ΦΙΛΟΘΕΟΣ

PHILOTHEOS International Journal for Philosophy and Theology

Władysławowi
Witoldowego Rumak
z pod Grunwaldu
1885

22.2
2022

ΦΙΛΟΘΕΟΣ **22.2 (2022)** **PHILOTHEOS**

International Journal for Philosophy and Theology

Sebastian Press
Los Angeles

GNOMON
Center for the Humanities

Center for Philosophy
and Theology, Trebinje

Belgrade 2022

ISSN 1451-3455 UDC 1:2 e-ISSN 2620-0163

PHILOTHEOS

International Journal for Philosophy and Theology

Founding Editor and Editor-in-Chief
Bogoljub Šijaković (Belgrade)

Executive Editors
Georgios Arabatzis (Athens), **David Bradshaw** (Lexington, KY),
Predrag Čičovački (Worcester, MA), **Aleksandar Djakovac** (Belgrade),
Alexey G. Dunaev (Moscow), **Markus Enders** (Freiburg i. Br.),
Andrej Jeftić (Belgrade), **Dmitriy Makarov** (Ekaterinburg),
Mikonja Knežević (Belgrade),
Vladan Perišić (Belgrade), **Marko Vilotić** (Belgrade)

Book Review Editors
Rade Kisić (Belgrade), **Bogdan Lubardić** (Belgrade)

Editorial Board
Petar Bojanić (Belgrade), **Jean-François Colosimo** (Paris),
Ingolf Ulrich Dalferth (Claremont, CA),
John A. Demetracopoulos (Patras), **Darko Djogo** (Foča),
Christophe Erismann (Wien), **Thomas Sören Hoffmann** (Hagen),
Vittorio Hösle (Notre Dame, IN), **Georgi Kapriev** (Sofia),
Basil Lourié (Saint Petersburg), **Krzysztof Narecki** (Lublin),
Gorazd Kocijančič (Ljubljana), **Časlav Koprivica** (Belgrade),
Nicholaos Loudovikos (Thessaloniki), **Dragan Prole** (Novi Sad),
Philipp W. Rosemann (Maynooth), **Christos Terezis** (Patras),
Werner Theobald (Kiel), **Maksim Vasiljević** (Belgrade / Los Angeles)

Editorial Assistant and Secretary
Jovana Šijaković (Belgrade)

Advisory Board
Konstantine Boudouris (Athens), **Thomas Bremer** (Münster),
Grigorije Durić (Düsseldorf), **Alois Maria Haas** (Zürich),
Christoph Jamme (Lüneburg), **Václav Ježek** (Prešov), **Andrew Louth** (Darlington),
Klaus Müller (Münster), **Friedo Ricken** (München), **Josef Seifert** (Granada),
Walter Sparn (Erlangen), **Wolfgang Speyer** (Salzburg),
Torstein Theodor Tollefsen (Oslo), **Christos Yannaras** (Athens)

ISSN 1451-3455 UDC 1:2 e-ISSN 2620-0163

ΦΙΛΟΘΕΟΣ

International Journal for Philosophy and Theology

PHILOTHEOS Vol. **22.2** (2022) pp. 107–210

Josef M. Seifert:
The Ur-(Primordial)Phenomenon of Reality 111
Lance H. Gracy:
Is Scholasticism "Philosophy as a Way of Life"?
St. Bonaventure's Scholastic Mystagogy as Seraphic Philosophy 134
Isaac Jay Aday:
Freedom, Human Nature, and Evil in Dostoevsky's
The Dream of the Ridiculous Man and *The Brothers Karamazov* 157
George Varvatsoulias:
Spiritual intelligence and spiritual exegesis: Constructing a self-devised
inventory of interdisciplinary importance for psychology of religion 169
Deepa Majumdar:
On War (Nature, Causes, Impacts) – and Peace 188
Book Reviews:
Graham Oppy and Kenneth L. Pearce, *Is There a God? A Debate* 207

Philotheos 22.2 (2022) 111–133

Josef M. Seifert
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in München
jmmbseifert12@gmail.com

The Ur-(Primordial)Phenomenon of Reality

Its Incorrect Determination by Husserl and Insufficient Phenomenological Grasp by Scheler

1. What is Reality *and Real Existence?*

The unique priority and excellence of being found only in the real world of individual things and their properties, this primordial phenomenon of *reality*, cannot be explained by anything else.[1] One can only intuitively grasp its nature and understand that here we find what 'being' is in the most actual sense; and that here we touch the real being, compared to which purely intelligible objects, even the most sublime ideas, possess only a 'thin' reality. The 'idea' of justice or of mercy as such cannot be compared in 'reality' with the really existing just prophet Daniel who saves Susanna from death, or the Idea of Justice lacks the reality of an act of merciful forgiving like that of St. Stephen who forgives those who stone him.

This affirmation must not be interpreted as denying that superiority of intelligibility and timelessness that we find in 'ideal essences', especially in the εἴδη, the absolutely necessary timeless essences that are objects of mathematical and philosophical knowledge. A fortiori, there shall be no talk here of the *real infinite divine justice* called 'justice itself '. For this possesses of course a full reality infinitely superior to that of any human real justice. We speak here only of the ideas and the εἴδη as such and say of these that they are inferior with respect to their reality to any just person and his acts , or even to a fly or piece of wood.

Let us remember here that being can stand out from non-being or from nothingness in three completely different respects and directions[2]:

1. Firstly, by its intelligibility (degree of inner meaning, cognizability and comprehensibility) and in this respect, of course, the general "essences" (εἴδη) are incomparably superior to any finite realization of them or to the fly, a superiority which implies also other ontological predicates like timelessness, at least in the case of necessary essences.

---

[1] Contribution to *The Phenomenon of Reality* Workshop, September 22, 2022.

[2] For a detailed account of these three "directions of being" see Josef Seifert, „Die verschiedenen Bedeutungen von 'Sein' – Dietrich von Hildebrand als Metaphysiker und Martin Heideggers Vorwurf der Seinsvergessenheit", in: Balduin Schwarz, hrsg., *Wahrheit, Wert und Sein. Festgabe für Dietrich von Hildebrand zum 80. Geburtstag* (Regensburg: Habbel, 1970), S. 301-332.

2. Secondly, a being can stand out in the deepest sense from nothing by its value (by its ought to be), through which being is something that *should be and is,* as it were *confirmed and enthroned in its being*. And in this sense, many real things that should not be, like a concentration camp, lack their *raison d'être* and thus the deepest sense of being, even if they exist fully really with all kinds of real atrocities happening in them. In the axiological sense of the word, even purely ideal or purely intentional objects like Imogen in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* or Cordelia in Shakespeare's *King Lear* can stand out much more positively from nothingness than trivial or evil real things.
3. In a third sense that is of special interest to us here, however, mountains, flowers, lions or men stand out from non-existence by their being real, by their reality, and it is into this dimension of being that we will try to penetrate in the following.

2. Husserl's twofold error in characterizing "reality"

Various attempts to attribute this primordial phenomenon of reality to something else, or to try to determine it too imprecisely by certain characteristics that are not the core of its essence, are also found in great phenomenologists. Thus Husserl in the *Logical Investigations* claimed that the only or at least a sufficient characteristic of reality is its temporality: everything temporal is real and everything real is temporal. Husserl expresses this alleged basis of the division of the world into ideal units of meaning and the real world with striking directness:

> "For us temporality is a sufficient mark of reality. Real being and temporal being may not be identical notions, but they coincide in extension."[3]

---

[3] Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, II, 1, ii, ch. 2. This text in its context reads thus:

Als charakteristisches Merkmal der Realität genügt uns die Zeitlichkeit. Reales Sein und zeitliches Sein sind zwar nicht identische, aber umfangs|gleiche [B124] Begriffe.

Natürlich meinen wir nicht, daß die psychischen Erlebnisse Dinge sind im Sinne der Metaphysik. Aber zu einer dinglichen Einheit gehörig sind auch sie, wenn die alte metaphysische Überzeugung im Rechte ist, daß alles zeitlich Seiende notwendig entweder ein Ding ist oder Dinge mitkonstituiert. Soll aber Metaphysisches ganz ausgeschlossen bleiben, so definiere man Realität geradezu durch Zeitlichkeit. Denn worauf es hier allein ankommt, das ist der Gegensatz zum unzeitlichen »Sein« des Idealen.

We do not, of course, suppose that psychical experiences are in a metaphysical sense 'things'. But even they belong to a thinglike unity, if the traditional metaphysical conviction is right in holding that all temporal existents must be things, or must help to constitute things. Should we wish, however, to keep all metaphysics out, we may simply define 'reality' in terms of temporality. For the only point of importance is to oppose it to the timeless 'being' of the ideal.

Husserl, Edmund. Logical Investigations Volume 1 (International Library of Philosophy) (p.520). Taylor and Francis. Kindle-Version.

Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl, although she cites and interprets many texts of Husserl on Wirklichkeit, does not cite or interpret this text, (although it is the only one in which Husserl gives a short answer to the question what reality is, if only by identifying an alleged essential mark of reality) in her monumental and impressive work *Edmund Husserl. Zeitlichkeit und Intentionalität.* PHÄNOMENOLOGIE, Texte und Kontexte. Herausgegeben von Karl-Heinz Lembeck, Ernst Wolfgang Orth und Hans Rainer Sepp, II. KONTEXTE, Band 8, (Freiburg-München: Verlag Karl Alber, 2000). Husserl treats the question of reality (Wirklichkeit) also in other works, for example *Cartesian Meditations* III, § 24, 25, where claims that any claim and right to such modes of being as Wirklichkeit (reality) derives from ourselves from or transcendental ego:

In all hundreds of *passages in which Husserl speaks of Wirklichkeit,* one does not find a single one in which Husserl presents a systematic analysis of the urphenomenon of *reality* or a revision of his quoted short but – relatively – most extensive Husserlian characterization of reality in terms of temporality presented in LU. This thesis of Husserl influenced also Heidegger's metaphysics and shapes his philosophy.[4] Heidegger's thesis of the radical temporality of being is formulated by him less clearly than in Husserl's *Logical Investigations,* but especially drastically with regard to the "outstanding" of being (in the future) that is inherent in temporality and without which being would fall into nothingness:

> However, as soon as Dasein "exists" in such a way that there is nothing more outstanding at it, then it has already become one with the no-more-there-ness.[5]

But Husserl's thesis of temporality as an essential feature of reality, asserted without closer investigation and rather lightly, is doubly false. That not everything temporal is real is evident by considering the fact that [even purely intentional objects, such as the events and occurrences in a novel, which take place in a fictional time, are very much subject to temporal changes and that a 'before' and 'after', 'earlier' and 'later' are part of their essence. Admittedly, this temporality is profoundly modified in the literary work of art by the fictional time and the fictional characters and events, so much so that it even makes sense to ascribe timelessness in a certain sense to the derived purely intentional objects in the work of art, insofar as they represent in a timeless fashion the stratum of the represented objectivities in a work of art and the time of the events in a novel, in which they take place, is not real time.[6] Nevertheless, fictional temporality is also a kind of temporality.

> *Es ist klar, daß Wahrheit bzw. wahre Wirklichkeit von Gegenständen nur aus der Evidenz zu schöpfen ist, und daß sie es allein ist, wodurch wirklich seiender, wahrhafter, rechtmäßig geltender Gegenstand, welcher Form oder Art immer, für uns Sinn hat, und mit all den ihm für uns unter dem Titel wahrhaften Soseins zugehörigen Bestimmungen. Jedes Recht stammt von daher, stammt aus unserer transzendentalen Subjektivität selbst, jede erdenkliche Adäquation entspringt als unsere Bewährung, ist unsere Synthesis, hat in uns ihren letzten transzendentalen Grund.*

From the real Husserl distinguishes also the "as if"-reality that also corresponds to Ingarden's fourth stratum of the Literary Work of art, this sphere of the purely intentional objectivities in a literary work. Cf. Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, transl. by George G. Grabowicz (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973). See likewise Edmund Husserl, *Nachlass,* IV, *Phänomenologie und Erkenntnistheorie* (1917), § 24, XXV169:

> Aber das ist sein Wesen, daß, was es gegenständlich bewußt macht, nicht charakterisiert ist als wirklicher Gegenstand, sondern als »gleichsam« wirklicher, z.B. der phantasierte Zentauer als »gleichsam« dort seiend, »vorschwebend« im Modus einer Wirklichkeit-als-ob, wenn wir Vaihingers Ausdruck verwenden wollen.

Cf. also Husserl, *Logical Investigations, Prolegomena,* chs. 7, 32 ff, 8, 46, 51.

[4] Cf. M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Second Section, Dasein and Temporality, where he makes temporality the basic determination of an "original existential interpretation" of man (Dasein) and thus of being in general. According to Heidegger, the structure of temporality culminates in "Being to Death" (ibid., § 46 ff., ch. 1) and in historicity (loc. cit., §§ 72 ff., ch. 5).

[5] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 46, p. 236: *The elimination of the being – standstill means the annihilation of its being. As long as Dasein is as being, it has never reached its "completeness". But if it gains it, then the gain becomes the loss of the being – in – the – world par excellence. As being, it then never becomes experienceable anymore...The hindrance stands on the side of the being of this being.*

[6] The most in-depth research on this can be found in Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art. An Investigation of the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of Language.* Translated by George G. Grabowicz. Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1979).

More importantly still,] the derivatively purely intentional and non-real objects in a literary work of art can also enter time in form of original purely intentional objects and events[7] that take place in real time such as when the work is read or a drama or opera is performed: they succeed each other in the same real time in which we read the work of art or follow a performance on stage. In this case, the purely intentional objects and events take place in real time no less than the conscious acts themselves in which they are given. Yet they are clearly not real, but *purely intentional objects*. The same applies to the objects of dreams: as the different phases of a dream take place in real time, so also the purely intentional objects of the experience of dreaming unfold in real time. This is not to deny that the real time in which dream images and events follow upon each other may be far shorter than the dreamt contents, times and events themselves.

This is true of dreams, however, not of fictional events acted out in real time on stage or in a movie, even though also in the theater or a movie the represented time in the world of represented objectivities make it possible to experience in one real hour 30 days of fictional time. Such a "ruffled time" is possible because purely intentional and imagined or dreamt occurrences fill out real time in an essentially different way from the way in which real events take time. Moreover, real and fictional time "overlap" here as it were.

Regarding the opposite side of Husserl's claim, namely that all real processes and events are temporal, it is likewise evident that real "being-in-time" like a human life with its flowing present (which despite its fragile and fleeting character forms the *actus of* temporal reality) cannot be regarded real in an exclusive or even a primary sense; a fortiori, the no-more-being of the past and the not-yet-being of the future are not real now. Thus, also real "being-in-real-time", instead of simply coinciding with reality, entails a tremendous lack of reality, which led Augustine to say that being-in-time *is* only by moving towards *nothingness*. Thus, since temporal beings entail, in their past and in their future, but also in their fleeting present, a tremendous limit of "reality," being-real by no means coincides, as Husserl and Heidegger claim, with "being in time"; indeed, being in time entails a very profound lack of full realness that brings it closer to nothingness than to the highest reality.

This leads both to the realization that the only fully real Being that not merely was or will be but IS in the fullest sense, cannot be temporal but must be eternal, since in the mirror of the structural nullity of the temporal being as well as the impossibility that temporal being is beginningless,[8] it is evident that exclusively the simultaneous and never disappearing being and possession of an eternal now, in which there is no no-more-being of the past and no not-yet-being of the future, can possess the full reality of being and life.[9] Only the eternal, never the temporal, can be real *par excellence*.

---

[7] A distinction made by Ingarden in Roman Ingarden, *Das literarische Kunstwerk. Eine Untersuchung aus dem Grenzgebiet der Ontologie, Logik und Literaturwissenschaft* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1931), 3rd ed., 1972, as well as in Roman Ingarden, Gesammelte Werke, vol.13, *Vom Erkennen des literarischen Kunstwerks*, ed. Rolf Fieguth and Guido Küng (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1997). Ingarden calls "original purely intentional objects" all objects that "live" entirely from being the object of conscious acts, while "derivatively purely intentional objects" are those objects which are not objects of conscious acts but correspond to word-meanings even when the objectivities described in a literary work are not actually objects of intentional acts.

[8] I presented, defended and developed further Bonaventure's proof for this in Josef Seifert, *Bye-bye Dawkins und Darwin. Göttliche Schöpfung der Welt und des Menschen aus dem Nichts: Philosophische Beweise,* chs. 1-3. (Aachen-Mainz, Patrimonium Verlag 2021)

Husserl's and Heidegger's equation of reality with Being-in-time either implies an untenable processualist idea of God like that of Whitehead or Hartshorne,[10] or else (namely if a temporal God is contradictory in nature, as can be proved) is, at least in its last consequence, atheistic.[11]

3. Scheler's incorrect assertion about reality and its primary criterion and form of knowing it

It is no more possible than to defend Husserl's thesis that the concept of reality is of equal extension as that of temporality, to consider, with Scheler (or also Kant in one of his arguments for the existence of the 'thing-in-itself'), the *resistance to the* sense of touch or to drives, volitions and desires as the only criterion let alone the innermost essence of the real. For not only can there be resistances of unreal objects in tactile hallucinations and in psychic phenomena of perceiving purely subjective intentional objects as if they were real, but there are also many ideal laws of being and other non-real objects which resist our imagination and arbitrariness without therefore being real in the strict sense of the *urphenomenon* of reality.

Even though that special and profound resistance to the senses and to real acts, which only characterizes reality and which Scheler has in mind, is a *consequence* of reality; it neither is its exclusive criterion nor its innermost core. For evidently no human person could perceive the reality of things as perfectly as an angelic or divine mind, but the reality would not resist them at all as it often resists us.

But also man's experience of reality is in no way primarily a kind of "running our heads against a wall." There is none of that in the clear and evident experience of the reality of our own minds nor can the cognition of the reality of other persons, with whom we are united in friendship or love, be reduced to, or primarily identified with, their resisting our whims and wishes. It would make no sense to claim that the immediate inner experience of the reality of our own mind or the very different perception of other persons consists primarily let alone only in such a resistance.[12]

---

[9] This I have discussed, with extensive reference to Plotinus' *Enn*. III,7 and Augustine's phenomenology of time in Book X of the *Confessions*, as well as Bonaventura's metaphysics of time in detail in Josef Seifert, *Essere e persona. Verso una fondazione fenomenologica di una metafisica classica e personalistica*. (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1989) ch. 10. This book will soon be published in English in an enlarged version.

[10] Whitehead and Hartshorne interpret it in their process philosophy in the context of a "neoclassical theism," whose God himself is conceived to be temporal.

[11] On this point see, besides *Essere e persona,* ch. 10, Josef Seifert, *Bye-bye Dawkins und Darwin. Göttliche Schöpfung der Welt und des Menschen aus dem Nichts: Philosophische Beweise,* cit., chs 1-14. Even though Whitehead and Hartshorne interpret it in their process philosophy in the context of a neoclassical theism whose God is himself temporal.

[12] Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl offers an excellent analysis of those of Husserl's texts in which he, at least apparently, holds that there is an immediate inner perception of the reality of the conscious self. See Sonja Rinofner-

But even if the experience of obstacles and resistance to our drives or movements is an excellent road to grasp reality, the reality itself of the wall against which we run our head, is different from such resistance: it is, among other things, the condition of the possibility of running our heads against it, but in this does not consist its reality.

My criticisms of Husserl's and Scheler's attempts to capture the urphenomenon of reality do not deny that many or most temporal beings are real and that their resistance to our sense of touch and wishes is an important characteristic of reality and an important road to its cognition.

4. The irreducible and undefinable urphenomenon of reality allows for Its Elucidation through Its Opposites and essential marks

If all attempts of explain the primordial phenomenon of reality by something else like temporality or resistance to our senses or wishes fail, one is led to understand that reality is one of those ultimate data, such as being, consciousness, cognition, etc., which cannot possibly be explained or defined by anything other than themselves, but must be taken seriously in their self-givenness. The primordial datum of reality can only be unfolded by analyzing, on the one hand, its characteristics, also separating it from its opposites and from everything that is not it, and by refuting, on the other hand, those attempts at its determination which do not do justice to the primordial phenomena as reality.[13]

Despite the character of reality as a primordial reality, it is not true about it what G.E. Moore says about the good:

Kreidl, Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl, *Edmund Husserl. Zeitlichkeit und Intentionalität.* PHÄNOMENOLOGIE, Texte und Kontexte. Herausgegeben von Karl-Heinz Lembeck, Ernst Wolfgang Orth und Hans Rainer Sepp, II. KONTEXTE, Band 8, (Freiburg-München: Verlag Karl Alber, 2000), pp. 512 ff.

There, she quotes a text of Husserl on the immediate and indubitable knowledge of the *reality* (*Wirklichkeit*) of the *ego cogitans,* in which there is no experience of "Widerständigkeit" of reality at all: *»… um zu wissen, daß das reine Ich ist und was es ist, kann mich keine noch so große Häufung von Selbsterfahrungen eines besseren bsbyeelehren als die einzelne Erfahrung eines einzigen schlichten cogito. Es wäre ein Widersinn zu meinen, ich, das reine Ich, sei wirklich nicht oder sei etwas ganz anderes als das in diesem cogito fungierende. Alles Erscheinende, alles irgendwie sich Darstellende, Bekundende kann auch nicht sein, und ich kann mich darüber täuschen. Das Ich aber erscheint nicht, stellt sich nicht bloß einseitig dar, bekundet sich nicht bloß nach einzelnen Bestimmtheiten, Seiten, Momenten, die zudem ihrerseits bloß erscheinen; vielmehr ist es in absoluter Selbstheit und in seiner unabschattbaren Einheit gegeben, ist in der reflektiven, auf es als Funktionszentrum zurückgehenden Blickwendung adäquat zu erfassen. Als reines Ich birgt es keine verborgenen inneren Reichtümer, es ist absolut einfach, liegt absolut zutage, aller Reichtum liegt im cogito und der darin adäquat erfaßbaren Weise der Funktion.« (Id/II, S. 104 f., Hervorhebung. S. R.).*

I cannot discuss here Sonja Rinofner's extremely differentiated discussion of Husserl's early versus his later Cartesianism (in *Cartesian Meditations*). See on this also Josef Seifert, „Kritik am Relativismus und Immanentismus in E. Husserls Cartesianischen Meditationen. Die Aequivokationen im Ausdruck 'transzendentales Ego' an der Basis jedes transzendentalen Idealismus." *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* XIV, 1970.

[13] In this – and not in a skepticism that is wrongly but frequently attributed to the Socratic "I know that I do not know" – I also see the positive philosophical value of the many aporetic and negative endings of the Socratic dialogues. They refute definitions of primordial urphenomena and any form of reducing them in terms of what they are not.

> "If I am asked 'What is good?' my answer is that good is good, and that is the end of the matter. Or if I am asked 'How is good to be defined?' my answer is that it cannot be defined, and that is all I have to say about it. ."

There are various ways open to the philosopher to say more about the undefinable urphenomenon of reality than "reality is reality and that's the end of the matter," some of which we would like to explain and to apply in the following:

1. ***Ideas are ordered to reality that alone can be or possess what they are ideas of:*** The unique advantage of 'being', which only real things or persons possess over everything else, is first understood when one realizes that many 'ideas', intelligible and necessary 'plans of being'(*rationes)* – because they determine what the real things (provided these exist) are, can or cannot be, – are necessarily related or ordered to the real order of things. These intelligible "essences", if they refer to real beings, are related to the world of real things by containing, so to speak, the principles and timeless 'rules' or at least the 'possibilities' and the 'meaning' of the real beings that correspond to them or are 'called' to their realization. The intelligible timeless ideas of substances, animals, or persons are realized and 'fulfilled' *only* 'in' the real world.

Although the "ideal content" of justice, for example, may 'contain' a much more sublime value than can ever be realized in a human act, yet the 'idea of justice' does not embody this value in itself; rather, the goodness of justice *exists* only in real just acts or persons. Only these can actually *be* just: it is not the idea of justice as such that possesses justice or can even possess it; on the contrary, it lies in the eternal idea of justice that exclusively real persons and acts can realize the value of justice, just as they alone can *be* just.

2. ***Some kinds of being are only themselves when they are real.*** Another access to the original phenomenon of being real, which is not definable by anything else, can be gained by the insight that it belongs to some kinds of being that they possess their nature of a living, conscious, thinking or free being *only* if they really exist.

a. Such a belonging of being real to the essence of certain beings could be shown, e.g. for any (first) substance (*proth* oüsía), to whose 'standing in itself in being' (*inseitas*) also belongs its self-being in the sense of its reality.

b. Likewise, all material motions through space claim an autonomous real existence independent of mere possibilities, ideas or intentional objects, although in their case Berkeley's thesis that their being is only a being perceived (*esse est percipi*) is far less absurd and contrary to their nature than a similar conception of other persons[, who *can never be what they are, can never be persons, if* they do not really exist. Without this autonomy of reality and its difference from being purely intentional objects of some other conscious subject they would not be themselves.]

c. It could be shown a fortiori that living beings lay claim to independent real existence according to their essence. They only actually live if they are not only imagined as living but if they possess self-being in the sense of full reality. The autonomy and selfhood of the real are necessary ontological conditions of being alive, as well as of all nutrients and liquids without which no living being on earth can survive.

d. And a fortiori, indeed in a much higher sense, reality belongs to being a person and to its unique, unrepeatable being that consciously lives its life. Only really existing beings can be persons and purely intentional or possible persons just are no persons, but only imagined as such or ideas of persons. Likewise, all personal acts and experiences, including being deceived or dreaming, are only what they are, if they possess reality in the sense of this primordial reality of being actual, being real, which is our topic here.

e. All of this hold true in the supreme sense of God: a God who exists only as object of intentional acts, as a fiction, is no God at all, cannot meaningfully be addressed in prayers of petition and even less in acts of adoration.[14]

3. ***Opposita per opposita cognoscuntur – Reality is known through its opposites and what is not it:*** "being real," even if it is not definable by anything else, since it is an ultimate and eo ipso undefinable phenomenon, can be further determined by its opposites:

a. the real forms an opposition to the *merely* possible, which is determined both by the fact that it *can be* real and by the fact that it is not real.[15]

b. The real possesses an even stronger contrary opposite in the impossible, since this is not only factually not real, but necessarily excludes being real because of its contradictoriness or other "material" (content-related) impossibilities. Through this being excluded from the real, which we encounter in the impossible, the impossible, in a kind of 'creative negation', as William Marra calls it, opens up the meaning and the essence of the real, which is clearly given when contrasted with the being excluded from it of the impossible.[16]

c. The real also forms an opposition to the merely imagined or to purely intentional objects, whether these are imagined in real acts, or whether they are objects of units of meaning laid down in thought or expressed in language, for instance in a literary work of art.

Here it is especially the merely 'assigned being' possessed by purely intentional objects of conscious acts and of the meaning of texts in contrast to the selfhood of the real that stands in contrast to the self-possessed being of the real.

d. Likewise, in purely ideal essences and forms (ideas in the Platonic sense) or the various kinds of ideal "beings", we encounter a special contrast to the real. Although the timeless forms (the “ideas”) possess a being of their own and an autonomy in relation to all our acts, they lack, as it were, the innermost moment of reality: that unique actuality of the *actus* essendi, to which our next discussions shall turn.

---

[14] This elementary and indubitable insight would be a chief criticism I would launch against Kant's philosophy of religion and his conception of the postulates of Practical Reason, as well against the paper "Glauben, als ob. Religion als Fiktion und Erzählung" by Sebastian Gäb, hitherto only published on his academia.edu Homepage. Some philosophers, for example Robert Spaemann, thought that this is the main pont of Anselm's affirmation in his *Proslogion 2* that God would not be that greater than which nothing can be conceived ig he only existed "in the mind" and not also in reality. See Robert Spaemann, „Die Frage nach der Bedeutung des Wortes ‚Gott' ", in: *Communio* 1 (1972), S. 54-72, wiederabgedruckt in: R. Spaemann, *Einsprüche* (Einsiedeln: Johannes-Verlag, 1977), S. 13-35. He thereby counters Hermann Lübbe's claim in *Religion nach der Aufklärung* (Graz: Styria, 1986), that after Kant we can speak of God and religion only in terms of a fictional God that allows us to cope with our death and other evils. This "existentialist functionalist"conception of religion has much in common with Rudolf Bultmann's program of *Entmythologisierung* of religion.

[15] Of course, everything real is and was also possible. Thus possibility can be proven through reality: *ab esse ad posse valet illatio.* But this is precisely not the "*merely possible*".

[16] See William Marra, "Creative Negation", in B. Schwarz, Hrsg., *Wahrheit, Wert und Sein*, Festschrift für Dietrich von Hildebrand zum 80. Geburtstag (Regensburg: J. Habbel, 1970), S. 75-85.

And with this, we are directed to the possibly deepest way in which the philosopher can elucidate the essence of a primordial phenomenon like reality: namely, by an analysis of the different essential moments of the real.

4. ***The “inwardness of real being”:*** a phenomenon closely related to reality is the *inwardness of the being* of real beings, in contrast to all beings, like the purely intentional objects, to which their being is only conferred from the outside without belonging to them inwardly.

5. ***The ‘being in itself resolved’ of real beings:*** The autonomous selfhood and the ontic inwardness of the real, which reality also has in common with purely ideal beings like the εἴδη is also distinguished from another essential moment of the real: from the moment of ‘being in itself resolved’ of the real being, which consists in the fact that the real being does not refer (like the possible or the purely intentional or also the purely ideal being) to something else, in which alone it would become real. As a real being, a being possesses a certain ‘final character’, in that it does not, like purely intentional objects or ideal essences, stand in an essential relation to something else to which it refers and in which alone its full actuality would lie. A certain primacy of reality consists precisely in this “being resolved in itself” (*in sich selbst Beschlossenheit*), which does in no way coincide with an alleged closedness of real being assumed in Leibniz’s dictum that monads neither have doors nor windows, instead of recognizing that they do have windows and doors in virtue of their fundamental capacity of going beyond themselves, of transcending themselves in knowledge,[17] value responses and other ways.

6. *The Being-in-Itself (das Sein an sich) of and in all real beings. The incompatibility between Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology and any transcendental idealism with realism:*

Nothing can be real that has not intrinsic being – that is not a “thing-in-itself”. The in itself-character of the “urphenomenon of reality” cannot result from any transcendental constitution. I wish therefore to emphasize the absolute incompatibility of Husserl’s and any transcendental idealism with a recognition and cognition of reality: A transcendental constitution and an origin of “reality” in intentional consciousness is a *contradictio in adjecto*.[18]

---

[17] See Josef Seifert, *Erkenntnis objektiver Wahrheit. Die Transzendenz des Menschen ,in der Erkenntnis* (Salzburg: A. Pustet, ²1976).

[18] To begin with, by the term “ideal existence” we do not mean here, of course, what the term “transcendental idealism” means in Kant, Fichte or the late Husserl, but rather what Plato means by “ideas” and “eide.”

On the basis of transcendental idealism, it would even be impossible to speak of “ideal existence” in our sense; for this implies an objective, unchanging, timeless necessity of essence, incomparable intelligibility, apodictic and infallible certainty about the eternal *rationes of* things, which are transcendent to the human mind and to the contingent essences whose “primordial plans” they are. In transcendental idealism, only a “necessity” relative to and constituted by human consciousness could be found.

