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General Editor's Foreword

It is a great pleasure for me, as I begin my seventh year as Head of Department, to welcome this latest edition of *Maynooth Philosophical Papers*.

Once again, MPP highlights something of the very active research interests of some members of the Department. My thanks as General Editor are due to Mette Lebech as Issue Editor for this volume.

I take this opportunity to thank all colleagues for the constant work they put in, their constant support of me in my role, all of which makes the Department of Philosophy at Maynooth University so successful in so many areas.

Recent changes to both the Undergraduate and Postgraduate curriculum are already beginning to bear fruit in terms of increased student numbers and increased student satisfaction. While retaining the essential core of the philosophical programme, new degrees such as the BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) and the BSc in Computational Thinking, together with new modules, have helped us to begin to reach my stated objective of increasing choice and diversity.

With regard to the Department's recent very successful lecture and roundtable discussion at the Royal Irish Academy in conjunction with the President of Ireland's Ethics Initiative, Prof Philip Nolan commented that the event was "Provocative and Intellectually Rigorous". It would be an apt motto for our Department!

Michael W Dunne, October 23, 2014.

Issue Editor's Introduction

The 2013 issue of *Maynooth Philosophical Papers* presents five papers reflecting research conducted in and associated with the Department of Philosophy in Maynooth: one article by an invited speaker, one by a post graduate student and three by members of staff. Some themes (re-)emerge as presenting a focus of interest for the Department: the history of philosophy, in particular the medieval, renaissance and early modern periods; the different modern interpretations of scholasticism; its reinterpretation necessitated by experimental natural philosophy; phenomenology; continental philosophy, and moral philosophy. Traditions may be much like the river into which Heraclitus claimed one could never step twice: the water of practice forms a bed in which it flows until the bed finds a different course.

The paper by Amos Edelheit on the method and practice in renaissance philosophy exemplified with the concept of 'conscience' is illustrating the changes in the methods and practices that happened during the period of the Renaissance, and which makes it possible to speak of 'Renaissance Philosophy'. Edelheit identifies subtle changes in the concept of 'Conscience' in Antoninus Pierozzi (1389-1459), Giovanni Caroli (1428-1503) and Nicolaus de Mirabilibus (d. 1495) compared with the high scholasticism of Thomas Aquinas. My own paper on Edith Stein's Thomism traces the development of Stein's engagement with Thomas Aquinas, and attempts to account for the inner logic of this development by highlighting some of the difficult issues in the comparison she attempted between her phenomenological starting point and Thomistic scholasticism. Simon Nolan's paper on Baconthorpe investigates the notions of soul and extension in the Carmelite (late) Scholastic John Baconthorpe. Nolan draws the reader's attention to the development that leads from Aristotelian Scholasticism (and hylomorphism) to a more modern understanding of the opposition between extended matter and non-extended spirit, a development in which Baconthorpe's thought can be understood to form a stage. The necessity of reinterpreting hylomorphism by the early chemists such as Robert Boyle, is also the subject of Conleth Loonan's paper on Boyle's corpuscular hypothesis and its experimental basis. Loonan explores the different attributes of corpuscles discussed by Boyle in order to lay out the specific nature of his experimental philosophy. Stephan Steiner's paper, finally, on Leo Strauss' political realignment and understanding of German nihilism only indirectly bear a relationship with reinterpretations or critiques of scholasticism. Strauss turned towards the Ancients in his later career, and the form and nature of this turn is marked by this his German nihilism, as is also his earlier writings on natural right, but neither of this is discussed in the article. This article, in contrast, discusses simply the nature of his commitment to German nihilism.

Mette Lebech, September 2014

Some Remarks on Method and Practice in Renaissance Philosophy and the Concept of 'Conscience' as a Case-Study

Amos Edelheit

ABSTRACT:
In the first part of this article several methodological issues concerning Renaissance philosophy are discussed. The question of the contemporary philosophical canon is related to the fact that in the case of Renaissance philosophy there is still so much to do on the basic level of the archives. Then some preconceptions and misconceptions regarding Renaissance philosophers are presented. In order to show how these methodological issues are relevant we turn, in the second part of the article, to a close examination of the concept of conscience and the way in which three Renaissance thinkers, Antoninus of Florence, Giovanni Caroli and Nicolaus de Mirabilibus dealt with it.

Let me begin by presenting and briefly discussing some methodological problems and practices in Renaissance philosophy, and then move on to discuss one crucial concept or term as a case-study which hopefully would shed some more 'concrete' light on the more theoretical issues discussed in the first part of this paper.

The first problem I would like to address is the problem of the canon: what is a canon and who determines what should be included in it? Upon which preconceptions is the decision about the canon taken? What has happened to the philosophical canon in the 20th century? The last question is perhaps the easiest: under the increasing influence of the analytic approach, the history of philosophy was doomed and reduced to a non-philosophical approach, completely useless for a real understanding of the philosophical problems of past ages, which surprisingly enough are all related to their own contemporary discussions of logic, science, language, ethics, and politics. As a result, a common *curriculum* in a department of philosophy in the English speaking world today will quite artificially introduce the students to an analytic version of Plato and Aristotle, after which they must jump to Descartes as the representative of the new 17th century philosophy and science. From there, usually via Hume and Kant, all is ready for the analytic truth. The outcome is a very narrow philosophical canon. And the questions then are: is there anything important beyond this canon, or even beyond the printed texts which are outside the canon? Do we know everything that is there to know? Can a canon be changed? In which circumstances it is possible to change the canon?

The second problem is that of the archives and manuscript libraries. The archives are of course full of medieval, Renaissance, and early modern texts, but they are also silent. It is the arduous task of the scholar to discover and uncover texts and to contextualize them in the proper way. But what can we do when philosophy and scholarship are divorced from one another, when philosophy, in many cases, is used as an excuse for ignorance? When the basic philological skills are hardly being taught?

Martin Pine, a specialist in Renaissance intellectual history and a student of Paul Oskar Kristeller, told me once that Kristeller, who taught in the Department of Philosophy at Columbia University, used to give an extra seminar for his advanced students: one was dedicated to reading texts, and the other 'extra' was dedicated to paleography, since Kristeller was fully aware of the fact that the archives are full of unstudied and unedited texts. I guess it will be reasonable to assume that no one can know what exactly there is in the archives, and so, before we reach the situation of the Classics, where almost all the texts have been published in proper critical editions, we should be cautious and avoid generalizations and over-all theories and syntheses concerning late medieval and Renaissance philosophies. Why? Let us move to the next problem.

The third problem is that of preconceptions and misconceptions. Let us start with some examples: try to look for the missing link in all of them. We have just mentioned Martin Pine who wrote a book on Pomponazzi.[1] Pine's Pomponazzi is a reaction against Cassirer's Pomponazzi in his *The Individual and the Cosmos*.[2] The first is a secular Pomponazzi, a model of progress, rationality, and modernity; the latter is a superstitious Pomponazzi, an example of decline and irrationality. In both interpretations we seem to miss the real historical Pomponazzi. Marsilio Ficino is usually discussed by modern scholars in the context of the Platonic and Neoplatonic revival in the Renaissance in general, and in Florence in particular, in the second half of the 15th century. His formation as a student in the University of Florence who had four 'scholastic' mentors, the fact that he taught privately the logic of Paul of Venice while being a student, and had interesting relations with some professional scholastic philosophers later on in his career are not yet part of the standard interpretations of Ficino's intellectual achievements as a philosopher, interpreter, and translator. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, our last example, is related in many recent scholarly discussions to the Kabbalah. This trend started more or less with the works of Chaim Wirszubski, who followed Frances Yates, who together with D. P. Walker began focusing on the mystical and 'Hermetic' aspects of Renaissance philosophy and culture.[3] But the detailed philological works of Wirszubski also show how limited was Pico's command in Hebrew (not to mention Aramaic), and how dependent he was on the interpolated translations of Flavius Mithridates. Yet these facts did not change the course of scholarship, which very soon turned to focus mainly on those mystical aspects in Pico and in other Renaissance philosophers, leaving other important contexts unstudied. So what is the missing link in all these cases? Obviously the answer is scholastic philosophy. And I am not referring here to 'Renaissance Aristotelianism' which has not been ignored by scholars,[4] but rather to the scholastic

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[1] Martin Pine, *Pietro Pomponazzi: Radical Philosopher of the Renaissance* (Padua 1986).

[2] Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, trans. Mario Domandi (New York 1964).

[3] Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago 1964); Chaim Wirszubski, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism* (Harvard 1989); D. P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (London 1972). And see also Sebastiano Gentile and Carlos Gilly (eds.), *Marsilio Ficino e il ritorno di Ermete Trismegisto* (Florence 1999).

[4] See e.g., Charles B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Harvard 1983); David A. Lines, *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance (ca. 1300-1650). The Universities and the Problem*

philosophy of the Renaissance as such. This handy context, just under the nose of scholars, is in many cases almost completely disregarded, dismissed and ignored, or in some cases only hastily mentioned. Scholastic or academic philosophy in Padua in the 16th century is the key to understanding Pomponazzi and his account regarding the eternity of the soul. Ficino's scholastic formation and the complex relations between his *Platonic Theology* and contemporary scholastic discourse is still almost untouched by scholars.[5] Pico's known scholastic formation in Padua and Paris and his famous positive (and historical) account of scholastic thinkers (defending scholastic philosophical discourse against the attack of his friend Ermolao Barbaro, the Venetian humanist who planned to translate the works of Aristotle into humanist Latin)[6] was not enough: the Kabbalah won the day among many incompetent scholars who did not know enough Hebrew, Aramaic, Kabbalah, Latin, Greek, and Neoplatonism, but were attracted by Jewish mysticism.

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of Moral Education (Leiden 2002); John Monfasani, 'The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata* and Aristotle's *De animalibus* in the Renaissance', in his *Greeks and Latins in Renaissance Italy. Studies on Humanism and Philosophy in the 15th Century* (Aldershot 2004), VI.

[5] The importance of the scholastic philosophers in Florence and the need for detailed studies of their texts can be regarded as one of the implications of James Hankins' 'Lorenzo de' Medici as a Patron of Philosophy', in his *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols. (Rome 2003-2004), vol. 2, pp. 273-316. The two greatest scholars of Renaissance philosophy or intellectual history in the twentieth century, Eugenio Garin and Paul Oskar Kristeller, tried in their many studies to present a synthesis of Renaissance thought and novelty, also in regard to scholastic philosophy. Despite the fact that they both made extraordinary contributions also to the empirical work of editing texts, we still have many unedited texts of Ficino and Pico, as well as of other humanists. In the case of the scholastic contemporary philosophers the situation is much worse: texts by Lorenzo Pisano or Antonio degli Agli for instance, compared with the authoritative figure of St. Antoninus and his *Summa theologica*, are some of the essential works for the understanding of the intellectual Florentine history in the late 1450s and the early 1460s, crucial years for the development of the young Ficino. All these texts and many others are still unstudied, and some are extant only in manuscript form. It is my conviction that detailed studies of these texts might change our general perspective of the epoch. On the importance of this context see: Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'The Scholastic Background of Marsilio Ficino', in *Traditio* II (1944), pp. 257-318, especially p. 263, and see his important remark on pp. 273-274: 'This scholastic element is Aristotelian rather than Platonic in character, and it is obviously due to Ficino's early training at the University of Florence. The specific sources of this element are difficult to verify as long as the philosophical and theological environment of fifteenth-century Italy is not more thoroughly investigated. For it is among the Italian scholastics of the fourteenth and the early fifteenth century that we have to look for Ficino's teachers, not among the philosophers connected with the French schools of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, who have so far attracted most of the interest of competent medievalists'; Arthur Field, *The Origins of the Platonic Academy of Florence* (Princeton 1988), pp. 129-174, especially p. 136; and Christopher S. Celenza's introduction to his *Piety and Pythagoras in Renaissance Florence – The Symbolum Nesianum* (Leiden 2001), pp. 26-27.

[6] See Ermolao Barbaro, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Filosofia o eloquenza?*, ed. Francesco Bausi (Naples 1998). For one excellent account of the intellectual implications of this debate and the relations between Barbaro, Poliziano and Pico, see Jill Kraye, 'Pico on the Relationship of Rhetoric and Philosophy', in M. V. Dougherty (ed.), *Pico della Mirandola. New Essays* (Cambridge 2008), pp. 13-36.

Our next question is thus why is it the case that many Renaissance scholars still disregard scholastic philosophy? There are many reasons for that; let me just present to you some evidence to show that the terms 'scholastic' or 'scholasticism' are still used as pejorative terms by contemporary scholars.[7] Even Kristeller, who tried harder than others to contextualize Renaissance philosophy by comparing it to scholastic thinkers could not go very far, since he was working under the old historiographical paradigm of Gilson, according to which after the 13th century scholastic philosophy was declining, so he turned to Thomas Aquinas, ignoring all the important developments in scholastic philosophy which took place in the 14th and 15th centuries (and are most relevant to the Renaissance philosophers of the 15th century and later). But even beyond this problematic and untenable view, we should mention the fact that while the 14th century philosophers are nowadays at the centre of many scholarly discussions which show their importance (Peter Auriol or Durandus of St Pourçain are only two prominent names among many others),[8] the 15th century is still *terra incognita*.[9] So what should we do? We must return to the archives and manuscript libraries. We need first editions of texts unpublished so far, we need new critical editions of texts, we need commentaries and contextualizations which should provide us with a better understanding of those texts and philosophers, in the contexts of the Renaissance.

Let us examine now the concept of conscience as it emerges in scholastic and Renaissance thought. In modern languages and thought, this concept seems to be the most natural thing on earth. In late scholastic and in Renaissance theological discussions we can observe the formation of this concept as something of a bridge between objective knowledge and subjective will, choice and action.

The first question with regard to the concept of conscience that I would like to present is where exactly does the study of conscience belong? Is it moral

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[7] One among many examples for the use of the term 'scholastic' as a pejorative term in recent scholarship of Renaissance intellectual history will be sufficient at this point: see Jan Papy, 'Creating an 'Italian' Friendship: from Petrarch's Ideal Literary Critic 'Socrates' to the Historical Reader Ludovicus Sanctus of Beringen', in Karl A. E. Enenkel and Jan Papy (eds.), *Petrarch and His Readers in the Renaissance* (Leiden 2006), pp. 13-30; see especially pp. 15 and 26. On this see my review in *Scripta Classica Israelica* XXIX (2010), pp. 144-148.

[8] See, e.g., Russell L. Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions at the Medieval University: The Use of Philosophical Psychology in Trinitarian Theology among the Franciscans and Dominicans, 1250-1350*, 2 vols. (Leiden 2013); For some excellent scholarly accounts of fourteenth-century Scotist circles see, e.g., Guido Alliney, 'La contingenza della fruizione beatifica nello sviluppo del pensiero di Duns Scoto', in *Via Scoti. Methodologica ad mentem Joannis Duns Scoti. Atti del Congresso Scotistico Internazionale, Roma 9-11 marzo 1993*, ed. Leonardo Sileo (Rome 1995), vol. 2, pp. 633-660; 'Fra Scoto e Ockham: Giovanni di Reading e il dibattito sulla libertà a Oxford (1310-1320)', in *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 7 (1996), pp. 243-368; 'La ricezione della teoria scotiana della volontà nell'ambiente teologico parigino (1307-1316)', in *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 14 (2005), pp. 339-404; 'The Treatise on the Human Will in the *Collationes oxonienses* Attributed to John Duns Scotus', in *Medioevo* 30 (2005), pp. 209-269; 'Francis of Marchia's Theory of the Will', in *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 79/2 (2012), pp. 399-426.

[9] On this see Cesare Vasoli, 'La tradizione scolastica e le novità filosofiche umanistiche del tardo Trecento e del Quattrocento', in Vasoli (ed.), *Le filosofie del Rinascimento* (Milan 2002), pp. 113-132.

philosophy? Moral psychology? Moral theology? The last option is the most traditional classification, and it has some negative connotations. The first is too general, so let us try the second.

Just like another essential concept, the concept of the will, it took a while before 'conscience' was used independently and in a moral philosophical context, representing some inner sense or intention for moral actions and moral behaviour, an interiority which later on became a central feature of modern subjectivity and its efforts to justify or dismiss certain actions and modes of behaviour. In fact, by using the phrase 'moral psychology' we have tacitly moved to scholastic and late scholastic discussions of this concept and its importance (thus leaving behind us the ancient Greek and Roman pagan thinkers, the Greek and Latin Fathers of the Church, and the early medieval thinkers of the 11th and 12th centuries).

Let us move on then to the second part of this paper and discuss three scholastic thinkers of the Renaissance and their account of conscience.

The great fifteenth-century Florentine moralist bishop Antoninus Pierozzi (1389-1459) is the first thinker we shall discuss. Antoninus has long been recognized as an important figure by modern scholars,[10] although his moral thinking has not always been discussed in sufficient detail and with due appreciation, and his influence outside scholastic circles, as, for example, upon a humanist-oriented philosopher such as Marsilio Ficino, is still not recognized in modern scholarly literature.[11]

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[10] The best historical account of Antoninus' social, political, and ecclesiastical relations is still D. Peterson's *Archbishop Antoninus: Florence and the Church in the Earlier Fifteenth Century* (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell 1985). Valuable biographical information can be found in Stefano Orlandi O. P., *S. Antonino, Arcivescovo di Firenze, Dottore della Chiesa: Studi*, 2 vols. (Florence 1959). Antoninus' achievements as an economic thinker are discussed in Raymond De Roover, *San Bernardino of Siena and Sant' Antonino of Florence: The Two Great Economic Thinkers of the Middle Ages* (Boston 1967). An important attempt to understand Antoninus' moral theology in the context of sermons and pastoral practices can be found in Peter Francis Howard, *Beyond the Written Word. Preaching and Theology in the Florence of Archbishop Antoninus 1427-1459* (Città di Castello 1995). A more recent study of Antoninus in the context of Florentine ritual traditions can be found in Maureen C. Miller, 'Why the Bishop of Florence Had to Get Married', in *Speculum* 81/4 (2006) 1055-1091.

[11] Two prominent examples will suffice to make this point here, although this issue deserves much further study. The opening sentence of Ficino's *Theologia platonica* is echoed in the third argument for the immortality of the soul, found in the first part, the first title, chapter five, of Antoninus' *Summa*; *Summa theologica*, 4 vols. (Verona 1740; repr. Graz 1959), vol. 1, p. 42: 'Tertio sic probatur: aut anima est immortalis, aut homo infelicior est cunctis creaturis. Secunda pars non est vera, ut constat manifeste; ergo anima est immortalis.' Compare this with Marsilio Ficino, *Theologia platonica de immortalitate animorum*, 6 vols., eds. James Hankins with William Bowen, transl. Michael J. B. Allen with John Warden (Cambridge, Mass. 2001-2006), vol. 1, p. 14: 'Cum genus humanum propter iniquitudinem animi imbecillitatemque corporis et rerum omnium indigentiam duriorem quam bestiae vitam agat in terris, si terminum vivendi natura illi eundem penitus atque ceteris animantibus tribuisset, nullum animal esset infelicius homine.' The title of this opening chapter reads: 'Si animus non esset immortalis, nullum animal esset infelicius homine.' Moreover, the idea that religion was what gave preeminence in nature to mankind, and that without religion there would be no difference between man and beast, is mentioned by Antoninus, who refers to Giovanni Dominici as the source of this idea; see *Summa theologica*, vol. 1, p. 42: 'Dominus Joannes

Antoninus compares the human soul, from the point of view of its natural qualities, to God, basing the comparison on nine points: it is one in its essence; it is triple in its faculties, containing memory, intelligence, and will; it is simple and has no members; it is immortal; it is invisible; it is everywhere in the body just as God is everywhere in the universe; it is the origin of its genus just as God is the origin of the world; it is happy, being naturally fit for taking part in its own beatitude; it is intellectual in its nature and has the capacity of understanding infinite things, and it is naturally willing the good and the infinite good.[12] The second and the ninth are most relevant for moral psychology. In the second point Antoninus is following Augustine, who emphasized these three mental qualities in man and distinguished between them. One needs to understand a thing in order to remember and to want it, but understanding is distinct from memory and both are distinct from will.[13] The ninth point brings understanding and willing into the picture as the main faculties of the soul. This comparison opens Antoninus' discussion of the soul in general (*De anima in communi*), where we find, e.g., that the soul has a natural understanding of its own weakness.[14] This self-awareness of the soul brings us to yet another essential notion which is related to self-awareness: the notion of conscience.

While presenting ten common points between man and beast, Antoninus mentions, in his discussion of the fifth point (*per insulsam locutionem*), the notion of conscience:

> Observe with regard to the fifth point that the first human being equally knew both the serpent's and the human languages, and he knew perfectly the difference between them. For the human voice was simple, and full of truth, melody, and God. 'For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh' – says Christ in Matthew 12. But he was not unaware of the fact that the serpent's language was cunning and deceitful, when he already realized that he himself had been deceived. Yet in [his] conscience he realized that he himself, in the dialogue he had with God, lied and dishonoured his Creator, just as that serpent did; he thus showed himself, according to Genesis 3, by using silly talk, to be similar to the serpent.[15]

Dominici super Ecclesiastem inducit plures alias rationes ad hoc probandum, et exinde auctoritates. Et prima est, quia nihil est, quod nos discernat a brutis et mutis, nisi religio et cognitio summi Dei.' This idea plays a central role in Ficino's *De Christiana religione*; see *Opera omnia*, 2 vols. (Basel 1576; repr. Torino 1959, 1962; Paris 2003), vol. 1, p. 2: '… homo perfectissimum animal, ea proprietate maxime tum perfectione pollet, tum ab inferioribus discrepat, qua perfectissimis, id est, divinis coniungitur. Rursus, si homo animalium mortalium perfectissimus est, in quantum homo, ob eam praecipue dotem est omnium perfectissimus, quam inter haec habet ipse propriam, caeteris animalibus non communem, ea religio est, per religionem igitur est perfectissimus.'

[12] Antoninus, *Summa theologica*, vol. 1, pp. 7-9.

[13] Augustine, *De trinitate* X, 11, 17-18; 12, 19.

[14] Antoninus, *Summa theologica*, vol. 1, p. 23: '… quod tamen [anima] per viam naturae scire potest, est sua infirmitas et potentiarum suarum debilis valitudo aut nulla.' This, in fact, is the problem of *akrasia*, so familiar to us from Plato, Aristotle, and later Greek philosophers, and later on discussed by the Church Fathers and scholastic thinkers.

