar que no pueden tener la misma naturaleza, precisamente porque no tienen el mismo objeto.

No se trata aquí de alterar los textos para hacerles decir lo que uno quiere, sino de mantenerse en ciertas ideas muy simples que go-
biernan la interpretación de esos textos. Lo que ha contribuido más que ninguna otra cosa a mantener un cierto equívoco sobre el carácter del amor cortés, es el hecho de que troveros y trovadores declaran que pre-
fieren amar sin recompensa y sufrir, antes que liberarse de su sufrimiento liberándose de su amor. Nada más verdadero, pero ¿qué prueba eso? Escuchemos una vez más a Thibaut de Champagne:

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{De touz maus n’est nus plesanz} \\
& \text{Fors seulement cil d’amer (4, 1–2).}
\end{align*}
\]

16 Anitchkof, Joachim de Flore et les milieux courtois, 107.
Qui plus aime plus endure,
Plus a mestier de confort,
Qu’Amors est de tel nature
Que son ami maïne a mort;
Puis en a joie et deport,
S’il est de bonne aventure (117, 1–5).

¿Qué significan estos lamentos? Que el amor es un mal que vale la pena aguantar, sobre todo si tiene la posibilidad de encontrar su recompensa; pero en fin, es un mal. El más placentero de los males, el más beneficioso de todos los males, un mal que hace a aquel que lo sufre superior a los que no lo sufren, es aún un mal; es el famoso “mal de amor,” caro a las novelas sentimentales de todos los tiempos. Es un mal porque se sufre, y se sufre porque no siempre es recompensado. Así pues, se dirá que dado que persiste, es desinteresado. Sin duda, pero en primer lugar no es más que hasta un cierto punto. Cuando la esperanza se ha ido para siempre, Thibaut de Champagne comienza a hacer planes para liberarse de este mal tan benéfico:

Si je de li me poïsse partir,
Melz me venist qu’estre sires de France (65, 11–12).

Jamás se ha oído a san Bernardo desear ser liberado de la carga del amor de Dios. Esto no es un despropósito, es del fondo de las cosas de lo que se trata, pues se ve plenamente, en este caso, la contrariedad de naturaleza de los dos amores. El amor cortés, decíamos, es un mal porque puede no ser recompensado. Tomemos esta expresión en su sentido más inmediato, entendamos por ella que, incluso de una manera puramente sentimental, puede no ser correspondido (pues el sentimiento puede ir sin lo demás y lo demás sin el sentimiento), esto es suficientemente importante para que nos dé derecho a hablar de él. Sin embargo, esto solo excluye la hipótesis, propuesta hace tiempo, de que este poema tendría por objeto la Virgen. Las lamentaciones de los poetas cortesanos sobre sus amores no correspondidos son en ellos demasiado repetidos como para que valga la pena citar textos sobre este punto.

17 Jaufré Rudel: “mi destino es amar sin ser amado;” Anglade, Les Troubadours, 106. Esto solo excluye la hipótesis, propuesta hace tiempo, de que este poema tendría por objeto la Virgen. Las lamentaciones de los poetas cortesanos sobre sus amores no correspondidos son en ellos demasiado repetidos como para que valga la pena citar textos sobre este punto.
ciente para hacer que el amor cortés se distinga radicalmente del amor místico, que se distingue y se opone como el amor humano al amor divino. Es justamente este sufrimiento que Bernardo no quiere, del que nos enseña a liberarnos. Los hombres sufren porque aman sin ser amados; amad pues a Dios y nunca sabréis lo que es un amor no correspondido; pues, no lo olvidemos, Él nos ha amado primero: ipse prior dilexit nos! Tal es el verdadero amor, no la queja desolada de un alma que languidece en la soledad, sino la alegría de dos quereres que se saben unidos en intención y en deseos. Este amor nunca es decepcionado, y Thi-baut lo sabía bien, cuando escribía en un momento de desaliento:

Or me gart Deus et d’amor et d’amer
Fors de Celi, cui on doit aouer,
Ou on ne puet faillir a grant soudee (29, 41–43).

En estos tres renglones se encuentran los principios del amor cisterciense, pero son también la negación del amor cortés y la afirmación de su vanidad innata; si hay filiación de san Bernardo con la poesía de los troveros, se reduce a ésto: tal vez les ha inspirado algunas veleidades pasajeras a las cuales renunciar.

Vayamos más lejos; nos quedaríamos todavía en la superficie del problema si nos contentáramos con decir que el amor divino conlleva siempre su “grant soudee,” es decir su gran recompensa. Verdaderamente, es la naturaleza misma del amor lo que está en juego. ¿Un amor no correspondido es concebible? San Bernardo y todos los místicos cristianos responderán: no. El amor está en el orden de la amistad, y la amistad implica por esencia benevolencia mutua; no se es el amigo de alguien que no es nuestro amigo; no se puede más que desear su amistad, lo cual no es poseerla. Lo mismo sucede con el amor. Lo que los poetas cortesanos designan con este nombre, no es a los ojos de los místicos cristianos, más que el deseo; para traspasar a lenguaje místico lo que dicen, habría que expresarse así: tengo un deseo que no es correspondido, pues no sólo no soy amado, sino que no me amo a mí mismo,
Étienne Gilson

pues todo amor es recíproco por definición. Se ve cuán lejos estamos de acertar cuando establecemos ecuaciones fáciles entre fórmulas que, por fuera, se parecen, pero se contradicen internamente. Ni siquiera la aridez del místico puede ser comparada con el desamparo del poeta corte- sano. También el místico desea, pero se da cuenta que si sufre entonces su amor como una herida, no es porque no sea amado, ni porque ama, sino porque no devuelve aún demasiado amor por amor. El problema no es nunca para los cristianos hacerse amar por un Dios que los ha cre- ado por amor y rescatado con su sangre, sino de amarlo ellos mismos lo suficiente para encontrarse unidos a Él, que es la bienaventuranza: *Quid- ni ametur Amor?* (¡Cómo no será amado el Amor!).

Esta oposición fundamental sale a luz por una señal que no se ha observado lo suficiente. El amor cortés, no estando jamás seguro de ser correspondido es, a menudo presa del temor. El miedo es una palabra que Thibuat de Champagne conoce bien y que emplea con conocimiento de causa:

*Et la poors est dedenz moi entree* (64, 37).

Signo cierto de que estamos en un orden completamente extraño al de la mística cisterciense, pues el amor no introduce allí jamás el te- mor, sobre todo el de no ser correspondido; lo expulsa, según la pro- mesa de san Juan que san Bernardo ha meditado tan a menudo y por tan largo tiempo: *Caritas mittit foras timorem*. La caridad, es decir, el amor verdadero, pero no el deseo de lo que no es Dios y que el temor siempre acompaña, porque ese deseo está orientado hacia falsos bienes, que no pueden dejar de engañarnos.18

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San Bernardo y el amor cortés

Para llevar a lo esencial esta oposición fundamental, se puede decir que la palabra “amor” no tiene el mismo sentido en los dos sistemas. Como se confunde con el deseo, el amor cortés puede hacerse la ilusión de ser desinteresado, porque tiene la fuerza de durar hasta que la recompensa o el cansancio lo conduzcan a su término. Supongamos incluso (cosa rara fuera de la literatura) que se fija sobre un solo objeto y dura toda una vida: no será siempre más que un deseo sin esperanza o un deseo resignado. El cristiano no se encuentra jamás en esta situación. Dios ha tomado la delantera; Él nos ama y no quiere nuestro amor más que para nuestra bienaventuranza; desearlo, es pues devolverle amor por amor, es verdaderamente amar, y es amar la bienaventuranza. Amor, como lo dice san Bernardo, a la vez desinteresado y recompensado. Es por esto que el Cisterciense puede leer con toda tranquilidad las canciones de Thibuat de Champagne; ellas no le prueban más que una cosa que ya sabía: entre el poeta o él, él es el único que sabe amar; ha elegido la mejor parte.

Así, el amor cortés, para conservarle su nombre tradicional, está obligado a contentarse con menos que el amor místico; vive y dura sin alcanzar su fin, en cambio la caridad es por definición la captura de su objeto: *vacua esse non potest*. Resta un solo punto en el que se pueden relacionar las dos concepciones del amor, y es tal vez lo que se quiere decir al calificarlos a ambos, aunque sea en sentidos diferentes, de desinteresados. Incluso recompensado, el amor cortés se distingue de su recompensa; no es la alegría la que lo corona; cosechándola como un fruto del amor, no la confunde con el amor mismo. Tal san Bernardo, cuando afirma que amar al Padre por la herencia que se espera, por más legítimo que sea, no es aún más que amar la herencia del Padre, no al Padre mismo. Esto es verdad, pero debemos siempre volver a ciertas consideraciones fundamentales. Para el cristiano, el problema no se plantea verdaderamente. ¿Qué cosa más absurda que estar unido por amor a la Bienaventuranza y no ser feliz? Ahora bien, se le está unido
por el hecho mismo de que se lo ama; un discípulo de san Bernardo no puede preguntarse si le es posible querer la Bienaventuranza sin querer ser feliz. Ni siquiera puede preguntarse si la puede querer sin el bienestar que da, porque es el bienestar; la pregunta puede tener un sentido en otro caso, pero no en este.

Para mejor ver la diferencia, veamos una vez más cada uno de estos amores desde el punto de vista del otro. Visto por un poeta cortesano, es el amor cisterciense el que es sumamente sospechoso de no ser desinteresado; pues en definitiva, si lo es ¿cómo lo sabe? Sus perseverancias, incluso a través de sus arideces, no prueban nada; ¿qué mérito hay en perseverar hacia un objetivo cuando se está seguro de alcanzarlo? Pero si nos volvemos hacia el amor cortés mirándolo desde el punto de vista cisterciense, su posición no es más satisfactoria. ¿Qué quieres? preguntaría san Bernardo al poeta, ¿un amor que esté privado de su recompensa para estar seguro de su desinterés? Es una contradicción en los términos, porque el amor es en sí mismo su propia recompensa. Lo que os engaña es la costumbre que habéis adquirido de desear a las criaturas, pues tomando por amor lo que no es más que concupiscencia, dais a vuestro deseo el nombre de amor, y como inevitablemente se frustra, concluí que prescindir de recompensa. Pero si fuera amor, no podría prescindir de ella, porque sería su recompensa misma. Reprochar al amor no poder existir sin recompensa, es reprocharle no ser concupiscencia, sino amor.

El diálogo podría durar mucho tiempo, porque los dos interlocutores no hablan el mismo lenguaje; no podrían ponerse de acuerdo más que si uno de ellos instigara al otro hasta el punto de llevarlo a contenerse con el deseo humano, o a abjurar de él enteramente para entregarse a la persecución del amor divino. Parece claro, de todas formas, que los dos sistemas son excluyentes entre sí, y que cualquier comunicación de uno al otro es difícilmente conceivable. No podría haber filiación entre dos concepciones del amor dado que el nombre mismo del amor re-
cibe sentidos contradictorios; no se puede pasar del amor cisterciense al amor cortés más que por la apostasía, o del amor cortés al amor cisterciense más que por la abjuración: después de Lancelot, Galahad.