Many of the opposites to reality that we have discussed show that real beings necessarily have the fundamental character of existing *an sich,* they exist *in themselves.* A purely intentional object, something that exists only as object of a consciousness, can never be real – even if some forms of aspects that do not belong to a being in itself, partake in reality inasmuch as they are the human or personal "aspect" under which for example my person is experienced by me as an "I" but presents herself as a "Thou" to any other person. That every person exists in herself is also quite evident in her being experienced by herself as an "I", but by me as a "thou". She can only be a thou for me, because she is real in herself. Her thou-character belongs to her only from my second person vantage point but manifests her own being in herself just as much as her "first person" aspect as an "I", which belongs inseparably to the experience of a person, while the "thou"-aspect only constitutes itself when the person is encountered by another person.

7. *The actus essendi of the real:* While the ideal being of εἴδη and other ideal beings lack the self – containedness and the freedom from a reference to something else and already thereby clearly differ from the real, they differ from the latter even more fundamen-

---

Still less would transcendental idealism grant that we can know the *really real* existence and essence of things; for this implies that we are capable of knowledge of "things in themselves," which can solely be reality, if they are independent of being a purely intentional object of the human mind or of a transcendental consciousness. According to transcendental idealism, however, "real" beings and "real existence" would also exist only "in the mind", namely as *noemata* constituted by our conscious intentional life (*noesis*). This view was held by Husserl after 1907 and is even on a more foundational level of his philosophy incompatible with realism, although Husserl speaks continually of "real reality" and "true reality". His view, however, that all *"reality"* is constituted by transcendental consciousness as object of consciousness contradicts real reality and the in-sich-Beschlossenheit of the real, of which we have been speaking.

Existence in this sense is attributed to beings that "exist", for example, as purely intentional objects of human creativity (the scholastic, or rather a scholastic meaning of "existence in the mind").

See Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer einen Phänomenologie (1913)*, IV, § 135, [278 ff.] pp. III310 ff. Vgl. Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl: *Edmund Husserl. Zeitlichkeit und Intentionalität.* PHÄNOMENOLOGIE, Texte und Kontexte. Herausgegeben von Karl-Heinz Lembeck, Ernst Wolfgang Orth und Hans Rainer Sepp, II. KONTEXTE, Band 8, (Freiburg-München: Verlag Karl Alber, 2000), p. 173:

Der Phänomenologe urteilt, ebenso wie der pyrrhonische Skeptiker, nicht über die Erkennbarkeit oder Nichterkennbarkeit einer phänomentranszendenten Wirklichkeit. Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl, Edmund Husserl. (Fussnote zu diesem Text: Vgl. z.B. Hua VIII, S. 109. Diese Behauptung, die die Skepsis zum negativen Dogmatismus machte, setzte voraus, daß die Frage nach einem Wahrheitskriterium entscheidbar wäre, was gemäß den skeptischen Einwänden gegen die Erkenntnisansprüche der Dogmatiker gerade nicht der Fall ist. Vgl. Sextus (^{2}1993).

See for a more thorough critique of Husserl's transcendental turn Josef Seifert, „Kritik am Relativismus und Immanentismus in E. Husserls Cartesianischen Meditationen. Die Aequivokationen im Ausdruck 'transzendentales Ego' an der Basis jedes transzendentalen Idealismus." *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* XIV, 1970. See also my *Back to Things in Themselves. A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism* (London: Routledge, 1987; 2013); the same author, *Discours des Méthodes. The Methods of Philosophy and Realist Phenomenology,* (Frankfurt / Paris / Ebikon / Lancaster / New Brunswick: Ontos-Verlag, 2009). I think that, in contrast to Husserl's view, philosophical science can, without any dogmatic position, decide in the fight between realism and idealism, in favor of realism. On Husserl's view, see Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl, *Edmund Husserl. Zeitlichkeit und Intentionalität.* PHÄNOMENOLOGIE, Texte und Kontexte. Herausgegeben von Karl-Heinz Lembeck, Ernst Wolfgang Orth und Hans Rainer Sepp, II. KONTEXTE, Band 8, (Freiburg-München: Verlag Karl Alber, 2000), pp. 204-205.

tally and primarily by the fact that they lack another essential moment of the real: namely the moment of actuality, that dynamics of being which the scholastics described very well by speaking of the *actus essendi* (the *act of being).*

And just this decisive moment of the real, namely its *actualitas,* distinguishes the real from the possible and other kinds of being. In other words, existence constitutes the being real of the real. For the real is never real only by virtue of its essence, but always also and above all by virtue of real existence, by virtue of its *actus essendi*. Thus, the real is never a pure form or essence of a being, but being real comes to a being only by virtue of existence. This *esse* therefore belongs inseparably to the real being, as long as it is real.[19]

Now that we have briefly examined the meaning of *reality,* we are in a position to critically examine Kant's assertion that 100 real thalers are not distinguished from 100 possible ones and that therefore existence is not a predicate at all, and in any case not a real predicate: Many of the following insights about existence can also be applied to ideal or purely intentional existence; at their core, however, the following remarks apply to the primordial phenomenon of *real existence*.

7. Existence is not a predicate of the essence of real beings (at least of no contingent being).

Existence is indeed not a predicate of essence, at least in contingent beings. What we mean by existence of a something neither belongs to "what" the being is (to its *ti einai*) nor to "how" the being is (to its *poion einai*), whereas what we mean by "substance" or "accident", "personal" or "impersonal being", "just" or "unjust", etc., constitute, or belong to, the essence of a thing. Predicates of this latter type could be called "essential" predicates, since they determine or constitute *what* or *how* a being is.

With "existence", however, we mean *that* a being is, without adding any determination of essence to the thing as such. – We will see that with existence we point to something much more fundamental than just another determination of the what of a being: Existence is neither just one among many determinations of the what of a being, nor is it identical with the most significant dimensions of this "what a being is", let alone with the totality of what a contingent being is.

Accordingly, we can also understand very well *what* something is, or rather what it could be, without thereby knowing its real existence. What a hundred possible or imagined thalers are will correspond exactly with what they actually are, if they really exist.

The precise sense of this "correspondence" of what the object is *as possible with what* it is as *real,* however, must be clearly understood. But this requires a prior investigation into the sense in which existence is a predicate. This investigation will show that the correspondence in question here does *not* imply an *identity of* the possible with the real essence of something.

---

[19] Not absolutely so which is only true of God, but if ans as long it is real.

8. Though existence is not an "essential predicate" in contingent beings, it is a real predicate, an "existential" predicate. Ten ways to understand that and in which sense existence is a real predicate.

The following consideration will show us that the partial truth contained in Kant's second objection to Anselm's ontological argument, namely that existence is not a predicate of essence, does not at all imply that his first and most radical objection is correct, according to which existence is no predicate at all and in any case not a real predicate. In fact, existence is a unique and highly fundamental real predicate of a being, although it is a "predicate" in a sense very different from a predicate determining its essence.

[What we mean by "predicate" when we say "existence is a predicate" can be explained in two ways – in an ontological sense and in a logical sense:

1) Something is "added" to a being or to that which is a being as a possible one, if real existence is given to it. Or even more clearly: not nothing is added to a being, as Kant claims, but something immense is given to it when it is given existence. In this sense, "being" (Existieren) is a, nay the primary, real ontological predicate.

2) When we say "this or that being exists" using the term existence, we form a meaningful judgment. Something is "added to the subject-concept", if we attribute existence to the nature meant by it. If a sentence about existence is true, we learn something about a being. Something is said about a being when we say "it exists".

The assertion that existence is a predicate in these two (ontological and logical) ways radically contradicts Kant's claim that existence is no predicate; it is also opposed to most of Gilson's theses on existence.[20]

---

[20] See Etienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1952), p. -34:

> *It is not enough to say that* essence *is conceivable apart from existence; in a certain sense it must be said that essence is always* conceived *by us apart from existence, ... There is nothing we can add to a concept in order to make it represent its object as existing; what happens if we add anything to it is that it represents something else.*

In this passage, Gilson seems to ignore, as does Kant, the double meaning in which existence is a real predicate, as well as the manifold ways in which a concept of "existene is ce" as a mreal predicate can be recognized and formulated, as we will show below. Gilson sees clearly with Kant that a general concept *as such* can never express the necessarily individual concrete existence of a being. We will return to this problem later.

See also John M. Quinn, *The Thomism of Etienne Gilson. A Critical Study* (Villanova University Press, 1971), pp. 54 ff. Some of the criticisms made by Quinn are consistent with those I have made, although Quinn's investigation came to my attention only after I had completed this text. Quinn convincingly argues that existence can be grasped and indeed is grasped repeatedly by Gilson. He also shows that the contrary view leads to irrationalism. He convincingly demonstrates that existence is a predicate and sharply criticizes Gilson's response to Régis' critique. However, Quinn's critique does not take into account the *unique* sense in which existence is a predicate; his critique fails to do justice to the way in which predicates of essence are radically different from existence as a predicate, although he does articulate this fact in a few places, for example, on page 61: "The actual existence is not one last addition to essence: it is the overplus of determination, the extra-essential act that the essence cannot give, the determinant that in actualizing the essence makes the whole thing truly be." -As a whole, however, Quinn's investigation (let alone the contributions of some of his successors, such as John D. Beach in *The New Scholasticism*, Autumn 1976, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 522-528) is characterized by a very polemical tone and spirit (despite the compliments he pays to Gilson at the beginning and end of his work) that keeps him from learning from Gilson and following along with what Gilson sees. Nevertheless, it is very valuable. We cannot include in our work all the fine insights it contains concerning our subject.

That existence in these two ways is truly a *real* predicate of a being can be demonstrated mainly in ten ways, by which it can also be shown that being in the sense of existence is by no means identical with the meaning of the "is" of the copula.]

1) *The meaning of many existential questions and judgments can only be explained if it is admitted that existence is a predicate in the sense defined above.*

Let's imagine, for example, that we were listening to a conversation in which a person's personality is described and passionately discussed. As long as we are not sure whether we are talking about a character from a play or about an existing person, it makes a lot of sense to ask, "Is this person you're talking about just a fictional character from a play or is she a really existing person?"

This question is often asked and is obviously meaningful; but the very fact that it is meaningful necessarily implies that judgments about existence are also meaningful. It implies that existence is a predicate, in that obviously something important is "said" when the predicate real existence is ascribed to a thing, for example when one says: "Your first assumption was correct. The person, about whom are speaking, is empress Maria Theresia." Such a question and answer can have meaning only because existence is indeed a predicate – both in a logical and an ontological sense. This is further confirmed by the fact that we could just as well receive the opposite answer: "You must be aware that the person we are talking about is only a character in a Shakespearean tragedy: Ophelia. She does not really exist but Professor O. here says he would swear that she was a virgin, while Professor John believes that she had sexual relations with Hamlet." Very astutely, this point is explained by G. E. Moore regarding the negative answer to an existential question.[21]

When thinkers like N. Malcolm deny that existence is a perfection and a real predicate at all, it is easy to see that they are speaking of situations in which existence is already tacitly presupposed. Thus Malcolm speaks of the case of a king who, in seeking new ministers, lists "existence" as one of their desirable qualities. What makes this so surprising in a job-advertisement is not the supposed fact that existence is not a predicate, but the tacit presupposition of existence; for it is clear that the king presupposes existence from the outset when he describes his future ministers.[22] [But this does not prove in the least that there are not many situations in which it is unclear whether a person whom we are speaking of really exists. In such cases, questions and judgments about existence therefore make perfect sense.[23]]

This sense of existential questioning and judging leads us one step further to:

---

[21] G. E. Moore, „Is Existence a Predicate?" in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* XV (1936), reprinted in *The Ontological Argument*, ed. by A. Platinga (New York, 1965), pp. 71 ff, especially pp. 77 ff.

[22] See Normal Malcolm, "Malcolm's Statement of Anselm's Ontological Argument,"in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* XV (1936), reprinted in *The Ontological Argument*, hrsg. A. Platinga (New York, 1965), especially pp. 139-141.

[23] In many disciplines, as for example in the science of history, in which precisely the distinction between merely falsely reported events and real events is under discussion, judgments about the real existence of things play a decisive role. The same is true in the field of law, when the real occurrence of a crime is distinguished from a false accusation, or in geography.

2) *The metaphysical insight into the reality of the "predicate" existence.*

We have to consider that the "what" which is us or any other contingent being, or that which infinitely many possible contingent beings would and could be, has "existed" from eternity as a possibility. But nobody would say that in reality "nothing happens" when such possibilities are realized by divine creation or by human activity. Nobody would say that nothing would be "added" to a being in the unique moment in which it receives existence.

When we consider this, and especially when we gratefully acknowledge the gift of our own existence, we see that real existence is not just one among other real predicates, but that it is *per eminentiam* a real predicate. This metaphysical fact explains precisely why existential questions and judgments, as we just saw, do have meaning.

3) *The two truths and arguments just mentioned (1 and 2) can be seen even more deeply if we realize that the essence of a being is given a completely new "meaning" if this being exists.*

The "essence" (as merely possible) is radically influenced and changed by real existence.[24]

One can even describe this change in innumerable "essential judgments". The possibility of a being (i.e. *what* the being is – its essence – as merely possible) has completely different essential predicates than the real essence (i.e. *what* "the same" being is as really existing). If we take the human being as an example, we could say: a merely possible human being cannot think, whereas a really existing human being can think; a possible human being (or the possibility of a human being) cannot will, is not free, cannot cause states of affairs, cannot be happy, cannot repent or build a palace; a real human being is capable of all this. This proves the radical difference between the possibility of an essence and the real essence. Real hundert thalers are radically different from possible ones. Consequently, Kant's claim that what 100 real thalers are is identical with 100 possible ones is false, if not straight out absurd.

We could say, existence is not only *a* real predicate, but *the* real predicate par excellence, insofar as all predicates of essence become real through it and receive a new and their proper sense through it.

4) *The tremendous event that takes place when a possible being is given existence is manifested in many human acts that show that not nothing, but in a certain sense everything is added to a being when it receives real existence*

The tremendous transition from mere possibility to reality, which, for example, the coming to be of a great work of art represents, offers rightly an occasion for celebration. The unique role and ontological significance of existence can also be seen in the act of gratitude – for example, for the conception or the healthy birth of a longed-for child – or also when we become aware of the overwhelming gift character of our own existence or that of a beloved person.

The same is obvious also from the opposite of such gifts of existence. There are also existential situations in which existence is, or is subjectively experienced as, something negative. Such a disvalue of existence underlies our struggle against crimes and sufferings whose existence is an evil and which we want to end or to prevent.[25]

---

[24] This has been excellently demonstrated by Ingarden. See R. Ingarden, *The Controversy about the Existence of the World,* I, "Existential Ontology", p. 69 ff, esp-. p. 7273.

In despair, we turn against our own existence and would wish not only not to *live any longer*, but to cease to *exist altogether*. It is precisely in despair that we experience the tremendous reality of the predicate of existence and wish– albeit impotently – this: to nullify our existence.[26]

S. Kierkegaard describes, in a grandiose text, the terrible dichotomy of real and utter despair of those persons (in hell), who reject the self they are and want to be a self they cannot be:

> The despairing man cannot die; no more than "the dagger can slay thoughts" can despair consume the eternal thing, the self, which is the ground of despair, whose worm dieth not, and whose fire is not quenched. Yet despair is precisely self-consuming, but it is an impotent self-consumption which is not able to do what it wills; and this impotence is a new form of self-consumption, in which again, however, the despairer is not able to do what he wills, namely, to consume himself. This is despair raised to a higher potency, or it is the law for the potentiation. This is the hot incitement, or the cold fire in despair, the gnawing canker whose movement is constantly inward, deeper and deeper, in impotent self-consumption. The fact that despair does not consume him is so far from being any comfort to the despairing man that it is precisely the opposite, this comfort is precisely the torment, it is precisely this that keeps the gnawing pain alive and keeps life in the pain. This precisely is the reason why he despairs — not to say despaired — because he cannot consume himself, cannot get rid of himself, cannot become nothing. This is the potentiated formula for despair, the rising of the fever in the sickness of the self.[27]

---

[25] Sometimes we can experience even the existence of goods as negative, either because resentment or hatred creates in us a revolt against all harmony, beauty, or peace around us, or because false pity or despair move us to destroy existing goods, such as when we terminate human lives in euthanasia and suicide. Regardless of whether such a judgment is true or false, it demonstrates that existence is a real predicate.

[26] Socrates, in the *Apology,* alludes to one form and reason of this despair when he says that unjust people want to get rid of their lives and their injustices at the same time, but this, he says, is neither possible nor a noble way to get rid of injustice.

[27] Kierkegaard, Soren. The Sickness Unto Death (Wiseblood Classics of Philosophy Book 6) (S.10). Jovian Press. Kindle-Version. Here the full text:

The despairing man cannot die; no more than "the dagger can slay thoughts" can despair consume the eternal thing, the self, which is the ground of despair, whose worm dieth not, and whose fire is not quenched. Yet despair is precisely self-consuming, but it is an impotent self-consumption which is not able to do what it wills; and this impotence is a new form of self-consumption, in which again, however, the despairer is not able to do what he wills, namely, to consume himself. This is despair raised to a higher potency, or it is the law for the potentiation. This is the hot incitement, or the cold fire in despair, the gnawing canker whose movement is constantly inward, deeper and deeper, in impotent self-consumption. The fact that despair does not consume him is so far from being any comfort to the despairing man that it is precisely the opposite, this comfort is precisely the torment, it is precisely this that keeps the gnawing pain alive and keeps life in the pain. This precisely is the reason why he despairs — not to say despaired — because he cannot consume himself, cannot get rid of himself, cannot become nothing. This is the potentiated formula for despair, the rising of the fever in the sickness of the self.

A despairing man is in despair over something. So it seems for an instant, but only for an instant; that same instant the true despair manifests itself, or despair manifests itself in its true character. For in the fact that he despaired of something, he really despaired of himself, and now would be rid of himself. Thus when the ambi-

Whether hell and such utter despair exists or not, the mere imagination of it reveals the tremendous reality of the predicate of real existence.

5) The clear insight that existence is a real predicate can also be gained if we think of the different modalities in which existence is encountered. Something can exist by necessity, as a matter of fact, or it can be totally impossible for it to exist at all.

The *"possibility of existence"* (which is implied and presupposed in every assertion of existence) is an "existential" predicate, opposed to the "impossibility of existence".

Contingency and *necessity of* existence are likewise modalities of both ideal and real existence: this shows even more clearly that existence is a predicate. Not only can it be meaningfully asserted that something exists, but also that it has a certain mode of existence.

Furthermore, ethics also makes it clear that existence is a predicate when it examines the fact that some actions *should be* performed from the moral point of view they should exist, while other actions *should not* exist. Implicitly, it is hereby shown not only that the predicate "real existence" is distinct from the predicate "possibility," but also that the question of whether something that ought to exist actually does in fact exist, and the question whether something exists which should not exist are entirely meaningful. In order to be able to ascribe modalities to existence at all, it is not only necessary that it be a predicate; rather, the various existential "modalities" and, above all, the difference between what should exist and what should not exist, also reveal the abyss that exists between merely possible and actually existing beings. At the same time, they show the fundamental weight and meaning that accompanies a judgment about existence.

6) Even if Kant by no means clearly grasps the sense in which existence is a real predicate, but rather rejects it without closer examination, he nevertheless presupposes it at a significant point in his system, namely when he rightly asserts that every existential proposition is synthetic.[28]

How could this be so if existence were not a real predicate? Indeed, if existence were not a real predicate, any judgment that something exists could at best be only an analytic judgment, in which nothing is "added" to the subject term beyond what is already contained in its concept.[29] In other words, Kant's two assertions – on the one hand that existence is not a real predicate and that nothing is added to the concept of a thing when existence is attributed to it, and on the other hand that any judgment of existence is synthetic a posteriori – stand in stark contradiction to each other.[30]

---

tious man whose watchword was "Either Caesar or nothing" does not become Caesar, he is in despair thereat. But this signifies something else, namely, that precisely because he did not become Caesar he now cannot endure to be himself. So properly he is not in despair over the fact that he did not become Caesar, but he is in despair over himself for the fact that he did not become Caesar.

[28] Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, B 626

If, on the other hand, you admit, as every reasonable man must admit, that every existential proposition is synthetic, how will you maintain that the predicate of existence cannot be abolished without contradiction? Since this advantage is peculiar only to the analytic propositions, as their character is based on it.

[29] If existence were *absolutely not a predicate,* how could it even be contained in the subject term to make a tautology possible?

[30] That existence in Kant's philosophy can only be known through experience, i.e. aposteriori, is stated, for example, in his *Critique of Pure Reason* B 629. Kant does not see at all the blatant contradiction between the

7) *The fact discussed earlier that there are other kinds of existence besides real existence (e.g. ideal existence) and the correct insight into the nature of the "exact coincidence" between real and possible being further show clearly that (real) existence is a predicate.*

The preceding remarks in no way deny the truth which Kant states when he says that there is an exact coincidence between the possibility of a being (the being as conceived in its possibility) and its reality or that the possible can only become real if it is not another thing but the same thing that was first possible and now exists:

> *Because otherwise not exactly the same but more would exist than I had thought in the concept, or better said, than had been contained in the possible being X, and I could not say that just the object of my concept existed.... but something other than was possible before (than I thought) would exist.*[31]

It is true (though subject to the comments above about the radical change of essence from the merely possible to the real) that we do not think a determination of essence more or less in a being if we conceive it as possible and when we say that it now exists. But this exact "coincidence" or correspondence between every feature of the "possible being" and every feature of the existing being does not imply an identity between a given essence and its possibility. "*What" the possible being is, and "what the real being is", are not at all identical*; the characteristics of the possibility as such and the characteristics of the real being corresponding to the possibility are in no way the same. Nevertheless, the two correspond exactly. How can these two seemingly contradictory propositions be reconciled?

There are many forms of exact correspondence without identity. The image in a mirror may *reflect a* face – eyes, a look, a smile, etc. – precisely but (as such) but *this face in the mirror* cannot see, nor have eyes nor possess any of the other characteristics of the real face it reflects.

Similarly, our knowledge (cognition) of an animal may exactly correspond to it and grasp it as it truly is, but without possessing any of the animal's characteristics; neither does the cognition live nor leap, nor does it resemble the animal in nature. But the animal is grasped in the cognition; the adequate cognition corresponds to every aspect of its object in a self-transcending receptive intentional act.[32]

In a similar way, the exact correspondence between the "essence" of the possible and that of the real being must be interpreted: not as identity, but as another kind of relation. The possibility of a being is completely different from the essence of the real thing; nev-

---

two above-mentioned statements about existence, indeed for him the problem does not even arise how they could be conceived as compatible with each other; for the denial that existence is a real predicate in any sense, that it "adds something" to the subject term used as the predicate of a proposition, is in direct contradiction to the nature of synthetic judgments, which add a new predicate precisely to the "concept of a thing," a predicate not yet explicitly contained in the subject term.

We can even go one step further: If existence were not a predicate at all (instead of being a "new" predicate only in comparison to "essence predicates"), then an existential judgment would not be an analytic judgment either, but no judgment at all. Cf. below, chap. 1.

[31] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, in: Kants Werke, Akademie-Textausgabe (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1968), Bd. III, B 629.

[32] Cf. a critique of false model conceptions of cognition in Erkenntnis objektiver Wahrheit. The Transcendence of Man in Knowledge, ch. I,3.

ertheless, it corresponds to it precisely. Possible being is by no means "essence minus existence", but there is, nevertheless, not a single characteristic of the real being, which would not find a correspondence in its "possibility".

8*) The crucial difference between "is" in the meaning of "exists" and "is" as copula.*

Kant identifies "is" as existing with "is" as copula.[33] If Kant were right in his assumption that "to be" (exist) and the copula "is" are synonymous, then his rejection of existence as a predicate would also be justified; for the copula "is" is in fact not a predicate.

This becomes clear when we realize the double function that the copula performs. On the one hand, the copula exercises the function of relating S to P: both in the sentence and in the question, the "is" of the copula relates the property meant by the predicate term (or whatever other determinacy can be meant by a predicate term) to the being meant by the subject term (or to its existence, lack of being, etc.); on the other hand, the judgment affirms through the copula the predicate *of the subject*.[34]

These two functions of the copula are unmistakably different from the predicate "existence". This becomes immediately clear by the fact that as long as "is" is meant in the sense of the copula, any sentence which would contain only a subject term and the copula "is" would not be a judgment at all. To take an example, "This apple is..." would not be a judgment at all; for here the very predicate is missing which the copula, according to its essence, is supposed to ascribe to the subject and assert of it.[35]

Even in a complete judgment, the copula "is" can at best be said to ascribe (in connection with its double function) "being" to a state of affairs in the broadest sense of the word. [This broadest sense of being refers not only to all beings possessing the transcendental propriety of being, but even to nonexistent – "being" (for the nonexistence of – a thing can be asserted in a judgment), to "being" in the second sense of the word according to Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas that corresponds to any true proposition.[36]]

---

[33] See notes 5 to 7, chap. I, and the passages of our work to which they refer. Neither Gilson nor Régis make the fundamental distinction between "to be" as "to exist" and "to be" ("is") as copula. See Gilson pp. 3 ff. where such a distinction is missing in his discussion with Kant; see also pp. 190202 -and 217218-.

[34] See the masterly exposition of the nature and meaning of the copula in Alexander Pfaender's *Logik*, pp. 38 ff. "Is" in its function as a "copula," does indeed not mean a predicate, as Kant rightly notes, but rather has the function of ascribing a predicate to a subject, for example "ripe" to the subject "apple". In the question: "Is this apple ripe?", we refer ripeness to the apple by means of the copula "is" (and by means of the terms forming the meaning of the words "apple" and "ripe"). This function of the copula "is" is also present in the proposition "This apple is ripe".

In the judgment, however, we encounter a second function of the copula "is", namely the assertive function. This function of the copula consists not only in relating the predicate to the subject, but in asserting the predicate of the subject, in asserting the state of affairs in question and with it the reality of the predicate.

[35] In an analysis that is significant not only for logic but also for metaphysics, Pfänder shows that in a judgment in which the copula would stand without a predicate, we would not be left with the predicate "existence" but with a mere *fragment of the judgment*. He shows convincingly that "to be" in the sense of "to exist" has a sense completely different from the meaning of the copula, and that it refers to "a predicate determinacy sui generis." Cf. p. 59 in his book.

[36] Thomas Aquinas refers in the following text to Aristotle, *De Ente et Essentia,* cap. 1, 1 ff, *Opera Omnia,* vol. 3, p. 584:

Since the copula does not refer to any real existence, not even to any "being" which carries the most general transcendental properties of being, it must be clearly distinguished from both. As soon as the necessity of this distinction becomes evident, it also becomes obvious at the same time that the meaning of the copula "is" cannot serve as a starting point for a metaphysical investigation of being as being.

In fact, this "being", which Hedwig Conrad-Martius, in her justified criticism of the insufficiency of Pfänder's determination of the sense of the copula by its double "pure function" in the judgment, calls "pure Sachverhaltssein" in her book *Das Sein, is* always posited and implied when the copula "is" or "is not" is used in a judgment; but being in this sense is entirely distinct from "real existence." Consider sentences like the following, "The possibility of something is distinct from its reality." The two functions of the copula (relating and asserting) are present in this judgment. We also find here the ontological meaning of "is" in the sense of the pure *Sachverhaltssein,* the obtaining of a state of affairs. But the "being" of the state of affairs is not, nor does it imply, real existence; for the difference between possibility and reality cannot itself be called "really existing". Or if we say: "The possibility of a human being as such is not capable of thinking", we certainly do not mean that the possibility "exists" as incapable, and so on.[37]

Sciendum est igitur quod., sicut in v metaphysicae philosophus dicit, "ens per se dicitur dupliciter, uno modo quod dividitur per decem genera, alio modo quod significat propositionum veritatem", ...secundo modo potest dici ens omne illud, de quo affirmativa propositio formari potest, etiam si illa in re nihil ponat, per quem modum privationes ET negationes entia dicuntur...sed primo modo non potest dici ens nisi quod aliquid in re ponat...

And Thomas ascribes an essence only to the being, which breaks down into the ten categories; the being, which is only the object of true propositions, and which can be purely negative or consist of privations, does not necessarily possess an essence as such. Cf. also Pfänder, *Logik,* p. 60.

Pfänder basically states the same in his argument against Brentano's view that the copula "is" means "to exist". Since the copula "is", *when* completed by a predicate different from it, posits or asserts a state of affairs, one could say of it in a certain, very general sense that it "posits" "being". However, Pfänder shows that the "is" of the copula does not mean "existence" in the sense of real existence.

When we say, "One hundred merely possible thalers are different from one hundred real thalers," we certainly do not mean "exist" by "are." By the copula "are" we do not ascribe existence to possible thalers, not even in the analogous sense in which we speak of the existence of the "ideal essence" of mathematical objects, nor do we imply the weak kind of existence which, radically different from real and ideal existence, objects of human imagination possess (e.g. the imagined Mr. Brown whom we imagine living on a chicken farm in South Africa).

The being or "reality" that corresponds to each copula "is" (e.g., when we say, "What you are talking about right now is unimportant, is absurd," etc.) is not even the *esse* that every thing that "exists" in any sense of the word has, i.e., the esse *transcendentale* (in an even wider sense than Thomas Aquinas grasps this concept when he applies it to "being as divided by the ten categories"). But when we speak of reality and being as the object of every true judgment, we do not even imply this kind of being; for the proposition, "I was nothing before I was conceived," is true; but the reality of "not – being – ", (which corresponds to the truth of this sentence and which is meant by the copula "was") is not a "being" possessing unity, intelligibility, etc., but precisely "nothing".

[37] Even if we use the "is" not merely in the sense of the copula, but for the purpose of attributing "being" to a thing in a more actual sense, we by no means attribute to this thing the unique predicate of real existence. If we attribute the characteristics of the "esse *transcendentale*" to a being, for example, – like to the number three or even to a mere object of our dreams, if we say that they have being, in that they are not nothing, are cognizable, have a certain unity, etc., – we do not imply that the number 3 or the dreamt object have real existence.

9) The distinction between being-in-potency and being-in-act.

When we speak of the actuality of a thing, we often contrast it with the potency or potentiality of the same thing. For example, we designate as actual pianist the trained and practicing pianist in contrast a gifted person who is a potential pianist or the fully grown oak in contrast to the seed.

Within the potencies we could further distinguish with Aristotle between active and passive potentialities. An active potency we find, for example, in the seed in its relation to the fully grown tree or flower. In the seed there exists not only an "abstract", indeterminate potency to become a tree, but a real and in its essence determinate tendency to become a very specific tree.