[15] Ibid., pp. 26-27: 'Quantum ad quintum adverte, quod expertus fuerat homo primus linguam serpentinam pariter et humanam, optimeque noverat earum distantiam. Erat enim vox hominis simplex, veritate, modulatione et Deo plena. *Ex abundantia enim cordis os loquitur*

Interestingly, the focus here is not on Original Sin itself, but rather on man's behaviour just after he sinned. In fact, the act of eating the forbidden fruit seems marginal; Antoninus is reconstructing the narrative of Genesis 3 and concentrating on the human being's awareness of two languages: one which is coming from the heart (man's language) and another which is cunning and deceitful (serpent's language). Despite this awareness, man was not cautious enough, and instead of ignoring the serpent he listened to it, finding himself deceived. This is still part of the Original Sin. But worse is to come: faced by God's question, Adam used the serpent's language (which is described as *insulsa locutio*, the fifth point of similarity between man and beast, mentioned earlier), being well aware in his conscience that he is lying and dishonouring God. We can distinguish here between the harmonious and true language which emanates from the heart, and the notion of conscience, an internal sense or criterion, which involves awareness and self-reflection on one's own words and deeds. The language of the heart represents harmony between internal intentions and external acts, it uses univocal meanings. The language of the serpent breaks this univocality between interior and exterior meaning, and between inner intentions and external acts. Words do not reflect the reality of actions or the inner psychological state of the agent. Adam, while using the serpent's language, tried to hide the fact that he had committed a forbidden action, and that he knew it in his heart and was perfectly aware of his action. This self-awareness of the contrast between his words and his actions, and between his words and his interior psychological state, is, according to Antoninus, due to Adam's conscience, where a process of judging one's own actions and awareness takes place. This is where awareness and knowledge – for instance, knowing about the two languages – becomes self-awareness and self-knowledge, facing the question of how the agent acted in the real situation, how he manifested his knowledge, a self-judgment of his acts in their relation to his knowledge. Thus, conscience involves act and knowledge (or in fact, turning knowledge into act) – and, most important, self-awareness of the agent as someone who truly or not truly acts according to his knowledge and awareness and is capable of giving a reliable linguistic account of his act, while using the language of the heart. This is the psychological drama behind the famous dialogue between God and Adam in Genesis 3, 9-11: 'And the Lord God called Adam, and said to him: Where art thou? And he said: I heart thy voice in paradise; and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself. And he said to him: And who hath told thee that thou wast naked, but that thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?'

Let us examine now some other cases of *conscientia*, still in the first part of the *Summa*, and then pay a closer look to the term *scientia*, which is included in, and related to, *conscientia*, in this context of moral psychology.[16]

(Matthew 12, 34), ait Christus, Matth. 12. Linguam vero serpentinam versutam, fallacemque fuisse, non ignorabat, quum se jam sciret deceptum. Demum conscientia teste loquendo cum Domino mentiri et suum infamare auctorem, sicut ille serpens fecerat, se videbat, Gen. 3. et sic per insulsam locutionem se similem serpenti ostendit.'

[16] See, for instance, Giovanni Caroli, *Liber dierum lucensium*, MS Florence, *Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale*, Conv. Suppr. C.8.279, ff. 1r-56v; ff. 55v-56r (from Book III, the speech

Among Antoninus' arguments for the immortality of the soul we find another mention of the concept of conscience:

> And again in another letter [of Lucan Corduba we read]: we are not inhabitants of this world but rather foreigners, nor did we come to earth to remain in it, but to pass beyond it; indeed we hasten towards [our] fatherland not being loaded with any burdens of sins: in fact we proceed without any shame of conscience, so that we would run through the proposed itinerary with expedition and ease.[17]

Conscience here represents a certain interiority, where shame caused by sinful acts is located. Under this burden it is very difficult, if not impossible, to proceed on our way to our true fatherland while leaving this world.

While mentioning the many different meanings of the word 'soul' in Scripture according to Hugh of St-Cher, we find in the eighth meaning, that the soul means also conscience.[18] We see that 'conscience' involves a process of judging and justifying.

But the main discussion of conscience in the first part of the *Summa* is found in title 3, chapter 10 (*De conscientia*), following chapter 9 (*De synderesi*); Antoninus is following here the same sequence found in Thomas Aquinas' *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*.[19] First of all one should determine what *synderesis* (sunthvrhsi~; the medieval erroneous form of suneijdhsi~) is and to distinguish it from *conscientia*. *Synderesis* is not a potency or a faculty of the soul, but rather some habit of the soul, of which three things should be considered: its quiddity, sinlessness, and unquenchability. As for its quiddity or essence, *synderesis* is an innate habit or light with a special task or duty: to drag men away from evil by whispering in their ears against sin and to turn them towards the good.[20] It is the light of the active intellect and it is essentially related to human actions, it is the natural light of practical principles (*principia operabilia*), which are universal principles of natural law; and so it stands against all evil and in agreement with all good.[21] More specifically, this natural

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of Antoninus): 'Videte ne iam demum ad entia vestra nomina terminetis. Quod ita intelligi volo. Primi ac venerabiles ¶ [56r] patres vestri conscientia certe vixerunt, quod nomen sanctimoniam continet cum peritia litterarum. Reliqui vero cum iam fortasse conscientie pertesum esset, scientiam posthabitis aliis coluere.'

[17] Antoninus, *Summa theologica*, vol. 1, p. 44: 'Et iterum in alia epistola [Lucani Cordubensis]: Nos non sumus incolae hujus mundi, sed advenae, nec ita in orbem terrarum venimus, ut in eo libeat consistere, sed transire: properamus enim ad larem patriam nullis delictorum ponderibus gravati: nulla quidem conscientiae fronte progredimur, ut expediti ac faciles spatium propositi decurramus itineris.'

[18] Ibid., p. 53: 'Octavo pro conscientia, ut illud Ecclesiastici 14. *Justifica animam tuam*, idest conscientiam.'

[19] Ibid., pp. 177-204. For Thomas' discussion see Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, qq. 16-17.

[20] Ibid., p. 177: 'Et quantum ad primum sciendum, quod synderesis est quidam connaturalis habitus, sive connaturale lumen, cujus actus vel officium est homines retrahere a malo, murmurando contra peccatum, et inclinare ad bonum.'

[21] Ibid.: '… sicut enim in anima nostra est aliquis habitus, vel aliquod lumen respectu cognoscibilium, quem habitum vocamus intellectum principiorum, scilicet lumen intellectus agentis; ita in anima nostra est quidam habitus naturalis, sive quoddam lumen naturale

light belongs to the third kind of rational activity in our soul, that is judgment of matters of belief or practice which pertain to good customs or proper behaviour.[22] In this case another distinction is required, between free choice (*liberum arbitrium*) and *synderesis*. While free choice means a judgment regarding a particular practical case, *synderesis* is a judgment regarding a practical case in general (*in universali*).[23] Antoninus is referring here to Thomas, Alexander of Hales and Raynerius of Pisa, while very briefly mentioning that unlike *synderesis*, conscience is open to error and disturbance, while *synderesis* is not, although *conscientia* is reduced or brought down to *synderesis* according to each case.[24]

What provisional, and rather partial, conclusion can we draw from the account of *liberum arbitrium*, *synderesis,* and *conscientia* we have had so far? We can say that *liberum arbitrium* has a more personal flavour, being related to *judicium de particulari*, and thus it is somehow closer to the modern notion of interiority in trying to deal with moral dilemmas, while *synderesis* which *iudicat de operabili in universali* has a more objective status, yet still inferior in comparison to *conscientia*. The fact that *synderesis* is related to universal principles of natural law is yet another indication of its universal and non-personal nature. And indeed, in the discussion of the second characteristic of *synderesis*, that is its sinlessness, Antoninus again explicitly follows Thomas and Raynerius in asserting that *synderesis* respects and imitates the superior part of reason, which cannot sin, and so also *synderesis* cannot sin.[25] But in this case, can our soul be deprived of *synderesis*? In his account of the third characteristics of *synderesis*, that is its unquenchability, Antoninus declares that this is impossible, since the light of *synderesis*, which is the light of the active intellect, and through which speculative and practical matters (matters which are part of the soul's essence) are known to the soul, is an essential part of the soul's nature.[26] This immediately raises

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principiorum operabilium, quae sunt universalia principia juris naturalis, quod scilicet lumen vocamus synderesim, quae omni malo resistit, et omni bono consentit.'

[22] Ibid.: 'Tertio modo ratio est judicativa operabilium: et hoc duabus modis, videlicet vel operabilium, quae ad mores non spectant, et talis ratio non est synderesis; vel credibilium aut operabilium, quae pertineat ad bonos mores; et tale lumen naturale rationis dicitur synderesis.'

[23] Ibid.: 'Item liberum arbitrium non est idem, quod synderesis, quia liberum arbitrium habet judicium de particulari operabili; synderesis autem de operabili judicat in universali.' Compare Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 16, a. 1: '… quod iudicium est *duplex*: *in universali*, et hoc pertinet ad synderesim; et *in particulari operabili*, et hoc est iudicium electionis, et hoc pertinet ad liberum arbitirium.'

[24] Ibid.: 'Sed nec synderesis est idem, quod conscientia; quia conscientia recipit errorem et perturbationem, non autem synderesis. Tamen conscientia ex parte superiori secundum rem reducitur ad synderesim. Thomas in 1. parte quaest. 79, art. 12. Et in quaestionibus de veritate. Et Alexander in 2. parte summae, Raynerius.'

[25] Ibid., p. 178: '… synderesis respicit et imitatur superiorem partem rationis… sed pars superior rationis peccare non potest; ergo nec synderesis. Thomas in quaestionibus de veritate, Raynerius.'

[26] Ibid.: '… et sic non potest synderesis exstingui, quia sicut impossibile est, quod anima privetur lumine intellectus agentis, per quod hujusmodi speculabilia et operabilia innotescunt, quum sint de essentia animae; ita impossibile est quod anima privetur lumine synderesis, quum sit de natura ipsius animae.' Compare Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 16, a. 3: '… et sic impossibile est quod synderesis extinguatur: sicut impossibile est quod anima hominis

the issue of evil, and so Antoninus declares that the fact that any inclination towards evil is removed from among the blessed does not mean that *synderesis* among the condemned is absent, since it is inclined to the good. The reason for this is that evil is contrary to nature and thus nothing can prevent the blessed from removing the inclination towards evil, just as the tinder of evil or the fuel of evil (*fomes mali*) exists in the soul only accidently, and so it would be possible to remove it by the excellence of grace, as in the case of the Holy Virgin. On the other hand good, and the inclination towards the good are the result of nature itself, and therefore, as long as our nature remains what it is, the inclination to good (= *synderesis*) cannot be removed even in the damned.[27]

If we compare Antoninus' account of *synderesis* here to Thomas' *De veritate* q. 16, we find some interesting alterations to the scholastic discourse. Thomas' discussion is much more methodical and theoretical, while Antoninus' is more synthetic and categorical, presenting a shorter account of *synderesis* and leaving out of his discussion different nuances and implications. Thus, as we have seen, Antoninus discussed three aspects of *synderesis*, using the terms *quidditas, impeccabilitas,* and *inexstinguibilitas*; Thomas' titles of the three articles are: *utrum synderesis sit potentia, vel habitus; utrum synderesis possit peccare; utrum synderesis in aliquo extinguatur*. In his response to the first question Thomas presents different opinions and finally determines that *synderesis* is either a natural habit or a potency of reason with such habit, while admitting that there is not much of a difference between the two possibilities, and emphasizing that if it is to be regarded as potency of reason, it must have a natural habit. At the end of this article, Thomas explains the nature of a philosophical and natural composition, in case *synderesis* is indeed a compound of potency and habit. Before that he has made it clear that regarding *synderesis* as potency and habit does not mean that the two are the same thing, but rather that this name – *synderesis* – means the same potency with a habit under which this potency is subsumed. These remarks show that the answer to this question is not quite as obvious as presented by Antoninus, and that Thomas is inclined, slightly differently from Antoninus, to regard *synderesis* as a compound of potency of reason and a natural habit, and not simply as a habit.

Moving on to his account of conscience, Antoninus maintains that conscience is called spirit in so far as it is some precept of the mind. The fact that a habit is regarded as the origin of an act is reason enough for attributing the name 'conscience' to the first natural habit, that is *synderesis*. But in fact, conscience properly speaking is

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privetur lumine intellectus agentis, per quod principia prima in speculativis et operativis nobis innotescunt; hoc enim lumen est de natura ipsius animae, cum per hoc sit intellectualis…'

[27] Ibid.: 'Et sciendum, quod licet in beatis removeatur omnis inclinatio ad malum, non tamen per contrarium amovetur in damnatis synderesis inclinans ad bonum. Cujus ratio est, quia malum est praeter naturam, et ideo nihil prohibet inclinationem ad malum a beatis removeri, quum etiam fomes accidentaliter sit in anima, et possit exstingui per gratiae excellentiam, ut in B. Virgine. Sed bonum et inclinatio ad bonum consequitur ipsam naturam, et synderesis naturaliter est in anima.' Compare Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 16, a. 3: '… quod malum est praeter naturam, et ideo nihil prohibet inclinationem ad malum a beatis removeri. Sed bonum et inclinatio ad bonum consequitur ipsam naturam; unde natura manente, non potest inclinatio ad bonum tolli etiam a damnatis.'

an act.[28] Antoninus, following Thomas, argues that conscience's origin is in the natural judgment of reason, which is called the law of intellect. We can draw conclusions from this law by using a syllogism, in which *synderesis* posits the first premise, e.g. that all evil should be avoided; superior reason posits the middle premise, that adultery is evil since it is forbidden by God; and inferior reason posits that it is evil since it is against justice and honesty. Conscience then draws the conclusion, that adultery should be avoided, and it is therefore regarded almost as a 'concluding science' (*concludens scientia*).[29] The emphasis here is on the role of conscience in inferring the final conclusion on the moral aspect of an act; this is a mental process which is unique to conscience and leads to action: *adulterium est vitandum*. Conscience functions here as producing a syllogistic conclusion out of two more theoretical suppositions: 'any evil must be avoided' and 'adultery is evil'. And thus:

> … it should be known that conscience indicates an application of our knowledge, or of our cognition, towards some particular act.[30]

We have already seen that *liberum arbitrium* was related to *judicium de particulari*. Conscience is not a judgment of particulars, but the conscience of each human being – just like his face – is particular and unique in its nature, and there can be no two similar consciences.[31] Antoninus is citing Hugh of St-Cher's definition according to

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[28] Ibid., p. 179: 'Et sic conscientia dicitur spiritus, in quantum est quoddam dictamen mentis, quia etiam habitus est principium actus; ideo nomen conscientiae attribuitur aliquando primo habitui naturaliter, scilicet synderesi. Sicut Hieronymus super Ezechielem, conscientiam synderesim vocat. Sed conscientia proprie est actus.' This is also Thomas Aquinas' conclusion in his *De veritate*, q. 17, a. 1.

[29] Ibid.: 'Habet autem ortum conscientia ex naturali judicio rationis, quod dicitur lex intellectus, et ab eo est deducta et derivata ut quaedam conclusio, v.g. sit in animo vel in mente hominis quasi quidam syllogismus, cujus majorem praemittit synderesis dicens, omne malum esse vitandum. Minorem vero hujus syllogismi assumit ratio superior dicens, adulterium esse malum, quia prohibitum est a Deo. Ratio vero inferior dicit, adulterium esse malum, quia vel est injustum, vel quia est inhonestum. Conscientia vero infert conclusionem dicens et concludens ex supradictis: Ergo adulterium est vitandum. Propterea dicitur conscientia quasi concludens scientia, eo quod conscientia ratione supradictorum, scilicet synderesis, rationis superioris, et rationis inferioris conclusionem infert. Thomas in 2. Sententiarum, Dist. 24.' Compare Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 17, a. 2 (*responsum*).

[30] Ibid., p. 180: '… sciendum, quod conscientia significat applicationem nostrae notitiae, seu cognitionis ad aliquem actum particularem.' Antoninus is here closely following Thomas; see *De veritate*, q. 17, a. 1 (*responsum*): 'Nomen enim *conscientiae* significat applicationem scientiae ad aliquid; unde conscire dicitur quasi simul scire. Quaelibet autem scientia ad aliquid applicari potest; unde conscientia non potest nominare aliquem habitum specialem, vel aliquam potentiam, sed nominat ipsum actum, qui est applicatio cuiuscumque habitus vel cuiuscumque notitiae ad aliquem actum particularem.'

[31] Ibid., p. 179: 'Et dicitur conscientia facies ratione diversificationis; quia sicut inter tot homines non est dare duas facies omnimode similes, quod mirum est; ita nec duas conscientias omnino similes, idest in omnibus idem sentientes.'

which conscience is the science of the heart.[32] All this indicates a rather personal account of conscience, both in its peculiar internal nature and with regard to particular external acts. But what is the relation between conscience and science?

> Indeed when it has become acquainted with itself, it is called conscience, when it knows other things beyond itself, it is called science.[33]

Conscience involves relating our cognition or knowledge or science to a particular act and considering whether to perform or not to perform a certain action; Antoninus provides a common use (*communis usus*) of the term 'conscience' according to which it is close to intention and to some kind of awareness to one's own behaviour. The citation from Genesis 43, 22, supports this meaning.[34] What we have in the Hebrew of Gen. 43, 22, is LO YADA'NU. Jerome most probably translated this into *conscientia* in the basic sense of 'consciousness, awareness', and Thomas is already interpreting the same word as 'moral conscience'. Conscience has the power to dictate, being the witness of things done and undone, it can restrain the will and demand that it will not obey something. Conscience dictates whether something has to be done or not, and this 'dictation' is nothing but the arrival of a divine precept into an agent with conscience.[35]

Describing conscience as intention involving choice brings it once again very close to being a personal entity. It may even seem quite close to the Scotist notion of the will. According to Antoninus conscience binds not by way of compulsion but rather just like the will which is free and is its own master, and cannot be compelled by anything.[36] But at the same time it involves judgment, and it is connected to the active intellect and to natural reason which is related to the universal or natural

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[32] Ibid., p. 180: 'Unde Hugo in libro secundo de anima diffiniens eam sic ait: Conscientia est cordis scientia.'

[33] Ibid.: 'Quando enim se novit, appellatur conscientia, quando praeter se alia noscit, appellatur scientia.'

[34] Ibid.: 'Applicatur autem nostra notitia vel cognitio ad aliquem actum particularem tribus modis. Primo secundum quod cognoscimus, consideramus, an aliquis actus sit factus vel non. Ut quum dicitur in communi usu loquendi, hoc non est factum de conscientia mea, idest nescio, vel nescivi an hoc esset factum: secundum quod dicitur Gen. 43. *Non est conscientiis nostris, quis posuerit pecuniam in saccis nostris*: vel etiam applicatur scientia vel cognitio nostra ad aliquod, quod sit factum, secundum quod dicitur Ecclesiastes 7. *Scit conscientia tua, quod tu crebro maledixisti aliis*.' Compare Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 17, a. 1 (*responsum*).

[35] Ibid.: 'Dicitur autem conscientia esse testis factorum vel non factorum, in quantum conscientia retinet illud, contra quod voluntas fecit quasi voluntatem accusans de eo, quod sibi non obedivit; et sic conscientia habet virtutem dictaminis. Dictat enim conscientia, an aliquid sit factum vel non. Istud autem dictamen nil aliud est, quam perventio praecepti divini ad eum, qui habet conscientiam.' The last words are adapted from Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 17, a. 4 (*responsum*): '… quia conscientiae dictamen nihil est aliud quam perventio praecepti divini ad eum qui conscientiam habet…'

[36] Ibid., p. 184: 'Ligare autem dicitur conscientia non quidem per modum coactionis, quia quum voluntas sit libera et sui ipsius domina, a nullo cogi potest.' But we should note that in the context before and after this citation Antoninus is closely following Thomas Aquinas' *De veritate*, q. 17, a. 3 (*responsum*): 'Unde, cum conscientia nihil aliud sit quam applicatio notitiae ad actum, constat quod conscientia ligare dicitur vi praecepti divini.'

principles. In this respect it seems less personal, but nonetheless conscience might be regarded as an essential bridge between the two most important faculties in the human soul: the intellect and the will. This can be one possible solution to the apparent, and sometimes over-emphasized, tension between the intellect and the will in scholastic and humanist circles. Conscience is thus this unique act which is related, just like a long stick, on its one end or edge to some general principles of natural reason, which are of course related to, and perfected by, the divine precepts. But on its other end or edge it becomes very personal and individual, it is about doing the right thing as an agent who uses intention, free choice, and judgment. Conscience takes part in the rational process of the intellect, analysing knowledge regarding proper behaviour, and in the dynamic act of choosing the proper particular moral action. This is the transition from *scientia* to *conscientia*, and the way in which the intellect and the will are in fact working together in producing intentional, moral, and conscious acts. Now the critical tone we can find in Giovanni Caroli (whom we shall discuss shortly), presenting the words of the interlocutor in his dialogue Antoninus (n. 16) is better understood: 'Your first and venerable fathers certainly lived with conscience; that term embraces sanctity together with knowledge of the Scriptures. Now the rest, when they had become tired with this conscience, cultivated knowledge while neglecting other things.' What exactly are those other neglected things which are added by conscience?

> And so it is the same virtue through which both the precept and conscience are binding; since the precept is not binding without the virtue of knowledge or conception. Neither the knowledge nor the conception of the precept would bind without the virtue of the precept. Since conscience is nothing but the application of knowledge or conception to an act, it is agreed then that conscience is said to bind by virtue of divine precept.[37]

Virtue means here the power to bind something to something else. Knowledge and conception of the precept will have no real effect on the agent without knowledge of the precept. This is the first step through which the agent is attached to the precept, but it is not enough, and here is where conscience comes into the picture being the application of knowledge or conception towards an act, and having a unique quality of binding the acts of the agent with the virtue of divine precept. In this way conscience is related to actions on the one hand (thus relating the agent with conscience to the application of his moral knowledge and understanding), a very practical aspect of it, and to the virtue of divine precept (thus relating the moral acting agent to the divine precept) on the other. It is as if conscience drags the agent down from a theoretical moral understanding to real actions, while being able to bind those actions by using the virtue of divine precept. In this way conscience is responsible for an individual behaviour, putting the moral understanding of a specific agent into action, but it is also responsible for relating this action to a universal divine precept. Conscience is

[37] Ibid.: 'Et sic eadem virtus est, qua praeceptum ligat, et qua conscientia ligat, quum praeceptum non ligat nisi in virtute scientiae, vel notitiae. Nec scientia vel notitia praecepti ligaret, nisi per virtutem praecepti. Unde quum conscientia nil aliud sit, quam applicatio scientiae vel notitiae ad actum; constat, quod conscientia dicitur ligare in virtute divini praecepti.' I would like to thank Michael Dunne for his remarks on this passage.

thus a descriptive concept for a certain type of behaviour (and so *actus* in this context should be understood more as behaviour than as an act) of the agent, and it has no divine origins. Being the proper moral behaviour it must be in agreement with the divine precept, but essentially it is reflecting the agent's interiority, his good choices and judgments, intentions and awareness, in short, it reflects the agent's entire moral psychology when it functions properly.

Our next example is a leading Dominican theologian who was a disciple and a follower of Antoninus, Giovanni Caroli (1428-1503).[38] We shall examine his exposition of the Penitential Psalms written in Florence around 1499. As far as I know, Caroli's *Espozitione dei Salmi penitenziali* has never been discussed by any modern scholar, and it is only mentioned, with a brief description and a transcription of the first sentence of the proem (f. 1r), the first sentences of the first exposition (ff. 3r-3v), and the last sentence (f. 94v), in Stefano Orlandi's list of Caroli's manuscripts found in his *Necrologio di Santa Maria Novella: 1235-1504*, which was published in 1955, on pp. 371-372. The text is extant in a single autograph manuscript, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magl. XL.46, ff. 1r-94v. The handwriting is very difficult to read, probably due to the author's old age (Caroli used to have an excellent handwriting when he was younger, and he even served as a copyist in Santa Maria Novella's library). Interestingly, it is written in Italian, a fact which makes it more probable that this exposition is indeed the by-product of Caroli's sermons on these Psalms delivered during his long career as a preacher in the Florentine churches.

Let us examine Caroli's exposition to the first Penitential Psalm, that is Psalm 6 (*Domine ne in furore tuo*). The structure of the exposition is quite simple: our commentator first cites each verse, and each citation is followed by an explanation which is thematic and allegorical. From time to time Caroli cites biblical verses from other parts of the Bible as part of his explanation, whenever he thinks that this can help him with his argument. Only once does he cite a non-biblical authority: Augustine.[39] Caroli skips the detailed literal explanation in most cases by simply translating the verses into Italian.