Cuando todo está dicho, ¿qué queda en común entre las dos doctrinas? Que, en las dos doctrinas, el amor beatificante recae sobre el objeto beatificante mismo, por él mismo, más que por la alegría que da. Si no la da, como sucede en el amor cortés, el amor persiste; si la da, como sucede siempre a fin de cuentas en el amor místico, el amor puro recae aún sobre él por él, y no propter aliquid ipsius. Es todo y es ciertamente algo, pero ¿cuál doctrina es deudora de la otra? El hecho de que dos sistemas de ideas tan opuestos posean este elemento en común, bastaría para hacernos suponer que ambos lo tienen de un tercero. Tal parece ser en efecto el caso. La Antigüedad clásica podría ser una fuente más importante de la poesía cortesana, e incluso de la mística cisterciense, que lo que se ha supuesto hasta ahora.

Remitámonos una vez más al De Amicitia de Cicerón, un texto y un autor del que estamos seguros que el siglo XII ha leído. La idea de que la amistad engendra beneficios, pero no nace de ellos, está expresada allí con toda la fuerza deseable: “Y también los que forjan amistades a causa de la utilidad, me parece que quitan el más amable nudo de la amistad: pues la utilidad nacida por medio de un amigo no deleita tanto como el amor mismo del amigo . . . Pues no sigue la amistad a la utilidad, sino la utilidad a la amistad.”19 ¿Queremos una fórmula que pueda ser de san Bernardo mismo? Héla aquí: “Pensamos que la amistad debe buscada no llevados por la esperanza de una recompensa, sino porque todo su fruto está en el amor mismo.”20 Acordémonos de tantas fórmulas equivalentes de san Bernardo, que ya hemos citado: “El verdadero amor se contenta consigo mismo.” “El amor no busca una causa ni

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19 Cicerón, De Amicitia, XIV.
20 Ibid., IX.
un fruto fuera de sí mismo: su fruto es su ejercicio. Amo porque amo, amo para amar.” Ni el sonido de las palabras ni el acento son los mismos, pero es la misma noción fundamental del amor que se afirma en el moralista latino y en el místico cristiano. Se narra a veces algo análogo en los representantes del amor cortés. Unos y otros han retomado a su cuenta y utilizado, con fines por otra parte muy diferentes, o incluso opuestos, un elemento doctrinal que les era ofrecido por la cultura clásica de su tiempo. Fácilmente se encontrarán otros, pero ninguno que haya jugado un rol tal en la constitución de estas dos doctrinas, y su presencia en una y otra basta para dar cuenta de la analogía que se puede descubrir entre ellas, sin que sea necesario recurrir a la hipótesis de una filiación.

Amor cortés y mística cristiana: 
La hipótesis de la influencia

Hemos intentado mostrar la oposición fundamental que separa la mística cisterciense del amor cortés. El problema sin embargo queda en saber si, a falta de filiación, no habría habido influencia del Cristianismo sobre la poesía cortesana. ¿Pero cómo plantear el problema? Si se trata solamente de saber si la terminología de los trovadores y de los troveros no se ve afectada por el hecho de que han vivido en un medio cristiano, no hay duda sobre la respuesta. Uno se da cuenta por algunos signos que eran cristianos, incluso cuando los sentimientos que expresan no son para nada cristianos. También se podría querer decir que la influencia general del cristianismo sirvió para algo en la aparición de esta forma de amor que, aunque sensual, no dejaba de señalar un progreso sobre el amor licencioso de Ovidio. Esto es algo inmediatamente evidente que no pienso discutir.\textsuperscript{21} El amor cortés es inconcebible fuera

\textsuperscript{21} Ver el excelente análisis de la doctrina cortesana, por E. Faral, \textit{La chanson courtoise}, en J. Bédier y P. Hazard, \textit{Histoire de la littérature française} (París: Larousse, 1923), t.
de un medio cristiano. Cuando uno llega a preguntarse si ciertas ideas místicas no han sido introducidas en la poesía cortesana y no han sido incorporadas allí, entramos entonces en el campo de las hipótesis discutibles, es decir demostrables, pero también refutables. Es en esto en lo cual vamos a intentar mantenernos.

Incluso antes de hacer el esfuerzo de mantenernos allí, conviene delimitarlo. Es lo que no se ha hecho suficientemente. ¿Cómo discutir la posibilidad de una influencia, si primero no nos ponemos de acuerdo en las características con las que se la reconocerá? La primera regla, que no debemos olvidar nunca, me parece que es la siguiente: No se puede probar que una doctrina depende de otra, invocando como prueba que la misma idea se encuentra en ambas, cuando se trata de una idea que era fácil tanto de encontrar por sí misma como de encontrar en otra parte. Regla de simple sentido común, pero muy a menudo olvidada. Así, E. Wechssler constata que el amor cortés comienza, como el amor cristiano, por una especie de deseo nostálgico y vago, la Sehnsucht. No se trata de objetarlo pero ¿vale la pena reunir textos donde los poetas hablan de su “deseo” para probar semejante evidencia? Se puede fácilmente reunir citas donde el místico declara que no puede pensar en Dios sin desearlo, como el poeta afirma que no puede pensar en su dama sin desearla, pero no se sacará nunca ninguna prueba, porque nadie necesita que le enseñen que el deseo es el comienzo del amor. ¿Qué es el deseo? se pregunta san Agustín; y responde: “El deseo es la concupiscencia de las cosas ausentes.”

I, 44–46. El amor fuente de virtudes, la fecundidad del sufrimiento, muchas otras características aún, atestiguan la influencia del cristianismo sobre esta manera de sentir; pero no examino aquí esta cuestión, mucho más amplia que la de la posible influencia de la mística cisterciense.

22 Para el rol de la Sehnsucht, ver Wechssler, Das Kulturproblem des Minnesangs, 252–253. El autor se inspira en este punto en E. Boutroux, buen filósofo, pero místico de importancia claramente secundaria. Hay por otra parte, cosas buenas y malas en la descripción del misticismo dada por E. Boutroux y E. Wechssler; no es este el lugar para discutirlas, pero es preciso señalar al menos que la esencia misma del misticismo cris-
investigaciones especiales; todos los que se plantean la cuestión encontrarán la respuesta sin ni siquiera tener necesidad de consultar algún autor. No es pues sobre analogías tan generales en que uno se podrá fundar para establecer filiaciones.

Lo mismo sucede con este otro rasgo común que hace notar el mismo historiador: el amor violento es una pasión que vuelve insensible, tanto lo absorbe, a aquel que está poseído por ella.\textsuperscript{23} La pregunta que hay que plantearse en semejante caso, no es saber si los místicos lo afirman de la caridad como los poetas del amor, pues lo hacen, sino si uno está seguro de que los poetas no lo hubieran dicho si los místicos no lo hubieran dicho antes que ellos. Esa es toda la cuestión. ¿Se trata acaso de coincidencia o de influencia? Un poeta enamorado no tiene necesidad de leer una descripción del éxtasis para ser capaz de describir a un enamorado acongojado y angustiado.

No es todo, y falta todavía tomar otras precauciones. Es cosa excelente que los historiadores de la literatura se hayan interesado recientemente en la historia de las ideas. Ambos dominios no podrían ser separados. No se puede, sin embargo pasar de uno al otro sin algunas precauciones, la primera de las cuales es, al tratar sobre las ideas, aportar la misma exactitud que se aporta de ordinario al estudiar los textos. Estamos lejos de que se haya hecho así, y uno de los errores más comunes es tratar como comparables las ideas de expresión análoga, pero de sentido enteramente diferente. Propongamos pues como segunda regla: No

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\begin{itemize}
  \item tiano escapa al que sostiene junto con Wechssler que: “El Dios del místico no es trascendente, sino inmanente” (\textit{ibid.}, 263). Si Dios es inmanente sin ser trascendente, no hay problema místico en el sentido en que los cristianos lo entienden. Lo que van a experimentar, y de lo que deben rendir cuenta, es, por el contrario: la inmanencia de un Dios que es y permanece trascendente. Se simplifica mucho el paso de la mística cristiana al amor cortés al suprimir la noción de trascendencia divina; se ve, por el contrario, cuán inconcebible es un paso tal, en cuanto se lo restablece.
  \item Para la definición agustiniana del \textit{desiderium}, ver san Augustín, \textit{Enarr. in Ps. 118}, VIII, 4; P. L., t. 37, c. 1522. Cf. \textit{Enarr. in Ps. 62}, 5; P. L., t. 36, c. 750–751.
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\textsuperscript{23} Wechssler, \textit{Das Kulturproblem des Minnesangs}, 253–256.
se puede probar la influencia de una obra sobre otra estableciendo que contienen fórmulas literalmente análogas, pero de sentido diferente. Sin embargo, es lo que se hace a menudo y es lo que no se ha dejado de hacer a propósito de las relaciones de la mística cristiana con el amor cortés.

La intención era particularmente tentadora, y particularmente peligrosa, en lo que concierne al éxtasis. Después de haber citado textos místicos donde está descripto el éxtasis, Wechssler acumula textos poéticos donde el amante se pierde en la contemplación de la dama amada. Nada se opone a que se le dé el nombre de éxtasis a estos dos fenómenos; santo Tomás mismo consentiría en ello gustosamente, porque considera al amor, el que sea, como extático por definición. Ese no es el problema. Se trata de saber si la idea de que el amor es extático le vino a los poetas de parte de los teólogos. Se sostendría más bien lo contrario, y se estaría también impedido de probarlo, pues uno de estos éxtasis es lo contrario del otro, no sólo en el sentido de que uno excluye al otro, sino también porque la naturaleza de uno es lo contrario de la del otro. Es pues el mismo problema que se plantea de nuevo. Que el amor haga naturalmente salir de sí al que ama; que lo haga, por decirlo así, pasar al objeto de su amor, es algo que se puede adivinar sin esfuerzo, por poco que uno haya tenido la experiencia del amor. Si quisiéramos asegurarnos de ello por completo en un libro, un hombre tan poco místico como Cicerón habría bastado para enseñarlo. ¿No escribió, en efecto, en su De amicitia: “El verdadero amigo es como otro yo”? Esta identificación de dos “yo” ¿no se desarrolló espontánea e independientemente en dos sentidos diferentes, en el amor cortés y en el amor místico? Es por mucho la hipótesis más verosímil, si uno recuerda la diferencia radical que hemos señalado entre ambas concepciones.