A passive potency, on the other hand, is present in the marble stone with regard to the statue that can be made of it. In the case of such a potency, the being in question does not have a soul nor an "entelechy"" – an inner form and end, that drives it, (as found in the organism) from within towards the realization, to which it has the potency. In contrast, a passive potency is actualized "from without". The form or actuality comes to the being in question as one among many possible actualities.[38]

But "being" is not even understood in this most general sense when we use the copula, for example, in the following sentence: "Nothingness is not knowable." Here, apparently, neither to nothingness nor to its unknowability existence in the broadest sense is ascribed. This is probably what led the Mexican philosopher Agustin Basave to introduce in his *Treatise of Metaphysics* the Spanish term "hay" (these is, es gibt) and "habencia", which is even broader than the most general concept of being, because it also includes all possibilities, all non – being, all deficiencies, yes, everything at all, which "is there" in any sense of the word; the German expression "alles was es gibt" kommt dem Terminus "habencia" wohl am Nächsten.

The distinction between "is" as copula and "is" as "really exists" becomes even clearer when we grasp the many *different* kinds of existence that can be ascribed to different beings. For even the lowest one, which, for instance, ascribes "being" to a pure object of intentional acts, which has no extramental existence at all, surpasses the latter ontological meanings of the copula, in which only the pure "there is" (the pure "habencia") is asserted. Yes, even if we say "the number 3 exists" and thereby mean a much higher ideal form of existence than if we ascribe existence to a merely dreamt object, we still do not assert real existence at all. We ascribe existence to this entity only in a quite different sense from real existence, namely in the sense of the most general features of the esse *transcendentale, which* we also find embodied in a purely fictitious object. When we say that the objects of geometry have an "ideal existence," we undoubtedly attribute existence to them, but certainly not real existence (which is our main interest in this work, and which we have to distinguish from the "ideal existence" of the most diverse kinds of ideal "essences" and "essential plans" of things). Furthermore, there are other cases in which we can speak of a type of existence that is different from both "ideal" and real existence.

The question of the form of existence of "pure objects", which do not really exist in any sense, A. Millan-Puelles in his book *Teoría del objeto puro* examined in detail. Millán-Puelles extends this notion of the "pure object" which has no being at all too far. See Josef Seifert, „Preface" to Antonio Millàn-Puelles, *The Theory of the Pure Object,* English translation by Jorge García-Gómez (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996), pp. 1-12 Cf. also Josef Seifert, *Back to Things in Themselves,* ch. 2 ff.

[38] The marble stone receives this actuality of form from the outside and in a certain sense accidentally. A "passive potency" permits an inexhaustible richness of formations and is presupposed for all art. (From another meaning of "active potency" in Aristotle we completely prescind here; because this term can refer to a positive power, a "pure perfection", which is quite compatible with the highest – even with the absolute – actuality of an omnipotent being).

This Aristotelian distinction is very significant.

Another important distinction must be made, however, within active potencies: namely the distinction between potencies which to realize a being has an automatic, inevitable tendency, and those potencies which can only be actualized through free will. For example, the potencies realized by a human being in moral virtues and good actions cannot be sufficiently characterized as "active potencies." Still less can they be adequately conceived as "passive potencies." Only through free acts do they ever enter the real world; there is no immanent automatic or inescapable movement in man to become morally good in the way he grows into adulthood, but nonetheless man is called by his nature to realize moral goodness; he has not only a passive potency to it.[39]

With regard to all these potencies, but especially with regard to the active potencies, we can say that the term "potency" can refer to three related but quite different realities. First, by the term "potency" we can mean the real faculties that actually exist in a particular being. The human person must, for example, from the first moment of his existence have the fundamental powers to think, to will, etc., which constitute him as a rational personal being. Completely different from this are the different abilities, which have to be acquired and which include that a certain activity is at the disposal of a being. A person, for instance, appropriates the ability to think – on the ground of the power of human reason – by free acts and developments, as Crosby has shown.[40]

[Also in the other example of the seed we find the existing capacity to grow. When we call such currently existing abilities, capacities or capabilities "potencies" instead of actualities, we mean that these abilities, capacities etc., despite their indisputable existence and thus their actuality are intended to be exercised, and they should produce a new being by their exercise: actual knowledge, thinking, growth, the full – grown tree, and so on.]

A second meaning of potency calls "potencies" the unawakened, uncultivated layers *in* a given being, which are destined to awaken through the exercise of actual abilities, capacities etc. Here we refer to a somehow "sleeping" side *within a* given being, which must already exist in the real being, but still is unawakened, as long as the potency is not actualized and thereby realized. The Aristotelian thesis applies more to this second meaning of potency than to the first: namely, the thesis that *to dynamei on* (potential being) somehow "lies between being and non – being."

---

[39] A quite different situation is present in the case of the baby that has a potency to grow up which under normal circumstances inevitably tends toward its realization. The potency to become just, in contrast, can be actualized only trough free decsions. One might therefore be inclined to count it among the passive potencies; for – as in a passive potency – another actuality or "form" could be actualized by the respective human being, such as injustice or a life of unrighteous passions and vices.

But the potency in question is not a passive potency, nor is it only an active potency of minor importance, but it is one of those active potencies in the most actual sense, which are completely founded in the essence of a given being. Man is by his innermost nature to become just and morally good. This vocation belongs even more properly to man than it belongs to the seed to become a fully grown plant.

Many potencies actualized only by freedom, as well as many other potencies actualized in cognition, hope, trust, conviction, etc., differ from other active or passive potencies in another crucial way: they are "intentional potencies" in the sense that they involve a meaningful and conscious relation to the objects of personal acts. In these cases, the reality of an act is either generated in a person by the object of which it has consciousness, or it depends in some other way on the conscious intentional dialogue between the person and other beings.

[40] Cf. J. Crosby, "Evolutionism and the Ontology of the Human Person," pp. 208-243.

The third meaning of potency refers to something which does not yet exist at all actually in a given being, but which *can* become real in it. In this sense one can speak of a child as of a "potential pianist" or a "potential great philosopher", if one means by this that from this child a great pianist or philosopher *can* become. In this sense, the fully grown oak already exists in the seed "*in potentia*". This "potential being" is between actual being and nonbeing, – standing a little closer to non-existence and non-being than to being. But it is more than a mere abstract possibility; for potential being in the third sense is grounded in actually existing faculties or capacities of a being. This third kind of "being *in potentia*" is found primarily in the case of active potencies and here again in a new sense in such active potencies, which do not need the use of freedom for their realization. These references do not exhaust all meanings of "potency", but they are sufficient for the present purposes.

Wherever we find potency we find these *three different data that* can be meant by the term "potency". [For this reason, they are best referred to as three phases of potency, or three different conditions that can be called potency, rather than three *types of* potency.]

On the background of this short analysis of potency we see clearly that potencies presuppose real existence in at least four ways. First, the being that possesses capacities, faculties, potencies, etc., exists really. Secondly, the potencies in the first sense (capacities, abilities etc.) exist really, although they are likewise determined to cause another reality. Thirdly, the "unawakened layers" in a being already exist really as potentials. Fourthly, the being "to be brought to existence" already has an existence, even if it is very "weak"; it lies "between" being and non-being.

It is quite true that with respect to the last and to some extent also with respect to the first meanings of potency the transition from potency to act also means a certain coming to be (a beginning of being). In this actualization something becomes a full being that did not (fully) exist before. But if we consider the further fact that real existence must be attributed to the real being that has a potency as well as to its potency itself, and that this real existence already precedes every actualization in the ways described, we see that the understanding of this kind of actuality by no means gives us a sufficient concept of what existence means. Rather, it already presupposes the understanding and the givenness of the fundamental and irreducible datum of real existence.

The second misunderstanding of existence as actuality could arise from a confusion of existence with *what* we mean by the actuality of something that existed before only as potency. [*What actuality* and actualization mean is not yet the existence of this actualization. Rather, we find also here the real difference between *what actuality* is (the essence of actuality) and its existence.

Therefore, the understanding of actuality as such does not seem to give us any information about what we mean by existence. First, not only actualized but also potential beings can really exist; potential beings presuppose real existence in a fourfold way. Secondly, what we mean by existence is just not *what* we mean by actuality; it is not the essence of actuality.]

Existence, we can say, means something that is quite different from actuality in the sense described; nevertheless, it means something analogous and closely related to it. Without doubt Thomas Aquinas had this fact in mind when he called existence the "act of (all) acts."[41]

Real existence (to be) then is this unique actuality that makes both potentialities and actualities (in the sense described) *real.* It marks the unique actuality of what the thing or its potentialities or its acts and actualities are. The being of the being or its existence denotes this irreducible and unique actuality, because of which we call a thing or an actuality real, while we call another thing, potency or actuality only possible, because they lack real existence. Existence means this unique actuality to which we refer when we say something is real or exists actually. It is unique because all other acts, actions, and actualizations already presuppose the subject of such actions. Real existence refers to a completely different metaphysical actuality, which establishes the difference between possibility and actual reality, wherever this difference exists. Existence is this actuality of a being, which is at the same time responsible for that tremendous change of essence, which exists between the "possible being" and the "real being" of something and of the entire world. This *urphenomenon of reality* calls for a deep philosophical wonder and a cautious method that allows us to penetrate more and more deeply into it, without explaining it away by denying any difference between the real and the possible, or by reducing it to anything else that it is not.

---

[41] Fernando Inciarte, *Forma formarum. Strukturmomente der thomistischen Seinslehre im Rückgriff auf Aristoteles* (Freiburg/Münchexn: Verlag Karl Alber, 1970).

Philotheos **22.2** (2022) 134–155

Lance H. Gracy
Department of Philosophy and Religion, University of North Texas
lance.gracy@unt.edu

Is Scholasticism "Philosophy as a Way of Life"? St. Bonaventure's Scholastic Mystagogy as Seraphic Philosophy

Abstract: The scope of this essay is investigatory and its results look to renew interest in metaphilosophical analysis on the work of St. Bonaventure. This essay will, therefore, offer an account of St. Bonaventure's scholastic mystagogy as a philosophical way of life. One of the purposes of this is to recover interest in "philosophy as a way of life" (PWL) especially as articulated in Simone Kotva's recent work, *Effort and Grace* (Bloomsbury, 2020), Pierre Hadot's *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (Blackwell, 1995) and Sharpe's and Ure's *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (Bloomsbury, 2021). More specifically, the intention with this essay is to recover a scholastic appreciation for philosophy as a spiritual exercise. In the same breadth, however, the intention is also to restore appreciation of scholastic philosophy as a philosophical way of life by analysis of themes, ideas, concepts, etc. pertinent to St. Bonaventure's *Collationes in Hexaëmeron.* First, I provide an overview of "philosophy as a way of life" (PWL). I then develop Bonaventure's "scholastic mystagogy" and adduce "seraphic philosophy" to it at a level of acceptability. Following this, I provide a situated understanding of seraphic philosophy and explain the concepts of grace and effort relative to it. I end by proposing ten items of PWL according to a Bonaventurian philosophy and conclude with relevant remarks. My tentative thesis or conclusion (i.e., what remains relatively underdeveloped but which is significantly upheld in my theoretical investigation) is that "seraphic philosophy" implies a new model for understanding philosophy in Christianity, whereby St. Francis comes to be seen as a "greater-Socrates" and St. Bonaventure, as a "greater-Plato."

1. Introduction

This essay brings together Bonaventure's "scholastic mystagogy" with ancient-medieval sources, the French spiritualist tradition, and other relevant works through comparative analysis. What I aim to establish is that the scholastic mystagogy of St. Bonaventure, as seraphic philosophy, amounts to a spiritual exercise aligning to the perfecting powers of effort and grace—as for effort, grace; and as for grace, wisdom (*sapientia*) and love (*amore/dilectio*). My central thesis is as follows: scholastic mystagogy, as seraphic philosophy, is the philosophical science of contemplation that the ancients failed to provide, and it satisfies this condition through the *truth* of speculation—i.e., rest (*quiescere*) in the vision of truth of God's grace and wisdom made known, not so much by "Lady Philosophy," but more so by "Lady Poverty"; and not so much by the vision of the ancient schools, but by the vision of St. Bonaventure and St. Francis. In proceeding, I will first do some preemptive work and examine the context in which "scholastic mystagogy" makes sense. After this preemptive work, I argue for scholastic mystagogy as a philosophical-spiritual way of life, and one that, I believe, represents one of the crown jewels adorning the tiara of "Lady Philosophy" in the capacity of the exemplary wisdom of St. Francis of Assisi's "Lady Poverty."[1]

2. An Overview of "Philosophy as a Way of Life" (PWL)

According to Pierre Hadot (1922-2010), philosophy as a way of life (PWL) is, put simply, philosophy as spiritual-intellectual exercise.[2] Hadot's analysis begins with a quote by Georges Friedmann, which for Hadot resembles a "pastiche of Marcus Aurelius."[3] The latter end of Friedmann's quote reads:

> This work [of spiritual exercise] on yourself is necessary; this ambition justified. Lots of people let themselves be wholly absorbed by militant politics and the preparation for social revolution. Rare, much more rare, are they who, in order to prepare for the revolution, are willing to make themselves worthy of it.[4]

This quote speaks to the task of PWL as a task of individual improvement, of rectifying the affects.[5] However, Friedmann looks for a place to "re-source himself" and comes to the rather arbitrary conclusion that "there is no tradition—be it Jewish, Christian, or Oriental—compatible with contemporary spiritual demands."[6] Relatedly, Hadot finds it appropriate to analyze philosophy as a way of life (PWL) from the vantage of Greco-Roman antiquity. According to Hadot, the Christian understanding of "spiritual exercise" (*exercitium spirituale*) as seen in, e.g., St. Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, is "nothing but a Christian version of a Greco-Roman tradition."[7] It is unclear what exactly Hadot means by this. Presumably he means that Christianity has its own form of spiritual exercise, different from, but not disconsonant with, those of pagan philosophers. I will return to this conceptual problem in later sections. Suffice it to express, *en passant*, that there are points of *minor continuity* between Christianity and pagan antiquity. Notwithstanding, here I will begin a short summary of PWL according to Hadot's project.

---

[1] I will not devote much attention in this paper to unpacking the dynamics of the Franciscan understanding of "Lady Poverty," which is a "particular sign" of Christ; but, in order to acquaint the reader to it, here is a description from Bonaventure's *Major Legend*: "Among other gifts of graces that [Saint] Francis had received from the bounteous Giver, he merited to abound, as by an especial prerogative all his own, in the riches of simplicity, through his love of sublimest Poverty. The holy man regarded Poverty as the familiar friend of the Son of God, and as one now rejected by the whole world, and was zealous to espouse her with such a constant affection as that not only did he leave father and mother for her sake, but he did even part with all that might have been his" (VII.I).

[2] Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (Blackwell Publishing, 1994), 81.

[3] Ibid., 81.

[4] Ibid., 81.

[5] See Bonaventure, *Collations on the Hexaemeron: Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: The Illuminations of the Church* (St. Bonaventure University: Franciscan Institute, 2018), VII.8.

[6] Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 81.

[7] Ibid., 82.

Philosophy as a way of life or as spiritual exercise in pagan antiquity was about achieving wisdom, which was usually connected to attaining to certain states of being, such as "peace of mind" (*ataraxia*) and "inner freedom" (*autarkeia*).[8] The Greco-Roman ideal, then, was about the "art of living"; a "therapeutic of the passions" (as in, trying to get rid of the passions); a transformation of the individual's mode of "seeing and being"; a 'con-version' to an exact vision of nature; a concrete attitude and determinate lifestyle, which engages the whole of existence—not as situated merely on the cognitive level, "but on that of the self and of being."[9] The emphasis was on making someone *to be* in a different way, not to cause them to know abstract theories.[10] In short, the Greco-Roman ideal of living a life worth living was about achieving a state of harmony, peace, and inner freedom in which wisdom was loved, however much so. According to Sharpe's and Ure's scholarship on PWL, there are ten items for identifying PWL in general: (1) philosophy as pedagogy or teaching; (2) intellectual exercises; (3) spiritual exercises; (4) discourse/systematic division or parts of philosophy; (5) a "turn inwards" emphasizing not *pragmata*, but *dogmata*; (6) multiple literary genres; (7) metaphilosophical metaphor; (8) models of *sophia* and happiness; (9) a critique of non-philosophical life; and (10) figure(s) of the sage.[11] In the words of the Jesuit philosopher, A.C. Cotter, for a philosophy to deserve the name "philosophy of life" its principles "must be clear and sure, and the one who claims them as his guides, must habitually live up to them." Cotter adds the following: "But it does not matter how he came by them, whether by personal reflection, from teachers or through revelation."[12] With Sharpe's and Ure's items and Cotter's criteria into perspective, I take it that the sources by which one may develop their "philosophy of life" can vary. In other words, PWL is not the exclusive domain of the ancient schools. But to understand why, we must go further.

My preliminary argument is that, while the spiritual exercises of scholasticism (i.e., scholastic mystagogy) do not model themselves simply on the visions of the ancients—whether by spiritual exercise of "the One" per the Neoplatonic tradition; the fundamental Stoic attitude of attention (*prosoche*) on the present moment; concern for one's own mortality and the healing of one's life, and so on[13]—and while these ancient visionaries procured practices suitable to the universal discipline of philosophy as a turn-toward eternal things or as a turn-toward an examined way of life worth living, in the final analysis, scholastic spiritual exercises are modeled upon the confluence of Hebrew faith and Greco-Roman reason. The basic implication of this for PWL is that, in scholastic mystagogy, there must be a renewed sense of philosophy—as something which simultaneously retains respect for its Greco-Roman heritage but which, in the end, maintains its unique claim to fulfill the shortcomings of the ancients. In proceeding, I give an analysis of PWL according to the vision and practice of the ancient schools along with monastic *philosophia* and, further on, Christian scholasticism. By doing so, I will contextualize my central thesis and position it in a way so as to understand scholastic mystagogy in terms of PWL.

---

[8] Ibid., 265.

[9] Ibid., 83.

[10] Ibid., 83.

[11] Sharpe and Ure, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: History, Dimensions, Directions* (UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 15. I return to these items in the last section of the paper. In short, Bonaventure's scholastic mystagogy is identifiable with all ten items in its own mode of being.

[12] Cotter, *Introduction to Catholic Philosophy* (MA: Weston College Press, 1949), 1.

[13] Sharpe and Ure, 87.

2.1. Philosophy as a Way of Life according to Sharpe and Ure

Monastic *philosophia* "Christianized" philosophical or spiritual exercises of the ancient schools by condensing them into bodies of thought for meditation.[14] Sharpe and Ure take this "Christianization" in a mostly positive direction: it signified not outright repudiation of the ancients, but adoption, as in the adoption of pagan terminology by Evagrius or Basil's sermon on *prosoche.*[15] What distinguished monastic spiritual practices from the spiritual exercises of the ancient schools were those foreign to the pagan world, such as confession or *exomologesis,*[16] *examination of conscience,*[17] *and mortification of the body.*[18] *The "living libraries" (florilegium)* of early Christian monasticism grew out of such practices in conjunction with other practices, such as *lectio divina*, which shared similarities with pagan practices of internalizing texts. One crucial point of difference, however, was the source-material used by Christian monastics: i.e., Holy Scripture and Patristic writings. Generally, *exercitium* in Christian monasticism designated the practice of divine reading (*lectio divina*), ascetic practices, and mystical contemplation (as distinct from intellectual contemplation)—all of which were required for the Christian spiritual life.[19] Despite similarities between them, monastic *philosophia* nevertheless claimed to fulfill what the noble teachings of the ancients could not. Indeed, the polemic employed by the monastic fathers against pagan philosophers was that the ancient philosophers, despite their outstanding achievements, "could not fully actualize their noble theoretical teachings."[20] All the same, Chrisitan monastics were not particularly fond of extirpating the teachings of pagan philosophers.

What, if anything, would change with the advent of scholasticism, when the "identity of the professional philosopher as we still mostly know him as the interpreter of recondite texts was solidified"?[21] In response to this question, we must first understand what "scholasticism" means generally. According to Domański,

---

[14] Ibid., 342.

[15] Ibid., 132-4.

[16] Ibid., 135.

[17] Ibid., 137.

[18] Ibid., 133.

[19] Ibid., 133.

[20] Ibid., 129.

[21] Ibid., 138.

> The scholastic philosopher is a scholar who attempts to resolve the problems that reason poses itself *à propos* of the writings of Aristotle, and who explains to others the solutions to these problems, with all the arguments for and against. It is a solely intellectual work. In this situation, [the philosopher] is not himself obliged to give—by his comportment or by his personal merits—a testimony to the truth drawn from the text.[22]

As Sharpe and Ure point out, the theoreticist conception of philosophy, as expressed in the *studium legendi* of the University of Paris, preceded scholasticism. Cicero and Plotinus, among others, taught in a similar, dialectical manner to the scholastics of the Middle Ages.[23] At first glance, we may be inclined to think that since Cicero and Plotinus were theoreticians in philosophy as well as practitioners of "philosophy as a way of life," then those trained in scholasticism cannot be entirely excluded from the PWL picture, even if they are *positioned* in the PWL picture differently than their ancient counterparts. But matters become more difficult upon consideration of the status of *philosophia* in Christian scholasticism. According to Sharpe and Ure, there were at least two competing frameworks for considering *philosophia* in Christian scholasticism. In the first framework, *philosophia* was devalued as merely propaedeutical or as a liberal art in the way the liberal arts of geometry, astronomy, etc. were to pagan philosophers.[24] In this framework, philosophy was not regarded as the highest science[25] and "The names of ancient philosophers [were] only... word-signs which serve to indicate doctrines and opinions."[26] Those working from this framework treated the philosophical visions of the ancient schools as rivals or threats to orthodoxy.[27] In the second framework, *philosophia* was "no more identified with the liberal arts in the medieval period [than] in the classical world."[28] Those working from this latter framework were of two differing views: they either regarded *philosophia* as "noble antecedents, from whom resources could be 'despoiled' in order to defend, demonstrate and proselytize the claims of faith"[29] or as something "more favourable to the ancient conception [of PWL]...than scholastic conceptions."[30] This latter group Sharpe and Ure refer to as "dissident scholastics," and they include the likes of Peter Abelard, Boethius of Dacia (not to be confused with St. Severinus Boethius), Roger Bacon (a contemporary of Bonaventure and a fellow Franciscan), and others.[31] The following basic disjunction becomes evident in considering the two frameworks: either scholastics viewed the teachings of ancient *philosophia* as noble antecedents that can (and should) be used for the sake of a higher science, or, as erroneous opinions that must be overcome. In truth, there were some noble teachings of the ancients, and others not so noble. A scholastic had to choose which teachings to adhere to and which he would not. Dissident scholastics viewed some teachings as noble antecedents, yet it is *how* they proceeded from these noble antecedents that marks a crucial point of departure from the other scholastics.[32]

---

[22] Ibid., 138.

[23] Ibid., 141.

[24] Ibid., 138-9.

[25] Ibid., 139. One of the earliest proponents of this framework was Philo of Alexandria. Bonaventure echoes Philo's (whom he praises as "the most eloquent of Jews") view as well: "The Jews refused to listen to wisdom from the mouth of Wisdom [i.e., Solomon]; and we have Christ within us (*intra nos*), and we refuse to listen to his wisdom. It is the greatest abomination that the king's most beautiful daughter is offered to us as a spouse, and we rather wish (*volumnus*) to copulate with the ugliest slaves and prostitutes; and we wish (*volumnus*) to return to Egypt, to worthless food, and we refuse to be restored by heavenly food" (*Hex.*, II.7).

[26] Sharpe and Ure, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 145.

[27] Ibid., 146.

[28] Ibid., 143.

[29] Ibid., 140.

[30] Ibid., 146.

As one should be able to detect by now, there is much that hinges on the *meaning* of *philosophia*—whether it *alone*, as a way of life, should be desired in the first place. In other words, and to return to Cotter's criteria: there is much hinging on whether one's life-principles are "clear and sure." Consider the following: Boethius of Dacia was a Latin Averroist who inferred that "only philosophers live fully according to human nature," and this was deemed to "skirt heresy."[33] Even so, the statement is problematic. Why? Because even if the philosopher is content with natural law—as seen, e.g., in the dialogue of Peter Abelard—this by no means guarantees that being content with natural law is truly *enough* for one's life.[34] *I argue that, insofar as "being content with natural law" characterizes the entirety of "philosophy as a way of life," then the modus operandi* of PWL is incomplete. My objective, then, is to establish a framework for understanding the completeness of PWL. I call this framework "scholastic mystagogy."

3. Understanding Scholastic Mystagogy

At the outset, scholastic mystagogy may be regarded as a scholastic testament to the evangelical perfection of the Church. This becomes more evident when considering the new methods and styles of learning that came with the arrival of the mendicant orders in the High Middle Ages. In the early 13th century, if Franciscans came warily to the University, it was due to St. Francis of Assisi advising his Lesser Brothers against any formal study that would "extinguish the Spirit of prayer and devotion during study of this kind."[35] St. Bonaventure, who may be considered the "second-founder" of the Franciscan Order, was aware of this. Kevin Hughes has expressed that Bonaventure's final series of lectures, published under the title *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*, reads as intellectual and spiritual guidance to Franciscans navigating the rigors, and dangers, of scholastic life.[36] Yet, for Bonaventure, the life of the Franciscan Rule was not to be castigated for the sake of books and learning; rather, books and learning were an opportunity to semi-ameliorate Franciscan beginnings—just as the holy Apostles, who began as poor fishermen, ended as learned and skillful doctors poor in spirit.[37]

---

[31] Ibid., 146.

[32] E.g., Aquinas treats the question of the eternity of the world differently than the Latin Averroists.

[33] The Parisian condemnations included the propositions "That there is no more excellent state than to give oneself to philosophy" and "That the wise men of the world are the philosophers alone." Cf. Wippel, "The Parisian Condemnations of 1270 and 1277" in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 68.

[34] Cf. Henrici, "The Concept of Religion," 7.

[35] Armstrong, R., Hellmann, J.A., Short, W. (eds.). *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*: *Vol. 1* (NY: New City Press, 2020), 107.

[36] Kevin Hughes, "Between Paris and Assisi: Bonaventure, Franciscan Scholar and Saint." Lecture, Lumen Christi Institute, 2020.

In Bonaventure's day, there were generally three types of methodological practices pertaining to reading: *lectio divina* ("divine reading," associated with monastic practices); *studium legendi* ("studious reading," associated with the scholastic schools); and *lectio spiritualis* ("spiritual reading," associated with the mendicant orders that emerged in the High Middle Ages).[38] "Scholastic mystagogy" is the conceptual framework that incorporates elements of all three into a unified outlook on reading as an intellectual, affective (prayerful), and communal practice.[39] According to historian Ian Wei, the University of Paris underwent a renewal in the spring of 1231 with Gregory IX's papal bull, *Parens scientiarum*.[40] In the papal bull, Gregory lays out a vision for what the University of Paris should become. It begins: "Paris, parent of the sciences…city of letters, and precious, shines forth."[41] Pope Gregory praised the University of Paris as "wisdom's special workshop" (*officina sapientia speciali*) in which

> the masters and students mine and refine silver and gold, from which "those prudent in mystical eloquence" (*prudentes eloquii mistici*) produce precious ornaments to adorn the bride of Christ, and take iron out of the earth to manufacture "the breastplate of faith, the sword of the spirit, and other Christian arms needed to fight the evil powers."[42]

In the bull's larger context, Smith interprets the underlying message of Gregory as a sort of missional decree for the newly established University: to find, through the refinement, purification, and cultivation of young men, a use in the Church—i.e., according to the gifts and abilities of each, the usefulness of preaching and defending the faith.[43] In this way, preaching was to be a key part of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual life of the University of Paris, to be established as "an enduring feature of university life."[44] It is Bonaventure adaptation to Gregory's directive that is of interest here. According to a standard reference text on the works of Bonaventure, written by Jacques-Guy Bougerol, the Minister General set himself "free from the patterns of the Schools [*studium legendi*], that is, free to develop a form for his thought more concordant with his vision."[45] This should not be taken to mean Bonaventure developed a mode of expression alien to the language of the scholastic schools; rather, it should be taken to mean that Bonaventure forged a creative path amid the technical scholasticism of the *studium legendi*, the monastic practices of *lectio divina*, and the mendicant practices of *lectio spiritualis*. Therefore, "scholastic mystagogy" expresses the subtle interrelations of these different forms of reading and study practices in the religious state of life.

---

[37] See Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure* (Providence, RI: Cluny Media Press, 2020), 38.

[38] See Hammond's introduction to Bonaventure's *Hexaëmeron*, same edition.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Randall Smith, *Aquinas, Bonaventure, and the Scholastic Culture of Medieval Paris* (U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 37.

[41] Ibid., 37-8.

[42] Ibid., 38.

[43] The message in Latin reads: *Et lapis calore solutus in es veritur, quia corda lapide Sancti Spiritus afflata fervore dum ardent, incendunt et fiunt predicatione sonora preconantia laudes Christi.*

[44] Ibid., 39.

[45] Ibid., 363.

At any rate, there were two modes by which a religious representative of the university delivered content—either as a non-liturgical *collatio* (which, by modern standards, would be considered a "conference talk"); or, as a liturgical *collatio* (which, by modern standards, would be considered as a sermon delivered by a religious leader to his congregation). The *modus* of Bonaventure's *collatio* was decidedly distinct from both: in his capacity as Minister General, Bonaventure's instructional delivery was likened to that of a "sermon conference." Smith writes: "[T]he translation 'sermon conference' would be appropriate for these works [i.e., *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*]—not because Bonaventure was delivering a sermon, but because the rhetorical structure and many of the rhetorical devices he used were derived from the contemporary arts of preaching."[46] However, the philosophical *style* of Bonaventure's "sermon conference" is of just as much importance. Christopher Cullen, following Ratzinger's *Theology of History in Saint Bonaventure*, describes Bonaventure's philosophical style as "aristotélisme éclectique néoplatonisant et surtout augustinisant."[47] Taken together, the character of Bonaventure's "scholastic mystagogy" is eclectic, consisting of theological, philosophical, and rhetorical elements. Bonaventure would call it "eternal art," which is inclusive of both art and reasoning,[48] as well as the species of wisdom related to the acquisition of art.[49] Without divulging more than is necessary, "scholastic mystagogy" can be identified according to two basic dimensions: by its existential or practicist dimension (i.e., its "sermon conference" mode of delivery), and by its theoreticist dimension (i.e., its eclectic philosophical style, which brings together Augustine, Plotinus, Dionysius, Aristotle, and others).

All the same, Kevin Hughes has also provided important scholarship on Bonaventure's scholastic mystagogy. According to Hughes, scholastic mystagogy is a genre of protreptic and heuristic dialectic or discourse for describing the inquiring character of metaphysics and religion in truth.[50] *According to Hughes, Bonaventure's Collationes in Hexaëmeron* should be regarded along these lines than as some "run-of-the-mill" scholastic manual. For Hughes, the goal of scholastic mystagogy is fourfold:

---

[46] Ibid., 365.

[47] Cullen, "The Semiotic Metaphysics of Saint Bonaventure," 18. The French means, roughly: augustinianizing or neoplatonizing eclectic Aristotelianism.

[48] Cf. Arist., *Meta*. I.1 980b28 (tr. Sachs).

[49] Cf. Maimonides, *Guide* III, 54 (tr. Pines). The four species of wisdom pertain to: (i) the apprehension of true realities, which have for their end the apprehension of God; (ii) the acquiring of arts; (iii) the acquiring of moral virtues; and (iv) a (gracious) aptitude for "stratagems and ruses."