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[38] On Caroli see Stefano Orlandi, O. P., *Necrologio di Santa Maria Novella: 1235-1504. Testo e commento biografici*, 2 vols. (Florence 1955), vol. 1, pp. 203-205; vol. 2, pp. 353-380. For a description of the manuscripts of Caroli found in the library of Santa Maria Novella see G. Pomaro, 'Censimento dei manoscritti della biblioteca di S. Maria Novella – parte II: sec. XV-XVI', in *Memorie Domenicane* 13 (1982), 203-255. The most profound historical analysis of Caroli and his role in the intellectual history of fifteenth-century Florence can be found in the works of Salvatore I. Camporeale; see especially 'Giovanni Caroli e le 'Vitae fratrum S. M. Novellae' – umanesimo e crisi religiosa (1460-1480)', in *Memorie Domenicane* 12 (1981), 141-267, including an appendix with Caroli's letter of dedication to Cristoforo Landino, his general introduction, and his seven introductions to each of the *Vitae*, on pp. 236-267; and his *Giovanni Caroli – dal 'Liber dierum' alle 'Vitae fratrum'*, including an appendix containing the third book of the *Liber dierum lucensium*, on pp. 218-233.

[39] Giovanni Caroli, *Espozitione dei Salmi penitenziali*, MSS Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magl. XL.46, f. 37v: 'El quale poi che ai adoperato inmediate per quel disordine che interviene in te medesimo senti qualche rimaso come se dicessi che o io fatto. E questa è sententia di sancto Agostino che dice: Jussisti, dice, et ita est ut pena sibi sit omnis animus inordinatus.' The quotation from Augustine can be found in his *Confessiones* 1, 12, 19.

Caroli's first concern, stemming from verse 2 where anger (*furor*) and ire (*ira*) are mentioned, is to determine the exact relation between God and these passions. The aim of both passions are vengeance (*vendetta*) and justice (*giustitia*), but only the last, which is a positive passion, could possibly be ascribed to God – Who in any case is not subject to such passions. The prophet's intention by mentioning these passions is to warn sinners not to reach their death and the final judgment without penitence and indulgence; for this reason he is begging God not to wait with His judgment and punishment but rather to punish him during this present life, when mercy and correction are still possible and meaningful. Otherwise the sinner remains evil until the final judgment, when it is too late.[40] The present life, while there are still hope and mercy, is thus the proper arena for the act of penitence. Reconstructing the psychological mechanism of penitence through an exposition of the first Penitential Psalm is thus the subtext here.

The first step in this mechanism of penitence is an awareness by the individual of his weakness, shown in verses 3-4: 'Have mercy on me O Lord, for I am weak: heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled. And my soul is troubled exceedingly…' Caroli emphasizes that although the prophet admits that he is seriously weak or ill, he is not yet dead; he thus begs God for a hope of salvation:

> But the prophet says: O Lord, I am seriously ill, but I am not yet dead. And give me now hope of salvation, I confess and recognize that I am seriously ill, but I am not dead.[41]

Caroli presents an analogy between the bones as the rulers of the body, and the virtues as the rulers of the soul. Thus, the bones are analogous to the virtues, and the physical state of disturbance is transformed into a moral disturbance.[42] This moral disturbance reaches its high point in Caroli's interpretation of verse 7: 'I have laboured in my groanings, every night I will wash my bed I will water my couch with my tears.' This is the lowest and most difficult state of the sinner, when he truly confesses his sins and struggles against his own habits as a sinner. At this point the Holy Spirit interferes, causing the first movement in the sinner's soul towards penitence, since, Caroli claims, it is impossible to do it without the grace of God. Here our commentator follows an image found in Thomas Aquinas:

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[40] Ibid., ff. 34r-34v.

[41] Ibid., ff. 34v-35r: 'Però dice el propheta: o signore, io sono bene gravemente infirmo, ma io non sono anchora morto. E dammi anchora speranza di salute, confesso e conosco che sono gravemente infirmo, ma io non sono morto.'

[42] Ibid., f. 35r: 'Ove è da notare che come l'ossa naturalmente regnano il corpo, così naturalmente le virtù regnano l'anima.' The analogy between bones and virtues is a known topos in biblical interpretations; see, e.g., Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 31, 2, 13: 'Intendite quia si clamaret peccata sua, et taceret merita sua, innovarentur ossa eius, id est virtutes eius…'; Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob* 23, 24, 48: 'Ossa in scriptura sacra virtutes accipimus…'

> And he [the prophet] calls conscience his own bed since just like in bed we repose…[43]

Caroli puts the notion of conscience at the heart of the mechanism of penitence. He seems anxious to ascribe it directly to the prophet as if 'conscience' is part of the biblical text, while Thomas is more cautious, mentioning 'conscience' as part of the moral interpretation of *lectus*. While the conscience of the sinner is constantly disturbed and is never at rest, the one who is truly doing penitence is trying hard to clean his conscience and keep it clear of any stain of sin.[44] This image of the bed is concrete and simple, unlike other images used for conscience, such as the heart or some abstract interiority. And thus:

> And God, being most just, cannot allow the ugliness of blame to exist without the beauty of justice. And this is the remorse of conscience.[45]

Caroli ends his exposition of Psalm 6 by emphasizing the role of shame and the importance of free choice (*libertà dello arbitrio*) in the mechanism of penitence,[46] following verse 11: 'Let all my enemies be ashamed, and be very much troubled: let them be turned back, and be ashamed very speedily.'

Caroli's emphasis and focus is on the present life of the individual and his state *in via*, under human constrains, weaknesses, and possibilities. By having the freedom of choice the act of penitence becomes meaningful. The first Penitential Psalm is a prayer not to reach death and final judgment without penitence; God must judge us now, but this is dependent upon man through the voluntary act of a true penitence.

Our last example is Nicolaus de Mirabilibus (d. 1495), another Dominican friar who was for a short while a colleague of Caroli in the monastery of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. While being there he wrote a short text, *Libello de conscientia*, which is written in Italian and is based on a sermon delivered in 1488 to the Dominican nuns of the convent of St Pier Martire and written down some months later upon their request.

Nicolaus mentions three faculties in our soul which are responsible for the soul's judgments: the first is *synderesis* (Nicolaus is following Thomas in regarding

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[43] Ibid., f. 37r: 'E chiama la constientia il letto suo perché come nel'letto noi ci riposiamo…' See Thomas Aquinas, *In Psalmos Davidis expositio*, in *Opera omnia*, vol. 18 (Paris 1876), p. 255: 'Dicit autem, *Lacrymis stratum meum rigabo*, quia etiam in lecto jacens plorando perfundebat pannos lecti, quasi irriguum lacrymarum. Moraliter, lectus in quo homo quiescit, est conscientia, hanc lavat homo per lacrymas in poenitentia…'

[44] Ibid.: 'E per contrario la constientia del peccatore […] mai si riposa, sempre turbata, sempre si rode. Però il vero penitente si sforza di lavar la e nettar la da ogni macula di peccato per uscire di tanta angustia.'

[45] Ibid., f. 38r: 'E non pote Iddio – essendo giustissimo – che sia la bruttura della colpa sanza la bellezza della giustitia. E questo è il rimorso della constientia.'

[46] Ibid., ff. 39r-39v: 'La penitentia vera fa che l'uomo si vergogna de peccati e conturbasi del recordarsene e piglia dispiacere di quel atto disordinatto, non solamente di questo ma etiamdio de peccati…'; 'Concludiamo addunque questo salmo primo… in rachomandarsi a Iddio che non riserbi la punitione al l'ultimo della vita noi, né al l'ultimo giuditio, ma già in questa vita quando siamo nella libertà dello arbitrio apoterci movere di male in bene.'

synderesis as a natural inclination of the soul to do good); the second is *ratio superior vel inferior* (a version of Avicenna's distinction between the potential and the active intellect, and the Aristotelian distinction between theoretical and practical thinking); and the third is *conscientia*. He claims that without these three our soul cannot do either good or evil.[47] This means that without these three mental judges there is no morality, no good or evil. Right deliberation produces good actions; wrong deliberation is the reason for evil actions and vices. Thus this process of deliberation via the three judges is crucial.[48] Conscience is the final judgment just before an act; it considers the proposals of supreme and inferior reason and decides (=concludes) on which way to go.[49] Error can only occur in the judgment of superior and inferior reason; both *sinderesis* and conscience cannot err or sin. *Sinderesis* is naturally attracted to the good and rejects evil, while conscience, since it is neither potency nor intellectual habit of the soul, is not capable of cognition and judgment, and thus it can have no cognition and notion of sin.[50]

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[47] Nicolaus de Mirabilibus, *Libello de conscientia*, MS Florence, Magl. XXXIII, 17, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, f. 1v. Nicolaus is following Augustine's definition of *sinderesis* here: 'Lumen innatum anime concreatum, quo dirigimur et movemur ad ea faciendum que pertinentur ad vitationem culpe et pene, et ad adeptionem glorie.' *Sinderesis* can thus be regarded as the natural light of the soul according to Augustine (f. 2r). Nicolaus moves on to distinguish between speculative and practical intellect: the first is focused on knowing the truth, the second on acting rather than knowing.

[48] Ibid., f. 18r: 'L'anima delibera per questi tre iudici, quello che ha fare del si o del no. Et primo la sinderesi facendo l'officio suo dirà: nessuno male si vuol fare, sempre el bene si vuol acceptare [compare with Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 16, a. 1 (especially the response to the seventh *contra* argument)]. El secondo iudice, cioè la ragione superiore dirà: la superbia, vana gloria, invidia, accidia, et gola è male perché idio l'a prohibito. Et alle volte per contrario: la ragione superiore corropta et viciatta, per qualche habito malo dirà che la luxuria sia buona perché idio l'a dotata con una gran delectatione. E similmente la ragione inferiore se gli è sana e non vitiosa, dirà che rubare, bestemiare, mormorare et cetera sia male, perché egli è contra boni costomi. Così facevano alchuni antiqui philosophi che erano sanza lege divina…'

[49] Ibid., ff. 18r-18v: 'E poi sequita el terzo iudice, cioè la conscientia, la quale facendo l'officio suo proprio determina et fa la conclusione di quello che truova nella ragione superiore o inferiore. Onde se la ragione dirà la tal cosa è buona, quella altra item è bona, sempre la conscientia conclude dicendo adunque si vuol fare. E quando la ragione dice questo e quello non è buono, sempre la conscientia conclude dicendo adunque non si vuol fare. Onde l'officio della conscientia non è altro che dire si vuol fare o non fare secondo che la ragione superiore o inferiore propone.'

[50] Ibid., ff. 18v-19r: 'Dico adunque che propone parlando della constantia, che lei secondo sé non erra, ma tutto errore che può essere nel iuditio del anima procede dalla ragione superiore o inferiore, et questo si pruova inductive così: egli è chiaro e manifesto che la sinderesi mai non può errare in questo, non dicendo altro se non sempre el bene si voli fare, nessuno male si vuol acceptare. A dio sempre si vuol obedire, et in questo iuditio universale della sinderesi non può essere errore veruno, perché secondo Aristotele nell'ethica sua el iuditio dell'anima non erra circa le cose commune et universali se non circa le cose particulari, circa tale et vale quello et questo bene o male. Simmilmente la conscientia non può errare ne peccare, perché la conscientia proprie detta non è una potentia dell'anima, ne uno habito intellettivo. Come pruova san Thomaso nella prima parte, questio 78, articolo 13, e però non può cognoscere ne iudicare se questa o quella cosa è buona o mala. Onde non possendo iudicare del bene o del male non può havere nessuna colpa, ne peccato veruno quanto in sé imperò che secondo tutti

So how come that we have expressions like good or bad conscience? This is because of two different meanings of conscience, 'communiter' and 'proprie'. The first refers to any judgment done by the three judges. The second refers to a common use of the language.[51]

While explaining the reasons for the errors of reason, Nicolaus is following Thomas in arguing that reason and the will do not err with regard to common and universal matters; on the other hand they can err in more than one way with regard to particular matters, especially in the process of drawing conclusions.[52] Interestingly we have seen (n. 29) that Antoninus regarded conscience almost as a *concludens scientia*. Nicolaus also emphasized this 'concluding' role of conscience. Now if this act of concluding is regarded as the weakness of both reason and will, then once again we can say that conscience might have a key role in sorting out the complex relations and much debated contrasts between the intellect and the will.[53]

Moving on to discuss Aristotle's critique of Socrates, Nicolaus claims that experience shows us that even learned men can err, but they do err with regard to particular matters; the example presented by Nicolaus shows his analysis and understanding of moral psychology:

> For example reason says: 'no act of adultery is legitimate'. On the other hand it says: 'every act of adultery is enjoyable'. In those common and universal notions reason judges without error. Then, coming down to more particular matters, reason will say: 'going to this or that woman is adultery'; and even then it does not err in doing and electing the conclusion when reason is constant and is not defeated by some sensual passion, but rather it will choose the right and opposite conclusion while saying: 'one should not go to this person, it is not legitimate or accepted'. But when reason is weaker than sensuality, then it allows itself to be defeated (si lascia vincere)… and defeated by sense it will say: 'let us go then to that person'. Reason now will follow the conclusions derived from that true notion: 'every adultery is enjoyable'; every enjoyable matter is good; and thus going to that woman is good in so far as it is enjoyable.[54]

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dottori ogni peccato actuale presuppone la cognoscentia et notitia, et nemo de ignoto licite punire potesi. Adunque non possendo errare né la sinderesi, né la conscientia proprie… necessario che ogni errore proceda della ragione superiore o inferiore.'

[51] Ibid., f. 19v: 'Per tanto etiam si dice che la conscientia consequentemente erra non perché erra la sinderesi in sé, né la conscientia proprie detta in sé, ma perché el iudicatorio dell'anima erra in quanto la ragione superiore et inferiore erra, et per questo se dice appresso al commune parlare: 'Piero ha una larga et erronea conscientia'; 'Paulo ha verbi gratia una scrupulosa et stretta et periculosa conscientia'; in quanto la ragione erra più et meno, et non perché errassi la conscientia proprie detta.'

[52] Ibid.: 'La ragione e la voluntà non erri nelle cose communi et universali, non dimeno possono errare in più modi cerca le cose particolari et maxime nel fare la conclusione.'

[53] One example of such a debate which took place in Florence in the 1470s is discussed in Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'A Thomist Critique of Marsilio Ficino's Theory of Will and Intellect', in *Harry Austryn Wolfson Jubilee Volume*, English section vol. II (Jerusalem 1965), pp. 463-494.

[54] Nicolaus de Mirabilibus, *Libello de conscientia*, ff. 20r-20v: 'Verbi gratia la ragione dica: 'nessuna fornicatione è licita'. Dell'altro canto dirà: 'ogni fornicatione è delectevole'; et in queste sententie communi et universali la ragione havuto iuditio et non erra; poi descendendo

The essential phrase here is ‘si lascia vincere’. Deceived by sensuality or by a tempting demon reason allows itself to be defeated. Can conscience save the day?

alle cose più particolari dirà: ‘andare a questa o quella donna è fornicatione’; e anche non erra, ma nel fare et elegere la conclusione quando che la ragione è constante et non sia vincta da qualche passione sensuale, elegerà una vera negativa conclusione dicendo: ‘adunque non si vole andare a questa persona, non essendo licito ne conveniente’. Et per contrario quando la ragione è più debile che sia la sensualità, allora si lascia vincere... e così vincta dello senso dirà: ‘adunque andiamo a questa persona’. Allora la ragione sequitarà quella vera sententia, dove diceva: ‘ogni fornicatione è delectevole; ogni cosa delectevole è buona; adunque andare a questa donna è buono in quanto è delectevole.’

Edith Stein's Thomism

Mette Lebech

ABSTRACT:
After her baptism at the age of 32, Stein engaged with Aquinas on several levels. Initially she compared his thought with that of Husserl, then proceeded to translate several of his works, and attempted to explore some of his fundamental concepts (potency and act) phenomenologically. She arrived finally in *Finite and Eternal Being* at a philosophical position inspired by his synthesis of Christian faith and philosophical tradition without abandoning her phenomenological starting point and method. Whether one would want to call this position Thomist depends on what one understands Thomism to be.

Introduction

It is generally known that Stein was a non-believing Jew before her conversion to Catholicism New Year's Day 1922.[55] She encountered Aquinas as a way into the Catholic tradition. Her translation of *De veritate*, which came out after many years of work in 1931 and 32,[56] afforded her the time to habituate herself to his thought world – and with it to the Catholic worldview. She 'became so absorbed by his thought that an inner clash between it and the phenomenological way of philosophising was inevitable.'[57] Her own first formation was as a phenomenologist, first studying with and later being the assistant of Husserl in Göttingen and Freiburg. During this time both Adolph Reinach and Max Scheler had a profound influence on her and each in their own way prepared her for the encounter with the thought of Thomas Aquinas.

Scheler and Reinach's version of phenomenology was, like that of Husserl's *Ideas*, marked by the exploration of the intuition of essences. They shared the understanding that an important task for the discipline of phenomenology is to enable such intuition,[58] which is not exhausted in the achievement of definitions, but rather commands a sustained effort at describing, discerning and clarifying, in order to look afresh and let the phenomena *show themselves forth* in their purity. The purpose is insight – *Wesenschau*. When Husserl's transcendental turn led him to practically support Heidegger as his successor, Reinach came, for the Bergzabern

[55] This article originates as a paper given to the *Centre for Thomistic Studies at St Thomas University*, Heuston, Texas, 21 March 1913. I am grateful to Kathleen Haney for having organised it. It was later given at a Thomas Aquinas Society/Cairde Thomas Naofa conference in Dublin, 7 June 2013.

[56] Edith Stein: *Über die Wahrheit 1-2* (Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe = ESGA, vol. 23-24), (Freiburg – Basel –Wien: Herder, 2008).

[57] A fragmentary foreword to *Potency and Act* is found in 'German Editor's Introduction' in *Potency and Act* (Collected Works of Edith Stein = CWES vol. XI) trans. W. Redmond (Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 2009), p. xxvi.

[58] See for example Adolph Reinach: 'Concerning Phenomenology', trans. Dallas Willard, *The Personalist* 50 (1969), p. 194-221, reprinted in *The Phenomenology Reader*, ed. Moran and Mooney (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) pp. 180-196.

phenomenologisits, to 'stand for' – posthumously – the analysis of essences, Scheler having his mind on other things.[59]

Stein, like Husserl, understood ultimate intuitability to be 'transcendental', and did not see that as conflicting with Reinach's designation of the realm as '*a priori*', a term she also sometimes herself used.[60] Her understanding of the transcendental I as a pole of experience, incontrovertibly linked with experience, is one she shared with all the phenomenologists. In so far as she analysed experience from this point of view she must be called a transcendental phenomenologist. We could, however, just as easily call her a realist phenomenologist, if we by that mean that she, like other early phenomenologists, insists on the importance of eidetic analysis for completing the phenomenological project. She understood the transcendental to be ultimate in relation to us and therefore to experientially reveal the being of the essences (reflecting what she, following Hering, calls 'essentialities'[61]).

A guiding question in Stein's approach to Thomas was in fact that of the transcendental dimension of knowledge (*Erkenntnis*). She had become habituated to the Cartesian starting point and was very familiar with the Kantian intuition of the synthetic *a priori* as structuring for knowledge. She had found in Husserl a methodical approach to take account of these modern insights, anchoring them in transcendental experience. She found it difficult to renounce an eidetic analysis of knowledge.[62] Her reading of Aquinas was to find another way of approaching the transcendental dimension of knowledge, rooted in the necessity of affirming being as an intrinsic part of the scientific endeavour inherited from Aristotle and issuing in a full sketch of the dimensions of a *Seinslehre*.[63]

We shall follow this question of the transcendental dimension of knowledge from its first formulation in the dialogue Stein wrote for the *Festschrift* marking Husserl's seventieth birthday (1), through her treatment of the First Question of *De veritate* (2) and her investigation of *Potency and Act* (3) to *Finite and Eternal Being*'s transformative admittance of truth as the transcendental quality of being which reveals the Trinitarian analogy of being, articulated in natural being, finite spirit and infinite spirit (4).

As Stein progressed from phenomenology through ontology to metaphysics she had a very important fellow traveller, who became her Godmother when she was baptised in 1922: Hedwig Conrad-Martius. Conrad-Martius was not, however, a Catholic, but a protestant Christian, nor was she particularly interested in Thomas Aquinas, but she was, from the beginning of her career as President of the Göttingen

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[59] The excellent work of Jean Hering, 'Bemerkungen über das Wesen, die Wesenheit und die Idee', *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 1921, pp. 495-543 clarifies how the terms were used among the (early) phenomenologists, and does so by application of the method of eidetic analysis itself. For a superb introduction to the Bergzabern Phenomenologists and their understanding of Heidegger's influence, see Joachim Feldes: 'A yet hidden story: Edith Stein and the Bergzabern Circle' in the proceedings of the first IASPES conference, ed. Haydn Gurmin and Mette Lebech, Traugott Bautz, forthcoming.

[60] ESGA 6, p. 9, for her (very infrequent) use of the word 'transzendental', ESGA 5, p. 114 and ESGA 6 p. 200, for her use of 'a priori'.

[61] *Wesenheiten*, ESGA 11-12, III, § 2-3.

[62] ESGA 23, p. 3 ('Vorbemerkung' to the translation-commentary of *De veritate*).

[63] ESGA 11-12, p. 5 ('Vorwort' to *Endliches und ewiges Sein*).

Philosophy Society, profoundly interested in ontology, and in particular in the ontology of the real (as distinct from the ideal). Conrad-Martius insured that the question of a phenomenology of reality was always present to the minds of the early phenomenologists.[64] Stein's dialogue with Conrad-Martius was frank, serious and challenging. Their friendship accompanied Stein to maturity in a direction growing from the same root as herself: phenomenology.

Conrad-Martius survived the war, and published in 1957 an outstanding work called *Das Sein*,[65] (*Being*), in which she presented the fruits of her mature reflections.[66] The first part of *Das Sein* concerns categorical being, the being of states of affairs, something which had already interested Reinach in his theory of Negative Judgement. The insight common to both Conrad-Martius and Reinach is that the affirmation of being forms an integral part of the essence of judgement, such that no phenomenological analysis of the act of judging is possible without an inclusion of its correlate: being. Thus a phenomenological analysis of being should paradoxically be possible, and indeed necessary to complete the phenomenological project of founding the sciences.

Paradoxically Heidegger's way from phenomenology to fundamental ontology followed along a similar path. Conrad-Martius, however, was very critical of Heidegger's approach, which she, like Stein, understood to illegitimately reduce being to the human being (Stein thought it reduced it to the being of the unredeemed human being).[67] To Conrad-Martius being could not be thus arbitrarily limited to the human being because judgement concerns cosmic (natural) being and also infinite or eternal being besides that of the human being. Stein's criticism of Heidegger can be found in an appendix to *Finite and Eternal Being*, and proves that this impetus towards ontology stemming from within the phenomenological tradition already blew like a strong wind in the sails of Stein as she engaged with Thomas Aquinas' thought. She was convinced that the subjects with which he was dealing ultimately had to be the same as those of her times, and thus she read him not as a historian of philosophy would, but as a philosopher does: for the arguments he presents and in order to encounter a perspective to challenge her own.