Lancelot vio desde la ventana de una torre a la reina Ginebra secuestrada por su enemigo; cuando pasa ante sus ojos y él la ve, entra en trance y caería de la torre si su amigo Gawain no lo sostuviera. Acumó-
lense rasgos de esta clase, agréguese el “corazón loco de amor” de Jaufré Rudel y los “olvidos” donde se pierden los poetas cortesanos a la vista del objeto amado, sigue siendo imposible encontrar en lo que dicen un recuerdo cualquiera de los éxtasis místicos; es preciso haber olvidado lo que son estos últimos para dudar de ello.

Wechssler sin embargo los ha definido muy bien: “El esfuerzo del alma por salir de lo finito y su paso al infinito por la fuerza del amor extático.” Lo que se quiere llamar aquí el “éxtasis” del amante cortesano, es por el contrario un esfuerzo del alma por absorberse en lo finito por la fuerza del amor humano. Destaquemos bien que se trata una vez más de la estructura íntima de los sentimientos en presencia [del objeto]; salvo este elemento extático común a todo amor, y que santo Tomás reconoce hasta en la demencia—la alienación de sí—nada de lo que define a uno de estos sentimientos se encuentra en el otro, de modo que uno llega a preguntarse cómo los historiadores que lo admiten pueden representarse la influencia de uno sobre otro.

¿Pero buscan también representársela? ¿Qué cambio concebible de ideas representa para ellos este supuesto paso? Estamos reducidos a conjeturas. Sin embargo, lo que es verdadero de las formas animales lo es igualmente de las ideas: no se puede pasar de cualquier cosa a cualquier cosa. ¿Se puede pasar del raptus del místico al arrobamiento del poeta, o del excessus mentis del místico a los éxtasis del amor cortés? Esa es toda la cuestión.

No discutamos ni siquiera el problema de la terminología; supongamos, lo que nunca he constatado, que la palabra éxtasis haya sido empleada por un poeta del siglo XII o del XIII, faltaría preguntarse qué entiende por ella. Me excuso por insistir, pero está en el fondo mismo de la cuestión. Después de haber pasado revista a estos diversos aspec-

24 Ibid., 259–264.
25 Ibid., 243.
tos del problema, Wechssler agrega honestamente: “Solamente un pequeño número de estos motivos son específicamente místicos. No se lo puede decir categóricamente más que de las nociones de arrobamiento y de éxtasis.”  

26 He aquí el equívoco; el arrobamiento y el éxtasis del poeta ¿son estados místicos, o no dejan de serlo al pasar de la mística a la poesía? No digamos que es una sutileza que no interesa más que a la teología. Admitir que la mística cristiana ha ejercido una influencia demostrable sobre la poesía cortesana es obligarse a probar que algo del arrobamiento o del éxtasis del místico se encuentran en los del poeta. Si no se encuentra nada así, ya no es de “Vorstellungen” [ideas], sino sólo de palabras de lo que se trata. Para resolver la cuestión, lo más simple es comparar una vez más las dos concepciones del amor en presencia: “Höfliche Frauenminne und christliche charitas” [“Mujeres cortesanas y caridad cristiana”].

El mismo Wechssler se plantea la cuestión, y conoce demasiado bien el problema para no sentir lo que hay de paradojal. “El amor cortés de las mujeres y la charitas cristiana, ¿qué tienen que hacer juntos?”  

27 Nuestro historiador no intenta menos que descubrirlo. Lo que le impresiona ante todo, es que el amor, tal como lo conciben los místicos mismos, es substancialmente uno; ya se trate del amor carnal o del amor de

26 Hablo de poetas que no son más que líricos, y no de los autores de obras didácticas en prosa, como André le Chapelain, o de un poeta tal como Dante, que es el heredero de toda la teología del siglo XIII. Cabe observar que los testimonios acumulados por E. Wechssler son heteroclitos. Probar la influencia de la teología mística sobre Dante es un juego de niños, pero los textos de Dante, irrecusables, no prueban nada en cuanto a la influencia de la teología sobre Jaufre Rudel, Bernard de Ventadour o Chrétien de Troyes. No se pueden citar los textos uno después de otro como si fueran las pruebas de la misma tesis. El amor del que habla el Dante no es más aquel del que habian hablado los poetas del amor cortés; la espiritualización del amor en él es un hecho consumado, y es porque no lo es en los trovadores o los troveros, que la comparación de sus obras con las de san Bernardo está tan llena de trampas. Se quiere ir demasiado rápido; habría que seriard los problemas y distinguir las cuestiones.

Dios, es siempre el mismo affectus, pero modificado por formas diferentes. La observación es perfectamente justa, y hemos visto bastante bien hasta qué punto se verifica en la doctrina de san Bernardo. Wechssler tiene pues completamente razón sobre este importante punto, pero hay que tener cuidado con las consecuencias que se desprenden de él.

Para simplificar el problema, volvamos al punto que decide todo: 

**cuando un poeta cortés habla de amor puro, lo que tiene en el espíritu es exactamente lo contrario de lo que un místico cisterciense designa con ese nombre.** Dejemos de lado los casos, por mucho los más numerosos, donde el desinterés del amor cortés no es más que lo peor que puede suceder, para no considerar más que aquellos donde se priva voluntariamente de la posesión del objeto amado para asegurarse él mismo de su desinterés. El poeta se encuentra entonces en la situación descrita por André le Chapelain con una llana crudeza: “Hay un amor que es puro y otro que es llamado mixto. Y el amor puro ciertamente es el que une los corazones de dos que se aman con total afecto amoroso. Pero éste consiste en la contemplación de la mente y el afecto del corazón; llega hasta el beso de los labios y el abrazo vigoroso y el contacto ruboroso de la amante desnuda, dejado de lado el consuelo último.”

Estas palabras son de un clérigo, y que toma las palabras amor purus de los autores místicos, pero ¿qué concepto les toma prestado? Ninguno. No insistamos en lo que tiene de sospechosa esta extraordinaria concepción de la pureza, sería muy fácil; importa subrayar por el contrario el hecho de que lo que constituye para el poeta o el teórico del amor cortés la prueba de la pureza del amor, sería, a los ojos del místico, la prueba de su impureza. La oposición fundamental de los dos sistemas de ideas se manifiesta aquí en todo su rigor. El carácter carnal del amor cortés le prohíbe mantener unidos el amor mismo y el goce del objeto

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amado; este goce, al ser fundamentalmente impuro, no podría coexistir con el amor sin contaminarlo, o al menos sin volverlo sospechoso a los ojos de aquel que lo experimenta. El amor cortés va pues hasta el final de su lógica prohibiéndose la unión del amante con la amada, es incluso la razón por la cual algunos de sus teóricos lo juzgan incompatible con el matrimonio, donde la legitimidad y la seguridad de la posesión hacen imposible toda ilusión de desinterés. Pero el amor místico no va menos valerosamente hasta el final de su propia lógica afirmando que la señal del amor espiritual, llegado a su punto de perfección, es precisamente la unión real que el amor cortés se niega; este último no es puro más que si tiene todo excepto ésto: “Dejado de lado el último consuelo;” el amor místico no ambiciona ninguna otra cosa que este último favor, y no está seguro de su pureza más que si lo obtiene. Es por eso que el simbolismo místico del Cantar de los Cantares es siempre interpretado por nuestros autores como el del Esposo y la Esposa. El amor puro de la mística es esencialmente el matrimonio del alma con Dios: las Nupcias Espirituales, el Matrimonio místico, todas estas expresiones son la negación directa, si no del amor cortés, al menos de sus timideces o resignaciones. Puesto que, propiamente hablando, ni siquiera prepara para el matrimonio del alma con Dios, él lo es: *sic amare nupsisse est* (así entonces, amar es desposarse); no hay para ella término medio entre el amor mixto y el matrimonio místico del amor puro: *aspirare ad nuptias Verbi* (aspirar a las nupcias con el Verbo), allí está su objetivo supremo, y nada la detendrá, ni honor ni pudor, hasta tanto haya llegado.

¿Cómo no ver ahí el signo de una diferencia profunda entre los dos amores? Uno podría obstinarse en buscar entre ellos un paralelis-
mo, al sostener que el amor cortés, por su exclusión misma de la unión carnal, cuando la excluye, llega a imitar la espiritualidad del amor místico, o al menos se esfuerza. Concedemos que se esfuerza, en el sentido de que toma prestado aquí el lenguaje, pero ni por un instante va más lejos que la expresión de amor puro; todo le prohíbe imitar el concepto. Un “amor carnal puro” es un absurdo en los términos, para quien considera la exclusión del elemento carnal del amor como la primera condición de su pureza. Concedamos a Chapelain que, en la difícil posición en que se encuentra, hace lo que puede, el punto central de la dificultad no deja de ser que los dos sistemas son necesariamente “incomunicantes,” herméticamente cerrados el uno en relación al otro, porque emplean la palabra amor en sentidos opuestos. Colocándose en el plano de la vida espiritual, el místico puede exigir del amor sobrenatural lo que, como hombre, exigiría del amor carnal. Ahora bien, sobre este punto no hay duda: el amor humano no se realiza completamente más que en esta unión del hombre y de la mujer, que hace del uno y de la otra una misma carne. El hombre es un ser carnal, la unión de dos seres humanos no debe pues, para ser completa, limitarse a una unión de pensamiento o de afectos, o incluso, para retomar el lenguaje de André le Chapelain, de contemplación, sino una unión de todo su ser. Ninguna relación de humano a humano se puede comparar con aquella, ni siquiera la de los padres con los hijos, y es por cierto lo que está escrito: “Dejarás a tu padre y a tu madre,” ningún lazo prevalece contra ese lazo a la vez natural y sacro. El místico no puede pretender unirse a Dios por su cuerpo (si bien este cuerpo también debe más tarde participar de la bienaventuranza celestial), porque Dios es espíritu, pero, al menos en el orden de la vida espiritual, que es el suyo, no concebirá jamás una unión de amor que no sea total a su manera: Sponsus et Sponsa sunt: “Son Esposo y Esposa,” el amor tendrá esto, o si no se frustrará porque le es imposible no desear sin dejar de ser él mismo. El amor impuro del que habla el místico es el que desea otra cosa: Impurus est qui aliud cupid, pero el
amor puro al contrario es el que lo desea, pues es el de la Esposa, y es Esposa porque es este mismo amor: \textit{Sponsae hic est, quia hoc Sponsa est quaecumque est}. “Éste es [el amor] de la Esposa, porque esto es la Esposa cualquiera que sea.” En una palabra, el amor puro cortés se define por la exclusión de lo que constituye el amor puro de los místicos: la unión real del amante y de la amada; nada puede borrar ni atenuar esta oposición.