[50] Kevin Hughes, "St. Bonaventure's *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*: Fractured Sermons and Protreptic Discourse." In *Franciscan Studies* 63 (2005): 107-29.

(i) It aims at a particular audience with specific interests and perspectives;
(ii) Includes a *synkirisis*, a point of contrast with other modes of discourse or ways of life;
(iii) To always be existential as well as cognitive;
(iv) To persuade toward a way of life and invite and initiate the audience into that life.[51]

While it is unlikely that Bonaventure sat down to write a "protreptic work," the *Hexaëmeron* still has protreptic features. As Hughes states: "The intent of the *Collationes* is… not so much to refute error, but to navigate a sound course through eddies and shoals of scholarly dispute to the love of Wisdom that Francis exemplified."[52] Nevertheless, although Bonaventure is not quite concerned with winning an argument and is more set on revealing a way of life,[53] this should not be taken to mean that Bonaventure never explicitly criticized the ancients, nor should it be taken to mean that a critique of philosophy is never acceptable to PWL. A critique of philosophy would even be necessary for PWL if there is found among the ancients views incongruous to the "clear and sure" principles of PWL. One of the most pressing examples of this is Aristotle's teaching on the eternity of the world. For Bonaventure, such a teaching was identified with a collapse of virtue from the "artists" of the Parisian school.[54] More to the point, however, is Bonaventure's overarching theoretical rejection of the presumptuousness of the ancients, i.e., the "philosophers":

> But the philosophers were ignorant of certain eternity. Neither did they know (*cognoverunt*) perfect peace because they did not know (*cognoverunt*) that the world was to have an end, and that the body turned to dust would rise. Nor is it surprising, since they were investigating according to the power of reason (*rationis*), and our reason (*ratio*) is not able to penetrate to this truth…They knew not (*nescierunt*) the illness because they were ignorant (*ignoraverunt*) of its cause…This then is the medicine, namely, the grace of the Holy Spirit. This physician and this grace philosophy cannot attain…These philosophers had ostrich wings, because their affect (*affectus*) was neither healed nor ordered nor rectified; because this can only happen by faith.[55]

Virtue was an honorable signature of the ancient world and remains, to this day, a beloved relic of the Christian faith. Thus, according to Hughes, the failure to nowadays regard the *Hexaëmeron* as an "instrumental part of a spiritual discipline" seems to resolidify Bonaventure's foreshadowing of an apostasy of virtue, whereby modern philosophers continue to read the *Hexaëmeron* as "a work of contestation, as a piece that divides rather than distinguishes."[56] But, in reality, the *Hexaëmeron* is "not only an exordium to wisdom, but a school for it"[57] that faces us with the question: "What do you love, and how do you love it?"[58] Taken as a whole, the *Hexaëmeron* may be regarded as a scholastic mystagogy intent upon its audience seeking the "union of Paris and Assisi, of intellectual rigor and holy desire, of wisdom and understanding, in the midst of almost insurmountable opposition."[59] Or else, it may be considered as a religious template and guide for the philosopher-as-mystic and the mystic-as-philosopher—as the premiere synthesis of Christian wisdom at the very summit of Being. On my view, the *Hexaëmeron* as scholastic mystagogy is an existential initiative that presumes the rational character of mystical desire in a mendicant and scholastic way of life, and must be understood as a heuristic which, according to Aristotle's *Topics*, "aims to produce the kind of assent demanded by a particular inquiry for the participants engaged in it."[60] In other words, Bonaventure's scholastic mystagogy as found in the *Hexaëmeron* is a call to pursue wisdom in its fullness, to establish for oneself a "new philosophy" entirely compatible with spiritual demands and at a unique level of service with truth. From here, I will begin to elaborate upon the theoreticist dimension of scholastic mystagogy. In doing so, I will clarify some of the rational institutes of scholastic mystagogy, which, according to Hughes, indicates clearly "how…to move and how…to rest."[61]

---

[51] Ibid., 113-14.

[52] Ibid., 115-16.

[53] Ibid., 116.

[54] See Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure*, 23: "Praecessit enim impugnatio vitae Christi in moribus per theologos, et impugnatio doctrinae Christi per falsas positiones per artistas." Hammond's translation of the *Hexaëmeron* reads: "For there has been an attack on the life of Christ in morals by the theologians, and an attack on the doctrine of Christ by the false positions of the philosophers in the arts" (I.9).

[55] Bonaventure, *Hex.*, VII.6-12. A clarification is needed here: "It is important to note that Bonaventure does not deny that philosophy can attain truth without faith; rather, he says that the truths discovered by such an autonomous philosophy will be mixed with error" (Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 29). A philosophy wedded to faith is a "heteronomous philosophy."

[56] Hughes, "St. Bonaventure's *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*," 128-29.

3.1. Scholastic Mystagogy as Seraphic Philosophy: From Plato and Socrates to St. Bonaventure and St. Francis

What is the "philosophy" of scholastic mystagogy? As we have expressed earlier, scholastic spiritual exercises are not so derivative of Greco-Roman PWL models. They are, instead, in a state of minor continuity with them. Sharpe and Ure remind us that:

> The ascent towards 'abstraction' we see in…post-Platonic medieval classifications of the sciences is then in no way an escape from life into 'abstract' or 'empty' discourse. It is *intended* as a spiritual ascent, towards the true life and a contemplation of the highest objects.[62]

This quote highlights Greek philosophy as a herald of spiritual ascent, and this call is not, ultimately, for the sake of "abstract" or "empty" discourse. The question facing us is: Insofar as the above quote supplies us with a genuine character of *philosophia*, then what rapprochement can be made concerning Greek reason and religious faith? At a basic level, there are two minor features we can discuss here: *remembrance* and *dialectic.* In Christianity, remembrance is of Christ's passion as greater than the "perspicacity of all human ingenuity."[63] Aphorisms of the ancients—e.g., in the *tetrapharmakos*: "God presents no fears, death no worries. And while good is readily attainable, evil is readily endurable"[64]—support a *preamble* to the Christian understanding of remembrance. Hence the apostle, St. John, says: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love" (1 Jn iv, 18). And St. Paul: "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor xv, 55-57). As a discipline of insight wedded to the storehouse of memory, the purpose of remembrance in "seraphic philosophy" is to rectify the affects and *re-heal* that which was lost through neglect.[65] This is not identical to "seizing each day"[66] by the might of effort, but by seizing the voice of ages through a return to the inner sanctuary of grace, by remembrance: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the LORD of hosts" (Zech iv, 6). As for the feature of dialectic, it serves a multi-faceted purpose: it is not only for the sake of argumentation, but also for recalling someone to a state of holy remembrance—of one's life, of God's love of one's life, of how one has fallen short of loving the One who "first loved us" (1 Jn iv, 9). This, of course, differs from what is seen in pagan antiquity; yet the gist of dialectic as a tool for aspiring to the good life is nevertheless evident in, e.g., Socrates' engagement with his interlocutors:

---

[57] Ibid., 114.

[58] Ibid., 118.

[59] Ibid., 128.

[60] Ibid., 115.

[61] Ibid., 118.

[62] Sharpe and Ure, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 144.

[63] See Book II, c. 5 in *Sancti Aureli Avgvstini De Genesi ad Litteram*. Edited by Joseph Zycha. CSEL XXVIII, 1; (Prague: F. Tempsky, 1894), 39. The original reads *capacitas* ('capacity') while Bonaventure has *perspicacitas* ('perspicacity').

> My very good friend, you are an Athenian, and belong to a city which is the greatest and most famous in the world for its wisdom and strength. Are you not ashamed that you give your attention to acquiring as much money as possible, and similarly with reputation and honour, and give no attention or thought to truth [*aletheia*] or thought [*phronesis*] or the perfection of your soul [*psyche*]?[67]

According to Kierkegaard, Socrates was a prefigurement of Christ.[68] Put another way, Socrates was like a mask of truth and like a mask for others masking a truth.[69] One of the purposes of Socratic dialectic was to sow disquiet in the soul by concealing what lies further beyond the question.[70] In Christian scholasticism, dialectic serves the initiative of remembrance and rational deliberation. It informs one of truth by

> considering rational (*rationalium*) speeches, argumentations, persuasions, so that a person has through it the art for speaking by aptly representing the concepts of the mind (*mentis*), for drawing up argumentations for winning the assent of every mind (*mentis*), and for persuasions by influencing the affect (*affectus*) of the mind.[71]

---

[64] Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 87.

[65] Bonaventure, *Hex.*, VII.8. Departing from Cicero, Augustine understood *religere* (of *religio*) to mean "re-elect" or "re-choose" and not "to read repeatedly" or "to take up diligently." As Augustine says, "In choosing Him—or, rather in re-choosing Him; for we had lost Him by our neglect; in re-choosing [*religentes*] Him, then…we approach Him through love." See Henrici, "The Concept of Religion from Cicero to Schleiermacher," in *Catholic Engagement with World Religions* (NY: Orbi Books, 2010), 5.

[66] Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 88.

[67] Ibid., 88.

[68] Ibid., 150.

[69] Ibid., 149.

[70] Ibid., 149.

[71] Bonaventure, *Hex.*, IV.18.

Moreover, reason (*ratio*) "thinks (*cogitate*) of making whatever is within it to exist in another, and whatever is in another to exist in itself" and "Whatever then is within the soul (*anima*) is there either by way of concept (*conceptus*), or by way of assent (*assensus*), or by way of affect."[72] Philosophically speaking, *logos* is the assimilation of speech or dialectic to a body by conduct, as Socrates suggests.[73] Theologically speaking, however, Christ is the model *par excellence* of *logos* as such. Christ is not the Socratic lover, but the finisher and consummator of the Socratic *daimon* of love who renews with the aid of Socratic love.[74]

Simone Weil, one of the French spiritualists in this essay, and who was not a Christian and had only read the Gospels in Ancient Greek, once remarked that "The Gospels are the last marvelous expression of Greek genius, as the *Iliad* is the first."[75] This comment signifies a challenge to seraphic philosophy, for if "Holy Socrates"[76] represents the primary figure of philosophy as a way of life, then how is Christ representative of *philosophy* as a way of life? Jesus was, after all, no philosopher. On the assumption that Christianity brought to completion what Greek reason could not—i.e., *logos* as definitive self-revelation in Christ—then shall we say Christ is *represented* in philosophy through certain figures? I argue that Christ is represented in *seraphic philosophy* through St. Francis of Assisi. St. Bernard of Clairvaux instructed his monks in "the disciplines of celestial philosophy."[77] Similarly, it is appropriate to regard Bonaventure instructing his friars in the disciplines of seraphic philosophy. In seraphic philosophy, Socrates is replaced by St. Francis of Assisi, the *alter Christus par excellence.*[78] Francis *is* Bonaventure's Socrates. Francis is to Bonaventure what Socrates was to Plato. In this way, "seraphic philosophy," like *philosophia*, turns one's attention towards heavenly things; but more emphatically, the heavenly things in seraphic philosophy are definitive: they are the divine exemplars of God revealed in the Person of Christ and expressed in nature. And, in seraphic philosophy, the purpose of all dialectic is for the sake of *that* remembrance.

Perhaps "seraphic philosophy" might seem arbitrary or artificial to some. Without needing to say too much about why it is called "seraphic" philosophy,[79] I will provide a few comments on the reason behind assigning to philosophy special names or titles. This hearkens back to Jacques Maritain's comments on the status of Christianity with respect to *philosophia.*[80] As Maritain points out, the condition or situation of philosophy in Christianity is largely an historical phenomenon. Thus, I believe the assignment or designation of "seraphic philosophy" can be authenticated or vindicated via a similar cultural-intellectual tendency found in other traditions—specifically, the historical condition or situation of Japanese philosophy in Tanabean philosophy. Tanabe Hajime's *Philosophy as Metanoetics* sought to establish a renewed sense of philosophy amid the tumultuous setting of Japan at the end of World War II. "A philosophy that is not a philosophy" is Hajime's famous line for this, and in the work of Takeshi Morisato, a scholar of Japanese philosophy, the genuineness of establishing a "metaxological" perspective on the relationship between philosophy and religion.[81] The metaxological perspective of a refined or purified philosophy of religion, or of a "renewed sense of philosophy," is called "metanoetic philosophy" in Tanabean thought. I believe something similar can be said of Bonaventure's philosophical outlook in Paris in the late 13th century. Yet we would express seraphic philosophy not as "a philosophy that is not a philosophy" but as "religious philosophy beyond *philosophies*"—as a philosophy under and within the aegis of a Franciscan vision, the vision of Christ under the form of the Seraph, the "seraphic vision."

---

[72] Ibid.

[73] Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 155.

[74] Ibid., 161.

[75] Weil, *Iliad, or the Poem of Force*, tr. M. McCarthy (Pendle Hill, 1964).

[76] Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 167.

[77] Sharpe and Ure, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 130.

[78] See Sander Vloebergs, "Wounding love: a mystical-theological exploration of stigmatization," 3-5. According to Vloebergs, some consider St. Francis's stigmatization as "the most famous and influential case" of serving as "the exemplar model [of] *the* Stigmatized, *the alter Christus*," but not everyone (i.e., some Dominicans) believed it so.

[79] Basically, the Franciscan Order has been dubbed the "Seraphic Order" due to the mystical vision of St. Francis atop Mt. Alverno (or La Verna). There, Francis is believed to have received a vision of the Crucified Christ under the form or appearance of a Seraph (i.e., an angel belonging to the angelic choir of seraphim). Edith Stein refers to the seraphim as the angelic order of "the fire of love."

From here, I will begin to argue for my claim of a religious philosophy beyond philosophies according to points of minor continuity with the ancient schools: the first is the Platonic maxim of philosophy as "training for death,"[82] which may also be regarded as a constituent of Hebrew faith.[83] The second part is philosophy as a "dreaming" unto the quiet of love. "Dreaming" is context sensitive here. In Bonaventure's terminology, 'to dream' is likened to *quiescere*, which means rest, repose from work, serenity, and the like. Taken together as the basic building blocks of a scholastic mystagogy or seraphic philosophy, they comprise what I believe is distinctively Christian about spiritual exercise in scholasticism—namely, that the work of seraphic philosophy, when done with an eye to the exemplars of the Christian faith, leads to a rest-in-grace from the toil of intellectual effort.

4. Effort, Grace, and a Situated Understanding of Seraphic Philosophy

For Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and virtually the whole Christian tradition of mystical theology, "to be happy was to receive, through intuition, a vision of truth."[84] Or else, "happiness lies in sapience" (*sapientia*).[85] The sacred study of such a vision is contemplative, as even Aristotle himself suggested but which, according to Bonaventure, he failed to provide.[86] According to Boethius (480-524 AD), who McInerny deems the first scholastic, *theoretica*, *speculativa*, and *contemplativa* are all synonyms for each other and have as many species as there are virtues in the diversity of acts.[87] Boethius defined *philosophia* generally as "amor et studium et amicita quodammado sapientiae."[88] For Boethius, theology is "true philosophy" and the part of speculative philosophy that deals with 'intellectibles' grasped only by the faculty of the intellect which is *per se* infallible.[89] The issue here is not really Boethius's claim that theology is true philosophy; rather, the issue concerns *the reason why* the claim is made. One clear instance of the reason why comes from Bonaventure, who says that Aristotle and others promised to provide a tenth philosophical science, i.e., contemplative science, but immersed themselves in error instead.[90] The claim of seraphic philosophy is that it, at the very least, attains to the tenth contemplative science in a way Aristotle and others did not. And so we return to the rather bold thesis made at the beginning of this paper: seraphic philosophy is the satisfactory mode of the tenth philosophical science, which the ancients failed to provide, and its satisfaction rests in the realization of the *truth* of speculation—i.e., rest (*quiescere*) in the vision of truth through God's grace made known, not so much in "Lady Philosophy," but in "Lady Poverty."

---

[80] See Edith Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being* (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, Institute of Carmelite Studies, 2002), 16. In one of the introductory sections of her *Finite and Eternal Being*, entitled "Is There a Christian Philosophy?" Edith Stein recounts a presentation given by Jacques Maritain on the Thomistic solution to the problem of reason and faith. Maritain maintains that, despite philosophy's independent nature from faith and theology, its nature is yet "actualized within a specific frame of changing historical conditions" and so we can justifiably speak of "a Christian situation or condition of philosophy" (16).

[81] See Takeshi Morisato, *Faith and Reason in Continental and Japanese Philosophy* (U.K.: Bloomsbury, 2019), 41-2.

[82] Hadot, 241.

[83] See, e.g., Ecc vii. Additionally, Bonaventure's *Hexaëmeron* was never completed prior to his death in 1274. By its very personal nature in this regard, it may be read as sort of "last effort" in preparation of death.

[84] Kotva, *Effort and Grace*, 7.

In the *Inferno*, the "ornament of wisdom and of art," personified as Virgil, is asked by Dante: "[W]hat souls are these whose merit lights their way even in Hell [?] What joy sets them apart?"[91] Virgil's response is telling:

> The signature of honor they left on earth is recognized in Heaven and wins them ease in Hell out of God's favor.[92]

With this, Dante suggests that the effort of *philosophia* wins one ease in Hell out of God's favor. Or else, Dante's "imagineering" indicates that philosophy, as a training for death, merits eternal reward and divine favor. After all, the scenes and images of Limbo are celestial: citadels, jade-green meadows, and light—to name just a few. Limbo is certainly not pictured in the way the Circles of Hell are typically pictured. Indeed, in Dante's poetic imagination, virtuous pagans are "spared the fire and suffering Hell in one affliction only: that without hope we live on in desire."[93] In other words, the virtuous philosopher's only affliction is the pain of what was already made evident in the first pronouncement at the entrance of Hell—i.e., a loss of hope for ultimate fulfillment through primordial love and the good of the intellect.[94] But if the merits of philosophical effort alone can bring someone to a (quasi) celestial state *post mortem*, then is philosophy capable of achieving paradise when infused with supernatural or superadditive grace? Or else, what is the status of grace in *philosophia*? In the *Inferno*, the Philosopher raised on high, standing in the center of the virtuous souls of philosophy, is Aristotle. Aristotle represents the magnanimity of philosophy, or the height and honor of achievement through philosophical effort. Bonaventure's criticism of Aristotle is, however, startling. He says, "The Philosopher [Aristotle] says that magnanimity lies in the desire for honor; whatever he says, the truth does not teach this, unless the honor is of eternal things."[95] What is "the honor of eternal things"? For Bonaventure, it is seraphic magnanimity: i.e., "humility, which despises things that appear great and values those that may appear small (*parva*), but are truly great."[96] Bonaventure is thinking here of his Socratic form, St. Francis, and the eternal honor found only in the holy action of 'Lady Poverty' which emanates from mystical contemplation and leads to "spiritual transport."[97] Seraphic magnanimity evinces grace in a way Aristotelian magnanimity does not. Seraphic magnanimity is not something achieved by effort alone, but effort helps:

---

[85] Sharpe and Ure, 148. Interestingly, Bonaventure identifies theology with *sapiential* habit.

[86] *Hex.*, IV.1

[87] Ralph McInerny, *Boethius and Aquinas* (D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1990), 122.

[88] Ibid., 121. Translation: Philosophy is "the love, study, and friendship of wisdom (*sapientia*) in a certain way or manner." Hugh of St. Victor, a predecessor of Bonaventure, uses a similar Latin phrasing.

[89] Ibid., 124.

[90] Bonaventure, *Hex.*, IV.1. The nine sciences are: three in natural philosophy (metaphysics, physics, mathematics), three in rational philosophy (grammar, logic, rhetoric), and three in moral philosophy (ethics, economics, politics).

[91] Canto IV, v. 74-5.

[92] Canto IV, v. 76-8.

[93] Canto IV, v. 40-2.

> Now this contemplation happens through grace, and yet, effort helps, namely to separate oneself from everything that is not God, and even from oneself, if that were possible. And this is the supreme unity through love (*amorem*)...This love (*amor*) transcends all understanding (*intellectum*) and knowledge (*scientiam*).[98]

Moreover, training for death in wisdom, in seraphic philosophy, means turning-toward the honor of eternal things and away from mere contemplation of nature. This does not mean that contemplation of nature is entirely antithetical to the contemplative aims of seraphic philosophy, i.e. union with God in the "vision of the glorified soul."[99] As Hadot writes:

> Every person, whether Greek or Barbarian—who is *in training for wisdom*, leading a blameless, irreproachable life, chooses neither to commit injustice nor return it unto others, but to avoid the company of busybodies, and hold in contempt the places where they spend their time...every kind of meeting or reunion of thoughtless people. As their goal is a life of peace and serenity, they contemplate nature and everything found within her: they attentively explore the earth, the sea, the air, the sky, and every nature found therein.[100]

---

[94] Cf. Canto III, v. 18.

[95] Bonaventure, *Hex.*, V.10. And as St. Francis said: "A man's worth is what he is in the sight of God, and no more" (*ML* VI.I).

[96] Ibid.

[97] See Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, I.3. Bonaventure writes: "For no one is in any way disposed for divine contemplations that lead to spiritual transports unless, like [the prophet] Daniel, he is also *a man of desires*." Desire is enkindled in someone through "the outcry of prayer" and "the refulgence of speculation."

[98] *Hex.*, II.30.

[99] Ibid., III.24.

[100] Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 264.

Even so, the emphasis in seraphic philosophy is the turn-from-nature *to* God. According to the Franciscan intellectual tradition, God is "inside and not included, outside and not excluded" from natural things.[101] According to Bonaventure, who falls within this intellectual tradition generally, one's contemplation of nature must be lifted up by faith.[102] Why? Because too much curiosity about creatures causes wisdom to withdraw.[103] While contemplation of nature is essential to the training for wisdom, it is not the ultimate focus of a training for death. A proportioned amount of natural investigation is conducive to becoming invested in the life of grace, but to truly wear the habit of nature, to possess eternal wisdom, one must pass through a higher medium than nature. Bonaventure calls this medium sanctity, the "metaphysical Center," Christ. Bonaventure's commentary below describes the basic framework:

> [I]t is necessary to propose a medium, namely sanctity. And the passing over (*transitus*) is an exercise (*exercitium*): an exercise (*exercitatio*) from the study (*studio*) of knowledge (*scientiae*) to the study (*studium*) of sanctity, and from the study (*studio*) of sanctity to the study (*studio*) of wisdom; about which in the Psalm: *Teach me goodness and discipline and knowledge* (scientiam). The exercise begins from the highest, because it wants (*vellet*) to taste how *good and sweet the Lord is.* But wisdom cannot be reached except by discipline, nor discipline except by knowledge (*scientiam*): wherefore the last is not to be preferred to the first. One would be a bad merchant who would prefer tin to gold. For whoever prefers knowledge (*scientiam*) to sanctity will never prosper.[104]

For Bonaventure, scholastic spiritual exercise *is* the process of passing over from one form of study to another—from the study of knowledge to sanctity, from sanctity to eternal wisdom, and so on. All philosophical effort is at the behest of this spiritual exercise and serves the purpose of mystical contemplation, grace, love, and wisdom. As Pascal perceptively pointed out: human reason cannot reach God unaided.[105] God provides the seraphic practitioner with a template for them to fill-out such that when the individual's effort reaches its end, grace is diffused into the practitioner, consummating the practitioner to another form of study that humbles them in a unity of love and compels them toward better understanding of their "imitative likeness."[106] Effort is congenial or helpful with such because it helps one to "separate oneself from everything that is not God, and even from oneself, if that were possible." And grace, the perfecting power of effort, complements the creature's nature, for grace perfects nature without destroying nature (*gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit*). Recalling the ancients' idea of conversion to an "exact vision of nature," the "vision of nature" in Bonaventure's seraphic template is likened to reason betrothed to God while reason awaits the celebrant of faith to lift the vision of reason to God. Grace, then, is the enlivening gift given to wearied reason while reason awaits the celebrant of faith. But let us consider grace at a more concentrated depth.

---

[101] See Lydia Schumacher, "The Early Franciscan doctrine of Divine Immensity: Towards a middle way between Classical Theism and Panentheism," In *Scottish Journal of Theology*, vol. 70, no. 3 (2017), 8.

[102] Bonaventure, *Hex.*, III.26.

[103] Ibid., II.21.

[104] Ibid., XIX.3.

[105] Simone Kotva, *Effort and Grace: On the Spiritual Exercise of Philosophy* (UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 88.

[106] I.e., the "likeness of a creature relative to the Creator." See Junius Johnson, "The One and the Many in Bonaventure: Exemplarity Explained." *Religions* 7, no. 144 (2016): 11. Imitative likenesses are gradated and constitute the substance of creatures to the extent to which the creature knows the divine ideas.

4.1. The French Spiritualist Tradition

"Grace" comes from the Latin, *gratia*, which means "gift."[107] Let the following stand for Bonaventure's general view of grace:

> [I]n a general sense, it is the assistance freely and liberally granted by God to creatures performing any of their acts. In its general sense, grace is the concurrence without which no created thing could do anything, even continue to exist...In a more proper sense, "grace" (*gratia*) is a term usually reserved for the gift from God by which the human soul is perfected and transformed.[108]

In Simone Kotva's *Effort and Grace*, there is presented an overview of the French spiritualist tradition, which "combined elements of mystical spirituality with a psychological approach, challenging the heroic ideal of philosophy and proposing new critiques of philosophical method in light of passivity and the concept of grace."[109] Passivity and grace are the two major concepts presented in Kotva's work. The world of grace, or to use Leibniz's phrase, *regnum gratiae*, implies a "world of spirits"— "a place of repose where the self no longer labors but exists in a state of pure receptivity."[110] The feeling of the soul's repose is after, and not before, effort—and this evokes "the great saying that faith does not come by works, that love gives everything (*donne tout*)."[111] For Simone Weil, passivity pertained to "passive activity," "waiting" or "negative effort,"[112] and wisdom was not the end of waiting—it was simply a state of sanctity that allowed someone "to remain constant and act always in moderation."[113] In this way, wisdom serves as the perfecting power of effort by instilling those who await the grace of contemplation with understanding. This echoes a line in Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, where he states that wisdom unites herself to those who have been "weaned and removed from the sweetness of present consolation" that they may "understand useful things" in truth and love.[114] According to another French spiritualist, Félix Ravaisson, "grace is neither pure effort nor absolute passivity, but the middle term; the point where activity becomes effortless, and effort becomes spontaneous."[115] Metaphysically speaking, grace as a passive activity refers not to pure potency but to an emanation of active potency, as if a fire from afar. Love (*amore*) is the entitative act that sets the individual in the flames. In this flame, which is analogous to the unified field of grace, love, and contemplation, one's effort becomes relaxed, spontaneous, easy. The natural effort of philosophy is the *attentiveness* (*prosoche*) and *movement-towards* the fire. The French spiritualist tradition also differs considerably from Stoicism and Cartesian rationalism. According to Ravaisson, Stoicism "cannot speak to the heart" and, at least from the view of Pascal's philosophy, it is the heart that must be spoken to.[116] The French spiritualists' criticize Descartes, who "never makes the search after truth dependent upon the grace of God" even if he makes it dependent upon meditation.[117] Without the grace of God, meditation counts for very little, although even meditation as a form of natural effort is helpful for drawing near to God. Grace humbles the natural effort of creatures. It is at the heart of the First Principle of humility and wisdom:

---

[107] Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 153.

[108] Ibid., 153-4.

[109] Kotva, *Effort and Grace*, 8.

[110] Ibid., 42.

[111] Ibid., 42.

[112] Ibid., 5.

[113] Ibid., 7.

[114] Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Prooemium, no. 3.

[115] Kotva, *Effort and Grace*, 79.

> Therefore, since all things, which have been made, abide by the one principle and were produced from nothing, that man is truly wise who really recognizes the nothingness (*nihilitatem*) of himself and of others, and the sublimity of the first principle.[118]

At this point, we can address potential objections. First, can seraphic philosophy, as a scholastic form, truly be as satisfactory as it purports to be? I think this question relates to another: Ultimately, is it better to be a *theologi* than to be a philosopher? Setting aside standard rebuttals to theistic belief for the moment, it appears any philosophy of life would require grace, and the best PWL models would therefore be better disposed to articulate effort and grace. Consider Socrates. What else would Socrates identify as the state of grace and wisdom than the state of communion with his *daimon* who told him what not to do and, in a sense, prepared him for death? Socrates himself did not consider wisdom possible by effort alone,[119] and we must not minimize Socrates' experience of grace. Furthermore, we recall that Socrates was informed about one of the most important decisions of his life through a dream.[120] Using this Socratic prototype, the possible objection that seraphic philosophy is not so satisfactory can be handled with the following counter-argument: Since Socrates relied, in one way or another, on the superadditive assistance of *quiescere*, the language of which evokes *some* supernatural assistance, any philosophy of life devoid of *quiescere* is not sufficient PWL. It can be inferred, then, that the best PWL has the best teaching on *quiescere*. Yet again, *quiescere* is a dreaming of grace unto the quiet of love—not dreaming as a "thought experiment" or some Cartesian exercise in methodological doubt, but as a dreaming of, and instruction by, "Lady Philosophy," especially as enhanced by the instruction of "Lady Poverty."[121] The Latin word for 'dream' is *quies* or *quiescere* which, for Bonaventure, implies rest, repose from work, serenity, and the like.[122] To understand seraphic philosophy, or *this form of scholasticism*, as a dreaming unto quietude or serenity through love, is largely, I think, to sense the spirit of Socrates amidst Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* and as together *magnified* in the life of St. Francis. The philosophical difference between Bonaventure's seraphic philosophy and Boethius's is, however, that whereas Boethius's 'dream' is fostered by the Platonic and Eleatic schools, Bonaventure's is fostered more by an eclectic immensity: "aristotélisme éclectique néoplatonisant et surtout augustinisant."[123] Bonaventure's 'dream' is the contemplative joy of imitative and exemplary likenesses in unity as "transfinite signs of transcendence hidden and shown within immanent finitude"[124] and as possessing a "staying power" upon the practitioner. This dream is a transcendence of Socratic prefigurements that leads into seraphic magnanimity, exemplified in St. Francis of Assisi. So, while seraphic philosophy carries the benefits of a Platonic and Eleatic 'dream' à la Boethius, as well as the benefits of the *studium legendi* of the Aristotelian treatises, it also initiates its user into the *mysterium fideum* of Augustine. But the *mysterium fideum* in Bonaventure belongs, uniquely, to St. Francis.

---

[116] Ibid., 88.

[117] Ibid., 32.

[118] Cullen, *Bonaventure,* 13.

[119] Kotva, *Effort and Grace*, 3.

[120] See Plato's *Crito* (US: Cornell University Press, 1998), 100-1 [44ab]. Hicken has suggested that, in the *Theaetetus*, Socrates' account of knowledge as "a dream to match a dream" expresses not so much the correlate of a statement with an object, but with a fact. See Winifred Hicken, "The Character and Provenance of Socrates' 'Dream' in the *Theaetetus*" in *Phronesis,* vol. 3, no. 2 (1958), pp. 126-145.