Erich Przywara SJ, who in the years after her baptism had a mentoring function for Stein, was indeed, in contrast with Conrad-Martius, a Catholic. Stein takes pains in the foreword to *Finite and Eternal Being* to carefully explain the relationship between his *Analogia entis* (1932) and her own work, implying she has

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[64] *Zur Ontologie und Erscheinungslehre der realen Aussenwelt*, in *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Phaenomenologische Forschung*, 1916, pp. 345-542 and *Realontologie* equally in the *Jahrbuch*, but 1923, pp. 139-333. When one is crediting Heidegger with turning phenomenology towards ontology, one should not overlook that the immediate context into which he writes already deals extensively with ontology. For a discussion of Conrad-Martius' Heidegger-critique see Alexandra Pfeiffer: *Hedwig Conrad-Martius. Eine Phänomenologische Sicht auf Natur und Welt* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2005) pp. 43-8.

[65] München, Kösel Verlag.

[66] Stein responded to both *Metaphysische Gespräche* (1921) and *Realontologie* (1923) in *Potenz und Akt* and *Endliches und Ewiges Sein*.

[67] ESGA 11-12, Anhang I: Martin Heideggers Existentialphilosophie, p. 480. Transl. by Mette Lebech as 'Martin Heidegger's Existential Philosophy', *Maynooth Philosophical Papers*, 2007, Maynooth, pp. 55-98, p. 81.

read it in great detail. The most important difference seems to be in their understanding of the role of theology for metaphysics, a topic discussed at length in the *Introduction* to *Finite and Eternal Being*, part 4, entitled 'The meaning and possibility of a Christian Philosophy'.

The most fundamental problem Stein would retain with Aquinas' thought through to *Finite and Eternal Being* was that matter should be the principle of individuation.[68] This problem is linked to our general problem of the transcendental structure of knowledge in that the Aristotelian view reserves a transcendental place for the non-intelligible (matter), something Stein would explain to be unnecessary for the redeemed world-view, in which everything is potentially intelligible in the Word.[69] Apart from such a structural commitment to an idea of pure matter as being in principle non-intelligible[70] there seems to be no teaching of Thomas she did not assimilate, but it must be stressed that that is exactly what she did: *assimilate* Aquinas' thought. Her world view was very much her own, and still very much that of a phenomenologist into her mature years. One would not be able to say that she is *not* (also) a Thomist – but whether one would actually want to call her one, would depend on what one understands by Thomism.[71] One might understand Thomism as a doctrine in which Act and Potency, Form and Matter present definitive formative concepts, the foundation of which is beyond question. Or one could understand Thomism to be a doctrine, which relies on the best available philosophy for interpreting the world with the help of Revelation to form a view of the whole that allows for science to be a reality. On the first view, as we shall see, Stein is not a Thomist. On the second she is.[72]

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[68] Sarah Borden Sharkey: *Thine Own Self. Individuality in Edith Stein's Later Writings* (Washington D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010) also affirms this, but argues that what Stein puts in its stead, 'individual forms', has no advantages compared to Aquinas' solution, and maybe even disadvantages. Stein does think that the individual has an essence, and that essences have essential being, but form and essence are not synonyms for Stein (nor are they indeed for Aristotle). Some of Borden Sharkey's argument relies on an Aristotelian/Thomistic reading of Stein's concept of essence to which the *a priori* (transcendental) nature of essential being remains inaccessible. This is because the understanding of the transcendental realm of essences only can be accessed from within phenomenologically purified experience, as that which informs and structures it. Stein's focus is on the one hand on the individual, as Aristotle's focus was on *ousia*, because it is that without which the world remains unintelligible and on the other on essences of greater or lesser generality. This is another way of expressing what Borden Sharkey rightly affirms, that Stein's concern is not with *individuation*, but with *individuality* (p. 18). It seems to me that Borden Sharkey's placing of Stein into the discussion of individual form slightly dislodges Stein's project and may well generate the problems she sees in her account, in particular as regards the possible devaluation of what is common to human kind.

[69] ESGA 11-12, IV, §4, 5.

[70] One could say she reserves a place for understanding matter as unintelligible, namely as characteristic of the unredeemed world view.

[71] See Borden Sharkey op. cit., pp. xvii-xx: 'Edith Stein and Thomism' for the various points of view that have been expressed on the matter.

[72] It would be awkward to call Stein's philosophy 'scholastic', except if what one means by that is simply 'academic', i.e. conducted in the 'Schools', i.e. in or around the institutional setting of the University. But this would include most contemporary philosophy, which

1. The *Festschrift* Article

On the occasion of Husserl's seventieth birthday, a *Festschrift* was prepared for him by his students and associates. The first version of the article Stein contributed presents Aquinas in a dialogue with Husserl on the eve of the latter's birthday.[73] It was later rewritten at the instigation of the editor of the *Festschrift*, Martin Heidegger, to omit the dialogue form, but retain all the points. As Stein in the first version portrays the characters of her interlocutors as well as their philosophical divergences, this version is enriched by the wealth of information one gathers from an attitude displayed by a character.[74] Stein's familiarity with her characters is obtained from her engagement with the work of both authors, and in the case of Husserl, also through personal acquaintance. The characters present her understanding of their ideal selves engaging in a dialogue the basis of which lies outside time. Stein's Aquinas (SAquinas) has a clear grasp of what distinguishes his position from Husserl's, and moreover has the benefit of hindsight of more than 700 years. This allows him to explain his position to Husserl, and also at times to explain Husserl's position to Husserl. Since the article is addressed to Husserl as a gift, it is mostly Aquinas that Stein lets speak, possibly to avoid phrases Husserl would find alienating. The interpretation of his thought by his student Stein is thus put in the mouth of SAquinas, but whether a Thomist would find this Aquinas an accurate intellectual portrayal might be a subject of contention. Stein's Husserl (SHusserl), in contrast, sometimes will not discuss a point or looses himself in thought to the point where an answer is not forthcoming. Such foibles must have been clear enough to all and also to Husserl, for him not to be offended by their humoristic portrayal. Alternatively, Stein is making a point (which Heidegger as an editor might have wanted to mitigate). The impression is of two characters genuinely attempting to understand each other's view point in a highly complex but serene debate.

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would jar with the implicit understanding that 'scholastic' refers to a type of philosophy conducted within a specific time period past (however one defines this period), which accepted faith as a source of knowledge. Stein does accept faith as a source of knowledge, but that seems nevertheless insufficient to characterise the thought as 'scholastic', except if one believes that the tradition of scholastic philosophy is not restricted to the past. See Borden Sharkey op. cit. p. 56-72: 'The Scholastic and Phenomenological Traditions'.

[73] The title of the published article was 'Husserl and Aquinas, a Comparison', 1929. The first version of the article, 'Was ist Philosophie? Ein Gespräch zwischen Edmund Husserl und Thomas von Aquino', was published first in Edith Stein: *Erkenntnis und Glaube*, Edith Steins Werke = ESW (the first Herder edition of Stein's works), Bd. XV (Freiburg – Basel – Wien: Herder, 1993). It will appear shortly in ESGA 9, as the last of the ESGA volumes. The two versions were translated into English and helpfully presented alongside each other for comparison by Walther Redmond, in Edith Stein: *Knowledge and Faith*, CWES 8 (Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 2000) pp. 1-63.

[74] Erich Przywara also appreciated the 'artistic value' of this piece. 'Edith Stein. Zu ihrem zehnten Todestag' in *In und Gegen* (Nürnberg: Glock und Lutz, 1955), quoted in Andreas Speer und Francesco Tommasi: 'Einleitung' in *Thomas von Aquin, Über die Wahrheit 1* (ESGA 23), p. XXI.

The dialogue starts out by Aquinas affirming his accord with Husserl in philosophy having to be done 'as a rigorous science', as a 'serious, sober inquiry of reason'.[75] Then five important points of divergence are identified and the position of both thinkers on these points is discussed. The points are (1) the role of faith in philosophy, (2) the need for a starting point for philosophical inquiry, (3) the relationship between the I and the absolute I, (4) empirical and/or eidetic methods and (5) the nature of intuition.

(1) For SAquinas faith is necessary for the completion of the work of reason, such that philosophy as a rigorous science cannot be completed without it. SHusserl, in contrast, objects that a distinction between natural and supernatural reason would jar with the transcendentality of philosophy, where such distinctions have no place. SAquinas, however, finding ways to understand and take SHusserl's perspective, reproaches SHusserl for not seeing the (essential) limits of human reasoning, which deems our philosophy to be fragmentary, and intimates that this fragmentation can be overcome only with the help of faith. SHusserl retorts he never intended to contest the right of faith for religion, but denies it can have a decisive role for philosophy. Thus the distinction between natural and supernatural reason is accepted by him and SAquinas is able to follow up by introducing a corresponding distinction between natural and supernatural philosophy: metaphysics relying on both. About metaphysics relying on both, he comments in a parenthesis:

> (The loss of the appreciation for this fact accounts for the abstruse character of all modern philosophy and at the same time, quite consistently, for the mistrust of metaphysics felt by so many modern thinkers.)[76]

It remains that the certitude of faith remains a question of faith, and thus that modern philosophy is justified in its mistrust if it does not want to rely on it. SAquinas clearly has an understanding for this, but he is equally insistent that metaphysics cannot achieve its goal without faith.

(2) Thus the question of whether there is a need for a starting-point in philosophy presents itself. To SAquinas it is clear that modern philosophers, who exclude faith and make do with natural knowledge must first search for a starting-point for their inquiry. He presents Husserl's quest for a realm of genuine immanence within the transcendentally purified consciousness as prolonging this quest for a knowledge that is absolutely certain, absolutely one with its object. But he does not think this quest can succeed without faith in God, who *is* this knowledge identical with is object. The quest is not fruitless, however. It led to a 'methodological purity, perhaps unknown before'.[77] As he contemplates it, SAquinas admits his dependence

[75] *Knowledge and Faith* op. cit. p. 8.
[76] This is SAquinas' explanatory comment. *Knowledge and Faith* op. cit. p. 19. He continues a bit later: 'I should add, by the way, that you will find scarcely anything of what I have just been saying about the relation of faith and reason in my writings. For me it was all a self-evident starting-point. I am speaking now from a later reflection on how I actually proceed, as it is needed today for a rapprochement with moderns' p. 20.
[77] Ibid., p. 24.

on the methods of his time and confesses his ultimate intentions of serving truth and peoples' peace of mind. His is a 'philosophy for life'.[78]

(3) It is thus on the issue of first truth, on the relation between the pure (or transcendental) I and the absolute I, that their philosophies must part ways. SAquinas explains how Husserl's transcendental phenomenology *is* general ontology, but 'with a radical shift of sign' and admits there is room in his own philosophy for accommodating constitutional analyses – i.e. analyses of how things are constituted for consciousness – but not as fundamental. SHusserl, however, does not wish to enter into discussion of the difference between the ego and God, but is far from admitting defeat.[79]

(4) Instead he changes the topic and wishes to ask how SAquinas views the distinction between essence and fact, since it is fundamental to ontology as SHusserl understands it (material and regional ontologies investigating the essence of the various subjects of the sciences, under which the facts sort). SAquinas admits he 'did not distinguish them as a matter of methodological principle'.[80] What he was after was the broadest possible picture of *this* world and indeed of it as the basis for the best action (a motive SAquinas also explicitly ascribes to SHusserl). But he did distinguish between essence and accident and considered that which applies to things according to their essence as the 'basic scaffolding of the world'.[81] Although the play of free possibilities was not his concern, eidetic analyses conducted through such variation were granted by SHusserl's students to scholastic enquiries according to SAquinas, and it allowed them to access these latter.

(5) And thus we come to the last discussion concerning intuition or essence-viewing (*Wesenschau*), which is the longest of them all. An immediate vision of essence seems to be available to Husserl as *a priori*. About it SAquinas states that *Wesenschau* 'may well have been the greatest stumbling block in your philosophy for Kantians and neo-scholastics' alike.[82] Such immediacy as regards the knowledge of essences obtains only for the blessed in Heaven or indeed for God, according to SAquinas. On the other hand, it also obtains for our knowledge of principles.[83] SAquinas is not keen to admit such immediate (*a priori*) knowledge to essences in *statu via*, but admits they may be obtained through reasoning, such as for example eidetic variation. But the knowledge of them is mediate in another sense, it is mediated through *species*. 'Knowledge of the species themselves, on the other hand, is not knowledge through species. But it is still mediate in the first sense of being acquired actively.'[84] Thus SAquinas is open for the possibility of phenomenological essences being equivalent to the species through which we gain knowledge of things, and as knowledge of the species is reflexive, it is immediate in that it is not mediated through species. Only the blessed can intuit this fully, as they do so in the Word whom they see face to face (and see the world through). For us in *statu via*, the

[78] Ibid., p. 27-8.
[79] Ibid., p. 32-3.
[80] Ibid., p. 34.
[81] Ibid., p. 36.
[82] Ibid., p. 39.
[83] Ibid., p. 50.
[84] Ibid., p. 56.

intuition of essence is never completely fulfilled, although it helps us clarify our understanding. It remains that for us the intuition of essence is immediate in two senses (only): it is *not* known through effects, and it is *not* empty. This is very little in comparison to the intuition of essence completely fulfilled.

It may well be that this last question concerning intuition is what allows for the most fruitful interaction between phenomenologists and Thomists. It possibly is the fundamental one involving the rest, as it also touches on the relationship between the essences and the Ideas, and therefore also on the relationship between the human I and God.

2. The Translation-Commentary of *De veritate*

Stein had thus outlined the differences between the two standpoints she set out to bridge and integrate.[85] She continues this integration in a new key in her translation-commentary of *De veritate,* which also bears the title: 'Aquinas' teaching on Knowledge according to the *Quaestiones de veritate*'[86] – a systematic title true to her intentions to penetrate to the meaning of what Aquinas says by means of her 'translation'. To this end Thomas' text is restructured, abbreviated and provided with succinct and insightful resumés and critical comments, attempting to penetrate – as always – to the matters under discussion and not only to what Thomas says.

This way of proceeding – successful only because of its meticulous precision – highlights the epochal difference between the presuppositions of classical and modern philosophy.[87] The thoroughness lets Stein 'discover' things obvious to the careful and persistent reader, which easily evaporates when doctrinal consistency takes precedence. Aquinas, for instance, taught in fact that God and angels have knowledge of the individual, something which reveals that he thought that individuation by matter (by the principle of non-intelligibility) did not matter to them.[88] Thus individuality as such cannot be unintelligible (and he could not reasonably have thought it was), since it is not unintelligible to superior intellects. In so far as he thought that the true is what being is in relation to knowledge, and that being is the

[85] 'Wenn es nur ein Kern von Wahrheit hier und dort ist, so muss es auch eine Brücke geben'. ESGA 23, p. 4. The 'Vorbemerkung' is found in Stein's *Handexemplar*, where she has inserted it in her own handwriting, and reconstructed carefully by the editors.

[86] Ibid., p. 3.

[87] A publication of the work as a translation has occurred (Wiesbaden: Marixverlag 2013 (Kindle)) with a foreword of Bruno Kern. He presents the work in the introduction ('Von der Vollkommenheit der Geschöpfe gering denken heißt die Vollkommenheit der göttlichen Macht herabmindern') in the following manner: 'Die Textabschnitte der einzelnen Artikel sind so zusammengestellt, dass der Grundgedanke und die wesentlichen Argumentationsschritte leicht nachvollziebar werden und die Leser und Leserinnen sich nicht in einem Labyrinth unterschiedlicher Argumentationsketten verlieren. Mit guten Überleitungen fügt sie die Texte so aneinander, dass der Hauptgedanke klar hervortritt. Jede Questio wird mit einer äußerst erhellenden Zusammenfassung der wesentlichen Gedanken beschlossen.' This edition might well allow the work to be read in the manner in which it was intended, as an introduction to Aquinas' own thought.

[88] ESGA 23, Q. VIII, a. 11. Aquinas: *De veritate* Q. VIII, a. 11.

first object of the intellect (i.e. that which it primarily knows), no being can in fact be in principle unintelligible.[89] This transcendental insight about knowledge and about being remains the stepping stone for Stein from phenomenology to Thomist ontology, since it constitutes the transcendental core of being, knowledge and truth.

3. *Potency and Act*

Because we know that *Finite and Eternal Being* resulted from Stein's rewriting of *Potency and Act* for publication, we are tempted to read the latter as an earlier version of the former. That is helpful in so far as the latter work is, according to the subtitle, 'studies toward a philosophy of being' and seeks, like *Finite and Eternal Being,* to ascend to the meaning of being. The two works are, however, profoundly different. The concept of matter as a structural feature present in the first work has been superseded in the second and no longer serves as an opposite to pure act to account for order in the universe, or for the difference between regional (material) and formal ontology.

Potency and Act is an attempt to clarify what potency and act mean, from within experience (i.e., phenomenologically), and in accordance with both Aquinas' and Husserl's use of the terms. Apart from understanding what those terms mean (i.e. conducting an eidetic analysis of them), Stein is exploring their role for Thomas's and Husserl's understanding of the whole, of all there is to know, of being. She says herself that her work issues from an attempt to understand the 'method' of Aquinas, to expose the *Organon* of his fundamental concepts, something she also struggled with in her early comparison/dialogue.[90] She finds it necessary to do so because Thomas does not explore his own method, and because she as a philosopher must find out whether the reliance on these terms is justified or not. Her own method is thus an 'objective' (*sachlichen*) analysis of Aquinas' fundamental concepts, i.e. an investigation of the realities expressed in the concepts, a penetration towards their meaning, towards 'the things themselves' in order to assess the validity of the concepts.[91] As potency and act divide and concern being in its entirety, penetration towards their meaning is likewise a way of approaching the whole of being, as indeed Aquinas did with the help of this distinction, following a well-established tradition.

In the work we see being occurring under three forms – the internal world, the external world and the beyond of the world – spirit in persons and ideas, nature in material things, and the absolute in that towards which both of these point for the explanation of their existence. Both of the latter announce themselves in the former in virtue of their transcendence, their reality or material fullness (*Fülle*), and all admit of a meaning to potency and act. This meaning, however, cannot be investigated in a purely formal manner, as act and potency concerns the *content* of being. This is why Stein's analysis of potency and act must take the form of a presentation of the analogy of being, of act and potency as bearing on spirit, nature and their presupposition in absolute being. The formal ontology of potency and act cannot be

[89] *De ver*., Q.1 a.1.
[90] *Potenz und Akt*, ESGA 10, p. 4 (Vorwort), CWES XI p. 1.
[91] Ibid., pp. 4-5. CWES XI pp. 9-11.

investigated in isolation and thus the transcendental investigation of knowledge (of what these terms *mean*) leads over into an investigation of reality in its basic articulations (of what these terms *refer to*).[92]

In *Potency and Act* Stein works with several of her characteristic ideas: the ontological status of ideal or essential being, knowledge of the individual, in particular of the human individual, the nature of matter, the core of the person, evolution and life. The contrasting of the scholastic and the phenomenological approach already yields significant results. On the one hand the phenomenologically experienced unity of the I makes Aquinas' understanding of the immateriality of the soul show up as being in contrast with the idea that what individuates everything, and thus also the soul, should be matter. On the other hand the incontrovertible being of the I, as underlined by Husserl, makes it impossible to avoid the ontological investigation (of the *being* of the I) to which Aquinas' contributes.

4. *Finite and Eternal Being*

The novice mistress and subprior at St Maria *des Friedens*, Sr Teresia Renata, somewhat unexpectedly encouraged Stein to finish *Potency and Act* for publication, having a high regard for Stein's abilities and for what she must have seen as Stein's special mission. As Stein undertook this work, her external circumstances had changed: she no longer was under an economic obligation to teach or to pursue a career, time was regularly given over to writing and the quiet disengagement from the world left her room to think and study within the safe, but austere, haven of a religious community, hidden in a world marked by terror and violence.

Finite and Eternal Being takes, compared to *Potency and Act,* a different direction already in the first chapter, where Stein reflects on the possibility of (or indeed the necessity for) a Christian philosophy to account for the structure of reality. Maritain had claimed for moral philosophy the need to be supported by Christian principles for the moral philosopher to accede to moral truth, not only because grace would strengthen his intellectual powers, but because Christian doctrine underpins it (the dignity and equality of all human beings as children of God, love as their vocation). Stein claims this support for philosophy as such – not only anthropology, but also ontology, as indeed the revelation in the Word of God is of a God that *wants* relation and *is* relation, in which all relations find their ultimate meaning as the meaning of being. The idea that philosophy could achieve its goal (*perfectum opus rationis*) without recourse to Revelation was still – if only implicitly – affirmed in *Potency and Act*. Now it is denied: philosophy achieves its purpose through theology, but not *as* theology.

The consideration of formal ontology is now replaced by a phenomenological analysis of essence and essentiality.[93] This is due to the fact that *form* along with *matter* now seems secondary compared to essence to Stein (and with form and matter

[92] ESGA 10, III, §4.
[93] Stein conducts this inquiry in dialogue with Jean Hering, op. cit.

the distinction between formal and material ontology[94]). A close discussion of Aristotle has the purpose of determining the relationship between his concept of essence (*to ti en einai*) and the phenomenological one. In the course of this investigation the concepts of substance and form are equally discussed to determine their relevance for the phenomenological concept of essence, and the ideas of matter, mass and material (*Stoff*) are compared, so as to clarify the Aristotelian concept of matter on the one hand and penetrate towards an adequate understanding of concreteness, and of the bearer (*hypostasis*, *Träger*) of the being and its essence on the other.

Having discussed essence in relation to concreteness, Stein turns in chapter V towards being as such, i.e. towards the transcendentals: the being something, one, true, good and beautiful of everything. The divisions of being into spirit, nature and infinite being has revealed all being, transcendent and immanent, as standing in a potential (or real) relationship with spirit (everything stands in a relationship with the divine spirit), and hence opened up the possibility of everything being true and good, i.e. of everything being known and being appreciated for what it is. Knowledge, in so far as it is a relationship to the object, 'helps to build up the *what* of knowledge and is the condition of its reality'.[95] It belongs to all being to be open to be the object of such knowledge: that is what is meant by characterising truth as a transcendental. 'Being is (even if its full meaning is not exhausted by this) being revealed to the spirit'.[96]

The meaning of being treated in chapter VI relies on this division internal to being between nature and spirit, which allows being a meaning, i.e. a 'being for', a 'being revealed'. This meaning amounts to being as such standing in a definite relationship with a certain type of being, namely spirit, and thus it amounts to a relationship internal to being, which is itself intelligible, like being, and intelligible because it *is.*

What is common to the meaning of (all finite) being (where essence and being differ) is that it is the:

> *unfolding of a meaning; essential being is timeless unfolding beyond the difference between potency and act; real being is unfolding out of an essential form, from potency to act, in time and space; the being of thought is unfolding in several senses* (..).[97]

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[94] The distinction between form and content, empty form and fulfilment or 'filling' now moves to the forefront to account for the family likenesses of things. Form and content are distinct through the type of understanding (*Anschauung*) we can have of them: The content when contemplated allows the spirit to come to rest in the ultimate essentialities, the abstracted form refers beyond itself because of its emptiness and hence does not allow the spirit to rest in the same way. *Endliches und ewiges Sein* (ESGA 11-12) V, § 2, p. 242. This, however, does not cancel the idea of formal ontology but rather completes it as metaphysics: 'Alles Seiende ist Fülle in einer Form. Die Formen des Seienden herauszustellen ist die Aufgabe der Wissenschaft, die Husserl als '*formale Ontologie*' bezeichnet hat.' Ibid., p. 243.

[95] *Endliches und ewiges Sein* (ESGA 11-12), V,§ 10, p. 254. My translation.

[96] Ibid., p. 258. My translation.

[97] Ibid., VI, § 1, pp. 284-5. My translation; corresponding passage CWES IX p. 331.