Qué ha pasado, pues? Esto: que los teóricos del amor cortés (pues los poetas mismos no proveen más que textos raros e imprecisos sobre estas cuestiones), por haber querido apropiarse del lenguaje de los místicos, han elaborado una concepción del amor no sólo opuesta a la de los místicos, sino incluso opuesta a la de los moralistas cristianos. Su amor puro sería, a los ojos de los místicos, el colmo de la impureza porque es carnal, pero no es tampoco la forma suprema del amor carnal humano, porque excluye lo que es el signo y la prueba de su perfección: la alegría que da después de todas las otras, el \textit{extremum solatium} (el gozo final). No hay que dejarse seducir por la facilidad de un paralelismo exterior engañoso. El místico y el poeta cortés, aunque renuncian, uno a todas y el otro a algunas de las alegrías del cuerpo para mejor asegurar la pureza espiritual de su amor, no por eso no siguen direcciones opuestas; pues el místico, poniendo el problema del amor entre su espíritu y el Espíritu, puede resolverlo íntegramente sin sacrificar nada de las exigencias del amor: él aspira entonces a las delicias de la unión divina, y es ahí donde el amor encuentra su pureza; el poeta cortés, poniendo el problema del amor entre seres de carne, no puede concebir la pureza más que en la exclusión de toda unión real entre estos seres, de modo que la pureza del amor cortés separa a los amantes, mientras que la del amor místico los une.

Es pues quimérico buscar una influencia del amor místico sobre el amor cortés, más allá de algunos préstamos en el vocabulario; de lo que define a uno, nada ha pasado a lo que define al otro, porque del uno
al otro ningún paso era posible. Las analogías que se complacen en encontrar entre las expresiones, deben por tanto siempre ser leídas a la luz de esta oposición fundamental; cuando se lo hace, nos volvemos muy rápidamente escépticos sobre los pretendidos parentescos que ciertos historiadores creen haber descubierto.

Sin embargo, han ido demasiado lejos en la afirmación de su tesis: “Lo que promueve y lleva este lirismo no son los pensamientos particulares, ni siquiera las concepciones del tiempo, es la disposición fundamental a una cierta manera mística de sentir.”31 Este Grundbestimmung mystischer Gefühlsart (Sentimiento místico básico) es muy evidente en Dante, pero aunque su poesía se relaciona con la de los trovadores, corresponde a un estado completamente diferente de la cuestión. Si es de él que se dice esto, nada más verdadero ni menos útil; pero si es de los poetas cortesanos que se dice esto, se buscará en vano qué sentido de la palabra mística es posible elegir en semejante caso. Parece, al oír el comentario que hace Wechssler en este lugar, que se trata de lo que llama un elemento común a toda experiencia mística, sea poética, sea religiosa; pero si la experiencia poética en cuestión no es mística, su elemento estético no lo es tampoco. Decir que: “toda mística puede ser un acto estético, así como religioso,” no prueba nada; porque acabamos de ver que el amor puro del tipo cortés no tiene nada de místico; lo que tiene de estético no es un elemento estético religioso, no es tampoco un elemento estético místico en el sentido que los cistercienses dan a este nombre.

¿Quién podrá decir jamás los estragos causados en la historia de esta cuestión por el olvido de estas distinciones fundamentales? “La Iglesia fue siempre unánime en condenar sistemáticamente todo amor carnalis.”32 De ninguna manera, san Bernardo no lo ha hecho jamás,

31 Wechssler, Das Kulturproblem des Minnesangs, 269.
32 Ibid., 317.
pues el amor carnal puede ser bendecido y consagrado por la Iglesia; se olvida demasiado que el matrimonio es un sacramento, y el texto mismo de Hugo de san Víctor que se cita con este motivo, hubiera debido mostrar de qué se trata, pues condena el deseo carnal: “que enfervoriza por sobre o contra la razón.” Está lejos de una condena sistemática de todo amor carnal. Es el teórico del amor cortés, no el teólogo el que lo condena. Cuando pues se agrega: “Así no es posible duda alguna sobre este punto, que el amor de aquel que cantaba a la mujer no caía entonces bajo el concepto de fornicatio,” se va más allá de lo necesario. El amor cortés podía ser y fue a menudo una fornicación, pero nada lo obligaba a serlo y, de hecho, no siempre lo fue. Digan lo que digan, un canto de amor, incluso humano, no es necesariamente un peccatum crimi
nale, y no lo era, incluso en la Edad Media; todo depende del amor que canta o que cantaba, y uno puede preguntarse si el amor mixtus, tan des-preciado por André le Chapelain, no era realmente más sano y más inofensivo bajo este aspecto que el amor purus. Si el hecho de haber cantado el amor carnal basta para excluir a los trovadores de la mística, esto no es suficiente para hacerlos rebeldes. Es sin embargo lo que se ha llegado a decir, y era necesario. Si se admite que el amor cortés se inspira en el amor místico, como estos amores son de sentido contrario se debe necesariamente concluir que el primero no se ha inspirado en el segundo más que para poder luego dirigirse contra él. ¿Es necesario entonces creer, con Wechssler, que los trovadores hayan querido realizar una “Umwertung der Werte” (“revaluación de los valores”), anun-ciar una nueva concepción del mundo que estaba en abierta oposición con la de la Iglesia33? Esto es una dramatización de los hechos que nada justifica. El amor que cantan es a menudo culpable a los ojos de la Iglesia; no hizo falta que llegaran los trovadores para descubrirlo, dado que hacía siglos que los confesores pasaban su tiempo absolvíendolas fal-

33 Ibid., 321.
tas. A falta de la naturaleza, Ovidio hubiera estado allí para recordar a los hombres las formas más bajas. La poesía *popular* francesa, anterior a la de los troveros, no deja por cierto de hablar del amor carnal y de cantarlo a su manera.\(^{34}\) Por de jarse arrastrar a simplificaciones de esta clase, se llega a estos gráficos esquemáticos de la historia donde unas veces la Edad Media es un período de puro ascetismo, otras, como es el caso aquí, el testigo de esta rebelión de la carne contra el espíritu que anuncia y prepara ya el Renacimiento. “En lugar del ascetismo, la alegría de vivir devino no solamente el derecho, sino el deber principal del hombre y de la mujer cultos.”\(^{35}\) Lo que nos ofrece en realidad como espectáculo el siglo XII, es el de una magnífica vitalidad, humana y mística a la vez; la poesía de los trovadores no señala la agonía de un ascetismo que expira, pues el ascetismo de san Bernardo llega al mundo al mismo tiempo que ella: si hubo un Renacimiento del siglo XII, es aquí el caso de no olvidar que “san Bernardo y su mula” forman parte de él tanto como los Trovadores. El amor cortés no se presenta de ninguna manera como una utilización de la mística, ni como una reacción dirigida contra el ascetismo en nombre del amor humano; colocado fuera de uno y otro, expresa más bien el esfuerzo de una sociedad pulida y afinada por siglos de Cristianismo, para elaborar un código del amor humano que no fuera ni místico ni tampoco específicamente cristiano, sino más refinado que la grosería de Ovidio y donde el sentimiento prevaleció sobre la sensualidad. Allí está, parece, su significado histórico propio. La sensualidad al servicio del sentimiento, y a veces los más exquisitos como en Jaufré Rudel, o incluso de la razón como en Chrétien

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\(^{35}\) Wechssler, *Das Kulturproblem des Minnesangs*, 321.
de Troyes es en sí un muy bello descubrimiento para que no se lo pueda atribuir sino a los trovadores y a los trovers sin que parezca desprenderlos.

No se debe pues hacer del amor cortés ni una rebelión contra un ascetismo que se desarrollaba al mismo tiempo que él, ni un intento por imitarlo. Es caer en esta segunda falta hablar de “ascetismo cortés,” como si esta expresión tuviera algún sentido. Todos los textos que se citan en su apoyo, muestran que los enamorados de la Edad Media sabían aguardar cuando las circunstancias los obligaban a ello, contentarse con lo que se les concedía e introducir una cierta moderación de buen gusto en sus deseos; pero el ascetismo es más que el régimen sano del amor carnal, es la lucha sin cuartel contra la concupiscencia bajo todas sus formas; no es él quien se contentaría, al renunciar a la carne, con ese “contacto pudoroso de la amante desnuda,” alabado por Andrés le Chapelain. “Höfliche Askese” (“ascesis cortesana”) es una fórmula que sería preferible no emplear. La de “castidad cortesana” no calza mejor si esta castidad se reduce a la idea sumamente simple de que un amor verdadero no se concilia con una multiplicidad de otros amores simultáneos. Castidad limitada, como se ve, y de la cual André le Chapelain dice, muy justamente esta vez, que el amor “hace al hombre como si estuviera adornado con la virtud de la castidad.” Este quasi (como) es de buena teología; en ninguna de estas expresiones hay imprudencia al aplicarlas.

36 Cohen, Chrétien de Troyes et son oeuvre, 223–225. Cohen nota (ibid., 223) aunque con reservas, las tendencias morales de la doctrina de Chrétien y la rehabilitación del matrimonio en su obra (ibid., 224). Se observará que la poesía de este amor cesa en “el aburguesamiento del matrimonio,” mientras que por el contrario, para el místico cisterciense, es en el matrimonio del alma con el Verbo donde la poesía alcanza su plena y durable exaltación. Esta moralización del amor cortés no lo reconcilia pues con la mística cisterciense, donde las bodas espirituales ignoran el aburguesamiento. Es incluso para evitarlo que quieren ser espirituales.

37 La expresión es de Wechssler, Das Kulturproblem des Minnesangs, 328.

38 Ibid., 335. Sobre la castidad limitada del amor cortés, 345–346.
¡A qué excesos de erudición no se han entregado, de los cuales un poco de reflexión los habría eximido! ¿Por qué comparar “el ojo del corazón” de los poetas cortesanos con el de los místicos? El primero no es más que el de la imaginación, y a veces la más sensual; mientras que el segundo se define por la exclusión de toda imagen sensible, de aquellas de la que es precisamente la función del primero proporcionándonoslas en ausencia de sus objetos. ¿Qué relación entre el ojo místico, que no se abre más que estando todas las imágenes apagadas, y el ojo del corazón, que guarda estas imágenes presentes para un amor carnal que alimentan39? Los poetas dicen que creen en su dama, o que esperan en ella, pero no hay más Fe o Esperanza que la Caridad que entonces no había. Ellos temen, pero ya hemos señalado que el amor cristiano tiene precisamente por efecto expulsar el temor, y en cuanto a la comparación de que el trovador implora favor a su dama, con el cristiano que pide a Dios su gracia, es entrar en un equívoco casi tan grave como aquel que consiste en comparar la virtud cristiana de la paciencia con aquella con la cual los trovadores estaban obligados a armarse.40 Para retomar una comparación clásica, no hay más relación entre estas nociones que entre el Can, constelación del firmamento, y el can, animal que ladra.

El amor cortés y la concepción cisterciense del amor místico son pues dos productos independientes de la civilización del siglo XII; nacidos en medios diferentes, expresan, uno codificando la concepción de la vida en un corazón principesco, el otro expresando la que se hacía de ella en un monasterio cisterciense. Sin duda, el lenguaje de uno puede haberse alimentado de términos tomados prestados del otro, pero como era preciso renunciar a uno de estos amores para abrazar al otro, uno no puede sorprenderse que ningún concepto definido sea común a ambos.