[121] "Lady Philosophy" is of course an allusion to Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* but I also think it is suitable to Socratic instruction through the Bonaventurian notion of *quiescere.*

5. Conclusion

Perhaps, in the end, the most important question of philosophy is*: what is philosophy*? Or else, if we assume 'philosophy' means, simply enough, a tradition borne amid pre-Socratic theorizing in the search for a stable principle to account for change (i.e., from *mythos* to *logos*), then what must philosophical inquiry look like? If, following one of the later theorizers of the pre-Socratic tradition, Pythagoras, we assume it means nothing else than "love of wisdom" (φίλος, "fraternal love" and σοφός, "wisdom from above"), then what does it mean to be a lover of *sophia*?[125] Do we love it without resting (*quiescere*) in it? And why should *sophia*-wisdom be preferred to others? Why *sophia* and not, say, *sapientia*? Questions such as these, and the challenges presented by them, are I think reason-enough to regard philosophy at a level of generality, as something that touches upon any tradition directed at the search for ultimate principles and causes of things in accordance with reason *and* faith.

Notwithstanding, I will provide a model that shows the ways in which seraphic philosophy or scholastic mystagogy fits with the ten items of PWL. It is important to note that what follows is not exhaustive and more could be provided, but I believe it suffices as an initial model for identifying Bonaventure's scholastic mystagogy or seraphic philosophy according to PWL. Therefore, regarding Sharpe's and Ure's PWL model, we identify seraphic philosophy as follows:

---

[122] With more context: "When the soul (*anima*) sees this [divine 'to Be'] in more familiar ways, first by reasoning (*ratiocinando*), second by testing, and third by understanding (*intelligendo*), then it is able to rest (*quiescere*)" (*Hex.*, V.32).

[123] See Christopher Cullen, "The Semiotic Metaphysics of Saint Bonaventure," 18. The French phrase means: augustinianizing or neoplatonizing eclectic Aristotelianism.

[124] See Takeshi Morisato's analysis of William Desmond's metaxology in *Faith and Reason in Continental and Japanese Philosophy: Reading Tanabe Hajime and William Desmond* (UK: Bloomsbury, 2019), 90.

[125] Interestingly, the Greek word for wisdom in the epistle of St. James is *sophia:* "But the wisdom (*sophia*) from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (iii, 17)

(i) **Philosophy as pedagogy or teaching**—Bonaventure spent much of his time teaching and instructing and did so in relation to the "sermon conference" style of the *Hexaëmeron*. Bonaventure departed from his position of *Magister* in the University and assumed the role of Minister General in 1257. In this way, Bonaventure's pedagogy can be regarded as sort of "middle-way" between the *studium legendi* and *lectio divina*. I refer to this "middle-way" by the term *lectio spiritualis.*

(ii) **Intellectual exercises**—For Bonaventure, this means scholastic discipline (*Hex*., II.3). Typical conventions would apply here, such as removing distractions, contemplation during study, and the like.

(iii) **Spiritual exercises**—For Bonaventure, this means mostly monastic or moral discipline (*Hex*., II.3). It can also incorporate intellectual exercise insofar as one's intellectual exercise causes one to pass from one form of study to another. When done in the desire for wisdom, this serves the purposes of remembrance and communion with God.

(iv) **Discourse/systematic division or parts of philosophy**—See fn. 6 of Hammond's translation (p. 129), which identifies a threefold division of the arts according to Bonaventure's *De red. art.,* 4 (V, 320-321) and *Itin*., 3.6 (V, 305): three parts of natural philosophy (metaphysics, physics, mathematics), three parts of rational philosophy (grammar, logic, rhetoric), and three parts of moral philosophy (ethics, economics, politics). These nine sciences derive from three disciplines of knowledge in the *Hexaëmeron*: the natural truth of things, the rational truth of words, and truth of morals. Conference One of Bonaventure's *Hexaëmeron* also presents a detailed account of the seven subjects or parts of scholastic mystagogy as metaphysics related to theology, physics related to theology, mathematics to theology, logic to theology, ethics to theology, and law to theology. Bonaventure's discourse/systematic division mirrors that of Boethius insofar as *contemplativa* or theology stands for "true philosophy" which for Bonaventure is actually "seraphic philosophy."

(v) **A "turn inwards" emphasizing not *pragmata*, but *dogmata***—e.g., Rectifying or healing the affects through the theoretical and speculative dimension(s) of reason and faith. Bonaventure begins a few of his works with an ode to the "Father of lights" (cf. Jms i, 17). Augustine's *Confessions* speaks to this inward turn, which for Bonaventure is a turn to the radiation of glory: "By the Platonic books I was admonished to return into myself. With you as my guide I entered into my innermost citadel, and was given power to do so because you had become my helper (Ps. 29:11). I entered and with my soul's eye, such as it was, saw above that same eye of my soul the immutable light higher than my mind—not the light of every day, obvious to anyone, nor a larger version of the same kind which would, as it were, have given out a much brighter light and filled everything with its magnitude" (*Conf.* VII.16).

(vi) **Multiple literary genres**—Bonaventure's *opera* contains scholastic manuals (e.g., his *Commentarium*), spiritual treatises (e.g., *Itinerarium*), biblical commentaries, and scholastic mystagogy. I consider the latter to be seraphic philosophy, a metaphilosophy, or a renewed sense of philosophy suited to PWL.

(vii) **Metaphilosophical metaphor**—Bonaventure uses bestiaries to illustrate points (e.g., *Hexaëmeron* I.8: "For they make wasp nests that do not have sweet honeycombs, like bees that make honey" and *Hexaëmeron* VII.6-12: "These philosophers had ostrich wings, because their affect (*affectus*) was neither healed nor ordered nor rectified; because this can only happen by faith"); he is also fond of tree-metaphors (e.g., *Lignum vitae*), analogies involving natural things (he refers to these as "vestiges"), and other figures of Scripture, especially as it relates to religious time.

(viii) **Models of *sophia* and happiness**—More than *sophia* (the disposition of wisdom) and happiness (the feeling of contentment), Bonaventure emphasizes *sapientiae* (the judgments of wisdom) and eternal beatitude (the glorified vision of blessedness). For Bonaventure, true happiness is found only in God.

(ix) **Critique of non-philosophical life**—"Non-philosophical life" can refer to either the erroneous philosophy of the artists or to manual labor. In a lengthy passage concerning Bonaventure's view of manual labor, Gilson notes in *The Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure* that "Our Lord Himself long before had put learned men beyond the reach of reproach on this point [manual labor], for He had chosen what was best for a preacher and not worked with His hands!" (38). The point here is not that Christ never engaged in manual labor nor that friars should never do manual labor, but that study, prayer, and contemplation are the more appropriate activities of disciples of God.

(x) **Figure(s) of the sage**—For Bonaventure, this includes not only the learned (e.g., Plotinus, Cicero, Aristotle, Plato, Philo, et al) but more importantly religious saints, such as St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis *is* Bonaventure's Socrates.

In closing, are Christian spiritual exercises derivative of Greco-Roman PWL models? And is scholasticism pedantic and lacking in spiritual exercises? My response to the first is "No, not really." There are some common elements between them, but the differing elements between them comprise a difference that makes a transformative difference. As for the second, my response is "Not all." As I have expressed, scholastic mystagogy or seraphic philosophy retains elements of monastic *philosophia* as well as elements of scholastic manualism and, overall, is not something lacking spiritual exercise. Indeed, given the semi-monastic character of scholastic mystagogy, I think it is appropriate to model Bonaventure's seraphic philosophy alongside St. Bernard of Clairvaux's conceptual apparatus of “the disciplines of celestial philosophy.” Yet, instead of the disciplines of celestial philosophy, I identify scholastic mystagogy as a spiritual discipline of *seraphic philosophy*—a spiritual discipline under the rational-mystical aegis of a “biting” fire of love. Seraphic philosophy is directed not merely to dialectic nor to the methods of the scholastic manuals, but to a way of life where grace and love are premiere expressions of wisdom (*sapientia*). In this way, scholastic mystagogy is a philosophical way of life—just not one content with remaining under the purview of ancient schools as these are limited when considered alongside possible experience and the “unexpected being” concerning such. Indeed, this seems to be the real dispute at-hand for PWL: Is PWL more about whether the principles of one’s life are “natural,” or whether its principles are discerned as having the active potency for satisfying or fulfilling the *desideratum* of life? And what else is the *desideratum* for life but a fulfillment of divine happiness in God in need of nothing else but God? What may strike someone as “non-philosophical” about seraphic philosophy is that it begins from a state of ultimacy (or from the possibility of such a state) and clarifies, elucidates, distinguishes, etc., *from* such. Since “The end imposes a necessity on those things that pertain to the end,”[126] we can recognize that seraphic philosophy is not simply about obtaining divine life; rather, it is about expressing the divine life already tasted or lived-in on the part of the one doing the expressing. Seraphic philosophy elevates monastic *philosophia*; meanwhile, it puts the teachings of the ancients in its place by confining it to “natural” intellectual insight, but not so much the ‘intellectibles’ of nature. The chief doctrine of seraphic philosophy may just be this: Philosophy is not the end of Being; it is the elucidation or articulation of the ending(s) of indwelling Being. Without a sense of Being’s indwelling ends, philosophy matters very little. Yet, *with* such, the greater one’s philosophical prowess means the greater this indwelling can be made explicit. Seraphic philosophy begins with nature or being conforming to the mind; then, it leads from religio-philosophical conceptions of nature and being to the light of the soul; and it culminates in a superimposition of the Love Christ in the Light of Seraphic Wisdom.

Works Cited

Augustine. Book II, c. 5 in *Sancti Aureli Avgvstini De Genesi ad Litteram*. Joseph Zycha (ed.). CSEL XXVIII, 1. Prague: F. Tempsky, 1894.

Armstrong, R., Hellmann, J.A., Short, W. (eds.). *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*: *Vol. 1.* NY: New City Press, 2020.

Bonaventure. *Collations on the Hexaemeron: Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: The Illuminations of the Church*. St. Bonaventure University: Franciscan Institute, 2018. Print.

————. *Itinerarium* (“The Journey of the Mind to God”), Boehner, Philotheus (tr.) & Brown, Stephen (ed.). US: Hackett Publishing Company. Print.

Cotter, A.C. *Introduction to Catholic Philosophy.* MA: Weston College Press, 1949. Print.

Cullen, Christopher. *Bonaventure: Great Medieval Thinkers.* NY: Oxford University Press, 2006. Print.

---

[126] See Book II, c. 9 of Aristotle’s *Physica*. Cf. WAE, volume 2, pp. 199b-200a.

————."The Semiotic Metaphysics of Saint Bonaventure." Doctoral, The Catholic University of America, 2000 (9969576).

Dante. *The Inferno: Dante's immortal drama of a journey through hell.* Ciardi, John (trans.). US: Penguin Group, 1982. Print.

McInerny, Ralph. *Boethius and Aquinas.* D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1990. Print.

Gilson, Etienne. *The Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure*. RI: Cluny Media, 2020. Print.

Hadot, Pierre. *Philosophy as a Way of Life.* UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1994. Print.

Henrici, Peter. "The Concept of Religion from Cicero to Schleiermacher," in *Catholic Engagement with World Religions*. Becker and Morali (eds.). NY: Orbi Books, 2010. Print.

Hicken, Winifred. "The Character and Provenance of Socrates' 'Dream' in the *Theaetetus*" in *Phronesis,* vol. 3, no. 2 (1958), pp. 126-145.

Hughes, Kevin. "St. Bonaventure's *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*: Fractured Sermons and Protreptic Discourse." In *Franciscan Studies* 63 (2005): 107-29. https://doi.org/ST. BONAVENTURE'S COLLATIONES IN HEXAËMERON: FRACTURED SERMONS AND PROTREPTIC DISCOURSE on JSTOR.

———.Kevin Hughes, "Between Paris and Assisi: Bonaventure, Franciscan Scholar and Saint." Lecture, Lumen Christi Institute, 2020.

Johnson, Junius. "The One and the Many in Bonaventure: Exemplarity Explained." *Religions* 7, no. 144 (2016): 1-16.

Kotva, Simone. *Effort and Grace: On the Spiritual Exercise of Philosophy.* UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. Print.

Morisato, Takeshi. *Faith and Reason in Continental and Japanese Philosophy: Reading Tanabe Hajime and William Desmond*. UK: Bloomsbury, 2019. Print.

Plato. *Texts on Socrates: Plato & Aristophanes.* West and West (trans.). US: Cornell University Press, 1998. Print.

Schumacher, Lydia. "The Early Franciscan doctrine of Divine Immensity: Towards a middle way between Classical Theism and Panentheism," In *Scottish Journal of Theology*, vol. 70, no. 3 (2017).

Sharpe, Matthew and Ure, Michael. *Philosophy as a Way of Life: History, Dimensions, Directions*. UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. Print.

Smith, Randall. *Aquinas, Bonaventure, and the Scholastic Culture of Medieval Paris*. U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Print.

Stein, Edith. *Finite and Eternal Being.* Kurt Reinhardt (trans.). Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, Institute of Carmelite Studies, 2002. Print.

Vloebergs, Sander (2016). "Wounding love: a mystical-theological exploration of stigmatization," in the *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, vol. 2: 1-2. Doi: 10.1080/21692327.2016.1199968. Weil, Simone. *Iliad, or the Poem of Force*. M. McCarthy (trans.). Pendle Hill, 1964.

Wippel, John. "The Parisian Condemnations of 1270 and 1277" in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*. Noone and Garcia (eds.). UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. Print.

Philotheos **22.2** (2022) 157–168

Isaac Jay Aday
The University of Texas at Dallas
Isaac.Aday@utdallas.edu

Freedom, Human Nature, and Evil in Dostoevsky's *The Dream of the Ridiculous Man* and *The Brothers Karamazov*

Abstract: Underlying the works of 19th century novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky is a matrix of ideas outlining the relationship between human nature and human freedom. To shed further light upon these topics, this piece examines the underlying conflict between free will and human nature throughout Dostoevsky's oeuvre, focusing more specifically upon his short story "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man" and his novel *The Brothers Karamazov*. What emerges from these investigations is a notion of free will and human nature that, though perhaps paradoxical, are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and may in fact help inform one another. Theological, philosophical, and anthropological implications of this idea are discussed in reference to Dostoevsky's thought and writings.

Keywords: Fyodor Dostoevsky, 19th Century, Free Will, Determinism, Human Nature

Children occupy a strange and paradoxical locus between incredible cruelty and near-angelic purity in Fyodor Dostoevsky's novels.[1] They appear as torturers and sadists—feed needles to starving dogs, snap the necks of birds for mere sport, hang cats for entertainment, beat, abuse, and even stab one another—and still yet appear as the voice of Heaven, where they cry helplessly at the beating of an old mare, suffer silently at the hands of cruel families, give spiritual substance to the starving souls of the hopeless and suicidal, and tenderly ameliorate the suffering of the sick and dying.[2] It is in this paradox, one might argue, that receives Dostoevsky's best and most complicated and realistic account of human nature—one that is not only torn, as is Dmitri Karamazov, between virtue and vice, Sodom and Madonna, but one that necessitates an investigation of the strange and conflicted human soul, capable of such radical extremes. It is the purpose of this paper to bring evidence to this investigation. More specifically, I hope here to illustrate the connectedness of evil and cruelty, virtue and love, to freedom and environment in Dostoevsky's novels. Far from retracing the thoughts exhibited by psychological behavioralists (and still less genetic determinists) I intend to argue that there exists in Dostoevsky's works a conception of human nature which is, like the actions of his children, paradoxical: free-will, though existent, is something informed and shaped by external relations to human environments, for better or for worse. The most important implication of this idea, as we shall see, is that the proliferation of both evil and goodness in the world are contingent upon human freedom, and, more specifically, upon the individual's ability to requite evil with good.[3]

---

[1] Hruska, Anne. "The Sins of Children in 'The Brothers Karamazov': Serfdom, Hierarchy, and Transcendence." *Christianity and Literature*, vol. 54, no. 4, 2005, pp. 471-495.

[2] Hruska, 473, provides some more context to the first part of this list.

We may begin this investigation with a discussion of Dostoevsky's "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man", where we encounter a particularly clear and monolithic discussion of free will and human nature. "Dream" emerges ultimately with an explicitly defined concept of human nature: evil cannot be "man's natural state".[4] The protagonist of this story, the titular ridiculous man, comes to this conclusion by a strange, dreamlike experience on the night of his would-be suicide, wherein he personally takes part in introducing sin and evil to a new, pure, and pre-fallen Edenic humanity:

> Yes, yes, it ended in my corrupting them all! I do not know how it could have happened, but I remember perfectly that it did…I only know that it was I who caused their downfall. Like a malignant trichina, an atom of the plague afflicting whole kingdoms, so I spread contamination through all that happy earth, sinless before I came to it. They learned to lie and came to love lying…soon blood was shed for the first time…They formed unions…inimical to one another…[5]

It is worth mentioning that in all this destruction and sin the ridiculous man's world suddenly finds itself incapable of remembering the life they had lost—the time where they were happy and innocent.[6] Tasting once the concept of evil, the idea of a sinless world becomes itself impossibly foreign to them: it seems to them as though evil and sin was, is, and always shall be. This misinformed belief represents, therefore, not only the loss of purity and the proliferation of evil, but the loss of understanding—the loss of knowledge and the very memory humanity's previous state. Their awareness becomes corrupted even further still by the introduction of science and the belief that "knowledge is superior to feeling"—an idea that, once manifested, makes the humans *unwilling* to return to their pre-fallen state: "we possess science, and through it we shall seek and find the Truth once again, and this time we shall apprehend it consciously. Science will give us wisdom, wisdom will determine the laws, and knowledge of the laws of happiness is superior to happiness".[7]

---

[3] There is one central difficulty to this investigation that cannot go unnamed. As Robert Jackson writes, "the subject [Dostoevsky and freedom] is an immense one: its amplifications and ramifications are everywhere in Dostoevsky's artistic thought. The best one can do is plot out some of its directions—its moving design": Jackson, Robert. "Dostoevsky and Freedom." *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, 1995, p. 3. In some sense, we can do nothing more. To suggest that Dostoevsky aligned purely and entirely with one conception of free will or human nature as completely good or evil, to suggest that he never understood seriously and personally the problems of free will set forth in Ivan's Grand Inquisitor or the radical freedom proposed in *Notes from the Underground*, would be, I believe, a tremendous error. This ambiguity is even more intense in Dostoevsky's more emphatically polyphonic novels—novels where ideas and dialogue never solidify, where conclusions are never reached, where indeed there remains, until the end of each text, a realistic indeterminacy of truth. What emerges therefore from these works is a mosaic—a tapestry—of perspectives and ideas, and never a didactic textbook on what is right or true, or what one ought to believe. These works are in conversation with another, and it is from this conversation, this "moving design," that I proceed.

[4] Dostoevsky, Fyodor. "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man," in *Fyodor Dostoevsky Stories,* Trans. Olga Shartse. Raduga Publishers, 2001, 346-347.

[5] Ibid., 346-347.

[6] Ibid., 347.

The underlying concept behind this transformation, the central metaphysics of humanity underlying this total loss of innocence is relatively simple: mankind is fundamentally good, but infiltrated and corrupted by evil, just as it is in the Biblical account of the Fall of Man. Evil is not the natural state of humanity— the dream's humans existed in purity and goodness until evil was brought to them—but a tumor, a disease, which, even in being ubiquitous, remains nonetheless an abnormality. The ridiculous man even seems to express as much even in his language: he does not remind them of their evil nature, does not trick or deceive them into committing evil actions, but rather "infects" them "like a malignant trichina...an atom of the plague".[8]

It is through this plague, this infection, that the world of his dream and the people that he corrupted return to the world he had left. The dream-humans laugh at him, just as his acquaintances in the real world did at the story's beginnings.[9] The dream-humans are cruel to one another, spurn and insult one another, just as the ridiculous man did to the young beggar girl.[10] The ridiculous man has witnessed, in this sense, the very history of humanity that led to the moment where he planned to take his own life—the beginning of every conflict on earth. The corruption of all mankind, he sees, begins with one simple infection—one drop of evil, which spreads like a plague and leaves in its wake the destruction of the entire species. And yet, in all of this he realizes, too, the possibility of the other world—that there is another option, another choice, even for the corrupted, post-fallen world, than to exist in this infected, plague-bearing state. The ridiculous man's most "ridiculous" concept—the thing that earns the laughter of his peers at this story's conclusion—is his realization of this possibility: "I have seen the Truth...I know that people can be beautiful and happy without losing their ability to dwell on this earth ...I have seen it in such consummate wholeness that I refuse to believe that it cannot live among men".[11] His discovery, we might argue, is little more than a discovery of the free-will of humanity—that mankind could literally arrange paradise "at once" if simply they chose to love one another, and that evil is never a compulsion.[12] The ability to love one another, to treat one another tenderly and with compassion, has not been lost—even though it may have been forgotten.

But this idea is not just some lofty ratiocination—not just some impractical ideal, lost in the ether of thought. The adoption of this new perspective has very real consequences: the present world, the world that is fallen and exists following humanity's infection by evil, must now be understood differently. The ridiculous man's relation to the world—and to his fellow humans—is radically changed. Humanity is not fundamentally or intrinsically evil.

---

[7] Ibid., 348.

[8] Ibid., 346.

[9] Ibid., 349.

[10] Ibid., 347, 348.

[11] Ibid., 350.

[12] Ibid., 351.

Humanity has, in fact, received the brunt of the worst deal in history. They have lost their purity, lost their happiness, and exist now in the shell of their former joys and unity, believing lies and harming one another, all without reason, purpose, or necessity. Each act of evil was, in this sense, precipitated from the last—like ripples in water, each pushing the next, but only reacting to an initial blow. It is no wonder, then, that with this renewed mindset, the ridiculous man makes this choice to love—resolving ultimately to "spread the Word" for his whole life—for in this is the exact opposite of what he had done to the Edenic humans.[13] If one evil action corrupted the world, then goodness and love should appear the only way to cure it. This too is not just an ideal, not just some idea—but a commission. In seeing the possibility of goodness, in seeing perfection, he returns to the girl that he had abused in the very beginning of the story: "As for that little girl, I have found her...I shall go!"[14] Here another philosophy of human nature and freedom is at play. If indeed evil is not the natural state of mankind, if indeed goodness is the natural condition of mankind like the dream suggests, then it is possible that the evil state of our world is unnecessary—that it can, in fact, be broken, even "without death". This world, and not only the next, can be made into paradise with the simple choice to love—loving others as oneself is "all, nothing else, absolutely nothing else is needed."[15] The ridiculous man's decision to find the beggar girl again, to love what he had driven away at the story's beginning, is perhaps one of the greatest acts of freedom ever mentioned in Dostoevsky's works: it is the decision to stop evil from continuing, to break the chain of evil which he personally witnessed from its start to finish in his dream.

We will acknowledge in passing those who might object with the introduction of determinacy. Perhaps it was not possible, after all, for the ridiculous man to have such an experience and *not* change in the ways described. Perhaps this decision to love was never a decision at all—but a compulsion. There is hardly a need (or any originality to be achieved) in entering this thicket. And yet, we may use this interjection as a gateway to the broader nuance of this investigation of "Dream"—and, more specifically, one central question that has haunted us until now. The question lies mostly in the relationship between the natural state of mankind (human nature) and the expressions of human action and volition. How can a human be "fundamentally good" and still deign to commit evil actions—even if it is, as it were, an "infection"? The most obvious answer is, of course, through the exercise of free-will—they can "decide" to do what is evil, even against their nature. And yet, this only extends the question: How can a human be fundamentally good and still choose evil? And perhaps even one step further—is not this concept of a "nature" something incompatible with total freedom? Indeed, either this term "fundamentally good" ceases, in the presence of total freedom to choose between good and evil, to mean anything—for freedom seems, at least on its surface, to be incompatible with inclination, with compulsion towards something, even if it is goodness—or, by contrast, human freedom must be cut down a notch to allow for inclination and compulsion, which may influence decision making. Human nature may be, in this sense, fundamentally good (or evil)—but always at the cost of some ability of volition. "Dream" implicitly alludes to these paradoxes: the new, Edenic humans are, as we've seen, fundamentally good, and do not exercise their freedom to commit evils against one another until after their infection. If indeed they have choice beforehand, they do not utilize it—they appear stuck (though happily) in their habitual goodness. Just how "free" is this freedom, seen alongside inclination and nature?

---

[13] Ibid., 349.

[14] Ibid., 351.

[15] Ibid., 351.

In answer to these concerns, we may say that free will and any particular idea of human nature (here, fundamental goodness) are not necessarily at odds with one another. The ridiculous man exhibits his capacity for both—regardless of whether he is fundamentally good or evil, he illustrates his capacity for deliberate evil action, and still too his decision to pursue goodness. His nature does not, in fact, impede upon his ability to choose—though it may in some sense affect his decisions, exert some sort of influence over him. It is true that the ridiculous man's redemption arises not as a mere reformation of action, not as a reluctant and groaning task of the will, but as a reformation of tendencies—an incredible rekindling of the fundamental goodness of pre-Edenic mankind's nature. (He suddenly *wants* to do what is good—he desires, almost insatiably, to proliferate the goodness of the world.) It is true also that this change is brought about by an external stimulus: "the living image of what I have seen will remain with me always, it will always correct me and put me straight".[16] But all of this remains far from determinacy, far from mere passivity in the face of overwhelming compulsion. The ridiculous man's reformed nature in exposure to the dream never once nullifies his ability to choose, never restricts him from the ability to do what is wrong. The reinfection, the return of evil into his heart remains always a possibility—a reality, in fact, of the fallen world: "I shall stray once or twice of course, I shall perhaps even use the words of others sometimes."[17] "But," he qualifies, "not for long".[18] These slips are proof of his freedom of the will—they place him among the ranks of humanity, and not the angels. His poignant words follow then with alarming relevance: "I am full of vigour and strength [and] and I shall go and preach, be it for a thousand years."[19] The secondary, infected state—the ability to do evil—is never out of the question for the ridiculous man. He may indeed be acted upon by his environment once again—this time, in such a way that might corrupt his newfound freshness and resolve. He may, in fact, choose to do evil, even after this dream. The battlefield between these two states, between the pre-fallen Eden and the reality of the modern world, are always and will forever be at odds in his heart. But it is from the willingness to choose goodness, to act out love, that we find our narrator's rebellion against these things. He remains, as it were, capable of both—even as he chooses one over the other.

These questions of human freedom and human nature remain, however, far from neatly closed. *The Brothers Karamazov* rips them open again: free-will is introduced through Ivan Karamazov not as the opportunity for redemption, nor as the chance for goodness to multiply in the world, but as an agent of evil, a burden too heavy for mankind to carry, and, in fact, the very cause of all human suffering:

---

[16] Ibid., 350.

[17] Ibid., 350.

[18] Ibid., 350.

[19] Ibid., 350.

> Christ, [Ivan] says, promised mankind "freedom of conscience," but "nothing is a greater cause of suffering" (221). Desiring "man's free love," Christ required that man "hereafter with free heart decide for himself what is good and what is evil, having only [Christ's] image before him as his guide," but this "fearful burden of free choice" would cause man to "at last reject even [Christ's] image and [Christ's] truth" (221-2). Mankind, Ivan argues through the Grand Inquisitor, desires not freedom, but a subservience to "miracle, mystery, and authority" (222) in order to join in "one unanimous and harmonious anthill" from a "craving for universal unity" (224). Christ is therefore the cause of human suffering, Ivan argues, for he bestowed upon mankind a freedom beyond man's power.[20]

Wrapped up in this complaint against Christ and freedom is the belief that freedom causes men to suffer not only personally (existentially), but as a species: "Unrest, confusion, and unhappiness," Ivan's Grand Inquisitor argues before Christ, is "the present lot of man after Thou didst bear so much for their freedom!".[21] It is in God's bestowal of freedom, Ivan seems to suggest, that we find every evil under the sun—self destruction, the destruction of others, disunity, and embattlement, are all brought about by human volition, by the necessity of having to choose for ourselves what is right and wrong.[22] It is through free will that humans hurt and kill one another—it is through free will that children are abused, that animals and infants suffer. And this, to Ivan, is unacceptable. As Ellis Sandoz writes:

> Ivan's rebellion begins in outrage and indignation rooted in *humanitarian pity for his fellow man*, particularly for the guiltless, for children. He reasons, from effect to cause, that their suffering is due to the necessity of suffering in God's Creation in order that man may be permitted a free choice between good and evil, since it is only through free choice of the good that human salvation and the kingdom of God (the "final harmony") can be achieved.[23]

Ivan seems aware of the same legacy of evil as the ridiculous man—his "Rebellion", for instance features many such instances of evil leading to other evils, such as an injury to a dog's paw escalating to murder.[24] So too does he desire, in the words of Callaghan McDonough again, "the chain of suffering to cease, or rather to never have existed".[25] One might even say that he responds to the same hope, to the same possibility of a good world and the utter depravity of the present, as does the ridiculous man—and yet, in such a different way that comparing the two seems utterly impossible. The ridiculous man, in a spirit akin to the idea of "active love" mentioned elsewhere in *Brothers,* seeks to change the world through the choice to love—Ivan's Grand Inquisitor removes freedom from the equation, amputates the limb entirely, and in so doing seeks to save the world from the incredible burden of volition. The peace and happiness of the world is sought through opposing ends—through the decision to love, and the nullification of freedom as something impossible to bear. A polyphony between heart and mind thus arises—logical ideas, purely rational conceptions of God and freedom and human nature clash against the spiritual and non-Euclidean awareness of the heart. And once more, the battlefield—and the stakes—is the human soul.

---

[20] McDonough, Callaghan. "Incarnate Love and Other Embodied Truths: Dostoevsky's Response to Suffering in the Brothers Karamazov." *Global Tides,* 2017, vol. 11, no. 9, p. 3.

[21] Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *The Brothers Karamazov.* Trans Constance Garnett. W. W. Norton & Company, 1976, 237.

[22] Ibid., 239.

[23] Sandoz, Ellis. "Philosophical Anthropology and Dostoevsky's 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor.'" *The Review of Politics*, vol. 26, no. 3, 1964, p. 362.

[24] Dostoevsky, *Brothers*, 223.

[25] McDonough, 3.

The answer to Ivan's complaint is never provided as explicitly as one might prefer. No character emerges in this text with a long philosophical counterpoint to Ivan's attack on God and freedom—no warrior of the mind arrives to defend human volition through logic, reasoning, and intellect. It is in action that we see the most powerful refutation of his arguments—the most powerful defense, so to speak, of freedom, Christ, and goodness. Action, not idea, is the medium of active love—its language transcends the mind, transcends even rationality itself with one fell swoop. When Alyosha kisses his brother just after hearing the entirety of the Grand Inquisitor, he provides the ultimate foil to his brother's conception of freedom. In this one simple action, all is made clear: the human ability to choose good and evil may be a burden, may be the cause of a great number of sufferings—but so too is it a solution, for through freedom, love can manifest itself on earth. Freedom is, in the words of Predrag Cicovacki, "not only man's…most grievous burden…but [also his] greatest gift"—the cause of, and solution to, all of the suffering in the world.[26] Ivan may, upon seeing a starving beggar, complain about the human freedom which allowed for such hunger and suffering—but the proponent of active love takes it upon themselves to feed and clothe him.[27] Ivan may deeply lament the suffering of a child at the hands of his abusive caretakers—Alyosha, in deeper lament still, would seek to care for the children nearest to him.