Apart from unfolding, being also is, in accordance with its transcendental characteristics, one, true, good, beautiful and something, something with content (*erfülltes*). 'We *mean* this complete fullness, when we talk of "being". But a finite spirit cannot comprehend this fullness fully. It is the infinite task of insight.'[98]

The contrast between formal and material ontology – between form and content as understood by Husserl[99] – is replaced by one of ideal and real being, while essence moves to the foreground to replace form and matter as basic concepts. The idea of being as a hierarchy involving various degrees of actuality – as taken from Aquinas – is abandoned, and being is seen as instead reflecting a circular movement of mutual implication (that of the Trinity) in spirit, nature and absolute being. The meaning of being is approached as the happening and valuing of this reflection as experienced. The struggle with the principle of individuation turns into praise of the meaning of each individual being, and in particular of the individual human being. The thinking through act and potency to finite and eternal being has made the analogy of being unfold, with leftovers from both the phenomenological and the scholastic tradition falling away. This is an attempt to ascend to the meaning of being, as the subtitle indicates, no longer by penetrating to the meaning of act and potency (as in *Potency and Act*), but by penetrating experience to the meaning of being itself. The rewriting of *Potency and Act* made Stein accomplish a shift in presuppositions: as the concepts of form and matter were replaced, a new phenomenological ontology became possible on a Christian foundation, i.e. in the *Logos*. The transcendental structure of knowledge now takes its place at the heart of ontology, opening up the distinction between nature and spirit and leaving room for an infinite spirit whose correspondence with being in truth is identical to itself, and has revealed itself in Christ.

Conclusion

In so far as the idea that matter is the principle of individuation is not essential to Thomism, and in so far as form and matter, and act and potency can be investigated for their adequacy as concepts to deal with being, whether ideal or real, one can call Stein's ontology Thomist or Thomistic. More importantly however, Stein's ontology is an attempt to advance Christian philosophy in the tradition of the *philosophia perennis*, to which also Aquinas wanted to contribute. It may be more fruitful to see them both as parallel endeavours of the same species, instead of trying to place Stein's as a subspecies of the species to which Aquinas' philosophy belongs.

The fact that she is a Thomist and a phenomenologist (only) in so far as she is both, challenges us to cross categories established by major events in the history of ideas. This challenge was one she was aware of having a special vocation to meet, but also one which she considered to belong to the philosophical discipline as such. To her philosophy remained first and foremost systematic, the history of ideas would

[98] Ibid., p. 286: 'We mean this total fullness when we speak of 'being'. But a finite spirit is never able to apprehend this fullness in the unity of a fulfilling intuition. It is the infinite task of our knowing.' My translation; corresponding passage CWES IX, p. 332.
[99] *Logical Investigations* V, 2, § 14-15.

have to be, and here she is again in agreement with both Aquinas and Husserl, a discipline enabling eidetic variation as much as relying on it.

John Baconthorpe on Soul, Body and Extension

Simon F. Nolan

ABSTRACT:
John Baconthorpe (c.1290-1345/8) was the best-known of the Carmelite scholastics in the Middle Ages. This article is a brief study of his solution to the philosophical problem of how the soul may be wholly present in the human body and present whole and undivided in each part. Baconthorpe's account is of great interest for a number of reasons. He takes issue with one of his fellow Carmelite masters, alerting us to diversity of opinion within that 'school'. Furthermore, in using terminology and illustrative analogies drawn from terminist logic and the mathematical sciences, Baconthorpe is an important witness to what has been described as the 'mathematization' of philosophy and theology in late medieval England. Finally, study of Baconthorpe's texts provides further evidence of the emergence of the theme of extension in fourteenth-century thought in which we can discern the roots of modern philosophical debate.

Introduction

In Plato's *Phaedrus* Socrates declares: 'to describe what the soul actually is would require a long account, altogether a task for a god in every way.'[100] Unperturbed, many thinkers over the ages have attempted this 'god-like' task of giving a philosophical account of the soul and, more particularly, its relationship to the body.

In the late Middle Ages much of the philosophical discussion concerning the relationship between the soul and the body concerned itself with three problems. First, there was the *interaction* problem: how do soul and body interact with one another in a causal way given they are such different substances? Secondly, there was the *unification* problem: how could soul and body, such apparently separate and diverse substances, be united under the identity of a unique and unified entity such as, for example, a human being? Thirdly, there was the *extension* problem: how could the soul, as the form of the body, be present *as a whole in every part* of the body without being subject to spatial extension?

In the early fourteenth-century thinkers placed particular emphasis on the extension problem and considered it within the context of a wider concern to articulate a metaphysics of presence. The challenge to Eucharistic theology to give an account of the natural extension of Christ's body which is manifestly not circumscribed in the Sacrament was seen to be analogous to the difficulty of explaining how the soul is present in the body in a dynamic way without itself being spatially extended.[101]

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[100] Plato, *Phaedrus* 246a, transl A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. J. M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997) p. 524.

[101] See P.J.J.M. Bakker, *La raison et le miracle: les doctrines eucharistiques (c.1250-c.1400). Contribution à l'étude des rapports entre philosophie et théologie* (Nijmegen: Katholieke

For many late medieval thinkers the key to dealing with such problems of presence and extension was to posit a *forma corporeitatis* or 'corporeal form' in addition to the rational soul and thereby insist upon a plurality of substantial form in the human being. Some kind of form of the body or of 'bodiliness' was considered necessary to underscore the theological doctrines of the resurrection and the cult of relics; the issue was that of asserting the numerical identity of the human body through life, death and resurrection. In time to assert the contrary position and to insist (along with a thinker such as Thomas Aquinas (d.1274)) on the unicity of substantial form was to incur official censure. Although a condemnation of the unicity theory is absent from the Parisian condemnation of 1277, Archbishop of Canterbury, John Peckham's 1286 condemnation explicitly targeted it.[102]

The subject of this article, the Carmelite John Baconthorpe, conforms to the plurality thesis in relation to substantial form. There is nothing remarkable about this but what is interesting is the way in which he sees the potential in the plurality thesis for extricating the rational soul from issues of spatial extension. Equally intriguing are the kind of analogies Baconthorpe employs in his attempt to solve the extension problem by explaining the way in which the rational soul may be wholly present as form of the body and present as a whole in every part of the human being.

Study of John Baconthorpe on soul, body and extension is important for a number of reasons. First, paying attention to early Carmelite scholastics such as Baconthorpe is an indispensible part of the current move among scholars of medieval philosophy to deepen our understanding of the intellectual history of the early fourteenth-century, thus moving away from the 'Gilsonian paradigm' of thirteenth-century superiority. Secondly, reading Baconthorpe on the relationship between body and soul provides us with an example of early dispute among Carmelite doctors: Baconthorpe takes issue with the views of Gerard of Bologna, first Carmelite doctor at the University of Paris and former Prior General of the Order, who advocated the unicity of substantial form in human beings. Thirdly, Baconthorpe is an important witness to a discernible change in philosophical terminology which takes place at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Philosophical discussions of the period become replete with 'extension-type' language. Previously there was ample discussion concerning quantity, the subject of quantity, quantity's role in individuation and the relationship between whole and parts. The fourteenth-century focus in thought and in terminology on issues of extension helps to build up a picture of very real continuity of discussion in medieval, Renaissance and modern thought.[103] Fourthly, reading Baconthorpe's discussion of soul body and extension is a contribution to the

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Universiteit, 1999). Also K. Plotnik, *Hervaeus Natalis OP and the Controversies over the Real Presence and Transubstantiation* (Munich-Paderborn-Vienna: F. Schönigh Verlag, 1970).

[102] For a discussion of the philosophical and theological controversy surrounding the unicity-plurality of substantial form see Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York-Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1995).

[103] See D. Des Chene, *Life's Form: Late Aristotelian Conceptions of the Soul* (Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 2000), especially Chapter 9 'Divisible Souls', pp. 171-189, for a survey of discussion of soul, body and extension among Renaissance thinkers. With an eye to continuity of the debate into later centuries Des Chene highlights (p. 171, n. 2) the later exasperation of Pierre Gassendi when faced with (what Gassendi regarded as) Descartes's dogmatism in asserting that mind *must not* be extended without much supporting argument.

wider medieval preoccupation with the metaphysics of presence. Fifthly, Baconthorpe's style of argumentation, employing as it does terminology and illustrative examples from 'the exact sciences' (such as geometry) gives us some insight into the way English theologians liked to do their theology with their strong background in the mathematical sciences. In short, Baconthorpe is an important witness to what William Courtenay has described as the 'mathematisation of theology' in England in the late medieval period; it will be noted later in this article that the terminology the Carmelite master employs shows a certain affinity with that of the Oxford Mertonists.[104] Finally, reading Baconthorpe helps us to trace the impact of the Condemnations of 1277 and 1286 on the subsequent development of thought.

After a brief presentation of the life and work of Baconthorpe, some consideration will be given to the position of Gerard of Bologna since Baconthorpe articulates his own views in reaction to those of his Carmelite confrere. Then Baconthorpe's solution to the problem of soul, body and extension will be presented and followed by some concluding remarks.

1. John Baconthorpe

The best-known of the early Carmelite scholastics, John Baconthorpe, was born in England around 1290.[105] In the past scholars have suggested that he read the *Sentences*

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[104] W.J. Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth-century England* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 258-262. Edward Grant points to the profound differences between English universities and the university of Paris in relation to the study of the exact sciences in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: 'The emphasis on the exact sciences was not, however, of equal breadth and scope in all medieval universities. Although they formed an integral part of the curriculum at Oxford from the thirteenth century onward, they received much less emphasis at Paris and other places. For example, mathematics was not regularly taught at Paris in the thirteenth century and only sporadically in the fourteenth.' (E. Grant, *The Nature of Natural Philosophy in the Late Middle Ages* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), p. 20). Elsbieta Jung highlights the 'new theology' which emerged in England as result of the engagement with the exact sciences on the part of theologians: 'There were three main disciplines in which Englishmen were the leaders: terminist logic, mathematical physics and a new theology based on methods and insights achieved in the first two areas.' (E. Jung, 'The Concept of Time in Richard Kilvington' in G.Alliney and L. Cova, eds., *La concettualizzazione del tempo nel pensiero tardomedievale. Atti de Colloquio internazionale (Trieste, 4-6 marzo 1999)* (Firenze: Olshki, 2000), pp. 187-205, p. 187). John Baconthorpe can be seen to be a proponent of this innovative approach among English scholars.

[105] For studies of John Baconthorpe, *Doctor resolutus*, see the following: S. Nolan, 'John Baconthorpe' in H. Lagerlund, ed., *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), pp. 594-597; R. Cross, 'John Baconthorpe', in Jorge J. E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone, eds., *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, (Malden MA-Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 338-339; J. Etzwiler, 'Baconthorpe and Latin Averroism: the Doctrine of the Unique Intellect', in *Carmelus* 18 (1979), pp. 235-292; J. Etzwiler, 'John Baconthorpe: 'Prince of the Averroists?'', in *Franciscan Studies* 36 (1976), pp. 148-176; L. Kennedy, 'John Baconthorpe O.Carm. and Divine Absolute Power', in *Carmelus* 38 (1991), pp. 63-68; M.C. Linenbrink, 'The Universal and Its Relation to the Phantasised Object According to John

of Peter Lombard at Paris before 1318. However, recent scholarship proposes 1320-21 as a more likely dating. Baconthorpe had incepted as master in the theology faculty at Paris by 1323.[106] He edited his commentary on the *Sentences* around 1325. Baconthorpe's three sets of *Quaestiones quodlibetales* were disputed from 1323 to 1325 and in 1330: *Quodlibet* I (1323-1324), *Quodlibet* II (1324-1325), *Quodlibet* III (1330). He produced a second redaction of his commentary on book IV of the *Sentences* around 1340. Baconthorpe was Prior Provincial of the Carmelites in England from 1327 (possibly 1326) to 1333 and taught at Cambridge and probably at Oxford. He died around 1348 (possibly of Plague). Baconthorpe's teaching was so highly regarded in his order that both his *Sentences* commentary and his *Quodlibeta* were printed several times in the early modern era. Indeed by the seventeenth century he had effectively become the 'official' theologian of the Carmelites. Key to his status as preeminent Carmelite theologian was his defence of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and his writings concerning the history and spiritual tradition of his order and the importance of its early thirteenth-century Rule. Later English Carmelite scholastics, Osbert Pickenham (late 14th century) and Richard Lavenham (d. 1399), both cite a commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* by Baconthorpe but this is not known to survive.[107]

In common with other early Carmelite scholastics, Baconthorpe reveals himself to be a consistent if somewhat eclectic thinker. His own thinking is most often developed in dialogue with the thought of major figures such as Henry of Ghent (c.1217-1293), John Duns Scotus (c.1266-1308) and Peter Auriol (c.1280-1322). Baconthorpe frequently takes issue with Thomas Aquinas and both presents and criticises key doctrines of Giles of Rome (c.1247-1316) and Godfrey of Fontaines (c.1250-1304). Baconthorpe was an *opponens* of Thomas Bradwardine (c.1290-1349), specifically on the issue of freewill and predestination. An interesting aspect of his work is Baconthorpe's willingness to engage critically with the thought of other Carmelite scholastics such as Gerard of Bologna (d.1317) and his one-time Carmelite teachers at Paris and Oxford, Guido Terreni (d.1342) and Robert Walsingham (d.1313).

Throughout his work Baconthorpe is keen to present himself as a true interpreter of Aristotle. Frequently he is content to settle an argument *secundum Philosophum* without much supporting theological discussion; the text we will refer to later is a classic example of this. Another characteristic of Baconthorpe's thinking is his tendency to *conclude* his arguments at key points with the aid of Averroes's commentaries. This led to his being given the rather exaggerated title *Princeps*

Baconthorp', in *The Modern Schoolman* 42 (1965), pp. 353-374; C. Schabel, 'Carmelite Quodlibeta' in Christopher Schabel, ed., *Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages: The Fourteenth Century*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2007, pp. 493-541; J. Wippel (1994) 'Godfrey of Fontaines (b. ca. 1250; d. 1306/09), Peter of Auvergne (d. 1303), and John Baconthorpe (d. 1345/48) in Jorge J. E. Gracia, ed., *Individuation in Scholasticism: The Later Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation 1150-1650* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 221-256; B. Xiberta (1931) *De scriptoribus scholasticis saeculi XIV ex ordine Carmelitarum* (Louvain: 1931), pp. 167-240.

[106] See C. Schabel, 'Carmelite Quodlibeta', pp. 493-541.

[107] R. Sharpe, *A Handlist of Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland before 1540* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), p. 208.

Averroistarum in sixteenth-century Padua in the *Libellus de immortalitate animae* of Agostino Nifo (c.1469-1538).[108] It has to be said that Baconthorpe's title as 'Prince [or 'chief'] of the Averroists' has little really to do with his overall doctrinal affiliations and is more a recognition of his skill in *explaining* the doctrine of Averroes, particularly concerning the unique intellect. Baconthorpe's undeniable eclecticism may deny to his works the last degree of originality but it does give rise to a strong positive commitment on his part to the meticulous presentation of the opinions of other scholastics in preparation for declaring his own position. For this reason Baconthorpe's works are highly significant for the insight they afford into the state of philosophical and theological debate in the early fourteenth century.

2. Gerard of Bologna

Baconthorpe articulates his own views on soul, body and extension in reaction to the views of an earlier Carmelite scholastic, Gerard of Bologna, the first Carmelite master at the University of Paris in the Middle Ages, who incepts in 1295, becoming Prior General of the Order in 1297.[109] Unlike Baconthorpe, Gerard advocated the unicity of substantial form; in other words, he does not argue for corporeal form in addition to the rational soul. However, this led him to be wonder whether this might not lead one to having to say that the rational soul, as unique form of the body in human beings, is in some way extended along with the extension of matter, quantity being one of the Aristotelian categories of accident. Gerard deals with the issue in his *Quodlibet* II, q. 19 (c.1307) and (at considerable length) in *Quodlibet* III, q. 7 (c. 1308). His ultimate position is agnostic: he can see plenty of arguments for the position that the soul *might* be extended *per accidens* but is completely at a loss to determine the issue.

Gerard's position attracted significant contemporary comment. He was strongly opposed on the issue by the Dominican Hervaeus Natalis (c.1250-1323), an early promotor of the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas within his Order.[110] In addition, the anonymous Scotist of Vat. Lat. 869 is an important source for contemporary reaction to Gerard's doctrine concerning the soul.[111] This author claims to have heard (*audivi*) Gerard of Bologna and Francis Caracciolo, the Chancellor of the University of Paris from 1309 to 1316, maintain that the rational soul is extended *per accidens* and that, furthermore, the contrary can only be held as a matter of faith. The author

[108] J. P. Etzwiler, 'John Baconthorpe 'Prince of the Averroists'', in *Franciscan Studies* 36 (1976), pp. 148176.

[109] See S. Nolan, 'Teaching and Learning in the *Summa theologiae* of Gerard of Bologna (d. 1317)' in *Maynooth Philosophical Papers*, 5 (2008), pp. 35-41.

[110] Hervaeus's argument with Gerard of Bologna focuses on the point that in the case of the Eucharist dimensive quantity does not entail external extension. See Hervaus Natalis, *Quodlibeta* (Venice: 1513; reprint Ridgewood NJ: Gregg Press, 1966), *Quodlibet* II, q. 10, 52va.

[111] See S.D. Dumont, 'The Scotist of Vat. lat. 869,' in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 81 (1988), pp. 254-83.

clearly considers such a conclusion results from a denial of plurality of substantial form (*supposito quod in homine non sit nisi una forma sola*).[112]

Later the author goes on to say that another doctor thought that Gerard's position on the extension of the soul was heretical: *Sed contra istos doctores invehebat unus alius doctor, dicens quod illud erat periculose dictum et sapiebat heresim, videbatur enim declinare ad opinionem Commentatoris, qui posuit animam intellectivam esse corpoream*.[113] ('But against those doctors one other doctor went on the attack, saying that this was a dangerous opinion and that it smacked of heresy and seemed to decline unto the opinion of Averroes who held the rational soul to be corporeal.')

3. Baconthorpe's Solution

Our text comes from Baconthorpe's redacted commentary on Book III of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (*In Tertium Sent*., d. 18, q. 1, 1-3).[114] As we suggested previously, it may be dated to somewhere around 1325. It comes in the form of a *quaestio* divided into three articles. Here Baconthorpe sets out explicitly to counter the opinion of his Carmelite predecessor, Gerard of Bologna, that the soul *might* be accidentally extended and suggests ways one might argue philosophically for the presence of the soul as whole in whole and whole in each part. Baconthorpe's general approach will be to insist that corporeal form (*forma corporeitatis*) together with prime matter can 'take care of' issues of spatial extension, leaving the rational soul to fulfil its 'higher calling' to extend itself as a power in the human body, a power which is whole in the whole and whole in each part.

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[112] The full text of the anonymous author's observations is as follows: 'Ad istam quaestionem audivi duos reverendos viros at theologiae magistros (Cancellarius et Carmelita in marg.) dicere quod, supposito quod in homine non sit nisi una forma sola, fide tenebant animam intellectivam esse ab extrinseco, <et> tenent animam intellectivam esse inextensam per se et per accidens, et hoc quod sola <fide> tenendum sit et non possit ostendi per rationem, se potius oppositum probant unica ratione quam dicunt se nescire solvere. Et ratio est ista: quando aliquid convenit alicui toti primo necessario convenit cuilibet parti aliquo modo. Sed homini, inquantum dicit aliquid compositum ex materia et forma substantiali, et non tamen inquantum est materia tantum, convenit primo esse extensum, dicente Philosopho I Physicorum 'subiecta materia cum forma est causa sicut mater', id est subiectiva omnium accidentium. Ergo quaelibet pars hominis de necessitate est aliquo modo extensa. Cum ergo anima intellectiva sit pars talis totius cui primo convenit esse extensum, quia non est in illa toto cui primo convenit esse extensum alia forma nisi intellectiva, sit aliquo extensa.' (Quoted in Dumont 'Scotist of 869' p. 275).

[113] Quoted in S.F. Brown and S.D. Dumont, 'Univocity of the Concept of Being in the Fourteenth Century: III. An Early Scotist' in *Medieval Studies* 51 (1989) pp. 1-129, pp. 5-6, n. 16.

[114] John Baconthorpe, *Quaestiones in quatuor libros sententiarum et quodlibetales*, 2 vols, Cremona: 1618, 115a-119a.

Article 1

The first article sets out to answer the question of whether the rational soul may be the substantial form of every part of the human body and of the whole human body and *not* be spatially extended.

Turning to the opinions of his Carmelite predecessor, Gerard of Bologna, Baconthorpe argues his own position. He declares: 'I concede that the whole composite, which is subjected to quantity and informed by it, namely the human being, is extended accidentally.'[115] So it is the human being as a whole, as a unified composite of matter and form, body and soul, that can be said to be extended accidentally. He goes on to insist that the only parts of that composite that are *really* extended accidentally are matter together with corporeal form:

> And when it is said that essential parts are also extended accidentally, I say that that essential part which is the proximate and immediate principle of accepting extension (namely, matter together with the corporeal form) is extended accidentally, and this part which is the first and principal *ratio* of receiving extension is not extended accidentally in reality but only equipollently, namely in so far as equally truly it is in each part of extended matter.[116]

The use of the term 'equipollently' is unusual here. 'Equipollence' is a common term in the terminist logic of the late medieval period and has to do with the equivalence and convertability of propositions (*equipollentia propositionum*).[117] Here the Carmelite master is employing the term in a metaphysical-psychological context to mean that the soul is of equal 'power' in the whole body and in each and every part of the body in which it is present. Here we have a fine example of the tendency among English scholars in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to introduce terminology from terminist logic and the exact sciences into philosophical and theological discourse.

Matter and corporeal form are the proximate and immediate *rationes* of receiving extension. But there is, Baconthorpe argues, a prior first and principal *ratio*, namely the rational soul, which more remotely might be said to receive extension but does

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[115] Concedo quod totum compositum, quod subiicitur quantitati, et informatur per eam, scilicet homo, istud extenditur per accidens. (115b).

[116] Et quando dicitur, quod etiam partes essentiales extenduntur per accidens, dico quod illa pars essentialis, quae est proxima, et immediata ratio excipiendi extensionem (scilicet materia et forma corporeitatis) extenditur per accidens, pars autem, quae est prima, et principalis ratio excipiendi extensionem non extenditur per accidens realiter, sed solum per aequipollentiam, scilicet inquantum aeque vere est in qualibet parte materiae extensae, ac si extenderetur. (115b).

[117] Paul Vincent Spade highlights several instances of medieval discussion of equipollence of propositions. See P.V. Spade, Thoughts, Words and Things: An Introduction to Late Medieval Logic and Semantic Theory, Version 1.2: http://www.pvspade.com/Logic/docs/Thoughts, Words and Things1_2.pdf. John Buridan (c.1295-1361) includes a substantial discussion of *aequipollentia propositionum* in his *Summulae de dialectica*, Treatise 1, Chapter 5 wherein he sets out four rules of equipollence. See J. Buridan, *Summulae de dialectica: An Annotated Translation with a Philosophical Introduction*, ed. Gyula Klima, (Yale: Yale University Press, 2001).

not do so in reality (*realiter*) but only equipollently. The rational soul is whole and whole in every part of extended matter. In other words, Baconthorpe is trying to argue that the rational soul as the principle of life of the whole human composite of body and soul is whole and whole in every part and is in this way extended. But it is not spatially extended. Such spatial extension or quantity is, for Baconthorpe, 'taken care of' by matter and corporeal form.