39 Ibid., 376.
40 Sobre la noción de gracia, ibid., 395–396. Sobre la paciencia, ibid., 394.
San Bernardo y el amor cortés

Cuando el amor cisterciense ha querido introducirse en la literatura profana, no pudo hacerlo más que sustituyendo al amor cortés, y expulsándolo. La *Quête du saint Graal*, anuncio de una caballería celestial, no pide sólo a la caballería terrenal moderarse y afinarse, sino renunciarse. San Bernardo puede haber contribuido ampliamente a la decadencia del ideal cortesano, [pero] no es él quien lo ha inspirado.

**Saint Bernard and Courtly Love**

**SUMMARY**

The author discusses the problem of whether there is any interrelation between Cistercian mysticism, in St. Bernard of Clairvaux’s time, and courtly love. He concludes that courtly love and the Cistercian conception of mystical love are two independent products of the civilization of the twelfth century. They express the different surroundings in which they were respectively born; the one codifying life as led in a princely court, and the other expressing what men make of it in a Cistercian monastery. Undoubtedly the vocabulary of the one might be helped out with terms borrowed from the other, but since it is necessary to renounce the one of these loves before embracing the other it is not to be wondered at that no definite concept exists that is common to both. When Cistercian love would enter into profane literature it could do so only by driving out courtly love and taking its place. St. Bernard, in turn, may have largely contributed to the decadence of the courtly ideal, but never in him could it have found its inspiration.

**KEYWORDS**

Bernard of Clairvaux, mysticism, monasticism, love, courtly love.

**REFERENCES**


Samuel Bendeck Sotillos

*Siena, City of the Virgin: Illustrated* by Titus Burckhardt

The Italian city of Siena—the City of the Virgin—is a remarkable jewel that reached the height of splendor during the Middle Ages. It is the home of St. Bernardino (1380–1444) and St. Catherine (1347–1380), is known for its architectural beauty and its religious devotion, and has been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The art historian and philosopher of religion Titus Burckhardt (1908–1984), who explores the city with us in this book, was one of the 20th century’s most renowned experts on sacred art.

Burckhardt informs us that this book is about the “destiny of a town in which the spiritual development of the Christian Western world from the Middle Ages up to the present day is exemplified.”¹ There are continual references in this work to the Holy Virgin, or Mary, the Mother of God, as “She represents a never-failing, indestructible source of maternal power to be found at one and the same time in the depths of the human soul and in the whole of the world itself.”² It was the lofty intellectual and spiritual ambiance of the Middle Ages that gave birth to

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the marvel that is Gothic architecture. This Gothic architecture has been impeccably preserved in Sienna. Burckhardt writes, “No other city has retained in equal measure the harmony and severe purity of the architecture of those times.”

Burckhardt was infused with the Platonic doctrine that “beauty is the splendor of the true,” providing a depth that transcends mere scholarly or theoretical approaches as it delves into the very nature of things and captures, as it were its transpersonal essence at the heart of all sapiential traditions:

In order to understand a culture, it is necessary to love it, and one can only do this on the basis of the universal and timeless values that it carries within it. These values . . . meet not only the physical, but also the spiritual needs of man; without them his life has no meaning. . . . Nothing brings us into such immediate contact with a given culture as a work of art which, within that culture, represents, as it were a “center.” This may be a sacred image, a temple, a cathedral. . . . Such works invariably express an essential quality, which neither a historical account, nor an analysis of social and economic conditions, can capture. A work of art . . . can, without any mental effort on our part, convey to us immediately and “existentially” an intellectual truth or a spiritual attitude, and thereby grant us all manner of insights into the nature of the culture concerned.

The interdependence of the human and the city is crucial, as Burckhardt recalls when he writes of “the true meaning of a civitas, a city, that derives its measure not from the machine age but from man, and its order from the spiritual outlook of a human community.” The correspondence between the human and the cosmos is akin to the transcendence and immanence of the Divine, as St. Catherine of Siena suggests when she compares the city to the image of the human soul:

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3 Ibid., 1.
4 Ibid., vii.
5 Ibid., 1.
[T]he city is the image of the soul, the surrounding walls being the frontier between the outward and the inward life. The gates are the faculties or senses connecting the life of the soul with the outer world. The intellect, according to the saint, questions each one who approaches the gates whether he be friend or foe, thus watching over the security of the city. Living springs of water rise within it; gardens lie protected by its walls, and in the centre, where beats the heart, stands the Holy Sanctuary.\(^6\)

Siena itself is like a “little universe” consisting of many facets representing the “body, soul, and spirit of Man.”\(^7\) This tripartite division includes both the human microcosm and the macrocosm. Through metaphysics, the principle of Unity that both transcends and includes diversity in all its degrees and modes can be known. Burckhardt writes:

Hierarchy is the Unity revealing itself in multiplicity through a differentiation which yet does not divide, being of a qualitative nature, so that each separate element, according to that particular character and rank that belongs to it, still remains an expression of the total order. In like manner light, broken up by a prism, scatters its manifold colours yet remains, despite all this store of wealth, a perfect and undivided whole.\(^8\)

The medieval world consisted of four social orders or castes made up of different psychological types to maintain its natural balance. These castes have, as Burckhardt clarifies, “nothing to do with different levels of wealth”\(^9\) or economic standing as is often erroneously assumed. The first is the priesthood, which “is the only calling which is not inherited, at least this is so in the Christian world. A man becomes a priest as a result of an inward ‘call’.”\(^10\) In contrast, the second, the nobility, “among whom leaders are chosen, is founded on con-

\(^6\) Ibid., 53.
\(^7\) Ibid., 1.
\(^8\) Ibid., 66.
\(^9\) Ibid., 30.
\(^10\) Ibid.
sciously purposeful character and on initiative.”\textsuperscript{11} The third consists of the “merchants, craftsmen, and independent peasants.”\textsuperscript{12} The fourth is largely made up “of those who by nature tend to place all their thought in bodily well-being, and who only by giving service are able to find a place in the great structure of social life.”\textsuperscript{13} These social orders correspond to the elements of fire, air, water, and earth.

The city is also the home of two remarkable medieval saints known to Western Christianity. In a state of spiritual ecstasy or union, St. Catherine of Siena heard from the actual mouth of Christ: “I am He who is and thou art she who is not.”\textsuperscript{14} It is through the Divine grace that we can know ourselves and the Godhead and find what Burckhardt calls our “own abiding reality”\textsuperscript{15} in divinis as “the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9).

St. Bernardino of Siena made devotion to the Name of Jesus accessible to everyone, especially through his use of the holy monogram consisting of the first three letters, “IHS,” of the Greek Name of Jesus. He expressed that “the Name of Jesus is Origin without origin” and that it is “as worthy of praise as God Himself,” and again: “Everything that God has done for the salvation of the world lies hidden in the Name of Jesus.”\textsuperscript{16} Burckhardt comments on St. Bernardino’s efforts to make this spiritual method of ejaculatory prayer, or invocation, available to all: “The holy man of Siena thus made one of the most inward treasures of contemplative tradition outward and popular, doing so deliberately with the object that for many, through its compelling power, it might become

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 54.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 83.
inward again.”\textsuperscript{17} The saints and sages of all of the world’s religions have a corresponding spiritual method, as Burckhardt notes: “Indeed, not only in Christianity but also in the mysticism of all other religions this concentration on a divine or on a divine-human Name . . . plays a significant part.”\textsuperscript{18}

Burckhardt explores the sacred art of the Christian tradition that was crystallized in the mediaeval world. He points not only to its rise in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, but also to the fall of Siena as it “suffered a decline during the Renaissance.”\textsuperscript{19} It was in the post-medieval world of the Renaissance that “art” became disconnected from the sacred, no longer reflecting the metaphysical principles of Christianity. He speaks to the impact that the loss of “the eye of the heart, that inward spiritual eye of the soul”\textsuperscript{20} had on the traditional world, as “Renaissance rationalism had . . . undermined the capacity of men’s souls to sense the imponderables of spiritual reality which a mere symbol is able to convey.”\textsuperscript{21}

This masterly book is stunningly illustrated and surveys the history, culture, and spirituality of the Italian city of Siena, known in the medieval world as the “City of the Virgin.” Burckhardt invites readers to immerse themselves in the architectural beauty and devotional splendor of this remarkable city through the medium of color photographs, maps, and reproductions of original manuscripts. Although years have passed since this volume was initially published, provoking readers to ponder its relevance for the present day, it has nonetheless endured and it is as relevant today as it will be tomorrow, as Burckhardt’s aim was to recover the essential principles underlying all sacred art, exemplify-

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}, 82.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid.}, 1.
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Ibid.}, 86.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Ibid.}, 88.
ing what is beyond emergent trends and passing fads. Burckhardt upheld the following wish for Siena: “It is therefore to be hoped that widespread interest will be aroused . . . so that help may be forthcoming to preserve one of the most beautiful monuments of Western culture from destruction before it is too late,”\(^{22}\) and yet he knew decisively that “My Kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36).

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*Siena, City of the Virgin: Illustrated*
*by Titus Burckhardt*

**SUMMARY**

Siena, Italy—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—was the home of St. Bernardino and St. Catherine and is known for its architectural beauty and its religious devotion, particularly to the Virgin Mary. Siena was regarded in the medieval era as “The City of the Virgin.” The art historian and philosopher of religion Titus Burckhardt (1908–1984), who explores the city with the reader of this book, was one of the 20th century’s most renowned experts on sacred art. The interdependence of the human and the city is crucial, as it is akin to the correspondence between the human and the cosmos or the transcendence and immanence of the Divine. St. Catherine of Siena compares the city to the image of the human soul. Siena itself is like a “little universe” with many facets representing the tripartite structure of the human being, consisting of Spirit, soul, and body. This masterly book is stunningly illustrated and surveys the history, culture, and spirituality of the Italian city of Siena, which provides the metaphysical keys to comprehend at its deepest roots the architectural beauty and devotional splendor of this remarkable city.

**KEYWORDS**

St. Catherine of Siena, Siena, metaphysics, mysticism, religion, Christianity, Catholicism, sacred art, art history.