Emerging from both the Grand Inquisitor and Alyosha's kiss is a conception of human freedom similarly expressed in *Dream*: here, once more, actions are once again related to certain measurable effects in the real world. Active love and, by contrast, active evil are, once again, visibly contagious, and exist alongside one another. To Alyosha, freedom represents the possibility of more goodness in the world; and to Ivan, the possibility of further evil, of greater, needless suffering. The rest of the novel only solidifies—and problematizes even further—this relationship between freedom and environment. From start to finish, *Brothers* is positively riddled with relationships which might very well fit in the ridiculous man's dream of the freshly post-fallen world: fathers dismiss sons, caretakers neglect children, scholars provide dangerous ideas to lackeys, and towns fail to protect the helpless and "stinking" from sexual assault. But on the other hand, so too do we see human flourishing brought on by love, compassion, and tenderness—men taking the sins of others upon themselves, embracing their duty to the world and each other, offering gifts of reconciliation to one another, and expressing near inhuman mercy towards those who hurt them. Father Zosima is completely correct when he argues that "all is like an ocean, all is flowing and blending; a touch in one place sets up a movement at the other end of the earth".[28] The actions of one individual radically alter the world—even one interaction can fundamentally change the history of mankind for the better or worse. "We are all cruel, we are all monsters, we all make men weep, and mothers, and babes at the breast," says Dmitri Karamazov—we sew evil seeds in the hearts of our fellow men, women, and children, "all because... [we] did not foster in [ourselves] a careful, actively benevolent love".[29] And yet "love is a teacher"—"humble love" can "subdue the whole world".[30] It is in this limited sense that both Ivan and Alyosha are correct in their approximations concerning freedom.

---

[26] Cicovacki, Predrag. "Back to the Underworld: Dostoevsky on Suffering, Freedom, and Evil." *Philotheos*, vol. 3, 2003, p. 223.

[27] McDonough, 13.

But what, then, of nature—of inclination—in response to these social cues, these external factors of love or evil? Here we stumble across a similar concern that we saw in *Dream*: freedom appears once more to be in jeopardy, since it is acted upon by some external force. In *Dream*, we saw the conflict between human nature and freedom—between one's fundamental goodness and the possibility of good or evil actions. Here, however, the threat to human freedom occurs within human interactions—our relationships to one another may, in fact, determine us, restrict our freedom, force us to act one way or another. Do we not sense, in Zosima's "connectedness"—this ability of one evil to create another, and so on—a possible threat to the quality of freedom? Indeed, if the world is affected by the actions of others, as Zosima says, does not the human become in some sense an automaton—something programmed, as it were, by its surroundings? If the actions of others alter how we act, how can we describe ourselves as free? Indeed, as Nicholas Berdyaev writes, "if man is nothing but a passive reflection of his social surroundings, then there is no such thing as...freedom, evil, or good".[31] If indeed the human is merely a passive being, molded purely by its environment, then we might argue that Alyosha's kiss is meaningless—the outcome of goodness given to him by his Elder, who received it from someone further, and so on. It would mean, in other words, that even an act of active love like his kiss would remain nothing but an example of how one was raised or guided—a testament not to freedom, but determinacy. In the same vein, we might also question Ivan's ideas of freedom as the origin of all human suffering—for, in this case, freedom would cease to exist.

We may, in the search for this answer, point to a unique theme in this novel concerning the four Karamazov brothers. Dostoevsky is careful to point out that each Karamazov is unified, if not under the same "nature," most certainly under the same Karamazov spirit: Alyosha, the holiest, is not free from base temptations— "I was blushing because I am the same as you are"—nor is Dmitri, the most sensual, void of any spirituality or lofty sentiment.[32] Ivan, though not necessarily religious or sensualistic in the same sense as his other brothers, is not free from his Karamazov blood: he is still plagued by religious, teleological questions, is still capable of human emotions and desires, and possibly even love.[33] Even Smerdyakov—though only implicitly recognized as a Karamazov—is still one willing to take an idea to an extreme in the Karamazov fashion of being "heads down heels up".[34] The Karamazov brothers are, in this sense, unified—they all share in the paradoxical Karamazov bloodline, endure the same inner conflict between sensuality and high religious aspiration. Alyosha is not wrong when he suggests to his brother that "the ladder's the same. I'm at the bottom…and you're above, somewhere about the thirteenth…But it's all the same. Absolutely the same kind".[35]

---

[28] Dostoevsky, *Brothers*, 299.

[29] Ibid., 481, 298.

[30] Ibid., 298.

[31] Berdyaev, Nicholas. *Dostoevsky.* Trans. Donald Attwater, Meridian Books, 1957, 90.

Indeed, none of the brothers are so radically different from another—they belong, as do the soul, the mind, and the gut, to the same body. The disparity between their outcomes—one a killer, one an atheist intellectual, one a Russian Orthodox monk, and so on—prompts one therefore to investigate environmental rather than genetic causes. Dostoevsky is careful to recognize the differences in each of their upbringings: Alyosha, the monk, is raised by a loving and religious mother, and one of his earliest memories is of her holding him before a holy icon[36]; Dmitri, abandoned completely by his father, is tossed from family to family like an unwanted burden[37]; Ivan is raised among intellectuals[38]; and Smerdyakov, also abandoned and thereby mistrustful from an early age, is beaten and told that he is not a human but rather "grew from the mildew in the bathhouse"[39]. The parallel between these upbringings and their outcomes are, of course, striking, and it is for this reason that *The Brothers Karamazov* is so frequently read as an illustration of the breakdown of father-son relations: Susanne Fusso writing that it explores "the ways in which the fathers of Russia have failed in their obligations to sons"[40] and William Leatherbarrow, the broken "transmission of values and mutual responsibility between the generations".[41]

Further still, this failure, this lineage of broken responsibility that these critics recognize is not at all unique to the relationship between father and son. This brokenness, this perversion of *sobornost* affects the entire community the brothers find themselves in: each "broken household" is in some sense a reflection of a "broken community".[42],[43] At other junctures in this novel, the microscope is focused even more powerfully upon other, lesser characters—where we see, in fact, not an abstract transmission of evil like we did in *Dream*, but an entire etiology, transmission by transmission. Dmitri, neglected and unloved since birth, dishonors captain Snegiryov by dragging him by his beard; Snegiryov's son Ilyusha, after being mocked over his father's dishonor, then stands up to his peers by committing violence against them; his schoolmates then begin pelting him with rocks—inspiring even more frustration and hatred in him until, in the climax of this transmission, he bites Alyosha's hand—drawing, in a moment of eucharistic significance, his Karamazov blood.[44] Step by step, with an almost rhythmic cadence, we see evil manifest itself in the lives of these characters—the wake of its destruction no less poignant than it was in *Dream.* Wherever evil is found, it is found, like a trichina, in motion—and never truly stagnant.

---

[32] Dostoevsky, *Brothers*, 97, 98.

[33] Ibid., 178.

[34] Ibid., 96.

[35] Ibid., 98.

[36] Ibid., 13

[37] Ibid., 5.

[38] Ibid., 10-11.

[39] Ibid, 112.

[40] Fusso, Susanne. "Dostoevskii and the Family." In *The Cambridge Companion to Dostoevskii,* edited by W. J. Leatherbarrow, 2002, p. 176-177.

[41] Leatherbarrow, W. J. *The Brothers Karamazov.* Cambridge, 1992, 25.

[42] Berman, Anna. "Sibilings in *The Brothers Karamazov*." *The Russian Review*, 2009, vol. 68, no. 2, p. 263.

[43] Cohen, Sharon. "'Balaam's ass': Smerdyakov as a Paradoxical Redeemer in Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov." *Christianity and Literature*, 2014, vol. 64, no. 1, p. 59.

Is it a choice, then, that Ilyusha makes when he bites Alyosha? Or is it merely the reflection of the evils that have fallen upon him through his social surroundings—a powerful, malign spirit that possesses him, forces him to act as he does? Once more, we may say that freedom and environment do not impede upon one another. It is in Alyosha's response to Ilyusha that this answer is seen most powerfully. As we've seen, Alyosha is capable of Karamazov thoughts and actions—he has, in other words, a corrupted nature, and is himself capable of evil, even in spite of his upbringing. He is not like the *Dream's* pre-fallen mankind—he is of the same earthly blood as his brothers, and never immune to thoughts of retaliation, anger, and vice. He is, again, on the same "ladder" as his brothers—is still, after all, a human capable of choice and therefore capable of evil. And yet it is in spite of these tendencies that he chooses, nonetheless, to respond to Ilyusha's evil action with goodness and love. He does not bite Ilyusha back, does not take an eye for an eye—does not even condemn him for his action, but rather seeks to determine if, in any way, he may was guilty himself: "Very well…you see how badly you've bitten me…What have I done to you?…I must have done something to you—you wouldn't have hurt me like this for nothing".[45] What this text seems to allude, in attributing Alyosha a fallible human nature and having him respond against it as such, is that even in experiencing evil from others one is still ultimately given a choice. The ability to choose goodness or evil is never lost, even if one is inclined, raised, or treated one way or another or if one has a certain nature—humans are always capable of choosing goodness over evil, or evil over good. It is true, most certainly, that one's environment can so easily turn them towards or against one another, can cause one to neglect or tenderly care for their literal or spiritual "children,"[46] can engender in them a deep distrust for the world or an awareness of our purpose and duty in leading it towards love. This environment is not without a certain power over mankind. But neither does not impede on the possibility of goodness, freely chosen: as Father Zosima says, "do not say that…evil environment is mighty…and evil environment is…hindering our good work…Fly from that dejection, children!".[47] Indeed, even as he crushes Alyosha's finger with his teeth, Ilyusha is never incapable of goodness. He has, however, received the brunt of many negative experiences—and has, in this sense, become infected with evil, just as he is in fact struck by physical illness in the novel. His choice to bite Alyosha is indeed a choice—but it is not spontaneous, not without precedent. Alyosha, by contrast, has seen the dream of the ridiculous man through his Elder, Father Zosima—he understands, from his upbringing and guidance, the importance of love in a world that so desperately thirsts for it. He chooses, then, kindness, chooses forgiveness—and in this way exposes Ilyusha to the ridiculous man's dream, spreading goodness to the world. Ilyusha "stares in amazement" at this strange act, then weeps—the power of active love a foil to every evil inclination he had adopted until then.[48] And at the end of his life, this same selfless kindness emerges from his heart: "he flung his wasted arms round his father and Kolya…hugging them as tightly as he could… 'Dad, dad! How sorry I am for you dad!'".[49]

---

[44] Dostoevsky, *Brothers*, 162-164.

[45] Ibid., 164.

[46]

What emerges from these two texts is a unique conception of the human being as a free entity capable of agency and volition—though subject also to the influence of experience. Though fundamentally good, and fundamentally free, humanity does not exist in a vacuum—it is subject, rather, to a variety of influences, good and bad, which may exert some sway over its decisions. It is tempting, though wholly unsatisfactory, to understand this perspective as a standalone item—as simply a conception of the human being, a purely metaphysical stance on what constitutes human action. The reality, however, is that the philosophy of human freedom displayed in these two novels is linked wholly to the entire edifice of human destiny—the choices of the individual determine to some extent whether humanity shall learn to love or hate one another. The individual is, in other words, not merely the one being affected, but the one affecting others—and in this sense, the sins of the world truly do come down to the individual's ability to requite evil with good. It is here that we see Dostoevsky's roots as a Christian most prominently—for what truly lies at the center of all of this is a much simpler teaching: one must turn the other cheek. If we are all connected, if we all influence one another, as Dostoevsky believed, then there can be no other choice—one must, not only for their own sake but for the sake of others, exercise the radical freedom of the ridiculous man and Alyosha Karamazov. One must receive evils and accept cruelty with love.

---

[47] Ibid., 299.

[48] Ibid., 164.

[49] Ibid., 599.

References

Berdyaev, Nicholas. *Dostoevsky.* Trans. Donald Attwater, Meridian Books, 1957.

Cicovacki, Predrag. "Back to the Underworld: Dostoevsky on Suffering, Freedom, and Evil." *Philotheos*, vol. 3, 2003, pp. 215-230.

Cohen, Sharon. "'Balaam's ass': Smerdyakov as a Paradoxical Redeemer in Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov." *Christianity and Literature*, 2014, vol. 64, no. 1, pp. 43-64.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *The Brothers Karamazov.* Trans Constance Garnett. W. W. Norton & Company, 1976.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man." In *Fyodor Dostoevsky Stories,* translated by Olga Shartse and Ivy Litvinov, 329-351. Raduga Publishers 2001.

Fusso, Susanne. "Dostoevskii and the Family." In *The Cambridge Companion to Dostoevskii*, edited by W. J. Leatherbarrow, 2002, pp. 175-190.

Hruska, Anne. "The Sins of Children in 'The Brothers Karamazov': Serfdom, Hierarchy, and Transcendence." *Christianity and Literature*, vol. 54, no. 4, 2005, pp. 471-495.

Jackson, Robert. "Dostoevsky and Freedom." *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, 1995, pp. 1-21.

Leatherbarrow, W. J. *The Brothers Karamazov.* Cambridge, 1992.

McDonough, Callaghan. "Incarnate Love and Other Embodied Truths: Dostoevsky's Response to Suffering in the Brothers Karamazov." *Global Tides*, 2017, vol. 11, no. 9, pp. 1-15.

Sandoz, Ellis. "Philosophical Anthropology and Dostoevsky's 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor.'" *The Review of Politics*, vol. 26, no. 3, 1964, pp. 353-377.

Philotheos 22.2 (2022) 169–209

George Varvatsoulias

National Health System of Scotland/UK
George.Varvatsoulias@outlook.com

Spiritual intelligence and spiritual exegesis: Constructing a self-devised inventory of interdisciplinary importance for psychology of religion

Abstract: Spiritual intelligence and spiritual exegesis form constructs in psychology of religion and psychotherapy. They have been studied in several ways within the scientific paradigms of psychology. In psychology of religion, they have been investigated -among others- as adaptive values -especially, spiritual intelligence- towards the attainment of goals. Spiritual exegesis has been a valid explanation for spiritual intelligence in psychology of religion. In this paper, I introduce a self-devised inventory of 55 items that is pilot studied, the rationale of which is to discuss self-love as a motivating factor for pleasure and pain. The pilot study has shown an excellent internal reliability/consistency (.984) on all items of this inventory, which means can be safely employed for the main study. When the main study will be conducted what will be investigated as well will be the meaning of spiritual knowledge in view to thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, and how could that be practically employed for the psychospiritual balance of modern man.

Keywords: spiritual intelligence; spiritual exegesis; self-love; pleasure; pain; spiritual knowledge.

1. Introduction

The understanding of spiritual intelligence as a term has been considered under several interpretive approaches, be them religious, theological, or psychological ones. Spiritual intelligence from a religious point of view is when prominence is applied to material needs through the application of prudence and wisdom. Examples as such we can find in the Old Testament, and especially in the Books of the Wisdom of Solomon, such as in chapter IV, verse 12: *"Malign influence of meanness obscures goodness, and rumination of desire mines out a guileless intellect"* and that of Sirach, such as in chapter IV, verse 25: *"Do not speak against truth, and do not hesitate (to admit) your want of education"*. The importance of the theological point of view for spiritual intelligence is that it applies everyday psychospiritual thinking into self-investigative principles of personal and interpersonal edification. The spiritual intelligence from a theological point of view can be found in the New Testament, and especially in the Gospel of Saint John the Theologian who employs symbolic language to refer to the importance of the Incarnation of Logos-Jesus Christ for the mankind, such as in chapter I, verse 1: *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"*. The importance of the theological point of view for spiritual intelligence is that it uses linguistic metaphors to outline the cohabitation of God within mankind following the Incarnation of God the Word. In association with the above two examples, spiritual intelligence from a psychological point of view could be regarded as the spiritual exegetical process of the faculties of human mind.

The title of the paper underlines from the beginning that the purpose of that paper is to study spiritual intelligence as spiritual exegesis in psychology of religion. The Old Testament approach to sacred texts is linked to the common theological tradition that it entertained by both Orthodoxy and Roman-Catholicism. That outlines that all 49 books of the Old Testament are accepted by both the above Christian denominations. The extracts I use from the Old Testament are not accepted by the Protestant de-nomination and its various sub-divisions. I decided to use these specific extracts because the titles of the Books they are coming from in the Old Testament are specifically referred to examples of spiritual intelligence adherents.

Spiritual intelligence has nothing in common with emotional intelligence. According to Goleman (1996), the latter is a neuroscientific approach to the meaning of emotions based on the limbic brain and certain other areas of the brain so that an understanding for the foundations of cognitions to be sought for. The former is about religious beliefs the way these are comprehended and based on psychological/psychotherapeutic interpretations and how these could be associated to what one may think, feel, and act upon regarding certain and/or universal approaches on faith. Self-love and pleasure/pain references relate to religious understandings of spiritual beliefs and how these affect one's thinking, emotional and behavioural choices in the here-and-now. Emotional intelligence is also argued by the above author that cannot be measured in terms of IQ tests; spiritual intelligence has, again, nothing to do with IQ interpretations.

In this paper, we will take into consideration the psychological interpretive approach to spiritual intelligence, offered by Emmons (2000), where he claims that spirituality has an adaptive value for spiritual intelligence for it helps problems to be solved via the achievement of goals. In his paper (ibid, p. 3), he presents five aspects whereupon spiritual intelligence can be based: "(a) *the capacity for transcendence*; (b) *the ability to enter into heightened spiritual states of consciousness*; (c) *the ability to invest everyday activities, events, and relationships with a sense of the sacred*; (d) *the ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems in living; and (e) the capacity to engage in virtuous behaviour (to show forgiveness, to express gratitude, to be humble, to display compassion)*". Emmons (2000) concludes that spiritual intelligence can be used by both psychologists and people who are religious and are interested in associating a psychospiritual perspective in their understanding of the transcendence. What is needed in such a facet, is spiritual intelligence to be further researched and conceptualised not only as a construct, but also as an edifying concept for the practical needs of individuals within psychology, religion, and/or spirituality. In this paper, we will attempt to formulate spiritual intelligence using the experimental method (pilot study investigation), so a practical application of a self-devised inventory to be presented before the main study.

On the other hand, spiritual exegesis (interpretation, in Greek ἐξήγησις) is the culmination of spiritual intelligence without which the latter cannot prove its validity as a psychological construct for psychology of religion. The validity of spiritual intelligence in such a sense needs to be a pragmatic one. When we say 'pragmatic', we mean an endeavour with practical applications for everyday life. When spiritual intelligence is valid via spiritual exegesis it means that can be applied as a psychotherapeutic artifact to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural needs of our contemporaries. In such a respect, we are going to employ an interdisciplinary focus on the writings of Saint Maximus the Confessor (a Greek Father of the Church for both the Orthodox and Roman-Catholic Christianity), who since the 7th AD century contemplated the importance of spiritual intelligence for modern psychotherapy by offering hermeneutical exegeses of psychological im-portance to disturbances like self-love, and eating disorders, and how all these are related to each other, so to introduce the emergence of passions that do not enhance human consciousness; do minimise the role of spirituality in the here-and-now; do not look for solutions of problems through the use of spiritual knowledge; do not employ virtuous behaviours to bring upon a balance in human interrelationships.

The title of the paper doesn't reflect the use of some of the writings of Saint Maximus the Confessor because the self-devised inventory is being construed to study spiritual intelligence within the framework of modern psychotherapy/psychology of religion. Psychology of religion approaches don't see spirituality only from the side of specific religious and/or spiritual perspectives, but study spirituality and spiritual intelligence as a universal psychological tenet and its effect on differing religious under-standings.

2. Rational for the proposal

In this paper, I am proposing the use of a self-devised inventory, which I titled *"Philautie Inventory for Psychology of Religion (PIPR)"* – 'Philautie' is the official theological term that is used in Patristics (the writings of the Church Fathers), which is the French translation for self-love; the term stems from the Greek word φιλαυτία, consisted of 55 items (Appendix A). The inventory is structured according to the Likert Scale and the scoring of it from left to right reads: very much like me (5), somewhat like me (4), neutral (3), not much like me (2), not at all like me (1). The proposal rationale for such an inventory touch upon:

1. The presentation of a structured example for spiritual intelligence according to the experimental method of cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy.
2. The practical outline of spiritual exegesis as an interpretive method for psychology of religion.
3. The need for a modern interdisciplinary tool which will enhance our empirical knowledge on century-old approaches (writings of the Church Fathers) and contemporary psychological paradigms, such as CBT (cognitive-behavioural therapy).
4. The items in the self-devised inventory present a conceptualisation of the practical needs of individuals in both a psychological and a spiritual perspective.

5. The self-devised inventory follows the five aspects as expressed above by Emmons (2000) and is relevant to his interpretation about what spiritual intelligence is.

The purpose of this paper is not to look for similarities and differences between psychology and religiosity on spiritual intelligence. The purpose of this paper is to pilot-test the self-devised inventory for psychology of religion, for the latter entertains studies on spiritual intelligence according to the reference I make in the introduction (Emmons, 2000), where it is stated how spiritual intelligence may be explained in psychology of religion terms. The use of the self-devised inventory is to provide an alternative explanation to spiritual intelligence with that of a spiritual exegesis by employing interdisciplinary approaches between some of the writings of Saint Maximus the Confessor and cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy.

Cognitive behavioural therapy is also called cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy in psychology. The idea of psyche is not a notion, but a term that defines faculties in the brain, as far as CBT is concerned, which refer to the mind [thoughts, feelings (physical sensations), emotions] and behavioural elements that derive from thinking and feeling. 'Psychotherapy' is a coherent term which is used alternatively to the term 'therapy' in CBT. According to the authors, Norton & Price (2007), Hofmann & Smits (2008), and Stewart & Chambless (2009), CBT is considered as the gold standard of psychotherapy. The term psychotherapy is employed in CBT because CBT is another talk therapy; talk therapies are called psychotherapies as well. See also BABCP's (British Association for Behavioural & Cognitive Psychotherapies) website at https://babcp.com/About/About , where oneself can be assisted in the understanding of psychotherapy in CBT terms. Also, the official journal of BABCP is called behavioural and cognitive psychotherapy too. Please, find it at journals.cambridge.org/babcp.

3. Presentation of the inventory

Such an inventory and its association to spiritual intelligence, draws upon St Maxi-mus the Confessor's works as follows:

- Self-love is a strong motivating factor for pleasure and pain.
- Struggle is always happening between pleasure and pain: When the former increases, the latter increases too, i.e., the more the experience of pleasure, the more the experience of pain.
- Self-love increases the desire one to be struggling towards pleasure more, compared to pain.
- Pain is a powerful agent for self-love, and it is counterintuitively increased in the absence of pleasure. In that sense, self-love proves to be the driving force for the attainment of pleasure.
- The more self-love is practiced; the more pain is increased through the struggle pleasure to be re-attained.
- Struggle to experiencing pleasure means that pain assists in developing and establishing self-love. In such an interpretation, pain proves to be more powerful agent for self-love compared to pleasure.

The spiritual intelligence that is depicted in the term of self-love is through the com-ponents of pleasure and pain. The meaning of pleasure is that divides reason from intellect, for it is selfishly accommodating one's shortcomings in the impassioned relationship to the perceptible. The meaning of pain is about the difficulty in accommodating pleasure in the enjoyment of the perceptible. Having said that, self-love becomes the instrument of comparing and contracting oneself to others so to find 'evidence' that one is better than them, therefore the boastful adherence to the self (comp. Matsoukas, 1979).

In such a respect, self-love and pleasure are also related through a spiritual intelligence that could point to the direction of a clinical diagnosis of narcissism and personality disorders, for they are presented as traits and trends of a specific behaviour that does not include the variable of self-acceptance (comp. Campbell et al., 2002); on the other hand, pain refers to the fear not having pleasure associated to desire (comp. St Maximus the Confessor, PG91: 1112C, Migne 1857/1991) -the extract from St Maximus's writing that is associated with that reads as follows: "The desire that is added to the senses transforms to pleasure…and a sensation that is moved according to a desire, the outcome of it is also pleasure".

The process of pain is the determining factor of a missing desire; desire in such a sense can become both positive (longing for the extension of it) and negative reinforcement (dreading the decrease, or minimisation of it), for pain employs fear as its consequence, should the latter turn out fully experienced. Longing for pleasure and dreading pain could be seen as adherents to subjective wellbeing (comp. Anderson et al., 2015; Legault, 2017).

The spiritual intelligence deriving from a discussion such as the above is that the components of pleasure and pain do provide an interpretative account of what self-love is about when it relates to affairs of passions and/or clinical observations based on symptoms and traits. That interpretative account is what a spiritual exegesis is about, pointing out that interpretation enhances as much as spiritual intelligence develops, whether the latter proves a descriptive or an inferential psychological construct.

The Philautie Inventory for Psychology of Religion (PIPR) doesn't differentiate between pleasant versus painful responses from participants who will take part in the study. The pilot study as well as the main study has been and will be anonymous; responses of participants will not be differentiated between each other, i.e., the scope of the study is not to investigate which participants rated pleasure more than pain and vice versa. Participants aren't employed in this study as DVs (dependent variables) or IVs (independent variables); pleasure and pain are the DVs and self-love is the IV. Participants' ratings in the main study will be their scores associated to their understanding; it does not mean that their reactions to the items via scoring them is what they necessarily consider as lasting personal beliefs, if they were to score the items some other time, for instance after a month. Their ratings of the items are the way they under-stand themselves at the time of reading and responding to the inventory. The latter means that participants' reactions on the items of the inventory through scoring may not repeat the same responsiveness in the way they rated the dependent variables if they were to rate the items at different times.

Homogeneity in participants was also employed. Participants were all belonging (both in the pilot and the main study to take place) to the Orthodox Church (Greeks and Russians). Participants from other denominations weren't asked to take part in the study, first because Roman-Catholics are mainly using the writing of the Roman-Catholic Fathers, especially after the Schism from the Orthodox Church in 1054, and Protestants don't accept any other spiritual writing in their sub-denominations apart from the Bible (Old Testament -not all 49 books; they accept between 39 Books- and New Testament). Participants who took part in the pilot study and those who will take part in the main study are familiar with the writings of the Church Fathers because are also employed as liturgical texts in the various festivals and celebrations of the Orthodox Church.

4. Hypotheses for the main study

Two hypotheses will be assumed in this study: The first will be if pleasure increases then self-love increases too; the second will be if pain increases -in the absence of pleasure-, then self-love will increase as well. Prediction will be that we will have two positive correlations by both hypotheses, the reason being, pleasure and pain are intrinsic motivational characters which tune into self-love. The increase of pleasure reassures oneself to struggle more to remain selfish; the increase of pain, for it is dependent on the absence of pleasure, makes oneself more focused on the sought out for selfish behaviours, that will increase pleasure again. Pain is subject to pleasure; hence the latter is the main locus of attention in one's thoughts, emotional reactions, and related choices.

5. Method of inquiry

Altogether, there have been 11 statements referring to self-love and 8 statements refer-ring to pleasure and pain, in the writings of St Maximus the Confessor's. In the self-devised inventory, there have been used 11 excerpts from some of the writings of Saint Maximus the Confessor, which have been intertwined and combined in the 55 items of the inventory. Below, these 11 excerpts-statements are provided in Greek with their English translation -excerpts have taken from St Maximus's works of *Centuries of Love (CC)*, *Epistles (Ep.)*, and *Questions to Thalassius (QT)*:

1. «Φιλαυτία ἐστιν ἡ πρὸς τὸ σῶμα ἐμπαθὴς καὶ ἄλογος φιλία, ᾗ ἀντίκειται ἀγάπη καὶ ἐγκράτεια. Ὁ ἔχων τὴν φιλαυτίαν, δῆλον ὅτι ἔχει πάντα τὰ πάθη – Self-love is the impassioned and irrational friendship to the body. He who has self-love it is obvious he has all passions», CC. III, 8.
2. «Ὅσον δὲ ταύτης (τῆς τῶν γνωσθέντων ὑλικῶν αἰσθητικῆς ἀπολαύσεως) ἐνεφορεῖτο, τοσοῦτον τῆς ἐκ ταύτης γεννωμένης φιλαυτίας ἐξῆπτε τὸν ἔρωτα· ὅσον δὲ πεφροντισμένως περιεποιεῖτο τῆς φιλαυτίας τὸν ἔρωτα, τοσοῦτον τῆς ἡδονῆς, ὡς τῆς φιλαυτίας οὔσης καὶ γεννήματος καὶ τέλους, πολλοὺς ἐπενόει τρόπους συστάσεως – The more (one) is inflicted by that (the perceptive enjoyment of the known matter), the more (one) excites the desire, for self-love borne off it; the more (one) carefully looks after the desire of self-love, the more (one) invents ways of composition of pleasure, which is reproduction and end of self-love», CC. III, 57.