Next Baconthorpe considers the suggestion of Gerard that the whole human being is extended: *totus homo est extensus*. Here he more or less repeats the same argumentation as above in response to the question *in quo recipitur quantitas?* ('in what is quantity received?'):

> I concede that the whole human being is extended and when it is asked what is quantity received in, I say [it is received] in the composite as informed by corporeal form. And when it is argued that accordingly the form is extended I say that this is true with regard to that which is the proximate and immediate ratio of receiving extension but this does not apply to a form if it is a first and principal [form]. Again it is by equipollence that [the form] may be in each extended part of the composite.[118]

Again, Baconthorpe insists that the rational soul is wholly present in the whole and whole in every part without being accidentally extended *realiter* ('in fact'). The rational soul is the first and principal form of the body. It is in this way remote. Corporeal form together with matter are the proximate and immediate *rationes* of receiving extension; that is what they are fitted to do.

The Carmelite master advances several other arguments along the same lines. He talks of a newly-created hand – part of the human composite. The hand lives ('is alive') by means of the rational soul which precedes it, not in a way that the soul freshly (*noviter*) pours itself into the hand, but in such a way as it extends itself through the totality, so that it may be whole in individual parts. Furthermore, with an acknowledgement of the place of the human being in the hierarchy of substances, Gerard says the following:

> I concede that the human being as inferior and contained under a body according to the kind of substance it is, is *per se* extended. And equally I concede the point when we are talking about matter and the corporeal form – they are extended (together). But now we are talking about *accidental* extension which is a result of quantity (as an accident) and this is not the issue in hand.[119]

Finally, Baconthorpe reiterates the point he is making:

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[118] Concedo quod totus homo est extensus. Et quando quaeritur, in quo recipitur quantitas? Dico quod in composito ut informatur forma corporeitatis. Et quando arguitur: igitur forma extenditur: Dico quod verum est de forma, quae est proxima, et immediata ratio recipiendi extensionem, non tamen oportet de forma si sit solum prima ratio, et principalis, sed sufficit aequipollentia, quod scilicet ita vere sit in qualibet parte extensa, ac si extenderetur (115b-116a).

[119] Concedo quod homo inquantum inferius et contentum sub corpore de genere substantiae est per se extensus. Et quando dicitur, igitur partes essentiales eius extenduntur, scilicet materia et forma corporeitatis; concede, sed loquimur nunc de extensione accidentali, quae est per quantitatem: et sic nihil est ad propositum. (116a)

> When it is said that the soul surpasses matter as matter's act and for the same reason is able to be extended along with it, I say it is only true if in an equipollent and more excellent way it can be the perfection of material. It can be in any part of the body without being extended by it. It is whole in whole and whole in each part.[120]

At this point in the proceedings Baconthorpe introduces a potential objection to his argument from equipollence:

> It is possible to dispute my main point: I have been saying that these problems are apparently solved by equipollence. Nonetheless the principal difficulty remains: what in the nature of things could be such equipollence, namely that some form may be whole in any divided part and extended in some divisible thing without nevertheless the informing form being divided or extended.[121]

In reply to this potential objection Baconthorpe illustrates his position using an analogy from geometry: that of a flowing point as the substantial form of a line.[122] Here the Carmelite master demonstrates, once again, the willingness of English thinkers to employ insights from the exact sciences within the context of philosophical and theological discussion:

> I argue that this issue is best dealt with by means of the example of a point. Let us suppose a point is the substantial form of a line, just as the geometers suppose that a flowing point causes a line. If we add to this supposition that the point in no way can be divided neither according to location, nor according to position, nor according to extension, nor in any other conceivable way, it follows that a point is a substantial form of the line, which is whole in the whole line. So it is with the case in hand [concerning the rational soul].[123]

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[120] Quando dicitur quod anima ita supergreditur materiam, quod est actus materiae, et eadem ratione potest extendi cum ea: Dico quod verum est nisi quodam aequipollenti modo, et excellentiori posset esse perfectio materiae. Et hoc dico, quod habet inquantum potest esse cuiuslibet partis forma sine extensione per hoc, quod est tota in toto, et tota in qualibet parte. (116a).

[121] Contra praemissam responsionem generalem potest dubitari: Dicetur enim quod ista argumenta sunt apparenter soluta per hoc, quod dictum est de aequipollentia, sed nihilominus remanet principalis difficultas, qualiter in rerum natura potest esse aequipollentia talis, videlicet qualiter est possible, quod aliqua forma sit tota in qualibet parte divisa, et extensa alicuius rei divisibilis, et tamen quod illa forma informans nullo modo sit divisa, aut extensa. (116b).

[122] Margartet Baron points to the discussion of flowing points and the forming of lines in the writings of Nicole Oresme (c.1320-1382) and the fourteenth-century Oxford Calculators among whom the terms *fluxus* and *fluens* had currency. See M. Baron, *The Origins of the Infitesimal Calculus* (Oxford: Pergamon Press 1969), p. 84.

[123] Dico quod illud est declaratum superius per exemplum de puncto. Supponamus enim quod punctus esset forma substantialis lineae (sicut supponunt Geometrae, quod punctus fluens causat lineam) si post addamus huic suppositione quod punctus nullo modo potest dividi nec secundum situm, nec secundum positionem, nec secundum extensionem, nec quocumque alio modo cogitabili, sequitur quod punctus sic est forma substatinalis lineae, quod est totus in tota linea, et totus in qualibet parte. (116b).

Baconthorpe concludes the first article by summarising his position on the question in hand. He insists in the final analysis that one can bring forward compelling arguments for the position that the soul is present whole and undivided in the whole and in each part of the human being. To seek more is, Baconthorpe asserts, to look for 'a knot in a bulrush', that is to look for a problem where there is none:

> Concerning the case in question, I argue that the rational soul is whole in the whole, and wholly undivided in each part, and unextended, this is not provable by means of those things which are joined with it and other substantial forms and, thus, to procede in a probative and affirmative way because in many things it flees the nature of other forms. We suppose as a matter of faith or from Philosophy or both that the rational soul cannot be divided neither according to location, nor according to position, nor according to extension, nor in any other conceivable way either by faith or philosophy or both. It follows, therefore, that thus is our form, that it is whole, undivided in each of our parts and anyone who looks for more proof in such things, is looking for a knot in a bulrush (*nodum in scirpo*).[124]

Article 2

Elsewhere in his *Sentences* commentary Baconthorpe has extended discussion intended to prove the plurality thesis with regard to substantial form. In the present question he gives his brief article 2 over to a consideration of what kind of position concerning the soul and extension one would be committed to if one were to insist on the unicity of substantial form. He clearly has Thomas Aquinas in mind and, indeed, cites him explicitly. The text referred to is from Thomas's *Summa* Ia, q. 76, art. 4. On Baconthorpe's reading, Thomas's insistence on identifying corporeal form and the rational soul as one necessitates that one introduce a kind of 'graduated' view of unique substantial form:

> It has to be said that although they are one form, [proponents of this view] speak nevertheless of different degrees (*gradus*) in the same form. And so the question concerning the identity of the rational soul with corporeal form becomes a question concerning the degrees of forms and this is accepted by Thomas in the first part of his *Summa* where he addresses the question. Following this line one has to say that the [soul] is extended accidentally by reason of the grade of corporeity and remains unextended by reason of intellectuality.[125]

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[124] Ad propositum dico, quod animam intellectivam esse totam in tota, et totam in qualibet parte indivisam, et inextensam, non potest hoc probari faciendo probationem per ea, quae sibi, et aliis formis substantialibus conveniunt; et sic procedere via probativa, et affirmativa, quia in multis fugit naturam aliarum formarum. Supponimus enim ex fide, vel ex Phylosophia, vel ex utraque; quod anima non potest divide nec secundum situm, nec secundum positionem, nec secundum extensionem, vel quocumque modo cogitabili, ut ex fide, vel ex Phylosophia habemus, vel ex utraque. Sequitur igitur quod sic est forma nostril, quod ipsa est totat, et indivisa in qualibet parte nostri: Et qui quaerit aliam declarationem in talibus, quaerit nodum in scirpo. (117a).

[125] Respondendum est quod licet sunt una forma, dicunt tamen diversos gradus in eadem forma et ideo ista quaestio de identitate intellectivae cum corporeitate consuevit vocari quaestio de gradibus formarum, et accipitur a Tho. prima parte Summae, ubi quaerit istam

This is an issue to which Baconthorpe intends to return in the future. For the moment he 'holds his fire' and refrains from pouring scorn on the Angelic doctor's position. Just to note in passing that the doctrine of the real presence of the Eucharist makes a very brief appearance in article 2 only to be dismissed as (for the moment) irrelevant to the philosophical discussion in hand: *Sed illud exemplum est fidei: hic autem loquimur physice; Igitur non valet* (117a). Baconthrope is in the present text content to confine himself to philosophical discussion.

Article 3

It was noted earlier that Baconthorpe frequently settles an argument *secundum Philosophum* with the help of Averroes the *Commentator*. True to form, we find a classic example of Baconthorpe's preferred way of settling an argument in article three of the *quaestio* we have been considering. The entire article, which is intended to settle or 'determine' the issue of the rational soul and spatial extension pivots around two extracts from Aristotle's *Physics*. He will also supply some further argumentation from Aristotle's *De anima*. The early modern editor of Baconthorpe's text summarises his intent as follows:

> [Baconthorpe] teaches that the rational soul, as a form informing the body, is nevertheless not extended unto the extension of the body, whence he explains the demonstration of Aristotle in Book VIII of the *Physics*, by which he proves that Intelligence is not in magnitude.[126]

And so Baconthorpe asks: *Quomodo posit anima intellectiva non extendi extensione corporis*? ('In what way can the rational soul not be extended unto the extension of the body?').

True to form, Baconthorpe sets out to conclude his discussion *secundum Philosophum* but not before he admits that Aristotle puts forward an argument in Book VIII of his *Physics* (266a10; 267b19-26) that could be seen to prove that the rational soul is extended in the extension of the body of which it is a form. He summarises Aristotle's argument in the form of a syllogism:

> **Major:** The First Intelligence (the 'Unmoved Mover') cannot exist in magnitude because then it would be dividable into parts and the whole of its very magnitude and thus a part in a part of magnitude would move in shorter time and the whole which would be in total magnitude would move in longer time.
>
> **Minor:** But this would not be true unless the Intelligence were extended in the extension of its subject, if it is its form.

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quaestionem, et secundum hoc est dicendum quod extenditur per accidens ratione gradus corporeitatis, et manet inextensa ratione intellectualitatis.

[126] Docet quomodo anima intellectiva, cum sit forma informans corpus, non tamen extendatur ad extensionem corporis, unde explicat demonstrationem Aristotelis 8. Physico, qua probat Intelligentiam non esse in magnitudine. (118a).

> **Conclusion:** Therefore, the rational soul is extended in the extension of the body of which it is a form.[127]

Baconthorpe's strategy in trying to circumvent this problem is, first, to draw attention to its status as an argument and, secondly, to suggest that Aristotle's attention is directed in this case to (what Baconthorpe calls) common physical situations rather than to matters properly to do with First Intelligence (as First Intelligence). Aristotle is arguing, Baconthorpe contends, as a mere physicist (*mere ut Physicus*) and is not speaking simply and strictly (*simpliciter et stricte*).

In the first place, Baconthorpe insists that while Aristotle's views have the status of an argument they do not amount to a demonstrative proof: *non est demonstratio in rei veritate* (literally: 'it is not a demonstration in the truth of the thing'). Secondly, on Baconthorpe's reading, Aristotle is speaking in this part of the *Physics* concerning common physical situations. If we were to leave things at that level then his argumentation would suffice to show that each form received in matter is extended in the extension of matter. However, for Baconthorpe, this does not obtain in the case of what is *proper* to the First Intelligence or Unmoved Mover. To support his reading of Aristotle at this point and to make it applicable to the human soul, the Carmelite master adduces two references to the *De anima*. In *De anima* II (414b18-20) Baconthorpe asserts that Aristotle, dealing with the powers of the soul, argues that the rational soul is the form of the body and, as such, is that by which we primarily know. Furthermore, in *De anima* III (430a10-25) in that famous, enigmatic and textually problematic passage concerning the active and passive intellects, Aristotle insists (again, as Baconthorpe presents him) that the rational soul is unmixed, separate, incorruptible and impassible and that it does not lose its proper conditions when united with matter.

Baconthorpe concludes the article by reiterating his conviction that the rational soul, as a special case and when properly considered as rational, is not extended along with the extension of matter, although it is united with it within the context of the human being. Against those who would seek to deny that the rational soul is the form of the body on account of its being united with a material body, Baconthorpe argues that the rational soul, on account of its very rationality, has (and is to be asserted as having) a different mode of presence to other instances of form united with matter:

> I respond as before that the first consequence holds according to the common physical propositions, according to which if something is united with matter it is divided, but this does not hold according to propositions proper to Intelligence.[128]

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[127] Ubi primo dubitatur circa hoc, quia 8 Physicorum, tex. comm. 78 et 86, arguit Phylosophus quod prima Intelligentia non potest esse in magnitudine, quia tunc posset divide secundum partes, et totum ipsius magnitudinis, sic quod pars in parte magnitudinis moveret in minori tempore, et tota, quae esset in tota magnitudine, moveret in longiori tempore. Sed istud non esset verum, nisi Intelligentia extenderetur extensione sui subiecti si esset forma eius. Igitur anima intellectiva extenditur extensione corporis, cuius est forma (118a).

[128] Respondeo ut prius quod prima consequentia tenet secundum propositiones communes physicas, scilicet si unitur materiae igitur dividitur, sed non tenet secundum proprias positiones de Intelligentia (119a).

Conclusion

Although the best-known among the Carmelite scholastics, John Baconthorpe remains one of the lesser-known medieval thinkers today. In his discussion of soul, body and extension Baconthorpe reveals himself to be a clear-headed and methodical thinker, keen to engage with and contribute to the philosophical and theological discourse of his age. He is a dedicated proponent of the doctrine of the plurality of substantial form at a time and within a context when many considered it indispensable to philosophy and theology. Baconthorpe sees the potential in the doctrine for addressing the difficult question of the soul's relationship with (and 'presence in') the body. He also reflects the innovative spirit of the age in seeing the explanatory potential in employing logical terminology and insights from the exact sciences within philosophical and theological discourse; one should be reminded that 'philosophy' at that time and until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries 'included' all the natural sciences. Baconthorpe introduces an air of 'pragmatism' to the debate in admitting that all he can hope to provide are compelling arguments regarding the relationship between the body and the soul which may not ultimately satisfy the diehard seeker after proof. His particular discussion of soul, body and extension witnesses in a significant way to the wider concerns of philosophical debate in the fourteenth century. In addition to adding to the stock of knowledge concerning late medieval thought, further study of this Carmelite master's output (along with the work of other fourteenth-century thinkers) should also in time pay dividends in enabling scholars to trace the roots of early modern philosophical discourse.

Some Aspects of Robert Boyle's Corpuscular Hypothesis

Conleth Loonan

ABSTRACT:
Robert Boyle (1627-91) is credited with coining the term 'corpuscle', as his understanding of the ultimate subdivision of matter. Some of the properties attributed to the corpuscles by him form the subject of this paper. The nature of the corpuscles, their origin, permanence, divisibility, abradibility and how they might contribute to taste, are considered. The importance of motion to Boyle's account of corpuscular behaviour is treated of briefly.

Introduction

Robert Boyle (1627-91) was an important figure in the scientific revolution, who lived a generation after Descartes and was a few years older than John Locke and Isaac Newton, and is sometimes referred to as 'The *Father of Chemistry*'. He wrote primarily on matters philosophical, scientific and theological, although he referred to himself as a 'Naturalist' and an 'Experimental Philosopher'.[129] He was an ardent proponent of the newly emerging Mechanical Philosophy, which he expounded through his Corpuscularian Theory on matter,[130] and acknowledged in the *Proëmial Essay* to his *Certain Physiological Essays* the importance of Gassendi, Descartes and Bacon to the development of his thought,[131] and mentions also that of 'Gassendus, Magnenus, Descartes &...Kenelm Digby'.[132] Boyle held an atomistic understanding of matter, though as a devout Anglican he believed in the Biblical account of creation, with the Universal Matter produced at creation being corpuscularised, then imbued with motion by its Divine Creator. The corpuscles were for him the building blocks from which all material bodies were constituted. Kargon states that to Boyle must go a large portion of the credit for the acceptance of atomism in England through his attempts to bring the mechanical hypothesis of both Gassendi and Descartes within the pale of the experimental philosophy.[133]

[129] Michael Hunter, *Boyle Between God and Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).
[130] Not that Boyle was the first to postulate a corpuscular theory of matter, as Newman notes that: 'the alchemists did employ a longstanding corpuscular theory, which originated in the High Middle Ages and continued to thrive in an unbroken tradition that lived well into the seventeenth century'. In William R. Newman 'The Alchemical Sources of Robert Boyle's Corpuscular Philosophy', *Annals of Science*, 53 (1996), 567-585, 570.
[131] Thomas Birch (ed.) *The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle*, 6 vols. (London, 1772), i, p. 300.
[132] Richard S. Westfall, 'Unpublished Boyle Papers Relating to Scientific Method – II', *Ann. Sci*. Vol. 12 (1956), p. 111.
[133] R. H. Kargon, 'Walter Charleton, Robert Boyle and the Acceptance of Epicurean Atomism in England', *Isis*, 55 (1964) pp. 188-192, p. 188.

Boyle is credited with coining the term Corpuscle, which derives from the Latin word *corpusculum* or 'little body'.[134] What is of particular interest about the corpuscle as envisaged by Boyle is some of the properties attributed to it by him, and which will be developed in this paper.[135] For him, matter in the form of corpuscles, combined with motion, provided the foundation upon which the natural world was constructed. He does equate the corpuscles with atoms and links them also with the Medieval concepts of *prima naturalia* and *minima*. Boyle also carried out laboratory experiments in which solid metals could be reduced by powerful reagents to clear liquors, yet the original metal could be regenerated from them through precipitation. He has some curious views on corpuscular morphology, allowing that corpuscles may be abraded, to form water, and aggregated into larger structures. He posits that corpuscles were divisible, and reflects on how this might be possible, arguing that if the hardest mineral known, diamond, could be fragmented, then so too might the corpuscles.

Boyle understands that a material's physical form was not inherent to it but depended on external factors such as temperature, citing as example water, which could be converted from liquid to solid through freezing. He notes that a solid powder when set in motion behaves as a liquid, and reflecting on this, he considers the nature of solidity and liquidity, then ponders how these qualities might apply to the corpuscles.

Boyle was a first rate experimenter, which facilitated his manipulation of a variety of chemicals, and in the days when only the simplest means of chemical identification were available, would often take a small quantity of his reactants into his mouth, and note their 'mouth feel' and taste. This particular practice was common enough in Boyle's day as a diagnostic tool, with the dangers of ingesting many chemicals not yet understood. This caused him to try to account for the difference in taste between the different types of chemicals, positing that perhaps sharp-tasting materials had angular micro-constituents.

The Origin of the Corpuscles

Boyle agrees with Aristotle in the concept of the existence of but one 'common mass' of all things, what he 'has been pleased to call *materia prima*', [136] and as a believer in the Biblical account of creation, held that the matter of which the physical world is comprised had a divine origin. [137] For him the primal matter of creation was 'divided into little particles of several sizes and shapes variously moved',[138] with the result that not just the 'little particles' or corpuscles, but their motion as well, were the product

[134] R. K. Barnhart, (ed.) *Chambers Dictionary of Etymology* (New York: Chambers, 1988), p. 222

[135]See also: Conleth P. Loonan, *Robert Boyle on the Elements,* Chap. 2. M.Litt. Thesis. NUI Maynooth, 2010, from which much of the content of this paper is drawn.

[136] According to Anstey it was '…most likely a motionless block of extended substance'. In Peter Anstey, *The Philosophy of Robert Boyle* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 41.

[137] Robert Boyle, *The Sceptical Chymist* (London: 1661. Repr. Kila MT: Kessinger Publishing Co., 1991), p. 83.

[138] *Sceptical Chymist*, p. 30.

of divine intervention. Boas points out that Isaac Beeckmann (1588-1637) anticipated Boyle in stating the relationship between matter and motion, as she credits the Dutchman with saying that the *variation* in the motion of the atoms could explain some of the properties of the bodies made up from the atoms [Boas's italics]. Boyle in fact wrote that: 'therefore all properties arise from motion, shape and size, so that each of these things must be considered'.[139]

Corpuscular Architecture

The corpuscles can subsist as material bodies for Boyle, the simplest of which are the single corpuscles or *minima* and *prima naturalia* , (following a Scholastic tradition) which although having 'determinate shape' and being 'very solid', individually these lie below the level of sense detection. These are so small and solid that 'nature doth scarce ever actually divide' them, although they can be divided mentally and by 'divine omnipotence'.[140] In addition, the corpuscles are capable of agglomerating into 'minute masses or clusters' having increasing levels of complexity.[141] Clericuzio explains Boyle's corpuscular system by saying that the simplest particles, which are not actually divided by nature, were called by him *minima naturalia*. They are not identical with the *minima* mentioned in his early manuscript notes on atoms, because they have only mechanical properties. Their close and strict adhesions form the primitive concretions or clusters, which are indeed corpuscles of the second order.[142] O'Toole notes that, in addition, the *minima naturalia* are incapable of affecting the sensory system of percipients and are consequently insensible.[143] Anstey notes that, confusingly, the term 'corpuscle' may mean both individual, atomic corpuscle, and their molecular concretions.[144] Bodies of both animal and vegetable nature could be separated by thermal decomposition to yield 'a determinate number (whether three, four, or five, or fewer or more) of substances worthy of differing denominations'.[145] In addition such decomposition products (or their contraries, the materials of which compound bodies are composed) 'may without very much inconvenience be called the elements or principles of them'.[146] He can name some stable products – he cites

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[139] Marie Boas, 'The Establishment of the Mechanical Philosophy', *Osiris*, Vol. 10 (1952) pp. 412-541, p. 413.
[140] M. A. Stewart (ed.) *Selected Philosophical Papers of Robert Boyle* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), p. 41.
[141] *Sceptical Chymist*, p. 31. A useful summary of the various levels of corpuscular agglomeration is given in Marie Boas, *Robert Boyle and Seventeenth-Century Chemistry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 100.
[142] Antonio Clericuzio, 'A Redefinition of Boyle's Chemistry and Corpuscular Philosophy', *Annals of Science*, Vol. 47 (1990) pp. 561-589, p. 579.
[143] F. J. O'Toole, 'Qualities and Powers in the Corpuscular Philosophy of Robert Boyle', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. XII (1974), p. 300.
[144] Peter Anstey, *The Philosophy of Robert Boyle*, p. 63. A similar point is made in Peter Alexander, *Ideas, Qualities and Corpuscles* (Cambridge University Press, 1985, repr. 2009), p. 66.
[145] *Sceptical Chymist* , p. 34.
[146] Ibid., p. 34.

gold and mercury as examples of identifiable metals which can be reacted to form known chemical compounds, but which can still be reduced to the original metal by suitable manipulation.

Matter and Motion

Having already mentioned the introduction of motion into matter, it might be worthwhile to discuss motion further, in part because motion is the second of Boyle's twin principles, but also because he was at pains to identify its divine origin, in contradistinction to Epicurus, who held that it was inherent to matter.

Having agreed 'with the generality of philosophers' that there is but one 'catholic or universal matter' common to all matter, by which he means a 'substance extended, divisible, and impenetrable',[147] Boyle goes on to say that because this matter is of one nature only, the diversity we see in bodies must consist in something other than the matter from which they are composed, and since we cannot see how there could be any change in matter if all its parts were always at rest among themselves, it follows that to differentiate the universal matter into a variety of natural bodies, it must have motion in all its specifiable parts. This motion, in turn, must have various tendencies, which is evident in the great quantity of motion to be found both in the universe and in bodies in general.