**REFERENCES**


\(^{22}\) Ibid., 123.
Developing Distinctions of Classical Principles for Modern Constitutions: *Integralism: A Manual of Political Philosophy* by Fr. Thomas Crean and Alan Fimister

Father Thomas Crean and Alan Fimister have produced a comprehensive yet concise treatise on classical political and legal philosophy.¹ As the title implies the hallmark of their approach is that jurisprudence, political philosophy, moral philosophy, and theology are not separate disciplines but integrally related. Their exposition and arguments move seamlessly among theology, philosophy, and jurisprudence. It is representative in this respect of the Thomistic tradition in which one finds St. Thomas Aquinas’s discussion of law in the middle of his *Summa Theologiae.*² As J. Budziszewski has pointed out, “All of the limbs of the *Summa Theologiae* are interconnected, and the *Treatise on Law* is no exception.”³

Within the great *Summa*, the discussion of law is within the second part which is dedicated to the discussion of morality.\(^4\) In addition to placing the discussion of law within the part dedicated to morality, St. Thomas places the topic of jurisprudence immediately before the section discussing God’s grace.\(^5\) Law is comprehensible only in the context of morality and theology. In contrast, modern Legal Positivists such as H. L. A. Hart maintain that law is divided from morality.\(^6\) Even modern natural law jurists, such as Michael S. Moore and John Finnis, who accept a connection between law and morality argue that law can be separated from theology.\(^7\) Crean and Fimister make clear they reject the divisions among these disciplines. At the outset they explain: “Political philosophy is . . . a branch of moral philosophy” and moral philosophy “must be instructed by divine revelation.”\(^8\) Budziszewski agrees that to separate law “from its broader context is to make it unintelligible, because human law cannot pull itself up by its own efforts. It hangs like a chandelier from something higher.”\(^9\) He goes on to argue that “[j]ust as law is not the first word about man, so it is not the last.”\(^10\)

The second characteristic of Crean and Fimister’s work is how they interweave within a classical reading of Aristotle and St. Thomas several intriguing developments of the classical principles.

\(^4\) *Ibid.*.
\(^5\) See *ibid.*, xxiii.
\(^9\) Budziszewski, *Commentary on Thomas Aquinas’s Treatise on Law*, xxi.
Types of Human Societies

The traditional understanding of different types of human societies derives from Aristotle. Aristotle defined a political community as a “human association . . . instituted for the sake of obtaining some good.”11 Communities are different from “a mere multitude of men,” in that a political community is “bound together by a particular agreement, looking toward a particular end, and existing under a particular head.”12 Crean and Fimister would agree. They define a society as “a union of intelligent beings acting for an end.”13

According to the Aristotelian/Thomist tradition, communities can be either perfect14 or imperfect.15 A perfect community possesses both the perfect or most complete end as well as the complete means of attaining such an end.16 In a word, the perfect community is completely self-sufficient.17 A community which aims at a complete good and thus incorporates the goods of all lesser communities is this perfect commu-

13 Crean & Fimister, Integralism, 11.
14 In this context, “perfect” is used in a precise sense to mean complete or fulfilled and not necessarily good or virtuous. See Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, “Paradoxes of Perfection,” Dialectics and Humanism 7, no. 1 (1980): 77–78 (contrasting the Aristotelian notion of perfection as “complete,” “finished,” or “flawless” with a paradoxical view of perfection as “ceaseless improvement”).
15 Suárez, On Laws and God the Lawgiver, 86.
17 Suárez, On Laws and God the Lawgiver, 86.
The name of this perfect community varies from age to age and author to author. Aristotle referred to the *polis* or “city-state.” Aquinas varyingly refers to the perfect community as the *civitas* (city), *regnum* (kingdom), and *provincia* (province). Suárez uses the term *civitas* when referring to Aristotle’s perfect community. Crean and Fimister share this distinction between perfect and imperfect community as well as the definition of each. The perfect community is comprised of a variety of different imperfect communities, such as families, households, villages, etc. Each of these associations share a common end, but each is only to some extent self-sufficient and thus imperfect. The family’s purpose is to provide the basic nourishments of life for one household and the begetting of children. The village aims at the necessities for

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18 Aquinas, *Aristotle’s Politics*, bk. I, ch. 1, 4: “And the association that is supreme and includes all other associations is the absolutely supreme good.”


23 See Aquinas, *Aristotle’s Politics*, bk. I, ch. 1, 5 (showing how the union of men and women combine to form households, and households combine to form villages, and villages unite to form the political community); see also *ibid.*, 2 (stating that “since there are indeed different grades and orders of these associations, the ultimate association is the political community directed to the things self-sufficient for human life”). Aristotle continues by proposing “the true relation of other associations to the political community. . . . First, he explains the association of one person to another. Second, he explains the association of the household, which includes different associations of persons. Third, he explains the association of the village, which includes many households.” *Ibid.*, bk. I, ch. 1, 9; Aquinas, *De Regno*, bk. I, ch. 1, 9 (containing the same list of family, household, and city).


25 *Ibid*.

26 The term *vicus* translated “village” has an economic overtone more than the modern word neighborhood or village, as can be seen when Aquinas says that a village is self-sufficient with respect to “a particular trade or calling.” *Ibid*. Elsewhere, Aquinas refers to the fact that in many Medieval towns, streets or sections of a town were divided on the basis of occupation, as evidenced when he says “in one [vicus] smiths practice their
a particular trade or profession. The perfect community, city, or province has the aim of achieving all the necessities of human life and defense against external danger. Each imperfect community aims to an aspect of the complete good but does not encompass all of that complete good, the good life, or human happiness; they are parts of a whole.

St. Thomas recognized the greatest human political community (whether identified as a polis, province, or empire) as a perfect community on the natural level. For example, in commenting on Aristotle he teaches: “the perfect association . . . is the political community, now complete, having a self-sufficient end . . . Therefore, the political community was instituted for the sake of protecting life and exists to promote the good life.” He agrees that Aristotle taught that “the good to which the political community is directed is the supreme human good.” In his political work, De Regno, St. Thomas confirms that “the man ruling a perfect community, i.e. a city or a province, is antonomastically called the king.” Although St. Thomas never uses the term perfect society in reference to the Church, later writers claimed that the Church was a perfect society as it pursued a complete supernatural end, eternal beatitude, and was self-sufficient in pursuing that end.

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(References for details.)
though St. Thomas never drew this conclusion explicitly, he would likely easily accept the conclusion.

Crean and Fimister go beyond the extension of the Aristotelian term to the Church and argue that only the Church and not the polis meet the Aristotelian definition of a perfect community.\(^{33}\) They argue that

Temporal society, meaning by this phrase, “the widest community generated by nature,” does not contain within itself all the means needed to obtain its end, as a perfect community must. Even in a hypothetical community of pure nature, man’s perfect society would be a “church” . . . but for fallen man, called to a supernatural end, temporal society is much less competent to be a perfect society in the strict sense of the term. Hence only the Catholic Church is properly speaking and intrinsically a perfect society.\(^ {34}\)

Their argument is two-fold. First, since its end, beatitude, is supernatural then its end is more perfect than temporal society whose end is merely natural happiness. Secondly, they argue that the polis is not self-sufficient even with respect to its own natural end and that after the fall to original sin, people cannot even attain their natural end without the Church.\(^ {35}\) According to their argument, only Christendom, or to use the Augustinian term the City of God, is a perfect society.

It is clear that Aquinas never argued that the temporal political community is not a perfect society (in fact as previously noted he refers to it as a perfect community in several writings), it is true that he argues that man cannot even attain his natural end (the common good of the temporal sphere) “without divine assistance.”\(^ {36}\) It is possible therefore to argue that St. Thomas could accept Crean and Fimister’s conclusion

\(^{36}\) *S.Th.*, I–II, q. 62, a. 1.
that strictly speaking temporal civil society is not a perfect society since it is not completely self-sufficient.

Crean and Fimister do draw two important distinctions when making this claim that temporal civil society is not a perfect society. More precisely they claim that it is not intrinsically perfect but can become extrinsically perfect when a temporal society is incorporated with the Church into Christendom. They explain:

*Within* the one perfect society, we can speak of a temporal society or commonwealth which is made up of the same members, and hence is materially co-extensive with the Church, though formally distinct from her. This temporal society is Christendom and the realms of which it is composed. These may be described as extrinsically perfect societies, in that as long as the Church resides within them with the fullness of her rights, they possess perfection; but it is a perfection which in order to possess they must submit to the higher power which transcends them.\(^{37}\)

Thus, the polis or nation can become a perfect society (in the sense used by Aristotle and St. Thomas) if it enters into communion with the Church within Christendom. It does not possess in and of itself perfection but is potentially perfect. Their conclusion would be supported by St. Augustine’s analysis that even the mighty Roman Empire was not a true commonwealth as it was not oriented to the true God.\(^{38}\) Crean and Fimister claim that any temporal society established outside Christendom is not “strictly speaking . . . legitimate” or “in accordance with law.”\(^{39}\) Nonetheless, such a society is “in a certain respect” legitimate because its rulers do have a “right and duty to wield” legal authority that should be obeyed.\(^{40}\)

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\(^{39}\) Crean & Fimister, *Integralism*, supra note 80.

\(^{40}\) *Ibid.*
The second distinction they draw is to clarify that even if the
temporal civil society is not intrinsically perfect and if it is withdrawn
from Christendom and thus not even extrinsically perfect, it still pos-
sesses authority which, when legitimately exercised, must be respected.

They explain that God created within human nature the ability
for a man and a woman to form a particular type of society that “will
possess a nature and properties fixed independently of their wills,” that
is called the family.\textsuperscript{41} Likewise they explain that God created within
natural law “the duty and hence the power to unite with other families
into a new society.”\textsuperscript{42} This new society, temporal or civil society, is like
the family a thing “with a definite nature and properties independent of
the wills of its members.”\textsuperscript{43} When families so unite as families, natural
law as designed by God will bring this specific type of union into be-
ing. One of these fixed properties of civil society is authority that comes
from God.\textsuperscript{44} Since civil society has been created by God as a definite
thing that can be brought into being by families, it can be established
naturally outside Christendom even if it remains imperfect. This type of
temporal realm “confers a right to command and obey.”\textsuperscript{45} Yet, until in-
corporated into Christendom this authority is “dislocated” and instituted
“only provisionally” until fully instituted by the spiritual power.\textsuperscript{46} Thus,
although they deny the status of a perfect society to any temporal soci-
ety outside Christendom, they recognize such nations as possessing le-
gal authority, even if it lacks permanent institution. Even the Church
who waits to accept such nations into Christendom and properly insti-
tute their authority, recognizes provisionally their rulers and laws (to

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 84.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 85.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 87–88.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 90.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
the extent they are just). She cannot intervene in the affairs of nations outside Christendom to exercise her spiritual authority to the extent that she can with Christian nations. Crean and Fimister’s position is quite nuanced. Although they deny the status of perfect society to nations outside Christendom and although they consider legal authority constituted in them only provisionally, they maintain that this status does not undermine the exercise of legal authority or the obligation of citizens to obey just uses of it. Since legal authority and the obligation to obey it are natural, as created by God, and can be established, at least provisionally, by families, then the union they establish will possess the property of authority. In this way they are able to balance the traditional claim that ultimately all men and societies are called to submit to the reign of Christ the King while preserving due respect for legal authority in the circumstances in which most nations exist in our time. In this way they preserve the traditional principles while explicating a workable political and legal theory for a world that has almost universally rejected incorporation into Christendom.