3. «Ἡ φιλαυτία ὡς πολλάκις εἴρηται πάντων τῶν ἐμπαθῶν λογισμῶν αἰτία καθίσταται. Ἐκ γὰρ ταύτης γεννῶνται οἱ τρεῖς γενικώτατοι τῆς ἐπιθυμίας λογισμοὶ· ὁ τῆς γαστριμαργίας, καὶ ὁ τῆς φιλαργυρίας καὶ τῆς κενοδοξίας – Self-love as it is being said many times it is rendered the cause of all impassioned thoughts (logismoi). From that (self-love) are born the three general thoughts of desire: that of gluttony, that of covetousness and that of vainglory», CC. III, 56.
4. «…διὰ φιλαυτίας…τό τε εὐθὲς διατρέψας, καὶ τὴν φύσιν κατὰ τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον μερίσας, κατέτεμεν εἰς πολλὰς δόξας καὶ φαντασίας – …through self-love…having dissuaded the suitability and having divided the nature and its way (of expression), it is compartmentalized in many assumptions and imaginations (representations of the mind)…», Ep. II, PG91: 396D-397A; comp. PG90: 1196A, DC. I, 46.
5. «…ἡ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων φιλαυτία· περὶ ἣν ἐστιν ὥσπερ τις μικτὴ γνῶσις, ἡ τῆς ἡδονῆς πεῖρα καὶ τῆς ὀδύνης· δι᾽ ἃς ἡ πᾶσα τῶν κακῶν ἐπεισήχθη τῷ βίῳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἰλὺς… – …the self-love of humans towards (their) body; around which there is some mixed knowledge, that of the experience of pleasure and pain; through which (pleasure and pain) the mud (dirt) of all evil entered the life of humans…», PG90: 260A, QT. 14.
6. «Καθ᾽ ὅ σῶμα τὴν φθοροποιὸν ἐπιτελῶν λατρείαν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ καθ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ γενόμενος φίλαυτος, ἡδονὴν εἶχεν ἀπαύστως, καὶ ὀδύνην ἐνεργουμένην· – One by accomplishing the obsolete worship (to one's) body and by becoming selfish in oneself, one had ceaselessly activated pleasure and pain», QT. Prologue, De Scriptura Sacra, PG90: 257C.
7. «Εἰ μὲν δι᾽ ἡδονῆς τῆς φιλαυτίας φροντίζομεν, γεννῶμεν τὴν γαστριμαργίαν, τὴν ὑπερηφανείαν, τὴν κενοδοξίαν, τὴν φυσίωσιν, τὴν φιλαργυρίαν, τὴν πλεονεξίαν, τὴν τυραννίδαν, τὸν γαῦρον, τὴν ἀλαζονείαν, τὴν ἀπόνοιαν, τὴν μανίαν, τὴν οἴησιν, τὸν τῦφον… – …If we take care of self-love through pleasure, we beget gluttony, pride, vainglory, self-inflation, avarice, greed, despondency (a form of depression), haughtiness, arrogance, senselessness, mania (it is meant 'manic depression'), self-conceit, vanity…», PG90: 256C-D, QT. 13.
8. «(…)· εἰ δὲ μᾶλλον δι᾽ ὀδύνης ὁ τῆς φιλαυτίας αἰκίζεται τρόπος, γεννῶμεν τὸν θυμὸν, τὸν φθόνον, τὸ μῖσος, τὴν ἔχθραν, τὴν μνησικακίαν, τὴν λοιδορίαν, τὴν καταλαλιὰν, τὴν συκοφαντίαν, τὴν λύπην, τὴν ἀνελπιστίαν, τὴν ἀπόγνωσιν, τὴν τῆς προνοίας διαβολὴν, τὴν ἀκηδίαν, τὴν ὀλιγωρίαν, τὴν ἀθυμίαν, τὴν δυσθυμίαν, τὴν ὀλιγοψυχίαν, τὸ ἄκαιρον πένθος, τὸν κλαυθμὸν, τὴν κατήφειαν, τὸν ὀλοφυρμὸν… – (…); if rather through pain the manner of self-love is afflicted, we generate anger, resentfulness, hatred, animosity, envy, abuse, slander, sycophancy, grief, hopelessness, despair, calumny against (God's) providence, listlessness, negligence, faintheartedness, dysthymia (in the form of dysthymic depression), fearsomeness, ill-timed sorrow, weeping, dejection, lamentation…», PG90: 256C-D, QT. 13.
9. «Ὁ φίλαυτος, ἤγουν γαστρίμαργος λογισμὸς, ᾧ παρέπεται πάντως ὁ τῆς πορνείας λογισμὸς, καὶ ὁ τῆς φιλαργυρίας, καὶ ὁ τῆς λύπης, καὶ ὁ τῆς ὀργῆς, καὶ ὁ τῆς ἀκηδίας, καὶ ὁ τῆς κενοδοξίας, καὶ ὁ τῆς ὑπερηφανίας – The selfish, namely the gluttonous thought (logismos), which is altogether followed by the thought of fornication, avarice, grief, anger, listlessness, vainglory, pride», PG90: 464D, QT. 20.

10. «Πολυφαγία καὶ ἡδυφαγία ἀκολασίας εἰσὶν αἴτια· φιλαργυρία δὲ καὶ κενοδοξία, μίσους πρὸς τὸν πλησίον. Ἡ δὲ τούτων φιλαυτία τῶν ἀμφοτέρων ἐστὶν αἰτία – Multieating and eating from the best ('sweet-eating') are causes of licentiousness; covetousness and vanity (are causes) of hatred against the fellow human», CC. III, 7.
11. «Τῆς μὲν ἡδονῆς τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν, καὶ τῆς ὀδύνης δὲ τὸν φόβον ἀποβαλλόμενοι, τῆς κακῆς ἐλευθερούμεθα φιλαυτίας – In getting rid the desire from pleasure, and the fear from pain, we become free of evil selfishness», PG90: 260C-D, QT. 14.

All items in the inventory are brand new and come from Saint Maximus the Confessor's works as these were stated above.

All 55 items of the inventory will be employed in the main study. The translated 55 items are intertwined and combined with the 11 excerpts from Saint Maximus the Confessor's works. The term 'dipole' I use in item 2 (Appendix A) is not only used in electricity, chemistry etc., but also to define that an idea/notion/aspect may also have two options of understanding it. The need for more than 25 words in items of the inventory is participants to spend some time in considering the items in their minds as to the understanding and the core interpretations they include with reference to pleasure and pain. The number of words in the statements alludes to help the respondents think of the item they read before scoring it. Several nouns in statements relate to several verbs and sub-sentences which are associated to each other in each item, so a participant should not understand the connection of a verb with a noun to have the chance to comprehend the meaning of the whole statements via verbs and nouns best likening to his understanding of syntax and grammar within the statement itself.

Modern psychotherapy is not 'related' to the writings of Saint Maximus the Confessor. Modern psychotherapy cannot be related to the writing(s) of the Father(s) of the Church. It is an interdisciplinary approach to their writings as to discovering a modern psychological/psychotherapeu-tic vocabulary to the terms the Fathers of the Church are using so to uncover a common ground between their understandings on the psychology and mental conditions of humans with relevant modern psychotherapeutic approaches.

6. What we do, what we don't do in a pilot study

1. In a pilot study, there is no need for identifying the population studied, the reason being a pilot study is an internal reliability test of the items to be used in an inventory which has never been used before to discover which of the statements are reliable to be used and which aren't. It doesn't have with the participants' sample taking part in it.
2. No participants demographics in need to be referred to, i.e., no need for descriptive statistics to be presented.
3. No sample study, research method, sample size, materials used, etc. need to be referred to because pilot study is to test consistency on items of an inventory.

Evidence to support the above, we receive from the literature and indeed from the authors: Baker (1994); Bowling (1997); Burns & Grove (1999); Crombie & Davies (1997); Crosswaite & Curtice (1994); De Vaus (1993); Frankland & Bloor (1999); Holloway (1997); Hundley et al. (2000); Lindquist (1991); Mason & Zuercher (1995); Muoio et al. (1995); Peat et al. (2002); Polit et al. (2001); Rosenberg & Daly (1993); Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998); Wil-liams et al. (1989).

The pilot study to be a study for the use of items in an instrument that is being devised for medical purposes. The present inventory was devised for use in psychology of religion. The attenuation paradox we may encounter is such research, is an acceptable effect in scientific research simply because validity does not mean reliability. We are looking for the reliability of the use of a devised instrument, not the validity of the items per se, i.e., their construct validity, their criterion validity and/or their content validity. Such validities can be discussed in a main study, not in a pilot study. That said, does not mean that validity is sacrificed; it means discussion about validity in a pilot study is not what is questioned there, but the reliability of the items devised for the instrument.

Evidence to support the above, we receive from the literature and indeed from the authors: Loevinger (1954); Bocarnea et al. (2021); Mariel et al. (2021).

Points above aren't valid if the pilot study is conducted for medical research purposes, such as testing new medicines, drugs, equipment, etc. (In, 2017).

Furthermore, the aspect of reliability addresses the extent to which the present inventory demonstrates internal coherence with regards to the items used in this pilot study, which they will also be used in the main study. To further outline the latter, reliability, may also be seen as an estimate of whether there is or isn't a bias in the successive responses provided by the participants to the items of the pilot study (comp. Smith & Noble, 2014). To the best of my knowledge, the possibility of such a bias has been avoided.

7. Results of the pilot study

The pilot study was conducted by the experimenter to know which items of the 55 statements of the inventory could be employed in the main study with regards to the Cronbach's alpha scores' internal reliability. Since it was found that the internal reliability of all items was quite high (more than .9 consistency) it was decided that all 55 statements will be used in the main study.

Cronbach's alpha was reported as the .984 overall score meaning that the reliability/internal consistency of the questionnaire was found excellent at $0.9 \leq \alpha$. All 55 items of the questionnaire were tested in this reliability analysis and found consistent the way participants rated them in the inventory's Likert Scale, therefore, none of these statements will be removed for the main study.

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha reliability test

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	Cronbach's alpha between items average
.984	.984	55	.983-.984

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha items of the inventory reliability test

Higher Cronbach's alpha item score	Middle Cronbach's alpha item score	**Lower Cronbach's alpha item score**
1.000	.598	-0.98

The internal consistency of in-between items, which will be used in the main study, fall between -0.98 and 1.000.

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha between item corrected correlations

Higher corrected score from inter-item correlation	Middle corrected score from inter-item correlation	**Lower corrected score from inter-item correlation**
.928	.579	.411

Inter-item correlations for Cronbach's alpha have shown that the average of inter-item scores indicate a positive correlation between the pilot studied 55 statements. That is to say that the more the inter-item score has increased the more the internal consistency of each statement has increased as well.

The present reliability study (pilot study) presented a high internal validity (>.9) on all the items of the inventory, which means that if the internal reliability was smaller (<.7), then an interpretation using the effect size would be appropriate. Please, see relevant paper by Bowett & Wright (2014). Another useful reference to such extent is by Taber (2018).

Confidence intervals weren't also reported due to not having a larger sample of participants for the main study to take place -will be 80 participants in total. When conducting a pilot study, there is no need the number of participants to be mentioned, the reason being in a small-scale study as that -including the main study to take place- the sample of the pilot study was small as well -bearing in mind that it was taken out of the overall 80 participants. Please, see as above, Taber (2018). The pilot study is a study for testing the reliability of the items of an inventory, not a study where hypotheses are tested. The statistical knowledge we have on the use of confidence intervals in a pilot study shows us that this can be reported only if we have a larger sample of participants taken place in the study -80 participants is not even a large sample. (As above, Taber, 2018).

Also, effect sizes and confidence intervals as well as statistical significance levels, can be referred to only if the pilot study is conducted for medical research purposes (In, 2017). Another area where effect sizes, confidence intervals can be referred to in pilot studies are papers on dental research (Jain & Angural, 2017).

8. Discussion

Cronbach's alpha was found as .984 meaning that all 55 items of the inventory are reliable to be used in the main study. Cronbach's alpha tested the overall consistency of the items of the questionnaire which means the inventory can now be distributed to participants. Apart from the tool's statistical sense in this pilot study, I could argue there is also a psychological sense to it that the pleasure and pain variables behind those items might be regarded as consistent to be employed to study spiritual intelligence empirically. An explanation as to why such a high internal reliability of the inventory has been noted is because the statements were composed in a way that would not leave participants' at-tention unattended when rating the items. That means participants have focused not only on the rating of the items but also on the contents and meanings conveyed through each of the statements, indicating that their scoring on each one of them had been endeavoured in clarity and to the best of their knowledge.

The reason that this pilot study does not estimate the extent to which items of the self-devised inventory don't point to the target of spiritual intelligence, and therefore spiritual exegesis, is because this paper is interested in defining the internal consistency of all items of the inventory so to outline whether these could be used for the main study. Spiritual intelligence and spiritual exegesis will be explored in the discussion of the main study following the five points by Emmons (2000), which are referred to in the fourth paragraph of the introduction of this paper.

Admittedly, such form of an inventory -using extracts from Saint Maximus the Confessor's writings to design it- hasn't been attempted before, not only for this Father of the Church, but also for no other Father. That means that, we have no empirical evidence if such an interdisciplinary instrument for psychology of religion would be able to support the hypotheses to be tested. I certainty keep that in mind, so when moving onto the next phase of my research, which is going to be the main study, to explore that in the discussion section.

Relevant to the pilot study conducted, the hypothesis of the main study will be to carry out a research testing pleasure and pain as motivating factors for self-love. That said, it means that the more pleasure is enhanced the more pain will be increased as well. The more the pleasure, the more the pain, the more self-love will prove the focus of both. The rationale for such a hypothesis is to concentrate on the importance of spiritual intelligence and spiritual exegesis in terms of pleasure and pain as metacognitive elements that interpret self-love. In this way, the importance of spiritual intelligence to spiritual exegesis and vice versa will be argued in the light of the cognitive outcome of spiritual knowledge which can become a contemplative habit towards an equilibrium between psychological wishes-to-be-met and psychological suffering-to-be-controlled. In such a sense, it could mean that spiritual knowledge as a contemplative habit may become a metacognitive element for one's self-psychology; a conscientious part in the realm of the episodic recognition memory (comp. Staniloiu & Markowitsch, 2019), the neuronal beginning of which is discovered in the frontal lobes, where awareness of competence, knowledge around attitudes, meaning in line to decision-making, and acting upon once certainty about facts takes place (comp. Burgess & Wu, 2013).

In the next phase of my research, which will be the main study, I will attempt two quality control computations out of the 11 ones (5X11) by adding 5 items (first five items of the inventory) to consider if participants understand the items they study, and another 5 items (last five items of the inventory) to look at the degree of objectivity and/or interactional difficulty participants may experience when rating the statements.

The main study will argue that spiritual intelligence is a far greater metacognitive competence for the faculties of the mind, for it can be found at the core of them -at the core of perception, recognition, attention, language, and others- compared to not only being a competence with derivatives of emotional and physical sensation adherents (comp. Drigas & Mitsea, 2020). The findings in the main study will not only demonstrate the correlational relationship of the variables pleasure and pain (dependent variables, DVs) to the independent variable (IV) of self-love, but also the importance of spiritual knowledge that underlies psychotherapeutic salience in the paradigm of psychology of religion. In line to that, spiritual knowledge will also be formulated as a fourth-wave type of study for cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) for it employs the writings of the Church Fathers as modern psychotherapeutic practices.

9. Conclusion

Spiritual intelligence is a scientific psychological construct that can be discussed in the premises of psychology of religion and/or cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy. As a construct in the various paradigms of psychology can be researched based on the evidence accumulated when empirically studied. As a construct, can also be studied in combination with/or an interdisciplinary approach with religion and/or theology as well. Speaking of a combination of religion and theology, psychology of religion and/or psychotherapy form also parts of such interdisciplinary research. In such an account, I have conducted a pilot study on the tenet of self-love, according to a Likert Scale self-devised inventory, called *Philautie Inventory for Psychology of Religion (PIPR)*. The rationale about this inventory was for self-love to be understood as a spiritually intelligent independent variable (IV) that can be interpreted (spiritual exegesis) according to the dependent variables (DVs) of pleasure and pain. Following the pilot study, the findings show that the internal reliability/consistency of the inventory was excellent (Cronbach's alpha: .984) on all the 55 items of the inventory. That means that when I go ahead with the main study of that re-search, all these statements will be including in the experiment to be conducted.

Appendix A

1. The more I look after myself, the more the joy I receive from that is short-lived and I cannot describe my sorrow.

5	4	3	2	1
Very much like me	Somewhat like me	Neutral	Not much like me	Not at all like me

2. Desire and fear constitute the dipole of pleasure and pain which maintain a disposition towards selfishness.

5	4	3	2	1
Very much like me	Somewhat like me	Neutral	Not much like me	Not at all like me

3. Many times, selfishness begets greed not only against things, but people as well compared to whom I would like to appear better.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

4. Through selfishness one appears empty as far as one's pursuits are concerned.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

5. I reckon that if I was to prioritise about food, to have more money, or to behave in vain, food would come first the reason being it is directly related to self-preservation instinct.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

6. In my daily life, I am dependent on my mobile phone, my computer and my emails so that to be in contact with others.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

7. When I think about others, I feel more reserved towards my wishes.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

8. Selfishness gets reduced when the appearance of fear in the lack of pleasure reduces too.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

9. Through selfishness I am getting bombarded by unsubstantiated 'realities' which have no foundation.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

10. Removing desire from pleasure, selfishness decreases.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

11. Eating and sex when consummated, I somehow feel sad because these didn't last for long.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

12. Passion-like habits and absurdity relate to selfishness.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

13. I like to associate to the world via the senses. Sometimes, however, my 'perceptible aspirations' prevail, for it is also the matter of satisfaction that comes out of them. I consider that, satisfaction via the senses is legitimate since without the senses we can't realise the world around us!

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

14. Eating is a great pleasure, probably greater than sex.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

15. I think of myself first and I don't think this is wrong.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

16. The expression 'eats them through the eyes' means that pleasure through vision is finally greater compared to all other senses.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

17. One by thinking only of oneself is helped to discover solutions in difficult matters.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

18. Much eating as well as the satisfaction that comes with it is a by-product of selfishness.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

19. To be selfish it means that I love myself illogically and I have not self-control over my desires. In showing such a selfishness denotes I am not empathetic inside me towards others.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

20. Through selfishness reside within me tendencies that are relevant to multi-eating, love for money and attachment to matter and material things.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

21. Egoistic manner indicates distortion and self-phantasizing.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

22. Egotistic manner indicates arrogance.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

23. Ruminative thinking over sexual desires is consummated via excessive eating.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

24. Desire for pleasure reminds me more about the desire over sex. For me 'pleasure' and 'sex' are identical.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

25. Even if egotistic manner introduces problems in human interrelationships, this is finally what is needed because it preserves competitiveness.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

26. Behind eating lies selfishness and that because during food-eating one spends more time of preparation and looking-after oneself.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

27. Pleasure and pain come as identical to egoism.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

28. The pain I gain from selfishness is because it lasts just a little.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

29. I feel that food and sex finally dull the senses even if they take place within feasible limits, such as that of self-preservation and bodily pleasure.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

30. I feel like being divided in many parts by thinking only of myself.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

31. One by being deluded by what one thinks he or she knows a lot and therefore can participate in dialogues with others it may become a compulsive idea in one's psychological realm. I think that what makes it happen is the satisfaction of pleasure one to feel deluded and not that much the resulting of knowledge which ensues from perceptible matters.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

32. Through egoism, desires are indeed satisfied, which even if they do not last for long and may lead one in experiencing privation syndrome, the fact that they somehow bring about some sort of self-satisfaction it is good for oneself to attempt in regaining or recreating them.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

33. I can ascertain that the satisfaction of my desires lasts a little. What grieves me most however is the absence of them.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

34. Food provides better satisfaction than sex. However, one to be able to eat and have sex one needs to be in some sort of a good financial level, otherwise how could one have both?

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

35. I like the pleasures of life because the desires I have, led me to them. If there is something that I like and cannot satisfy it, I have the fear, in case I satisfy it just a little or not at all.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

36. Self-idolatry indicates egoism combined with pleasure and pain: pleasure, because it has to do with my self-presentation; pain, because when everything finishes, I fall into a deep sorrow.

5	4	3	2	1
Very much like me	Somewhat like me	Neutral	Not much like me	Not at all like me

37. I like to be liked by others and I feel sorry for myself if others don't pay attention to me. Is it bad to want to be liked by others and expect others to pay me the relevant attention as well?

5	4	3	2	1
Very much like me	Somewhat like me	Neutral	Not much like me	Not at all like me

38. Selfishness results to stubbornness.

5	4	3	2	1
Very much like me	Somewhat like me	Neutral	Not much like me	Not at all like me

39. Selfishness is lack of hope and this is proven by the sorrow experienced when egoism drops.

5	4	3	2	1
Very much like me	Somewhat like me	Neutral	Not much like me	Not at all like me

40. When I blame things around me or if I blame myself, I don't want to hear what others tell me. I prefer to keep myself to myself and that feels like I'm grieving, even sometimes there is no reason at all.

5	4	3	2	1
Very much like me	Somewhat like me	Neutral	Not much like me	Not at all like me

41. Food and sex when complete I feel grief because didn't last for long.

5	4	3	2	1
Very much like me	Somewhat like me	Neutral	Not much like me	Not at all like me

42. I reckon that it is not so important one to be selfish. On the contrary, one is helped to face others who try to behave selfishly against oneself. I consider that I belong to the former category: through selfishness, I protect myself.

5	4	3	2	1
Very much like me	Somewhat like me	Neutral	Not much like me	Not at all like me

43. Egotism is followed by anger and hatred.

5	4	3	2	1
Very much like me	Somewhat like me	Neutral	Not much like me	Not at all like me

44. To be selfish is greater than any other passion-like habit.

5	4	3	2	1
Very much like me	Somewhat like me	Neutral	Not much like me	Not at all like me

45. My relationship to the matter makes me selfish. The more selfish I become the more I cultivate satisfaction through the senses.

5	4	3	2	1
Very much like me	Somewhat like me	Neutral	Not much like me	Not at all like me

46. Through egotism I realise my innermost fragmentation.

5	4	3	2	1
Very much like me	Somewhat like me	Neutral	Not much like me	Not at all like me

47. With food I feel bloated, I feel tired and I am not in the mood for talking. With sex, when that is over for did not last for long, I feel it was so piecemeal that the satisfaction I have had from it wasn't enough.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

48. Selfishness helps the human mind to acquire the knowledge of desire and its loss, even if the latter could be experienced with more pain.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

49. With egoism I satisfy my appetites, however what is happening is to feel sorrow when these subside.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

50. I look after my body considerably. That could lead me to self-likeness, however what I do is just a … convention about survival in this world!

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

51. To be likened by others makes me taking care of myself and if I hide things is because I do not wish others to know about me.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

52. Hatred that comes out of selfishness is finally self-hatred because the latter (selfishness), should that not have been achieved, is about the satisfaction of ego in its desires.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

53. I wonder if my love for money and wanting to have more acquisitions if that is finally hatred towards others.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

54. Egotism begets pride.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

55. The effort one to experience pleasure and not sorrow constitutes the chief nucleus of our disposition to bind ourselves with the senses.

5 4 3 2 1
Very much like me Somewhat like me Neutral Not much like me Not at all like me

References

Anderson, C., Hildreth, J. A. D., Howland, L., "Is the desire for status a fundamental human motive? A review of the empirical literature", *Psychological Bulletin* 141, no. 3 (2015): 574-601.

Baker, T.L. *Doing Social research* (2nd Edn.). New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1994.

Bocarnea, M., Winston, B., & Dean, D. *Advancements in organizational data collection and measurements: Strategies for addressing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors*. Hershey, PA: Business Science Reference, 2021.

Bowett, D. G. & Wright, T. A, "Cronbach's alpha reliability: Internal estimation, hypothesis testing, and sample size planning", *Journal of Organizational Behavior, Published online in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com), DOI:10.1002/job.1960*, 2014.

Bowling, A. *Research Methods in Health: Investigating Health & Health Services*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997.

Burgess, P. W. & Wu, H-C. 'Rostral prefrontal cortex (Brodmann area 10): metacognition in the brain'. In Donald T. Stuss & Robert T. Knight (eds.), *Principles of Frontal Lobe Function*. 2nd edition, pp. 524-534. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Burns, N. & Grove, S.K. *Understanding Nursing Research* (2nd edn.). Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company, 1999, p 40.

Campbell, W. K., Foster, C. A., Finkel, E. J., "Does self-love lead to love for others? A story of narcissistic game playing, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, no. 2 (2002): 340-354.

Crombie, I.K. and Davies, H.T.O. *Research in Health Care: Design, Conduct and Interpretations of Health Services Research*. London: Wiley, 1997.

Crosswaite, C. and Curtice, L., "Disseminating research results-the challenge of bridging the gap between health research and health action". Health Promotion International 9 (1994): 289.

De Vaus, D.A. *Surveys in Social Research* (3rd edn.), London: UCL Press, 1993.

Drigas, A. & Mitsea, E., "The triangle of spiritual intelligence, metacognition and consciousness", *International Journal of Recent Contributions from Engineering Science & IT (iJES)*, 8(1), 1-21. https://online-journals.org/index.php/i-jes/article/view/12503 (2020).

Emmons, R. A., "Is spirituality an intelligence? Motivation, cognition, and the psychology of ultimate concern", *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 10, no. 1 (2000): 3-26 & 27-34. DOI: 10.1207/S15327582IJPR1001_2 (2000).

Frankland, J. and Bloor, M. 'Some issues arising in the systematic analysis of focus group material', In: Barbour, R. and Kitzinger, J. (eds) *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory & Practice*, London: Sage, 1999.

Goleman, G.. *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1996.

Hofmann, S. G. & Smits, J. A. J., "Cognitive-behavioral therapy for adult anxiety disorders: A meta-analysis of randomized placebo-controlled trials", *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 69, no. 4 (2008): 621-632. DOI: 10.4088/jcp.v69n0415; web publication on 19/09/2016.

Holloway, I. *Basic Concepts for Qualitative Research*. Oxford: Blackwell Science, 1997.

Hundley, V, Milne, J, Leighton-Beck, L. et al., "Raising research awareness among midwives and nurses: does it work?", *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 31, no. 1 (2000): 78-88.

In, J., "Introduction of a pilot study", *Korean Journal of Anesthesiology*, 70, no. 6 (2017): 601-605.

Jain, S. R. & Angural, V., "Use of Cronbach's alpha in dental research: Case Report", pp. 285-291, 2017. Downloaded from Medico Research Chronicles on 09/01/2023 at 321_USE_OF_CRONBACHS_ALPHA_pdf.pdf).

Legault, L. 'Self-determination theory'. In V. Zeigler-Hill, T.K. Shackelford (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*, pp. 1-10, (2017). Springer International Publishing, AG. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-28099-8_1162-1.

Lindquist, R., "Don't forget the pilot work!", *Heart Lung*, 20 (1991): 91-92.

Loevinger, J., The attenuation paradox in test theory, *Psychological Bulletin*, 51, no. 5 (1954): 493–504. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0058543 .

Mariel, P. et al. *Environmental Valuation with Discrete Choice Experiments. Springer Briefs in Economics, Chapter 8 (Validity and Reliability)*, 2021, pp. 111-123. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-62669-3_8 .

Muoio, R., Wolcott, L., and Seigel, H., "A win-win situation: The pilot program", *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 26 (1995): 230-233.

Norton, P.J. & Price, E.C., "A meta-analytic review of adult cognitive-behavioral treatment outcome across the anxiety disorders", *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 195, no. 6 (2007): 521-531.

Mason, D.J. and Zuercher, S.L., "Pilot studies in clinical nursing research", *Journal of the New York State Nursing Association*, 26 (1995): 11.

Matsoukas, N. (Ματσούκας, Ν.). *Kosmos, Anthropos, Koinonia kata ton Maximo Homologete/World, Man, Community according to Maximus the Confessor (in Greek: Κόσμος, Ἄνθρωπος, Κοινωνία κατὰ τὸν Μάξιμο Ὁμολογητῆ)*. Athens-Greece: Gregoris Publications, (1979).

Migne, J. P. *PG (Patrologia Graeca), vol. 91: St Maximus the Confessor: About various questions on the writings of St Denys's and St Gregory's*. Brepols-Turnhout, Leuven/ Belgium, 1857/1991.

Peat, J., Mellis, C., Williams, K. and Xuan W. *Health Science Research: A Handbook of Quantitative Methods*. London: Sage, 2002.

Rosenberg, K.M. and Daly, H.B. *Foundations of Behavioural Research: A Basic Question Approach*. Fort Worth London: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1993, p 182-184.

Staniloiu, A. & Markowitsch, H. J., "Episodic memory is emotionally laden memory, requiring amygdala involvement", *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, 42, no. e299 (2019), DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X19001857 .

Stewart, R. E. & Chambless, D. L., "Cognitive–Behavioral Therapy for Adult Anxiety Disorders in Clinical Practice: A Me-ta-Analysis of Effectiveness Studies", *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 77, no. 4 (2009): 595– 606.

Smith, J. & Noble, H., "Bias in Research", *Evidence Based Nursing*, 17, no. 4 (2014): 100-101.

St Maximus the Confessor. *Epistles*. Patrologia Graeca, volume 91, 580-662AD.

St Maximus the Confessor. *Centuries of Love*. Patrologia Graeca, volume 90, 580-662AD.

St Maximus the Confessor. *Questions to Thalassius*. Patrologia Graeca, volume 91, 580-662AD.

Taber, K. S., "The use of Cronbach's alpha when developing research instruments in science education", *Research on Science Education*, 48 (2018): 1273-1296.

Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative & Quantitative Approaches*. London: Sage, 1998.

Williams, L., Wilkins-Prescott, P. A., Soeken, K.L., "The potential uses of pilot work". *Nursing Research*, 38 (1989): 60-62.

Philotheos **22.2** (2022) 188–209

Deepa Majumdar
Dept. of History, Philosophy, Politics and Economics, Purdue University Northwest – Westville
dmajumda@pnw.edu

On War (Nature, Causes, Impacts) – and Peace

Abstract: In this essay, the author uses the theological worldview of Advaita Vedānta to approach war and peace philosophically and theologically, rather than empirically. Seeing our contemporary world-wide historical turbulence as a sign that we are being dredged in preparation for a new macro-cycle of history, she considers perpetual war more likely than perpetual peace in the current cycle – but perhaps less so in the next cycle. Distinguishing war from the coup, the revolution, and the genocide, and unjust from just war, the author reflects on the *nature* of war – especially the hi-tech war. Upholding free-will, she considers three causes of war. If human passions are its *immediate* causes, then the vices that underlie the passions are its *ultimate* causes, and loss of the ascetic norms (a hallmark of modernity) is its principle *precipitating* cause. Adding to this, a heightened will-to-power serves as the frontispiece of war. Invoking the individual's *karmic* ledger of merit and demerit, the author reflects on the overall impacts of war, focusing especially on the moral plight of the soldier. Based on the premise that war and peace are one among the pairs of opposites that plague Immanence, the author distinguishes different levels and types of peace (inner-outer, higher-lower, mental-natural). Envisioning true tranquility as the heart and essence of the solitary solipsistic divine One (*Brahman*), the author distinguishes between ordinary peace and the eternal abiding tranquility that is God. Invoking the hallowed state of *nirvanic unio mystica*, the author concludes that the very existence of divinized sages quells the will-to-war. Moreover, the surest antidote to a nuclear holocaust lies not only in the presence of such sages, but in *Brahman* – the fountainhead of inner peace that ensconces the universe even as it permeates it.

Keywords: war, just war, soldier, peace, passion, vices, will-to-power, ascetic norms, One, *Brahman*.

The ravages of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries – through war, genocide, revolution, etc. – manifest, at least in part, the ominous trinity that haunts modernity[1]– namely, materialism-militarism-concupiscence. Modern warfare comes with a historically unprecedented scale of destruction that therefore demands a more stringent peace. The retching soul characteristic of modernity can travel to outer space and plumb the depths of the ocean.[2] But it cannot stop man's slaughter of fellow-man through increasingly utilitarian, cowardly forms of war, wholly bereft of heroism. This is not to say that pre-modern polities are nonviolent. Although technically less advanced, their wars are no less cruel. War, therefore, seems endemic to human nature – making perpetual war more likely than perpetual peace.

---

[1] In this essay "modernity" is used – not in its strict technical-historical sense – but loosely, to signify both the postmodern mindset and the tail end of our current age, which is at a cusp leading to a new era (for which, we have no name as yet).

[2] In the Vedāntic context, "self" is more accurate than "soul." Hence, "soul" is used in this essay in a literary sense – without constancy of substance.

War becomes especially significant at this extraordinarily turbulent historical moment, which is dredging the world of iniquities – making them rise to the surface, like scum floating on water. At a cusp between two ages, this historical moment portends the end of the current macro-cycle of history, even as it presages a golden Age of Truth – an illumined age that will vindicate the purpose of free-will, by using it righteously to sublimate the passions.[3] Hence, even if war seems perpetual in our current macro-cycle of History, it may fade in the next age – bringing greater peace.