Boyle considers the fact that local motion in many parts of matter is 'manifest to sense',[148] but goes on to discuss how matter came by this motion. He says that the ancient corpuscularian philosophers, not acknowledging an 'Author' of the universe, were thereby reduced to making matter and motion connate and therefore coeval. Boyle, however, rejects this line of reasoning. He argues that local motion, 'or an endeavour at it', is not included in the nature of matter, which is as much matter 'when it rests as when it moves'.[149] He says that matter in motion can be reduced to rest, and will remain in a state of rest until acted upon by an external agent and set in motion again. He goes on to say that one of the Greeks, 'an eminent philosopher of old' (whom he does not name) proposed 'that opinion (for the main) that the excellent Descartes hath revived amongst us that the origin of motion in matter is from God'.[150] The unnamed Greek philosopher may well have been Aristotle, who said that 'the prime mover must be essentially immovable'.[151]

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[147] M. A. Stewart (ed.), *Selected Philosophical Papers of Robert Boyle* (Indianopolis: Hackett, 1991), p. 18.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid., p. 19.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1073[a], XII, viii, xxvii. In Jonathan Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Vol.1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

Divisibility of Atoms

Boyle speaks of 'indivisible corpuscles called *atoms*',[152] [Boyle's italics] in *The Origin of Forms and Qualities*, which seems to mean that to him the term 'corpuscle' is equivalent in meaning to 'atom', and meaning the smallest unit of matter that can exist. However, later on in the same work he speaks of a great quantity of particles of matter which 'being entire or undivided, must needs both have its determinate shape and be very solid' and, because of its smallness and solidity, nature 'doth scarce ever divide it' and these particles may be called '*minima* or *prima naturalia*'.[153] [Boyle's italics].

He does, however, introduce a new condition into his definition of the smallest entities, by saying that they are capable of being divided by nature, albeit with difficulty. One could argue that this cuts across one of the key criteria by which atoms are defined, viz. indivisibility. Boyle does call these entities *minima* and *prima naturalia,* (and as already noted, terms he borrowed from the Scholastic Philosophical tradition) rather than atoms, in his example just referred to, and yet the descriptions he applies to them, of 'determinate shape' and 'solidity', are the same as those used in his definition of the term 'atom'.

It may be that Boyle's thinking on the question of the definition of the atom had evolved over time and that by the time he wrote *The Origin of Forms and Qualities* (published in 1666) he might simply have believed that atoms were, in fact, divisible, and that in stating they were indivisible earlier in the article, it was part of a stock description of the word 'atom', which, by definition, implies indivisibility, but which he had, in reality, already abandoned, and that he gave his considered opinion on atoms when he said they were divisible. The reason why Boyle's thinking on the question of the definition of the atom seems to have undergone such a significant change may simply reflect his own development as an experimenter. Early on in his career, in his *Of Ye Atomicall Philosophy,* he seems not to have agreed with the Aristotelian representation of the opinion of Democritus and Epicurus that atoms were 'mathematical points',[154] which are 'absolutely indivisible and without quantity',[155] but rather regarded them as the tiniest particles of bodies which can be 'further divided by imagination, yet they cannot by nature'.[156] These bodies, however small they may be, are material entities, and are therefore possessed of extension: they are allowed of both 'quantity and figure'. That nature cannot subdivide them further Boyle attributes to her inability to resolve bodies beyond a certain limit, which means that she cannot proceed *ad infinitum* in her resolution of natural bodies, but must 'necessarily stop somewhere' and end up with bodies which are no longer capable of being subdivided *by nature*.[Italics added]. These bodies at the limits of the natural subdivision of matter may be 'justly termed atomes'.[157] Crucially for Boyle in his role

[152] *Selected Philosophical Papers of Robert Boyle*, p. 7.
[153] Ibid., p. 41.
[154] Richard S. Westfall, 'Unpublished Boyle Papers Relating to Scientific Method – II', *Ann. Sci*. Vol. 12 (1956), pp. 103-117, p. 112.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.

as experimenter, the existence of atoms as the smallest subdivision of particulate matter can be argued for precisely because most of the phenomena of nature seem to 'evince the being of atomes' in their various manifestations. He says that for most 'similar bodies' [i.e. homogeneous materials] it is 'very probable' that they are composed of atoms, since it is so that their constituent particles are very small and of the same nature as the bulk material which they make up, and gives as example silver. (He is careful to state that there are some materials which seem to be homogeneous in composition, such as milk and wine, but which can, in fact, be separated into distinct fractions). Boyle says that silver can be dissolved in *aqua fortis* [nitric acid], one of the most powerful reagents known. Even when the solution has been so well filtered that it can pass through cap paper [filter paper] the solution appears perfectly clear, indicating that the silver particles are now so small as to be invisible. He could then argue that the silver has indeed been reduced to the ultimate extent, i.e. to the atomic state. Yet bulk silver can be recovered from the solution 'by precipitating',[158] verifying that silver was present there all along.[159] Shapin and Schaffer note that 'Boyle sought to secure assent by way of the experimentally generated matters of fact. Facts were certain: other items of knowledge much less so'.[160]

Boyle, then, employs an argument centred on the reduction of a bulk material, in this case metallic silver, to its smallest subdivision, brought about by the action of a powerful and aggressive reagent, nitric acid, to serve as strong evidence in favour of the atomic hypothesis. His experimental procedure is set out: silver as bulk metal is replaced by a clear solution which shows no evidence of the presence of the metal, only for the bulk silver to be reformed out of the solution through precipitation. A detailed account of preparing the clear solution of silver is provided, enabling other workers to repeat the experiment if they so wished. Boyle reasons that, because bulk silver is present at the beginning and end of the experiment, then silver must also be present during every intermediate stage as well. Therefore, the clear solution must also contain silver, and because the *menstruum* employed, nitric acid, so thoroughly and effectively dissolves the bulk metal, there are no grounds for believing that the dissolution process does not go to completion i.e. that the metal is indeed reduced to the smallest subdivisions possible – the atomic state. Boyle's conclusion that the atomic state is achieved, in which the miniscule particles arrived at are indeed metallic silver (and not some degraded form of the metal) is demonstrated by the fact that the original bulk silver can be regenerated from the solution by precipitation. So, for Boyle, atoms have extension, which means that they consist of some kind of matter, yet are not actually divisible by nature.

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[158] Ibid.

[159] Lüthy *et al*. make the point that Sennert employed this same experiment for one of his most important demonstrations for the existence of corpuscles, the *reductio in pristinum statum*. They state that Boyle borrowed a number of such demonstrations from Sennert. In C. Lüthy, J.E. Murdoch and W.R. Newman, *Late Medieval and Early Modern Corpuscular Matter Theories* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 15; Newman offers a photographic demonstration of this Sennertian experiment in William R. Newman, *Atoms and Alchemy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), figs. 1 – 8.

[160] Steven Shapin and Simon Shaffer, *Leviathan and the Air Pump. Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 23.

Atoms, then, are very tiny, but can persist intact through various chemical operations, and can be restored to their original bulk condition by appropriate chemical manipulation. This dissolution of a metal and its subsequent restoration Boyle takes as evidence that atoms retain their identity intact during chemical reactions.

Curiously, Boyle in *Certain Physiological Essays*, published in 1661,[161] speaks of atoms as divisible. He gives some examples of his understanding on how exactly atoms behave. His first example seems to be inspired by the case of diamond, which he understands to be the hardest mineral of all. He has been advised by 'artificers vers'd in the trade'[162] that diamond resists attrition by any other stone, yet he realises that diamonds may be 'reduc'd to powder'[163] by other diamonds. He presents the case of two cubical corpuscles lying on top of one another to which a third is added. If this aggregation is given a violent knock by some other corpuscles it can be broken in the centre of the entire assemblage, that is to say, in the middlemost body. This would be the case even if the corpuscles consisted of diamond. Irrespective of how hard corpuscles are, they can be broken if a sufficiently high force is applied to them. Boyle simply seems to understand that a very hard material, such as diamond, is also brittle, and that if an assemblage of brittle bodies is bent by applying a bending moment to each end, the aggregate will break where the bending moment reaches its maximum, which is at the centre of the collection of bodies. (Provided, of course, that the bending force is sufficient to actually rupture the material).

Abrasion of Corpuscles

Boyle offers a further example of how corpuscular morphology can be varied again through mechanical means. In his *Of the Producibleness of Phlegme or Water* Boyle posits that with a non-aqueous material, its 'edges and points', through the agency of fire, 'may by mutual attrition of the Corpuscles be worn' and have 'so much of the substance' worn away, that the remainder 'cannot but be very flexible, and by all these qualifications become fit to make a particle of water'. Here he is supposing that a material containing no water may have the angular parts of its corpuscles abraded to such an extent that these worn corpuscles now constitute water. Boyle may simply have in mind the realisation already referred to, that even diamonds may reduce one another to powder through mutual abrasion.

The Nature of the Corpuscles

Boyle also seems to speculate on the nature of the corpuscles themselves, and wonders whether they might be solid or liquid. He realises that solid corpuscles can, under the proper circumstances, create a liquid-like substance, when in bulk form. He gives as an example 'bodies which are all or most of them hard'[164] and appear so

[161] *Works of Robert Boyle,* Vol. 2, 1661.
[162] Ibid., p. 164.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid., p. 186.

when 'commodiously [conveniently] connected'[165] to each other, and yet constitute a fluid body when reduced to a sufficiently small particle size and put into a 'convenient motion'.[166] Solid corpuscles can behave as a liquid, simply by the constituent corpuscles moving smoothly past each other.

This insight indicates that Boyle understands an important fact in relation to the behaviour of solids and liquids. Solids are not necessarily composed of solid corpuscles; neither do liquids have to consist of liquid corpuscles. He gives two good examples to illustrate his thinking. The first is that of the 'dust of alabaster',[167] [gypsum (calcium sulphate) or calcite (calcium carbonate)] the particles of which were still visible as solid powder, and when put into motion behaved as a liquid, but once the agitation ceased, returned to the appearance of a compact powder. Boyle can see from this example that solid corpuscles (or in this case dust particles) can, under certain conditions, behave as a liquid. In fact when the corpuscles can move easily with respect to one another they behave in a liquid-like manner.

Boyle gives as his second example the freezing of water. The 'particles of water'[168] constitute a liquid under normal conditions, yet those same particles of water can form hard and brittle ice. Boyle makes a connection between the liquidity of water and the solidity of ice, with the apparent liquidity of the moving particles of alabaster dust, and its apparent solidity when it is no longer agitated, for he says that liquid water is turned into solid ice when the corpuscles from which water is constituted 'are reduced to be at rest'.[169] He seems to realise that when water is cooled down, the agitation of its corpuscles is reduced until they are no longer in motion, at which point they constitute a solid material, i.e. ice.

Boyle has still another perspective on the question of the nature of atoms or corpuscles. Given that the same corpuscles can form either solids or liquids, it invites such questions as what solidity and liquidity actually are. It is not simply a question of solid corpuscles forming solid materials and liquid corpuscles forming liquid materials, and Boyle could not really say how atoms or corpuscles were configured in the first place. His stock description of them is that each one:

> Being entire or undivided, must needs both have its determinate shape and be very solid.[170]

However, given that qualities such as 'solidity' and 'liquidity' are not inherent in materials but only depend upon whether the corpuscles of the material are at rest or in motion, the question does arise as to the nature of the corpuscles themselves: can they really be solid or liquid? Boyle, also, reflects on this problem and gives as an example the 'least particles'[171] of fluid bodies if they were not (many of them at least) endowed with their own 'bigness and shape'[172] but instead such fluid bodies could be

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[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid., p. 187.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.
[170] *Selected Philosophical Papers of Robert Boyle*, p. 41.
[171] *Works of Robert Boyle*, Vol. 2, 1661, p. 186.
[172] Ibid.

always divided into 'fluid ones'[173] and even into very small fluid particles indeed. So fine could they become that they could pass through any filter available to him. If this is the case, is there any limit to the divisibility of truly liquid corpuscles?, as they would always 'be divided into particles fluid also',[174] and if the corpuscles themselves were inherently fluid in nature, could they not be subdivided *ad infinitum*? However, Boyle then says that divisibility is a 'primary affection of matter itself', and that the possibility of subdivision belongs as much to solid bodies as to fluid ones. He does accept that 'an endless division, of matter, fluid or solid, might be made mentally', yet it remains to him 'a great question',[175] exactly how far nature subdivides bodies.

Although Boyle does not pursue the subject any further, the question he really seems to be beginning to consider was: what physical description could be applied to the smallest units of matter? Could they have labels such as 'solid' or 'liquid' applied to them, if these qualities belong only to aggregates of corpuscles? If even diamond – the hardest substance – can be broken, could not the hardest corpuscles be broken as well?, and if corpuscles are intrinsically liquid, can there be any limit to their possible subdivision? Boyle might simply have been coming to the realisation that 'solidity' and 'liquidity' were not qualities inherent to corpuscular entities *per se*, but rather could only be applied to aggregates of corpuscles. In other words, 'solidity' and 'liquidity' were terms which could only legitimately be applied to bulk materials and not to the individual corpuscles from which these materials were constituted.

It might well be that the questions which emerged to confront Boyle as well as ourselves really only arose when one realises that atoms are not, in fact, indivisible. As mentioned earlier, Boyle, in common with Epicurus and other ancient atomic theorists, initially had accepted indivisibility as a fundamental atomic property, but later he seems to have come to consider atoms as divisible. An obvious reason why he would have rethought his opinion on atoms' indivisibility may simply have resulted from his own religious convictions. In framing his hypothesis on matter, he believed in the divine creation of the world, and this may have led him to the conception of all created matter as collectively constituting prime matter, and prime matter was, in turn, converted into corpuscles or atoms. For this process to be effected, prime matter must be divisible, and Boyle acknowledges it to be so, but if prime matter is divisible and all corpuscles or atoms are split off from this common primordial stuff, how then can these same corpuscles or atoms not be as divisible as the prime matter from which they derive?

Although Boyle did come to believe that atoms were divisible, he did qualify his opinion by stating that they were actually divisible only with difficulty. It could be argued from this that prime matter itself may be as difficult to divide as the corpuscles or atoms into which it was divided at the time of creation. This could, in turn, lead to the conclusion that under normal circumstances matter is not divisible, but that in some special circumstances it can actually be subdivided. Divine intervention may be cited to account for the initial splitting up of the primeval universal matter into atoms or corpuscles, and some special conditions could be invoked to facilitate the division of atoms or corpuscles. Boyle suggests severe

[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid., p. 187.

mechanical forces, acting on an assemblage of three corpuscles, may lead to the rupturing of the middle particle in his discussion of the cleavage of those hard corpuscles.

It seems that Boyle does not distinguish between the stuff of universal matter and that of corpuscles or atoms. He seems to have believed that all atoms were made of the same universal matter and differed only in outward physical characteristics. For he says that at the first production of 'mixt bodies'[176] [compound materials] the universal matter, of which they and other parts of the universe were constituted, was actually divided into 'little particles of several sizes and shapes variously moved'.[177]

What Boyle does not seem to say is whether all of the particles of a particular size or shape constitute a particular chemical species. For example, are all pyramidal-shaped particles of a particular size constitutive of a single atomic species? Boyle seems to hint that the variations in the 'figure or shape' and 'size'[178] of the universal matter represent the variety of atomic species, and although he makes frequent reference to the importance of motion in his scheme of things, nevertheless he seems to rule it out as an inherent characteristic of corpuscles or atoms, for he says that 'local motion, or an endeavour at it, is not included in the nature of matter, which is as much matter when it rests as when it moves'.[179] Matter then, is the same matter when in motion or at rest.

Why Materials Taste as they do

The question of corpuscular morphology arises again when Boyle speaks in a tentative manner of how crystalline corpuscles, having an angular shape, might be hypothesised as fracturing along their cleavage planes into smaller, wedge-shaped fragments, which might then go on to combine with similar fragments of a different chemical species to form a distinct chemical compound. He describes experiments by which nitre [potassium nitrate or saltpetre] is synthesised by the reaction of spirit of nitre [nitric acid] which is strongly acidic, with a solution of fixt nitre [potassium carbonate] which is alkaline. Boyle deduces that because the larger and best formed crystals of nitre are of a prismatic shape with six sides, 'we should suppose the corpuscles of nitre to be little prisms'. The crystals of nitre which are crystallised out of solution, when dried and freed from any adhering impurities will, when tasted, 'have upon the tongue neither a sharp nor an alkalizate [alkaline] tast'. Rather, if pure, they will have 'that faint and scarce sensible bitterness that belongs to salt-peter'.[180]

Boyle here presents an account by which the sharp, acid-tasting nitric acid, when reacted with the soapy, alkaline-tasting potassium carbonate gives as reaction product the almost neutral, slightly bitter-tasting potassium nitrate. He is fascinated by the complete contrast in taste between the reactants and the reaction product, and wonders whether the transformations in taste might be explained by changes at the

[176] *Sceptical Chymist*, p. 30.
[177] Ibid.
[178] *Selected Philosophical Papers of Robert Boyle*, p. 20.
[179] Ibid., p. 19.
[180] *The Works of Robert Boyle,* Vol. 8, 1674-76, p. 366.

corpuscular level. However, he is hesitant in presenting the changes in taste as reflecting differences at a corpuscular level, and says that 'the main conjecture may not be worthy any farther prosecution'.

Boyle's hypothesises that the crystals of nitre with their 'prismatic shape with six sides' is an extension of order at the microscopic level, where he hypothesises the corpuscles of nitre to be 'little prisms', but he supposes that these corpuscles have angles and ends which are too obtuse or blunt to make 'vigorous and deep' impressions on the tongue. Yet if these little prisms are split or otherwise broken either by 'violent heat' or forcibly made to grind against one another 'they may come to have parts so much smaller than before, and endowed with such sharp sides and angles, that being dissolved and agitated by the spittle that usually moistens the tongue' their small size may give them 'great access to the pores of the tongue'. The sharpness of their sides and points may enable them to 'stab and cut' and to 'fear' [i.e. to frighten] the 'nervous and membranous parts of the organ of tast', in accordance with their own individual diversity of shape and bulk. He further argues that, if blunt prisms of nitre can be fractured in such a way as to give sharp fragments, capable of cutting and stabbing the taste buds so as to give the sensation of a 'sharp' taste, it seems 'conceivable' to Boyle that when alkaline and acidic particles come to be put together in the same common solution they might by chance combine, so as to 'recompose little prisms or convene into other bodies' 'almost' like those made up of the original crystals of nitre. He illustrates his argument by considering a large prism of iron which, because of its shape, will not pierce the skin, but if is now cut transverse-wise into wedges, such wedges would be capable of cutting through the skin or of splitting wood. Yet they could subsequently be reassembled so as to 'recompose a prism' which would revert to its former condition of bluntness. He gives another example: that of a 'dry stick circularly cut off at the ends' which is unable to prick the hand, yet if it is 'violently broken' the resulting jagged ends and splinters may well prove sharp enough to pierce the hand. However he then says that one might, as he himself does, think, as before, that the 'main conjecture might not be worthy any farther prosecution'.[181]

Boyle seems here to be attempting to employ the explanatory power of his Corpuscular Philosophy to solve two separate problems: how to account for the combining of two kinds of corpuscles, constituting two different reagents, to give a reaction product which is quite distinct from the starting materials, and how to reconcile the marked difference in taste between these same two reagents, one alkaline, the other acidic, with that of the near neutral taste of their reaction product.

Both explanations cleverly exploit the differences in size, figure and shape which, along with motion (or rest) Boyle never tires of telling the reader underlie all physical phenomena. He states the obvious fact that the best formed crystals of nitre are in the shape of six-sided prisms, which means that they are angular bodies with planar sides, then makes the reasonable assumption that the visible structure of these crystals derives from a like structure at the microscopic scale, in fact at the corpuscular level. Boyle then attempts to provide a mechanistic account of the sensation of taste by positing a physiological linkage between the shape of the corpuscles of nitre and their giving rise to a particular experience of taste. He

[181] Ibid., p. 367.

supposes that the angular corpuscles of nitre are not sufficiently sharp to prick the taste buds and so have a rather bland, only slightly bitter, taste. But these corpuscles of nitre are the reaction product of two quite different chemical species i.e. nitric acid and potassium carbonate, which themselves have distinctive tastes, the one acidic, the other alkaline. Boyle wonders whether the corpuscles of nitre result from the fitting together of two acutely angled corpuscles. Individually these wedge-shaped corpuscles produce a sharp taste because their acute shape pricks the taste buds, then when reacted, they fit neatly together to form the more obtuse-angled corpuscles of nitre, which are simply too blunt to prick the taste buds, and give a relatively mild tasting sensation.

Boyle is, however, curiously hesitant in promoting his hypothesis, even though a single model – acute-shaped, sharp tasting corpuscles, and behaving as reactants, fitting neatly together to become an obtuse-shaped, mild tasting reaction product – would seem to offer an elegant demonstration of the Corpuscularian Theory providing a convincing mechanism for a chemical reaction, and at the same time giving an account of why reaction products can taste so different from the reactants from which they derive. It is all the more surprising that Boyle does not see this particular application as providing a viable hypothesis on the functioning of the sense of taste, incorporating as it does insights going back to the Ancient Greeks. In speaking of acute-shaped particles as stabbing and cutting the tongue he is saying that sharp tasting materials prick the pores of the tongue as a needle might prick the hand. In making this comparison Boyle is implying that taste is closely related to touch and Aristotle seems to have held a like opinion when he stated that 'taste is a sort of touch'.[182] And as to the influence of particle shape on the experience of taste, Descartes held that it would be sensible to attribute different taste sensations to the various shapes causing taste. For Descartes, the nerves of the tongue and the parts adjacent to it are moved by bodies floating in the mouth along with the saliva. 'And these nerves are variously moved according to the diverse shapes or movements of the particles, thereby causing the sensations of diverse tastes'.[183] Boyle, if he had so wished, could have employed the explanatory power of his Corpuscularian Philosophy to link together the physiological and the chemical in just one simple model, but seems to have had no inclination to so do.

Conclusion

In this paper it was seen that Robert Boyle's Corpuscularian Philosophy, combined with the Genesis account of Creation, provided him with a mechanism whereby he could explain the formation of the corpuscles and the origin of their motion. Their occurrence in the natural world both individually and as agglomerations, and some details of their properties, was explored; their divisibility mentally and actually, and an experiment in which a metal could be reduced to its corpuscular state, then

[182] *Aristotle On the Parts of Animals*, 660[a] 21. In Jonathan Barnes (ed.) *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).
[183] R. Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, trans. V. R. Miller & R. D. Miller (Dordrecht: R. D. Reidel, 1983), p. 279.

reagglomerated to give the original metal, was related. The abrasion of the corpuscles to form water, and their intrinsic nature (are they truly solid or liquid?) was considered. Finally, the connection between corpuscular morphology and the taste of specific types of material was discussed.

German Nihilism
Leo Strauss's Philosophical Realignment

Stephan Steiner, Centre for Literary and Cultural Research, Berlin

ABSTRACT
In the following article I attempt to outline the transformation of Leo Strauss's political thought during his first years in New York. The lecture 'German Nihilism' presents an ideal opportunity to identify Strauss's philosophical realignments in the transition from the Weimar Republic to his American exile. Rendering visible the historical and biographical context of his philosophical arguments allow us to reflect on their political implications.

Introduction

In recent years the German-Jewish philosopher and emigrant Leo Strauss – paradoxically a pupil of Martin Heidegger *and* Ernst Cassirer – became infamous for being a mastermind of American neo-conservatism. Most of those speculations must today be classified as unwarranted.[184] His philosophical ideas do not today exert any direct political power. Still, it may very well be the case that through introducing German cultural critique and a specific *anxiety of relativism* his thought is present and effective in contemporary American discourses.