Social Contract Theory

Although on the surface, Crean and Fimister’s theory of the origins of civil authority may seem similar to social contract theory, it differs in three key respects. First, they maintain that although any particular civil society is brought into existence by the voluntary union of families, civil society itself has been created by God not by families that so unite. As such civil society is not an artificial invention of human beings out of necessity to escape some worse state. It is natural. Secondly, their explanation of the origins of civil society are rooted not in the in-

48 See Ibid., 84–86.
dividual who bands together with other individuals to form society, but in families. The family thus precedes society in the order of being.\(^{49}\)

They also solve one of the major problems in the consent theory of authority—how does the consent of the founding members of a society bind future generations to the society formed? As they explain, the difference is that civil society although formed by the voluntary union of families is not a voluntary but a necessary society. Societies formed for “collecting stamps or mining coal” are not complete unions but formed merely for contingent objectives.\(^{50}\) Marriage and civil society are necessary unions that involve a union not for a contingent end but a union as such. Once formed by the voluntary act of the husband and wife or founding families, the society created, marriage or civil society respectively, has a fixed nature that no longer depends upon the continued consent of those who formed it. As they explain, those who govern a constituted nation do “not depend on the continued consent of the subject, just as the husband’s authority over his wife does not depend on his wife’s continued consent to it.”\(^{51}\) Once formed by voluntary consent, a marriage and civil society are brought into being and have in a certain sense a life of their own.

### Constraints on Legal Authority

Yet, this lack of dependence upon the continued consent of the governed does not create a totalitarian system. Although the legitimacy of any form of government is not dependent upon the continued consent of the citizens after it is formed by the consent of founding families, the exercise of that legitimate authority is constrained. First, the authority to make laws is circumscribed by the natural law and justice. Lawmak-

\(^{49}\) See \textit{ibid.}, 86; see also \textit{ibid.}, 40–63.

\(^{50}\) See \textit{ibid.}, 84.

\(^{51}\) \textit{Ibid.}, 85.
ers may only make just laws and unjust laws are not laws but acts of violence.\textsuperscript{52} This claim begs the question: who has the authority to determine if any particular law is unjust and thus no law? Crean and Fimister answer this question in another way that preserves the rights claimed by the Church and acknowledges the current reality in which the Church may not be able to exercise those rights. They argue that “the right to judge and to declare when a civil law, because it transgresses the natural or divine law, is null and void belongs of right to the spiritual power” but if “no definitive judgment is forthcoming from the spiritual power . . . each man must follow his conscience in this regard.”\textsuperscript{53} Although they maintain that within Christendom the Church has the authority to declare unjust laws null and void, with respect to a nation outside of Christendom they summarize the role of the Church thus: “When an unjust law is passed, the Church does not, outside Christendom, annul it though she may condemn it; and if it obliges citizens to unjust actions, she teaches that it does not bind in conscience and must not be obeyed.”\textsuperscript{54} This explanation contains an interesting ambiguity that they do not resolve. They state that the Church “does not” annul a law in this context but do not say “cannot.” It is unclear if they maintain that in theory the Church can so annul a law and merely does not out of prudence (since it would likely be ignored). Given some of their arguments about the removal of tyrants I think it possible they do maintain this position.

Crean and Fimister draw an important theological distinction with respect to this legal authority to decide the legitimacy of potentially unjust laws. They make clear that such determinations by the Church “do not have the degree of infallibility that belong to doctrinal

\textsuperscript{52} See \textit{ibid.}, 122–136.
\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Ibid.}, 131.
\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Ibid.}, 224.
questions.” 55 Thus, if a citizen or governor determines, in good faith after having given due respect to the judgment of the spiritual power on this matter, that this judgment is “erroneous or imprudent,” such person must ultimately follow his informed conscience on this matter even if doing so involves suffering penalties. 56 This distinction is very significant when considering the topic of human law. When human law attempts to enact a principle of natural law into the positive law to reinforce that principle’s importance, the Church’s judgment on the content of the natural law precept would be of a more doctrinal nature and thus more likely to rely on infallibility. In cases in which the human law merely attempts to determine in more specificity an application of natural law to the contingent matter of a society, judgments as to the injustice of such a law are not so protected. 57 Most laws are of the latter sort and thus it would be in more rare circumstances in which the Church could infallibly declare a law unjust. Examples would include a law compelling one to offer sacrifice to false gods or declaring a universal right to procure an abortion.

The next constraint upon the exercise of legitimate legal authority relates to its usurpation. Although legal authority as such, once constituted, does not rely on continued consent for its legitimacy, citizens may resist the usurpation of that legitimate authority by one who unjustly seizes it from the one entitled to exercise it. 58 Once again in this section, Crean and Fimister demonstrate their ability to maintain a very nuanced balance between preserving principles and recognizing practical political realities. They maintain that a usurper’s de facto control of political power can never legitimate their unlawful usurpation “for that

55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 For a further explanation of these two types of human laws, repetition of natural law precepts and determinations, see McCall, The Architecture of Law, ch. 6.
58 See Crean & Fimister, Integralism, 98–100.
would make of theft a title of ownership.” Yet, if the legitimate holder of legal authority who has been usurped “abdicates or when it ceases to be probable that the good of conflict would outweigh the evil,” Crean and Fimister introduce at such junction a form of consent that can legitimize the de facto government. They claim that upon either of the aforementioned conditions prevailing, the civil society is dissolved resulting in the ability of families “or a body speaking in their name” to reconstitute a new constitution of society and install the former usurper into the office of legal authority. Although continuous consent is not needed to sustain a constituted society, consent (either directly or indirectly) is necessary to reconstitute a society if it is dissolved due to unresisted usurpation. This nuanced approach provides a method to maintain the principle that usurpation never confers legitimate title to authority as well as provides a practical solution to historical realities in which usurped authority persists over time.

Finally, Crean and Fimister place one final constraint upon legal authority. A governor who goes beyond adopting an isolated law that is unjust and becomes a tyrant may be removed legitimately from office. They define a tyrant as one “habitually manifesting his intention not to govern for the good.” They use the concept of habitual intention to distinguish a tyrant from an inept ruler. One may make unjust laws unintentionally through incompetence or manipulation by others. Yet, one becomes a tyrant by virtue of a habitual intention to make such unjust laws. Their definition is an interesting twist on St. Thomas’s definition of a tyrant as one who “seeks his own benefit from his rule and not the good of the multitude subject to him.” Although very similar, Crean and Fimister’s definition has the advantage of capturing a bad ruler who

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59 Ibid., 99.
60 See ibid.
61 See ibid., 95.
62 Aquinas, De Regno, bk. 11, ch. 2.
habitually seeks to govern in a way that harms the common good of the nation but who may not intend to benefit himself thereby. It may in this sense capture a purely malicious ruler who knows that such bad government is actually contrary to his personal interest but who intends such destructive rule.

In dealing with a tyrant, Crean and Fimister once again demonstrate their ability to express a nuanced solution. They make clear that a tyrant “no longer has the right to use” legitimate legal authority and that authority may be transferred from the tyrant to others. Yet, a tyrant who is not a usurper does not result in the dissolution of the civil society which remains constituted. Therefore, individual citizens or families are not free to force an extra-constitutional transfer of power from the tyrant because the one who displaces the tyrant “must have authority over the one displaced.” Since authority is not conferred from below but from above, those ruled by a legitimately installed but tyrannical ruler lack the authority to remove the tyrant. Who then can do so? The answer depends upon whether the nation has submitted to the rightful jurisdiction of the Church. In Christendom, the spiritual authority can remove the authority from one who obstinately persists in abusing it and transfer it to another. Although their discussion seems to imply that outside Christendom the Church may still in theory have this ability, they acknowledge that in such a state some of the powers of the Church “lapse” and “others become unusable in practice.” In this case in which the spiritual power does not or cannot act to transfer authority, it “may be done by those who, though not the sovereign, have by their office some duty of care for the whole commonwealth.”

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64 Ibid.
65 See *ibid.*, 230.
66 Ibid., 234.
67 Ibid., 96.
of whom may fit this definition in a particular nation depends upon the constitution of the nation but would have to be the “most authoritative non-tyrannical body within the society”\(^{68}\) and could include a parliament, court, or even the military.

**Refining the Classification of Regime Types**

In addition to adding new distinctions to the traditional analysis of tyrants and usurpers, Crean and Fimister also add some new distinctions to the traditional Aristotelian categorization of Constitutional regime types. They begin by recapitulating the three divisions of legitimate constitutions (monarchy, aristocracy, and timocracy) and their deviations (tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy).\(^{69}\) After considering several different interpretations of Aristotle’s principle of distinction among these forms, they conclude that it is the extent to which “the ruling element governs the society independently of the governed.”\(^ {70}\) Traditionally Aristotle and St. Thomas have been read to identify the number of rulers (one, few, or many) as the point of distinction, but Crean and Fimister argue that this is merely a material or circumstantial distinction.\(^ {71}\) They claim their principle of distinction constitutes a formal distinction.\(^ {72}\) In addition to the three pure forms of constitution, St. Thomas argues that the best form of constitution is one that mixes the three pure forms (there is a mixture of some rule by one, some by a few, and some rule by the citizens).\(^ {73}\) They next explain how St. Robert Bellarmine identified seven different types of a mixed polity—one that

\(^{68}\) Ibid., 98.

\(^{69}\) See ibid., 146.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., 147.

\(^{71}\) See ibid., 148.

\(^{72}\) Ibid.

\(^{73}\) See S.Th., I–II, q. 105, a. 1.
mixes all three types and six different combinations of any two of them.\footnote{Crean & Fimister, \textit{Integralism}, 150.} They use Bellarmine’s analysis to refute Thomas Hobbes’s claim that there cannot be a mixed constitution, and what appears to be mixed is really one of the other forms.\footnote{Ibid., 151.} In doing so, Crean and Fimister identify more permutations than Bellarmine; they identify 12 permutations of a mixed form. They argue that a polity has a formal element that identifies it most with one of the three basic forms but then introduces secondary elements of one or more of the other forms to create a unique composite form.\footnote{Ibid., 152.} The variations within each of the three forms derive from differences in the power to propose or approve laws and whether the body that proposes laws is elected by few or many citizens or not elected at all.\footnote{Ibid., 152–153.} The polity is characterized formally as a mixed monarchy, aristocracy, or timocracy depending on whether one, few, or many have the ultimate authority to approve proposed laws. The four variations within each formal form derive from the nature of bodies that can propose laws for approval by the dominant authority and whether that constitutional organ is elected or not.\footnote{Ibid.} Crean and Fimister’s approach not only adds more granularity to the traditional analysis, it also makes it more relevant to a twenty-first century constitutional law context. Unlike at the time of Aristotle and even St. Thomas, the modern administrative state is more complex in its constitutional structure and it is difficult if not impossible to identify any pure forms of constitutions. The complexity of modern constitutional law is better explained by their 12 variations of mixed regimes than by the classical three or four categories. Their distinctions have the advantage of permitting more precision in the description of constitutional structures while preserving the con-
cept of a dominant form within a constitution (monarchial, aristocratic, or timocracy) that helps to describe the dominant feature.