A leitmotiv of Leo Strauss's political philosophy is the quest for *binding moral foundations* of political communities in a secular age. The inquiry into such binding moral foundations was historically informed by the experience of totalitarianism that forms the backdrop against which Strauss rediscovers Plato and natural right as normative instances of *a law beyond the laws*. In his view the pluralism of liberal western societies undermines (and potentially destroys) the universalism of such a seemingly Platonic tradition.

Strauss's critique of liberal western societies, influential in the U.S., is a critique he became acquainted with in Germany during the time between the wars.[185] He evaluates this tradition in a lecture titled 'German Nihilism,' held at the New School for Social Research in 1941. Strauss insists there upon the legitimacy of the German nihilistic rejection of 'open societies' and recommends to his audience the ideal of 'closed societies' as the only way to save liberalism. I aim to reconstruct the paths Strauss takes to defend this heritage and to disclose the complex interwovenness of philosophical and political implications.

For this purpose I undertake a detailed interpretation of the lecture 'German Nihilism.' Full of implicit autobiographical reflections, this text allows a

[184] See Zuckert, Catherine / Zuckert, Michael: *The Truth about Leo Strauss: Political Philosophy and American Democracy* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).
[185] See Steiner, Stephan: *Weimar in Amerika: Leo Strauss' Politische Philosophie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

reconstruction of the genesis and the transformations of Strauss's political philosophy. I intend to demonstrate the fundamental philosophical importance of exposing the manifold autobiographical as well as historical references the text contains and instrumentalizes. By doing so I prove to be a pupil of Strauss myself, as he incessantly reminded us of the *philosophical significance of rhetorics* – of the ways arguments are arranged and presented.

1. Historical Setting of a Lecture

Strauss held his lecture 'German Nihilim' on February 26th 1941 at the New School for Social Research in New York, where he found academic shelter. He arrived in New York (together with his wife and an adopted child) in 1938 after years of overwhelming existential uncertainty with stopovers in Paris, London, and Cambridge. It is important to notice that the lecture was not published until 1999,[186] a circumstance that may explain the unusual directness in speech we find in this text.

The place where Strauss held the lecture was the 'University in Exile' founded by European emigrants within the New School.[187] It was a gathering point for socialist and liberal intellectuals who had successfully fled to America.[188] Strauss with his decisive philosophical (not empirical nor sociological) agenda and his pronounced critique of modernity, fiercely demanding a return to antiquity, was isolated in such a liberal-pluralistic institution (leaning towards an empirical-social-scientific worldview) from the beginning.

The historical moment of Strauss's address – February 1941 – was the time when the battle of Britain (the reckless German air-raides against British cities) was still undecided. In fact, Nazi-Germany was at the height of its military success, celebrating Rommel's advances in North Africa, while neither the USA nor the USSR had entered the war. It was at this time, France had capitulated in June 1940 and England stood alone, that Winston Churchill gave his famous speech 'Blood, Sweat, and Tears,' which made a lasting impression on Strauss.[189]

The actual occasion for Strauss's choice of the topic 'German nihilism' was the publication of Hermann Rauschnings book *The Revolution of Nihilism*.[190] In this book, the former NSDAP-activist, also in exile, presents his conservative, middle-class critique of Fascism to which Strauss responds in his lecture. Strauss's critique of Rauschning is directed at his pejorative concept of nihilism. Strauss invites his audience instead to reflect on the phenomenon of German nihilism to discover its positive moral meaning. What Strauss rejects in Rauschning's thesis, later made popular by Erich Fromm's social psychology,[191] is that nihilism is to be understood as

[186] Strauss, Leo: 'German Nihilism,' in: *Interpretation* 26 (1999), 353–376.
[187] See Rutkoff, Peter M. / Scott, William B.: *New School: A History of The New School for Social Research* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1986).
[188] Krohn, Claus-Dieter: *Intellectuals in Exile: Refugee Scholars and the New School for Social Research* (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993).
[189] Churchill, Winston: *Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat: Winston Churchill's Famous Speeches* (London: Penguin Classics, 1990).
[190] Rauschning, Hermann: *Die Revolution des Nihilismus* (Zürich: Europa Verlag, 1938).
[191] Fromm, Erich: *Escape From Freedom* (New York, NY: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941).

a psychical affliction, as a will to nothingness, that is: a will to self-destruction.[192] Such 'medicalizations,' Strauss claims, merely serve to devalue the political opponent instead of serving the understanding of his actual motives and reasons. Building on this methodical decision Strauss unfolds his own thesis that *National Socialism is merely the most known form of German nihilism*: 'its lowest, most provincial, most unenlightened and most dishonorable form.'[193] Continuing this line of thought Strauss postulates:

> Yet the defeat of National Socialism will not necessarily mean the end of German nihilism. For that nihilism has deeper roots than the preachings of Hitler, Germany's defeat in the World War and all that.[194]

2. Varieties of Nihilism, or: Rhetorics of Differentiation

Strauss takes as his task the explication of the 'ultimate motive' behind German nihilism. His first step toward explication is to differentiate German nihilism from '*absolute nihilism*.' Only 'absolute nihilism' negates everything and can properly be described as a 'pathological phenomenon,' a will to self-destruction. *German nihilism*, however, is rather a matter of 'specific negation,' namely the negation of modern civilization.[195] Strauss elucidates this thought as follows:

> German nihilism desires the destruction of modern civilisation as far as modern civilisation has a moral meaning. […] That moral meaning of modern civilization to which the German nihilists object, is expressed in formulations such as these: to relieve man's state; or: to safeguard the rights of man; or: the greatest possible happiness of the greatest possible number. What is the motive underlying the protest against modern civilisation, against the spirit of the West, and in particular of the Anglo-Saxon West? The answer must be: it is a *moral* protest.[196]

For Strauss, the most important motivating factor of German nihilism is not nihilistic at all: it is the morally inspired protest against ideals of Western, Anglo-Saxon, modern civilization. As examples of positions that are rejected, he offers keywords like *property individualism*, *human rights*, and *utilitarianism*. What, it may be asked, does a moral protest against these ideals look like and from where does it draw its resources? Strauss justifies his notion of moral protest with reference to Henri

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[192] 'Nihilism might mean: velle nihil, to will the nothing, the destruction of everything, including oneself, and therefore primarily the will to self-destruction. I am told that there are human beings who have such strange desires. I do not believe, however, that such a desire is the ultimate motive of German nihilism.' Nihilism, 357.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid., p. 358.

Bergson's book *The Two Sources of Morality* from 1932,[197] which revived the platonic distinction between open and closed societies.

> That protest proceeds from the conviction […] that the establishment of a perfectly open society […] [is] irreconcilable with the basic demands of moral life. […] That the root of all moral life is essentially and therefore eternally the closed society; […] that the open society is bound to be, if not immoral, at least amoral: the meeting ground of seekers of pleasure, of gain, of irresponsible power, indeed of any kind of irresponsibility and lack of seriousness.[198]

With this description of an open society, Strauss situates himself in a narrative that describes the 17th century upheavals in political thought associated with Thomas Hobbes and John Locke as *a history of decline* – that logically culminates in the political catastrophes of the 20th century. In the quotation, Strauss also makes clear references to existential philosophy and to Carl Schmitt's political critique of culture. Especially Existentialism accentuates '*seriousness*' as a fundamental requirement for moral life. The category of seriousness is a focal point in the thought of Søren Kierkegaard as well as in Martin Heidegger's popularizations of the former.[199] It calls for a distinction between good and evil, or, in the jargon of the time, it calls for a distinction between *authentic* and *inauthentic life*. The need for distinction ultimately manifests in a *rhetoric of decision*, which due to its dualistically constructed polarizations intends to denounce and ridicule public forms of democratic-discursive government.[200]

The attitude of 'seriousness,' which is taken to be the hallmark of closed societies, refers in a further step to the demand of constant orientation in the 'case of emergency [*Ernstfall*].'[201] Strauss cites the term ('Ernstfall') in German, obviously assuming that his English-speaking audience was familiar with that famous slogan from Carl Schmitt's *Political Theology*.[202] In incredibly terse but sovereign form, Strauss then merges all the leitmotivs of the German critique of the West into the following depiction of the *ideal of a closed society*:

> The closed society […] is constantly confronted with, and basically oriented toward, the Ernstfall, the serious moment, M-day, war. Only life in such a tense atmosphere, only a life which is based on constant awareness of the sacrifices to which it owes its existence, and of the necessity, the duty of sacrifice of life and all worldly goods, is *truly human*: the sublime is unknown to the open society. The societies of the West which claim to aspire toward the open society, actually are closed societies in a state

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[197] Bergson, Henri: *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1932).
[198] Nihilism, p. 358.
[199] See Theunissen, Michael: *Der Begriff Ernst bei Søren Kierkegaard* (Freiburg/Br.: Alber, 1958).
[200] See Krockow, Christian Graf von: *Die Entscheidung: Eine Untersuchung über Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, Martin Heidegger* (Frankfurt/M.: Campus, 1990).
[201] Nihilism, p. 358.
[202] Schmitt, Carl: *Politische Theologie: Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität* [1922] (München: Duncker & Humblot, 1934).

> of disintegration: their moral value, their respectability, depends entirely on their still being closed societies.[203]

Strauss presents here a remarkable apology to claim legitimacy for the German critique of the West: Everything valuable in Western societies is based entirely on the remaining elements of a closed society that the West only has not yet been able to strip itself of. In order to convey to his American audience the plausibility of this perspective, Strauss explicates the ideal of the serious life as '*the ceremonial of seriousness – the flag and the oath to the flag*.'[204] Strauss's attempt at conciliation on this point is not only interesting but irritating, given the historical context of his lecture.

His argumentation here does not constitute an exception, however. Strauss repeats this strategy when he refers to the anti-Bolshevik aim of German nihilism with the goal of soliciting understanding and sympathy for this form of nihilism:

> The conviction I am trying to describe, is not, to repeat, in its origin a love of war: it is rather a love of morality, a sense of responsibility for endangered morality. The historians in our midst know that conviction, or passion, from Glaukon's, Plato's brother's, passionate protest against the city of pigs, in the name of noble virtue. They know it, above all, from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's passionate protest against the easy-going and somewhat rotten civilisation of the century of taste, and from Friedrich Nietzsche's passionate protest against the easy-going and somewhat rotten civilisation of the century of industry. It was the same passion – let there be no mistake about that – which turned, if in a much more passionate and infinitely less intelligent form, against the alleged or real corruption of post-war Germany. Against 'the subhuman beings of the big cities (die Untermenschen der Grossstadt),' against 'cultural bolshevism (Kulturbolschewismus),' etc. That passion, or conviction, is then not in itself nihilistic, as is shown by the examples of Plato and Rousseau, if examples are needed at all.[205]

At this early juncture of the war, when England stood alone and when nothing had yet been decided, Strauss stands before his audience in neutral New York and quotes all his heroes of intellectual history in order to present his reflections on the moral character of German nihilism and to emphasize the legitimacy of the German position in what had become literally a '*war* about principles' between English and German civilization. Strauss's position does not only sound incriminating if one was familiar with his review of Carl Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political* from 1932.[206] In his review of Schmitt's book, Strauss formulates the same morally motivated critique of liberalism that he delivers in this lecture, and he even reproaches Schmitt for remaining under the spell of liberal ideas. In other words, he accuses Carl Schmitt – *the Crown jurist of the Third Reich* – of still being *too liberal*. A letter to his friend Gerhard Krüger from December 3rd 1933 underscores the ambivalence surrounding Strauss. Explaining Krüger the reasons for his academic difficulties in Paris, Strauss

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[203] Nihilism, p. 358.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid., p. 359.
[206] See Strauss, Leo: 'Anmerkungen zu Carl Schmitt, Der Begriff des Politischen (1932),' in: Ibid., *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft und zugehörige Schriften – Briefe, Gesammelte Schriften, Bd. 3* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2001), p. 217–238.

concludes: 'France is not an option – in part due to the circumstance that I am regarded here as a "Nazi."'[207]

3. Generation as Framework Story, or: Rhetorics of Participation

We have concentrated thus far on the ambivalent premises of Strauss's reflections on German nihilism. It should be noted, however, that he portrays the majority of these reflections in the third person and that he claims to represent the perspectives of others in the name of scientific integrity and the philosophical pursuit of knowledge. Let us then review once again his line of argumentation in order not to judge prematurely: Strauss invites his audience to differentiate the motives of the young nihilists. This concern results from his message to his listeners that in the long run National Socialism and Hitler are not actually significant because they merely represent the most vulgar form of German nihilism. Its actual moral motive is what Strauss intends to uncover, and he justifies his experiment with a shift in perspective as the 'highest duty of the scholar:'

> Let us beware of a sense of solidarity which is not limited by discretion. And let us not forget that the highest duty of the scholar, truthfulness or justice, acknowledges no limits. Let us then not hesitate to look for one moment at the phenomenon which I called nihilism, from the point of view of the nihilists themselves.[208]

It is notable in this passage how Strauss plays with the personal pronouns 'I,' 'we,' and 'they.' Beyond such strategic play, his recourse to Max Weber's ideal of truthfulness as the highest scholarly virtue suggests that, in an act of ideal science, Strauss disinterestedly turns to foreign and disturbing views, while being conscious of the danger of a lack of discretion. What remains unmentioned when Strauss invites his listeners and readers to adopt the perspective of the generation of young nihilists born around 1900, however, is the circumstance that he himself had been one of those young nihilists. This aspect of the text remains sealed from a purely immanent reading.

One of the most important characteristics of the young nihilists was *their Nietzscheanism*. Strauss's affiliation with this intellectual movement between the wars is expressed in a letter to his friend Karl Löwith on June 23rd 1935: 'I can say only that between age 22 and 30 Nietzsche captivated me so much that I utterly believed everything that I understood from him.'[209]

Strauss was, by his own account, under the spell of Nietzsche from 1921, the year of his doctorate under Ernst Cassirer, to 1929. What he does not mention is that in 1929 he was so impressed by the famous disputation between Ernst Cassirer and Martin

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[207] 'Frankreich scheidet völlig aus – zum Teil infolge des Umstands, dass ich hier als 'Nazi' gelte.' Strauss, Leo: *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft und zugehörige Schriften – Briefe, Gesammelte Schriften, Bd. 3* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2001), p. 435.

[208] Nihilism, p. 363.

[209] 'ich kann nur sagen, dass mich Nietzsche zwischen meinem 22. und 30. Jahr so beherrscht und bezaubert hat, dass ich ihm alles, was ich von ihm verstand […] aufs Wort glaubte.' Strauss, Briefe, p. 648.

Heidegger on the magic mountain in Davos that he turned to Heidegger. This recapitulation is relevant because it demonstrates that in his depiction of the young nihilists, Strauss is describing his own past. It is a strategy for dealing with the past that is not uncommon as a comparative glance at Karl Löwith's memoir *My Life in Germany before and after 1933* demonstrates.[210] The striking thing about this comparison is their diametrically opposed relation to shared experiences of their past. Shaken awake by historical events, Löwith, writing throughout his travels in Japanese exile, looks back at formerly held ideas with a sceptical distance and examines his own role in them. For Löwith the political events of 1933 forced a fundamental revision of his relation to Heidegger as well as to the thought of Nietzsche.[211]

Contrary to this, Strauss advocates the (justified) differentiation of intellectual movements – concretely meaning German nihilism and National Socialism; but his concern for differentiation slips into apology. He deserves credit for working out the existing differences, but he is not in the position to acknowledge the substantial historical continuities. Nowhere does Strauss even consider the possibility that many of the young nihilists became adult National Socialists.

4. Analysis of a Political Confession

A question that has not yet been addressed is: *to which ideals* does Strauss commit himself when in his lecture he turns away from German nihilism and discovers in England and Churchill his new heroes? With astonishing openness, Straus lays out the reasons for his change in perspective:

> Only one answer was given which was adequate and which would have impressed the young nihilists if they had heard it. It was not however given by a German and it was given in the year 1940 only. Those young men who refused to believe that the period following the jump into liberty, following the communist world revolution, would be the finest hour of mankind in general and of Germany in particular, would have been impressed *as much as we were*, by what Winston Churchill said after the defeat in Flanders about Britain's finest hour. For one of their greatest teachers had taught them to see in Cannae the greatest moment in the life of that glory which was *ancient Rome*.[212]

The shift toward admiration of England and Churchill is based on Churchill's speech 'Blood, Sweat, and Tears' from 1940. For Strauss, this speech proved England to be

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[210] Löwith, Karl: *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933: Ein Bericht* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1986).

[211] Löwith says that 'it was first the completed fact of my turnaround that forced me to the revision of the intellectual direction I had been moving in since my years of study in Freiburg without knowing where I was going. The touchstone was for me my stance toward Nietzsche.' Löwith, p. 137. ‚Erst das vollendete Faktum des Umschwunges zwang mich zur Revision der geistigen Richtung, in der ich mich seit den Freiburger Studienjahren fortbewegt hatte, ohne zu wissen wohin. Der Prüfstein war für mich meine Stellung zu Nietzsche.'

[212] Nihilism, p. 363.

the true and legitimate heir of an imperial tradition. The equation of the English defeat in Flanders with the crushing defeat of the Romans in Cannae opens the path for Strauss to acknowledge England – not however to change his views on the ideal of equality, the humanist tradition, or human rights! In order to decipher the *key term of the* '*imperial*' in Strauss's thought at that time, it is necessary to recapitulate once more, what Strauss regards as *the* intellectual challenge of his generation:

> What they [the young nihilists] hated, was the very prospect of a world in which everyone would be happy and satisfied, in which everyone would have his little pleasure by day and his little pleasure by night, a world in which no great heart could beat and no great soul could breathe, a world without real, unmetaphoric, sacrifice, i.e. a world without blood, sweat, and tears. What to the communists appeared to be the fulfillment of the dream of mankind, appeared to those young Germans as the greatest debasement of humanity, as the coming of the end of humanity, as the arrival of the latest man.[213]

Both the undisclosed quotation from Nietzsche's *Thus spoke Zarathustra* and the reference to Churchill and his 'Blood, Sweat, and Tears' speech are readily identifiable. What is new, however, is that Strauss bridges the Nietzsche reference, characteristic of the young nihilists, to Churchill's politics. He thus interprets the latter as the legitimate heir not only of imperial thought but also of the moral protest of German nihilism. He completes this picture by rendering the discourse of German nihilism compatible with the new political situation. The postulated 'debasements of humanity' are removed from their anti-Western narrative and concretized as *critique of communism*. These realignments produce the framework in which Strauss seemingly can invoke old ideas in unproblematic fashion:

> Against that debasement of morality, and against the concomitant decline of a truly philosophic spirit, the thought of Germany stood up, to the lasting honour of Germany.[214]

Strauss reinforces this point with a quote from Nietzsche:

> That what one calls the modern ideas, or the ideas of the 18th century, or even the French ideas, that ideal, in a word, against which the German spirit stood up with profound disgust it is of English origin, there can be no doubt about that.[215]

For Strauss, such sentences do not contradict his recently gained views:

> This taking things easy, this muddling through, this crossing the bridge when one comes to it, may have done some harm to the radicalism of English thought; but it proved to be a blessing to English life; the English never indulged in those radical breaks with traditions which played such a role on the continent.[216]

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[213] Ibid., p. 360.
[214] Ibid., p. 371.
[215] Ibid., p. 372.
[216] Ibid.

The political existentialist Strauss with his inclination toward great, fundamental, and world-historical oppositions now praises English pragmatism. Even more surprising perhaps is that he does not make it seem that this shift is a matter of simple opportunism. At the conclusion of his lecture, he integrates his '*Kehre*' with a stunning twist in his thinking.

> The present Anglo-German war is then of symbolic significance. In defending modern civilisation against German nihilism, the English are defending the eternal principles of civilisation.[217]

By equating, in these last lines, the *defence of modern civilization*, which he had so sharply condemned in the forty preceding pages, with the *defence of the eternal principles of being civilized at all*, Strauss can claim that he has always stood on their side. This little rhetorical magic trick allows him then to conclude with an explicit avowal.

> No one can tell what will be the outcome of this war. But this much is clear beyond any doubt: by choosing Hitler for their leader in the crucial moment, in which the question of who is to exercise military rule became the order of the day, the Germans ceased to have any rightful claim to be more than a provincial nation; it is the English, and not the Germans, who deserve to be, and to remain, an imperial nation: for only the English, and not the Germans, have understood that in order to deserve to exercise imperial rule, *regere imperio populos*, one must have learned for a very long time to spare the vanquished and to crush the arrogant: *parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*.[218]

The newly won friend of pragmatism here reverts back to his well-known penchant for radical oppositions: Either imperial nation or state of helots, there does not appear to be anything in between. Yet it is Strauss's use of the *topos* of the imperial, invoked in the Virgil-quotation, that is most illuminating. Virgil's imperial Rome can be seen as Strauss's *model for* and *measure of* good political action in the 20th century. Strauss's choice of this model reveals much of what is problematic in his thinking. For interpreting Strauss's use of the Virgil-quotation I only read a passage from one of his letters to Karl Löwith, dating May 19th 1933:

> The fact that Germany, having turned to the right, does not tolerate us, proves absolutely nothing against right-wing principles. To the contrary: only on the basis of right-wing principles – on the basis of fascist, authoritarian, *imperial* principles – is it possible to protest with integrity, without the ridiculous and despicable appeal to the *droits imprescriptibles de l'homme*, against the repulsive situation. I read Caesar's *Commentaries* with deepened understanding, and I think of Virgil's dictum: *Tu regere imperio … parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*. There is no reason for crawling to the cross, neither to the cross of liberalism, as long as somewhere in the world *a spark of Roman thought* glows.[219]

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[217] Ibid., p. 373.

[218] Ibid.

[219] 'daraus, dass das rechts-gewordene Deutschland uns nicht toleriert, folgt schlechterdings nichts gegen die rechten Prinzipien. Im Gegenteil: nur von den rechten

The parallels are obvious and, for a careful hermeneutist like Strauss, hardly by chance. Fortunately for him, Churchill arrived on the scene as a new Caesar, which at least historically proofed to be a better choice than Schmitt's and Heidegger's option for Hitler.

Conclusion

The historical and biographical contextualization of Strauss's philosophical argument (defending the *moral* dimension of German nihilism) reveals the political and personal premises that motivate his realignment. Being a Jewish refugee in New York, Strauss needed to revaluate the legacy of his former intellectual heroes, who then hailed National Socialism. Strauss's *retractationes* are exceptional and deserve our attention because he is not willing to simply condemn a certain German tradition of thought (nihilism) but attempts to transform and justify it despite the devastating political developments. By doing so he revived the German tradition of *Kulturkritik* and successfully introduced it to an American academic audience.[220]

Prinzipien aus, von den fascistischen, autoritären, *imperialen* Prinzipien aus lässt sich mit Anstand, ohne den lächerlichen und jämmerlichen Appell an die droits imprescriptibles de l'homme, gegen das meskine Unwesen protestieren. Ich lese Caesars Commentarien mit tieferem Verständnis, und ich denke an Virgils: Tu regere imperio … parcere subjectis et debellare superbos. Es gibt keinen Grund zu Kreuze zu kriechen, auch nicht zum Kreuz des Liberalismus, solange noch irgendwo in der Welt ein Funke des *römischen* Gedankens glimmt.' Strauss, Briefe, 625.

[220] See Kinzel, Till: *Platonische Kulturkritik in Amerika: Studien zu Allan Bloom's 'The Closing of the American Mind'* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2002).