**Separation of Powers**

One additional benefit of their more refined categorization is that it improves their discussion of a related topic: the separation of powers. Montesquieu popularized the idea that the legislative, executive, and judicial powers needed to be separated within a constitution among different people. He summarizes his argument thus: “There would be an end to everything were the same man, or the same body, whether of the nobles or of the people, to exercise those three powers, that of enacting laws, that of executing the public resolutions, and of trying the causes of individuals.”

As with the categorization of polities they offer a traditionally based but more nuanced discussion of the topic. Crean and Fimister define the three powers of the sovereign—legislative, executive, and judicial—in terms of the relation of each power to the natural law. They identify the legislative power with the authority to make particular determinations of natural law precepts. They associate the power to derive by the use of human reason and not human determination, principles from natural law to resolve particular cases with the judicial power. Finally the associate with the power to take practical actions to achieve the goods identified by the precepts of natural law with the executive. Although their definitions of the three powers are similar in some respects to those of Montesquieu and although he makes refer-

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81 Ibid., 93.
82 Ibid.
ence to natural law, Crean and Fimister connect these three aspects of sovereignty to three ways human political action can relate to the natural law—determination, deduction, and action. This distinction adds clarity to the discussion of the need or desirability to separate them. Although they concede that some separation among those who exercise these three powers as a “safeguard to corruption,” they argue that a complete separation “seems impossible in practice and unnecessary in principle.” 83 They argue that there is a practical benefit to have those who must administer and judge the laws participate to some extent in the crafting of the law they must administer or judge in application. By connecting the powers to a common font, natural law, they gain the insight that these powers although distinct are inherently connected and therefore impossible and unreasonable to separate completely in their use. The partial separation of powers to avoid corruption is understood as a consequence of both human finitude and sin. They point out that Christ, who is not restricted by either of these, unites all three powers in himself.

**Conclusion**

This new book therefore contains both a concise but precise summation of traditional Aristotelian/Thomist political and legal philosophy while also introducing several interesting distinctions and interpretations of traditional concepts and categories. Their insightful distinctions in many ways adapt traditional doctrine to the complexities of twentieth century constitutional realities. In particular they balance preserving the immutable rights of the Church in theory and the practical reality in which the Church finds herself today in which many of those rights are impossible to exercise.

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Developing Distinctions of Classical Principles for Modern Constitutions: 
*Integralism: A Manual of Political Philosophy*
by Fr. Thomas Crean and Alan Fimister

SUMMARY

Father Thomas Crean and Alan Fimister have produced a comprehensive yet concise treatise on classical political and legal philosophy in *Integralism: A Manual of Political Philosophy*. As the title implies the hallmark of their approach is that jurisprudence, political philosophy, moral philosophy, and theology are not separate disciplines but integrally related. Their exposition and arguments move seamlessly among theology, philosophy, and jurisprudence. The second characteristic of Crean and Fimister’s work is how they interweave within a classical reading of Aristotle and St. Thomas several intriguing developments of the classical principles. They advance interesting distinctions and developments with respect to: whether civil nations can be perfect societies; the role of the Church in declaring a human law null and void under natural law; the removal of tyrants and usurpers; the classification of constitutional regimes, and separation of powers.

KEYWORDS

natural law, regime types, usurpers, tyrants, christendom, relation of Church and state, integralism.

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Brian Welter

The Heart of Culture
by Habiger Institute for Catholic Leadership*

This simple yet hopeful book, the outcome of the work of the University of St. Thomas, Minnesota, Catholic Studies program, provides readers with an overview of the productive fusion of Greek thought with the truth of the Catholic faith. A wide range of readers will benefit from The Heart of Culture, including university students, teachers, and parents. The authors take a chronological view of western education, starting by describing Greek paideia and showing its universalistic vision. The ancient Greeks saw their search for the truth as relevant to all of the cosmos, which centuries later would fit into the Biblical worldview.

The authors stress that what we need today to correct grave errors in western education is not a specific plan of action, but a set of principles. A given plan or teaching platform, likely due to technology, may need to change. Such change can be good or even desirable, but we must remain faithful to the essential principles of western education. These principles include the cultivation of wisdom and virtue.

The Heart of Culture asserts the vital role of rootedness for the soul’s growth. Education is a religious endeavor because it concerns the development of the soul:

The implications of the Incarnation for Catholic education are far-reaching. The Incarnation seeks the dialogue and, ultimately, the complementarity of faith and reason. This entails a generous interdisciplinary engagement of an incarnational faith with literature, math, philosophy, sciences, politics, history, economics, and the fine arts. It is the reason the Catholic Church started schools and universities and not Bible schools or only seminaries.\(^1\)

Christian education encompasses all of the teaching and learning process because it addresses the whole human person and all of society.

Over time, ancient Greek paideia developed many concerns that Christians would come to share, including a focus on personhood. The authors describe this process in easily-grasped ways:

In a process similar to the way the chivalric ideal of the medieval knight was transformed into the ideal of the courtly gentleman, the Greek understanding of arete underwent a change away from military training alone toward the formation of the ideal person in whatever walk of life. The point of education for the Greeks was increasingly the full development of all human faculties such that they resulted in a harmonious whole.\(^2\)

The Heart of Culture traces the remarkable consistency of this movement from ancient times onward, greatly buttressed and enriched by the Christian appropriation of paideia. Early Church fathers such as Justin Martyr and Augustine showed how paideia could take on a Christian perspective. A more thorough description of this vital period in the history of the relationship between Greek thought and Christianity would have clarified even more the relationship between Athens and Jerusalem. The authors nonetheless show how across many centuries and territories, paideia never lost its founding principles. Christendom added

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1 Habiger Institute for Catholic Leadership, The Heart of Culture, iv.
2 Ibid., 13–14.
and deepened its application and understanding of these principles. A concern for the whole person and for more than material success marked western education and fashioned a dynamic mentality.

This dynamism meant that western education saw several renaissances, all of which looked back to the original *paideia*, though each in distinct ways. The three great renaissances in the eighth, twelfth, and fifteenth centuries, all of which remained faithful to the founding principles of western education, contributed to European education each in unique ways: “The Medievals were consumed by an increasing desire for knowledge and especially for the ordering of all knowledge into systematic form.”\(^3\) *The Heart of Culture* insightfully notes that the Carolingian renaissance focused on grammar, the twelfth century on logic, and the last on rhetoric, corresponding to the *trivium* which along with the mathematics-oriented *quadri
duum* constituted the base educational curriculum of the Middle Ages. More on these two educational paths would have buttressed the argument by shedding light on their holistic nature, which included both the study of the cosmos and reflection on metaphysical and Biblical principles.

The authors trace the dynamic nature of western education and philosophy well, including revolutionary changes in modern times. “Having mastered the three arts of the *trivium*, Europeans after the Renaissance would turn more decisively to . . . the *quadri
duum*,” that is, a focus on math and natural science.\(^4\) It was not this fresh focus per se that sparked deep change, but instead the Enlightenment’s antipathy for Christianity, which *The Heart of Culture* covers well. While Christendom had maintained the relationship between faith and reason at the heart of religious belief and educational practice for centuries, the Enlightenment managed to pull these apart. The authors portray the result-

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\(^3\) Ibid., 46.

\(^4\) Ibid., 61.
ing confusion and chaos well: The French, led by the mathematicians Descartes and Condorcet, generally prized reason, while the Germans and Jean Jacques Rousseau generally favored sentiment above all else. One side chose reason, the other faith in emotion, in other words.

Another closely related issue was at stake:

For advocates of a Graeco-Christian culture of *paideia*, emphasis on the maintenance of their tradition was not simply a matter of preferring what was familiar or what was ancient; it was understood as keeping hold of what was perennially true, even if those truths needed continual reformulation to maintain their continuity. Hence the repeated “renaissances,” retranslations of perennial realities into the social idiom of each age. But for the Enlighteners, the past was no good guide to the present; in fact, it was almost certainly a bad guide. Humanity had now grown up.\(^5\)

The Enlightenment presents a grave and enduring challenge to western education, in other words, not only because of the resulting confusion, but because of the desire to wipe the slate clean of all Christian influence.

The juxtaposition of progressive educational reformers Heinrich Pestalozzi and John Dewey with the traditionalists Jean Baptiste de la Salle and John Henry Newman helps readers understand the educational *Kulturkampf* in which we still find ourselves. The analysis of the underlying objectives and nature of the social sciences helpfully reveals their danger to traditional education and even to the faith. The social sciences are “less departments of strictly scientific exploration than expressions of a social movement with a guiding theology and an accompanying set of definitive moral norms.”\(^6\) They directly challenge Christianity and traditional education. For the American Dewey, a Darwinist, “education was to be understood not as the passing of a set body of wisdom or truth, but as the process by which an individual learns to


adapt to his or her environment.” By the end of the chapter, readers have a clear sense that the progressive versus traditional educational battle is really a spiritual battle.

_The Heart of Culture_ ends with hope. It outlines Newman’s vision of a university, particularly the humanizing role of the colleges. They not only became homes away from home, but also checked student pride. They hearken back to the religious roots of the university: “The Church, seated in the college communities, provided the spiritual, moral, and relational context necessary for the university to accomplish its purpose.” That purpose is ultimately religious and metaphysical. Thus Jonathan Reyes in the Afterword cites Pope Benedict’s famous observation: The “encounter between the Biblical message and Greek thought did not happen by chance.” Reyes observes with hope that the world has become fatigued of the strictly materialist, anti-religious, anti-traditionalist nature of education. People are searching for the truth. This means that despite the Enlightenment’s seeming takeover of the classroom, we must work diligently to make the best of current opportunities.

Readers will come away inspired by the possibilities that an education based on the truth can bring. Renewal and growth of the person will prompt corresponding renewal and growth in faith, families, and society. The authors do not want a rerun of the Middle Ages. Given the dynamic nature of western education, we can hope for something even more imaginative and productive.

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7 _Ibid._, 91.
8 _Ibid._, 112.
The Heart of Culture
by Habiger Institute for Catholic Leadership

SUMMARY
This paper is a review of the book: Habiger Institute for Catholic Leadership, The Heart of Culture (Providence, R.I.: Cluny, 2020). The author highlights that the book (1) takes a chronological view of western education, beginning from its roots in ancient Greece, through its development by Christianity, up to its present crisis, and (2) stresses that what western education needs today to correct its errors is not a specific plan of action, but a set of principles, including the cultivation of wisdom and virtue.

KEYWORDS
Habiger Institute for Catholic Leadership, culture, western education, paideia, Christianity, person, wisdom, virtue.

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