Destroying not only human life, but *all* sentient lives, war violates Earth – betraying her bounty and ravaging her ecology. The answer to war lies not merely in negotiating external peace – through diplomacy, treaties, sanctions, etc. – but in cultivating inner tranquility as the causal source of external peace. For, the ultimate originary-origin of peace is the wellspring of divinity within every being – the solitary solipsistic One (*Brahman*) that exists as the Substratum of all beings. It is therefore important to distinguish between temporary mundane earthly peace, and the eternal abiding tranquility that is God.

Besides *Brahman*, the most powerful antidote to war lies beyond the pale of politics, in the very existence of exalted beings who experience ultimate divinization through the hallowed state of *nirvanic unio mystica*. Sublimating the violence of the collective consciousness, their holiness becomes a cosmic force that purifies the world of evil, serving as a source of benediction that transfigures the hearts of individual men and women. Infusing the immortal into the mortal, they thwart our worst propensities by their very presence.

Based on the theological worldview of Advaita Vedānta, this essay covers mainly the myriad aspects of war, but also peace – distinguishing between inner and outer peace. It therefore has three parts: (1) The Nature of War; (2) The Causes and Impacts of War – Passions, Vices, Will-to-Power, Loss of the Ascetic Norms; and (3) War, Peace – and Tranquility.

The Nature of War

The term "war" can be used in different ways. In its metaphoric sense, war is virtuous when it is the "inner war" we wage to defend our good from our evil tendencies – a noble strife that can remedy the violent external war. Moreover, a war of words – through speech, or writing – is distinct from literal physical war. Finally, war can be a metaphor for the Hand of History that dispenses our individuated fates and roles. For, as Heraclitus says, "War is father of all, and king of all. He renders some gods, others men; he makes some slaves, others free" (Fr. 53).[4] But when by "inner war," we mean the unuttered mental violence we feel against the enemy, this corroborates the external physical war, which it can escalate. Thus, the moral content of our deepest intentions determines whether or not the inner war matches the outer.

---

[3] In this work, upper case letters are used for some words (like Truth, Nature, History, etc.) for honorific emphasis and literary effect. This is especially relevant for Truth, which comes at two levels (because the author uses the concept of two truths) – with interior Truth, *Brahman* itself, and the exterior correspondence notion of truth, a match between statement and fact.

In its literal material sense, however, war is rarely virtuous, although it can infuse some goodness (heroism, courage, etc.) into a vista that is largely cruel. *Tamasic* in its murderous intent, *rajasic* in its ambitions, and *sattwic* in its trace of heroism, war is a violent travesty of truth[5]– because every vice is a departure from truth and war is vice-laden. Hence, truth is often the first casualty of war.

Wars can range from the unnecessary evil of a war of offense, to the necessary evil inherent in a just war. In between, war can be a coat of many colors – a mix of good and evil prompted by individuated moral choices based on free-will. For, war brings out the best and worst in us, so that human action in battle can range from the heroic and courageous, to the unheroic and cruel. When an unmitigated evil, however, war is ultimately savage and tragic – wreaking havoc upon helpless sentient beings.

The slaughter-bench of History is forged by myriad genres of violence, of which, genocide and war are the most egregious perhaps. Like History, Nature too is a slaughter-bench that expresses the conjoint will of the Creator and creature. If the divine will manifests itself in the laws that govern Nature, then the sentient (human and nonhuman) will manifests itself in the violence inherent in Nature – conflicts not just among human beings, but also among nonhuman sentient beings, and between humans and the latter (animals, birds, and fish) – through hunting, fishing etc. Moreover, when man desecrates insentient natural beings (rivers, forests, etc.), he wages war against Nature as a whole. War ravages the fragile ecology of Earth, adding to the environmental damage already caused by modern materialism.

But organized war between human persons is uniquely human. For, the embodied cause of war is always Nature's intelligent creature – never a nonhuman being. Bewildered by human antics, animals and birds are profoundly affected by war – but never its direct causes. Already bemused by man's material progress, they get shell-shocked by the hi-tech war. Although violent to one another, they do not wage organized war designed by military intelligence and strategies. Their weapons are bodily and natural, like talons and teeth – not external to the body, nor synthetic or instrumental, like human weapons. The same may be said of other sentient creatures, lower than birds and animals in the chain of being and sentience. Moreover, if the violence of sentient beings towards one another is distinct from the non-moral violence of insentient beings (like a volcanic eruption) – it must be all the more distinct from the violence of human warfare. In fact, both sentient and insentient nonhuman violence are distinct from human warfare. Compared to the impassioned-but-simple violence among nonhuman sentient beings, human warfare is complex, sophisticated, and malevolent. No other creature in Nature possesses the diabolical cunning and violence that man expresses through war – especially the hi-tech war. Talons and teeth can hardly compare with nuclear arsenal. Not even Nature's insentient non-moral violence (like the volcanic eruption) is as harmful – because Nature has neither free-will, nor malice. Unlike man's wars, Nature's violence is wholly unintentional, unwilled, and exculpable. Man is therefore culpable in a way Nature can never be.

---

[4] Heraclitus, *Fragments: A Text and Translation with a Commentary*, trans. T. M. Robinson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 37.

[5] In Vedānta, the three *guṇas* (forces or moods that constitute *Māya*) are *sattwa* (signifying tranquility), *rajas* (signifying activity), and *tamas* (signifying sloth and delusion) – with *sattwa* the highest, *tamas* the lowest, and *rajas* in between. *Māya* (the power of *Brahman*) transcends all three.

War is tied inextricably to human passion, which plays two roles – on the one hand, constituting the very nature of war, and on the other, serving as the immediate cause of war. For, war is a frenzy of passion that entails not only wanton killing, but also rape. Of the passions, hatred and anger bear a reciprocal relationship with lust, shadowing lust even as lust shadows them. Thus, both advancing and retreating soldiers rape "enemy" women, even as they kill – often converting war to a surge of toxic masculinity.

The highest ideals on enmity – love for and forgiveness of the enemy, non-resistance of evil, returning good for evil, etc. – are usually beyond the pale of conventional warfare. Nevertheless, when girded by ethical rules, war (especially just war) can retain *some* morality, despite its overall immorality. But this does not absolve war of its overall sordid character, caused, not merely by formidable weapons, or ruthlessness – but by raging passions in those who plan and execute war. A cloud unknowing that gives rise to dark plumes of alienation, death, and destruction – war is, in essence, an explosion of passions – intense anger, hatred, and fear that petrify themselves in the form of cold, calculating, instrumental reasoning.

War entails a special kind of enemy – and accordingly, a special kind of enmity. Unlike individuated conflict, which targets a personal enemy, war, like activism, targets an impersonal collective enemy. But, unlike activism, which seeks to protest, war (even a just war) seeks to subjugate and destroy. In waging or supporting war, we artificially personalize an impersonal enemy. War entails *collective* enmity that spews unbridled hatred for perfect strangers – based simply on their identity, which gets redefined as "enemy." Succumbing to generalizations, we lose sight of the individuality of the "enemy." The prime passions of war are not only anger, hatred, and lust against the enemy, but also intense, immoral tribal "love" for those on our side. In fact, former enemies within an identity, become "friends," when they unite in hatred against the primary external enemy.

All wars are cruel. But the hi-tech war of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is historically unique, not only in the malevolence of its technically advanced weapons, but in its *modus operandi* – which prioritizes efficiency over ethics. As a result, it can be remote, utilitarian, unheroic, and cowardly – as if seeking to divest the human hand of culpability for the blood it sheds – by aiming at an impersonal, unknown enemy, with weapons that are assumed to almost possess a will of their own. Although a reified product that uses technology, war is contingent in a way other products of technology are not. One humdrum aspect of modern production is its mechanical certitude – and hence, the utterly predictable character of its performance. Certitude belies the hi-tech war, which draws its contingency, not from mechanical or utilitarian failures, but from unforeseen historical happenings. The hi-tech war is unique in the chilling barbarism of its weapons – ranging, in opposite extremes, from nuclear arsenal to combat drones (UCAVs)[6] – with drones, in particular, representing the ultimate triumph of the utilitarian over the moral. If nuclear weapons are apocalyptic, then drone attacks – a result of blind utilitarian reasoning – represent the quintessence of cowardice. Reaching its sadistic peak when waged against a helpless, harmless "enemy," this craven, cold-blooded malevolence becomes unheroic in the extreme – when it surrenders human agency to the mechanical "will" of technology (the new god of modernity). Although man is the operator, and the machine his tool, so that man ought to rule machine, he loses his sense of agency and free-will, when he subordinates himself to the machine – by making mechanical and robotic use of technology, as exemplified by remote drone attacks that are never as "clean" as they are made out to be. For, the hand behind a drone attack is no less blood-drenched, just because the attacker does not physically face his enemy. Notwithstanding its many admirable aspects, western civilization, which takes inordinate pride in being civilized compared to the non-west, is in fact, *uncivilized* in its hi-tech wars. It is uncivilized also in how casual it makes war, by naming each. It is one thing to name tornadoes and storms. It is quite another to name a war. A name like "Operation Desert Storm" (1991) not only diffuses the horrors of war, but glorifies it – by giving it a literary name.

Besides excessive militarization and frequent warring, other insignia of the beginning of barbarism are – heads of state who kill remote international enemies to appease domestic citizens, economies that flourish through the manufacture and export of weapons, cultures that militarize their young with toy guns, narcissistic nationalism that abhors and eschews otherness, and a culture of death that excoriates life.

War is distinct from the coup, the revolution, and the genocide. All four can be violent quests for power that wage disproportionate conflict between unequal enemies. Yet, war remains distinct – not only in scale, or weapons, but in its deepest motivations. Where the coup is a domestic attempt to overthrow a government, and a normative revolution (whether domestic or trans-national) aims to overthrow perceived injustice, war is armed conflict that comes with varying intentions – from regime change in a foreign nation, to revanchist vengeance, to the primitive imperial impulse to colonize, subjugate, and swallow enemy territory, to defiant self-defense, etc. War, therefore, is more complex morally than the coup or the revolution. War is also distinct from genocide. Although war and genocide can use each other as instruments, they are not the same. War can entail genocide – but not always. Likewise, genocide can entail war – but not always. Although a war of sorts, genocide sometimes goes further by entailing actual formal war. When victims are already oppressed – so that they are easy to overcome – genocide no longer needs war. At best, a necessary evil, when well-intentioned and just, yet, war, like genocide, is always an unholy cloudburst of passions that culminates in meaningless blood-soaked triumphs.

War comes in different categories or genres, of which, just-unjust is the simplest binary. Where an unjust war acts in the offensive, seeking sadistically to harm the harmless, a just war usually acts in self-defense. Where an unjust war is waged by bullies – a just war is waged by heroes inspired by a worthy cause. Where an unjust war attracts, at best, reluctant soldiers duped into war, and at worst, uniformed sadists – a just war inspires and attracts courageous, self-sacrificing heroes. Where an unjust war dissipates morale through its innate injustice – a just war uses the justice of its cause to inspire soldiers, for whom, morale can be more important than weapons. Where tyrants use oppressive ideologies to crush morale – true leaders use morally sound political causes to inspire morale. Where an unjust war is imposed on citizens by imperialistic autocrats – a just war is inspired and led by morally sound, affable leaders.

---

[6] UCAVs: Unmanned combat aerial vehicles.

Having distinguished unjust from just war, what qualifies a war as just? For it to be true to its name – a just war must, first and foremost, *advance* the cause of justice – not detract from it. It must lead to greater freedom and justice, instead of greater incarceration (literal and moral) and injustice. This means, it must eschew the blind and blinding proclivities that tempt the worldly man to wage war – anger, greed, thirst for power, and the spirit of vengeance. Instead, a just war, even if secular, must serve Truth (*qua* God) – not untruth (*qua* power) – rescuing truth from becoming a casualty of war. At the very least, it must be historically necessitated and metaphysically mandated – although chosen consciously through righteous uses of free-will. Hardly an oxymoron, a just war must use its innate justice to sublimate its innate violence. Finally, in order to serve justice, a just war must diffuse collective enmity – by avoiding the blind hatred inherent in generalizations about the stranger-enemy. For, the only objects worthy of hatred are hatred itself, hate-worthy actions, and vices.

For a war to be just, it must, in its deepest intentions, be waged for morally sound reasons – either in direct self-defense or in defense of another nation, or to deter and thwart impending attacks, or on humanitarian grounds. Inspired by righteous defiance, a just war protects from abject untimely surrender. While the choice of weapons and their destructive capacities matter to an extent – weapons, on their own, do not make a war just or unjust. The moral quality of the human intentions prompting the use and choice of weapons, imbue a war with justice or injustice. Thus a war that uses weapons to defend the defenseless is just, whereas a war that uses the *same* weapons to harm the harmless is unjust. A war, if it is to be just, must relinquish the will-to-power, eschewing the twin halves of power, which are, sadism and masochism. Instead, it must engage in an unrelenting pursuit of justice and goodness that sublimate the will-to-power and the passions it unleashes.

Second, for a war to be truly just, it must never be guided by consequentialist ethics that judges the moral worth of an action by that of its empirical results. But it cannot be guided by the opposite of consequentialist ethics either – namely, the Gandhian creed – "As the means so the end" and "Impure means result in an impure end."[7] For, although a necessary evil, a just war remains a ghastly means to peace. Hence, it would never qualify as ethical or just, by Gandhi's creed. But it can qualify as just, if we apply Gandhi's creed

---

[7] M. K. Gandhi, *All men are brothers: Autobiographical Reflections*, ed. K. Kripalani (New York: Continuum, 2004), 74, 76.

– not to the means used, but to the intentions underlying a just war – thus avoiding consequentialist ethics. This means, if the deepest intentions underlying the decision to go to war are just, the war will be just – even if it fails to achieve the humanitarian goals it sought through war. Conversely, if the deepest intentions are unjust, the war will be unjust – even if it is, outwardly, a war-in-defense that benefits the people defended. Moreover, a war can qualify as just, if we apply Gandhi's creed – not to the entirety of the means used – but to the most ethical means feasible in a given situation. A war is therefore just, when it uses means that comply with morally sound international rules of war.

Third, a just war must be a reluctant last resort that seeks to reduce alienation, even if it cannot remove it altogether – given its innate violence, despite being just. A war, if it is to be just, must *actively* seek to minimize violence – especially in the case of the hi-tech war. Following international rules and laws that protect innocent civilians, a just war must be lawful and proportionate in its use of violence, selecting weapons carefully – not only avoiding those prohibited by international rules, but opting for those that are least damaging, yet most suited in a given situation. For a war to be just, it must be waged only against armed soldiers – not civilians.

Fourth, a war, if it is to be just, must be noble towards captured enemies. Tempering justice with mercy, and strictness with benevolence, a just war must also temper retributive justice with restorative justice (which comes with the potential for the highest virtues of forgiveness and love for the enemy). Applying restorative justice to those still capable of shame, and retributive justice to those who cross the threshold of shame, to become shameless, a just war must recognize forgiveness – not only as a gift to oneself – but as a force of redemption that purifies the enemy morally.

Besides the just-unjust binary, war comes in other categories or genres as well. War can happen between polities, nations, civilizations, and continents. In terms of polities, some are more war-prone than others. This includes not only autocracies, but also modern plutocratic liberal western democracies. Using insidious covert pro-war propaganda, resource-hungry, narcissistic, worldly western liberal democracies are at least as war-prone as dictatorships that use shameless overt pro-war propaganda. In terms of nations, wars vary – with world-wide war one extreme, and intra-nation civil war the other. Mutiny within armed forces constitutes perhaps the heart and essence of the civil war. War can also be secular or religious – both being unholy in the extreme. Indeed, no oxymoron could be greater than the "holy war" that kills people in the name of God.

Yet, although unholy, war is not an absolute vice that applies everywhere, always. Otherwise, it could not allow for the just war, which implies, by its very name, that in some situations, war is not only a necessary evil, but just. Nor can nonviolence and pacifism – although among the highest moral virtues – be absolute virtues that apply everywhere, always. Some empirical situations necessitate violence. Where nonviolence is infeasible, untenable, or unethical – war, in its just form becomes a necessary evil. That nonviolence is not an absolute moral virtue, constitutes, therefore, the principle that engenders and justifies the very notion of the just war. If an individual is not yet morally capable of nonviolence towards a violent enemy – she must have the right to violent self-defense, which, for her, is both right and righteous. The same may be said of groups. If they are not capable of the highest nonviolence before an armed, violent enemy, they must have the right to a heroic just war. Only a moral giant and prince of peace of the stature of the Dalai Lama could afford the inner strength to remain nonviolent before a formidable enemy like the People's Republic of China. But to coerce an ordinary person to emulate the Dalai Lama – before she is morally ready – would, in itself, be a violent act. Moreover, there are some situations where nonviolence is simply infeasible – especially those in which, the enemy is overpowering in his violence. Given the sheer exigencies of *realpolitik*, nonviolence, although entirely worthy, is not always feasible. Thus, the noble and ennobling actions of Gandhi and King, which were feasible and appropriate in protest situations, would have been infeasible in World War II. All this affirms just war, which, in its metaphoric sense, Kṛṣṇa endorses and exhorts in the *Bhagavadgītā*.[8]

Civilizations exist in varying states of parallel histories that meld together to sing the song of world history. A world historical period does not end until the Locomotive of History pulls all relevant civilizations into the chime of the current era – with each civilization unfolding by the logic of its teleological principles and unique history, which is never entirely bright or dark, but usually a mix of the two. The "superpower," which serves as the engine that pulls the Locomotive of History, sometimes has to wage war to fulfill its historical purpose. The fact of varying parallel histories implies that not all nations can be simultaneously modern. Moreover, war is not the exclusive prerogative of modernity. Notwithstanding the historical uniqueness of modern warfare, it is not as if war does not exist in pre-modern civilizations. It does, and in equally brutal forms, even if their weapons are less advanced, compared to modern weapons. For, war is endemic to human nature, in its current historical condition.

Given this reality of the slaughter-bench of History and the savagery of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the prospect of perpetual peace seems dim. Perpetual war seems more likely in our current cycle of History – despite these prophetic words of the Dalai Lama:

> Our world has become so interdependent that violent conflict between two countries inevitably impacts the rest of the world. War is outdated – nonviolence is the only way. We need to develop a sense of the oneness of humanity by considering other human beings as brothers and sisters. This is how we will build a more peaceful world…[9]

Yet, it helps to remember that the destructive passions apply only to lower levels of human nature, which, at its highest, is sublime. Using our God-given innate free-will, we each have the exact same capacity for reaching our full divine potential. Inspired by the wellspring of divinity within us, we share the same potential for using free-will and self-control to sublimate the raw passions, thus reaching the quietude of true dispassion. This means, we have the strength to overcome the darkness of the current age – especially this extraordinarily turbulent historical moment, which is purifying the world of long latent iniquities, in preparation for the next macro-cycle of History and its sequential ages. One day, therefore, we may overcome perpetual war.

---

[8] *The Bhagavad Gita*, trans., ed. Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1944).

[9] L. Greenblatt, "Dalai Lama shares statement on Russian invasion of Ukraine," Lion's Roar, February 28, 2022, accessed, August 15, 2022, https://www.lionsroar.com/dalai-lama-shares-statement-on-russian-invasion-of-ukraine/. Two spellings have been changed from the original quotation ("nonviolence" instead of "non-violence" and "outdated" instead of "out-dated").

The Causes and Impacts of War – Passions, Vices, Will-to-Power, Loss of the Ascetic Norms

The causes of war can be immediate (direct), ultimate, or precipitating. To understand the first two, we must first rule out the implausible causes – gender, demographic identities, institutions, and impersonal historical forces. Well-meaning people sometimes argue that if women ran the world, there would be greater peace. This argument is implausible, because it places matter (body) above mind. Inasmuch as mind rules over matter (body), it is the insubstantial gender-transcending human self, and its God given free-will, that make the moral choices that lead to war. Women can be just as impassioned, fractious, imperial, and power-hungry as men. Moreover, not all men are aggressive war-mongers. Violence is not innate to masculinity, just as nonviolence is not innate to femininity. Thus gender cannot be the cause of war.

Often identity politics, especially fear of demographic extinction, is said to cause war – perhaps because identities can be the first face of war. But not even the gravest identity-laden war is caused literally by identities, but rather, by moral choices made by individuals. Clearly identities are not individuals. To the perspicacious, fear of demographic extinction should never lead to war, because demographics refer to bodies – not souls. The cause of war can never literally be identities, but the individuals within each identity. We must therefore heed that which causes identities – namely, lack Self-knowledge, as evinced by the fact that we construct the ego (our false self) as a mosaic of identities.[10] This lack of Self-knowledge can be a precipitating cause of war.

Often, another seeming agent of war is the state. But this is only *seeming* – because the state draws its "will" from that of individuals (in positions of authority), who represent it. When a state declares war, it is a façade expressing the collective voice of individual war-mongers, each with free-will. A state, as such, therefore, cannot be the cause of war. Nor can impersonal historical forces – like broad socio-economic-political factors – or particular incidents be direct causes of war. At best, they are precipitating causes that influence (not cause) the individual's moral choices. The retching soul (characteristic of modernity) expresses its inordinate self-exteriorization through excessive empiricism that highlights facticity at the cost of free-will – by using observable empirical precipitating causes (that lack direct free-will) to explain war. Underlying these observable factors, however, prevails the free-will of man, which, when abused, unleashes the passions as immediate causes, not just of war, but of all social ills – including the climate crisis.

---

[10] The "Self" in "Self-knowledge" is the One (*Brahman*). In knowing *Brahman* we know our highest universal "Self."

Having ruled out the implausible causes of war, and highlighted free-will, we may conclude that only man and his moral states are plausible causes of war. Free-will, which makes man unique in the great chain of being, also makes him the unique direct cause of organized war. Hoisting him above other sentient beings, to the summit of the great chain of being, his God-given free-will makes man unique in his moral culpability. Nonhuman sentient beings (birds, animals, etc.) may possess will, which distinguishes them from insentient beings – like the volcano that cannot will its eruptions. But they lack *free*-will, and are therefore exculpable. Hence, man is higher than both sentient beings that possess will (but no free-will) and insentient beings (that possess neither will, nor free-will). But what is it *in* man that causes war?

The *immediate* causes of war – and of most social crises – are the churning passions that plague us. If greed causes capitalism and the climate crisis, and lust causes patriarchy, then anger, hatred, and greed (with lust following) are the primary causes of war. But underlying passions and actions – manifesting and exacerbating them – are the vices and iniquities in the human soul, which constitute the *ultimate* causes of war. External precipitating historical causes matter only to the extent that they tempt us to succumb to our vices.

Besides his unique stature in external Nature, man also possesses nature in his lower "animal" self, which manifests his unruly passions. Thus, Gandhi states, "Man as animal is violent, but as Spirit is nonviolent."[11] But even his "animal" nature arises from vices that exacerbate his egotism and will-to-power. Moreover, at a level lower than "animal" nature, the vices petrify the passions, through chilling forms of instrumental reasoning that trump the utilitarian over the moral. Man's most sadistic warring propensities come from villainous reasoning forged by the vices – not his impulsive "animal" nature. Caricaturing dispassion, the irrational coolness of a villain arises from passions petrified by formidable vices. In the hi-tech war, man expresses diabolical intelligence, cold-blooded strategies, and a will-to-kill that far surpass his impassioned "animal" nature.

Hence, our worst warring propensities express something only we are capable of in the great chain of being – namely, evil, and the unbridled egotism that signifies and measures evil. When we wage an unjust war, we slip morally to the base of the great chain of being. For, as Aristotle said, "… man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all…"[12]

Of all traits, therefore, man's will-to-power – a direct manifestation of his egotism and vices – is most relevant to war. Although stark opposites, power and strength are often confused with one another. If power expresses the vices, then strength expresses the virtues. The will-to-power, which opposes the will-to-goodness, prompts the reckless desires that unleash the passions. Man's thirst for power and his passions mutually exacerbate one another. The desire to conquer and annihilate perceived inferiors, through war, manifests nothing but a gigantic surge in the will-to-power. If human passions are the immediate causes of war, and human iniquities or vices, its ultimate causes, then man's insatiable lust for power is the immediate *frontispiece* of war – a facade that represents his iniquities and passions. In the invader, war is nothing but a surge of the will-to-power, whether individual or collective.

---

[11] Gandhi, 79.

[12] Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. B. Jowett (New York: Random House, 1943), 55.

Although not on par with direct causes, the broad precipitating causes of war matter as well – especially those that have prompted modernity's dark trinity of materialism-militarism-concupiscence. Of the three, materialism is primary – because it causes both militarism and concupiscence (a genre of materialism). Of the precipitating causes, the most relevant, perhaps, are not specific incidents, but modernity's historically unique loss of the overt ascetic norms. Serving as the principle cause of almost all modern crises (including the climate crisis), this loss serves also as the essence of modernity. The resulting hedonism causes the ontological loss characteristic of the retching soul. But what are the ascetic virtues and what is their purpose? They are primarily, self-control, temperance, and chastity – with renunciation and detachment (the opposite of addiction) their glorious results. Their purposes are purificatory-salvific-metaphysical. Cleansing us of spiritual encrustments of matter, they purify the reifying eye. Weaning us away from the empirical world and thrusting us forward towards the divine One, they fulfill their existential-salvific purpose. Hoisting human nature to the helm of the great chain of being, they fulfill their metaphysical purpose. By sublimating the pleasure principle, the ascetic norms help us let go of the world. By sublimating our lower desires, they prepare us for life. By imbuing us with renunciation, they prepare us for death.

The ascetic norms are to be distinguished entirely from puritanism (their grotesque caricature). Applying Aristotle's moral virtue, as a qualitative arithmetic mean[13] – to the ascetic norms (collectively), we may conclude that they are flanked by two associated vices – hedonism (excess vice) and puritanism (deficit vice). Moreover, applying Aristotle's insight – that one of the two vices will resemble the moral virtue[14] – we may conclude that puritanism resembles the ascetic norms more than hedonism. In fact, puritanism exploits this resemblance to caricature the ascetic norms.

The main historical cause of western modernity's apparent loss of the ascetic norms, is perhaps its descent, through the scientific revolution (ca. 1540-1700), from the inner Truth that serves religion – to the exteriorized correspondence notion of truth that serves science.[15] Moreover, this descent is perhaps the west's sacrifice at the Altar of History, for the sake of fulfilling its historical purpose – which has been to use scientific knowledge to bring modernity and material prosperity to the world.

Yet, this loss is *apparent*. For, the ascetic norms are *perennial*. Given their essential existential purpose of thrusting us towards the divine One, by detaching us from the world, they can never vanish from human nature or history. Nothing can obliterate them. Although strongest in their overt religious forms (through universal monastic vows) – they reappear in covert secular forms, when overt forms are infeasible. Thus, in contemporary western secularism, these covert-but-exteriorized ascetic norms are embedded in righteous expressions of corporeally-oriented political causes (feminism, anti-racism, anti-ageism, etc.) that come with the potential of detaching us from undue body-consciousness.

---

[13] Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. J. A. K. Thomson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955), 64-65, 68-69.

[14] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 72.

[15] See footnote 3.

This flight from the overt ascetic norms and its chief consequences – inordinate worldliness and corporeality – have caused the crisis of the modern self. Never before has the world seen so great a descent into the body or so destructive a materialism – an uncommon corporeality that has sunk the beleaguered self in a hissing cauldron of passions – especially, lust, greed, anger, and hatred – with the resulting worldliness prompting vengeance and war-mongering. Having lost sight of the perennial ascetic norms that guard dispassion, we inflate our egos and the will-to-power, thus enhancing war-mongering to historically unparalleled levels. Undue love of money causes undue love of war. Materialism-militarism-concupiscence, which robs life of meaning, trapping it in a black hole of nihilism, imbues modern man with a historically unparalleled will-to-kill. Almost the only way to sublimate this dark trinity is by returning *voluntarily* to the rarefied ascetic norms, which like a collective razor's edge, is difficult to tread. More often than not, we slip and fall into the two abysses that line the two sides of this edge – namely hedonism and puritanism.

Yet, the potential for the ascetic norms is universal in human nature, because they serve a soteriological purpose. Perhaps the next historical age will see us voluntarily transcend both hedonism and puritanism, to reclaim the overt ascetic norms. Yet, not even this golden age may wholly obliterate war. At best, it may reduce the frequency and violence of war. Until mankind, as a whole, vanquishes the eschatological procession it is embedded in, by reaching the solitary teleological summit of simultaneous *nirvanic unio mystica* – when the immanent God, present as the Substratum of all beings, returns to the same transcendent God, through the medium of individual ascending human beings treading the cycles of reincarnation – war will happen.

Bringing in its trail death, destruction, homelessness, famine, and pestilence – war wages unbridled violence against human and nonhuman sentient beings. Adding the long shadow of sinfulness to the broken bodies and minds of returning soldiers, the spoils of war never last long. No triumph or medallion for bravery can compensate for the soul-searing destruction that visits the human agents of war. When fought for economic profit – war earns inauspicious blood-money that wreaks havoc on warring economies. Given the *karmic* boomerang inherent in all acts of violence, every war returns home to haunt the invading nation. Unholy and inauspicious, war broods with the stench of alienation and necrophilia. Unlike death from terminal natural causes, death through war is not inevitable. Sudden, untimely, unexpected, and contingent, death through war leaves little room for philosophical repose, or solace. Making a mockery of funerals and mourning, war pollutes cities, towns, and the countryside with its stench of death.

War impacts three categories of people – soldiers attacked, soldiers attacking, and civilians. Those who directly suffer war sometimes live with lifelong scars, both physical and mental. To this, we may add the sufferings of those who lose loved ones through the chaotic will of the invader. War maims, kills, and orphans children needlessly. War robs the cradle – snatching infants from mothers and mothers from infants. That the impact of war on those it slaughters, tortures, rapes, and pillages is extreme trauma, sorrow, pain, and death is therefore obvious. What may not be as obvious, are the imperceptible *karmic* impacts of war on war-mongers and executors.

The impact of war upon those who wage it is far more insidious than its palpable impact upon the enemy. Here the just war is no exception. In fact, "legitimate" violence can be more dangerous – because its self-righteous "legitimacy" blinds it to its wrongfulness. War boomerangs back to return violence upon the warring nation – bringing hellish states of mind, loss of Conscience, and devastating *karmic* consequences. The direct psychological-*karmic*-ontological toll of war, which comes from the sins committed – especially taking life – visits direct executors, like soldiers. But the indirect toll of causing others to kill, visits the planners of war. Of the two, the indirect toll can be heavier. When war-practitioners (soldiers, workers in weapon factories, etc.) are misled into war by war-planners (politicians, weapons manufacturers who influence politicians, war-profiteers, etc.), the latter escalate their own *karmic* demerit far more than the demerit they cause in war-practitioners – especially in soldiers they use as cannon fodder. Besides, citizens who support unrighteous wars, or fail to atone one, should also fetch *karmic* demerit – in addition to deluded states of mind. Finally, the heaviest *karmic* demerit should befall those who engage in torture, which is sadism at its worst. Private mental atonements for war should be possible under any polity. But public atonement, which is sometimes essential, is usually feasible only in a viable democracy. It is incumbent upon the citizens of a democracy to atone, when their governments wage unjust wars.

Free-will is of paramount significance in measuring the *karmic* toll appropriate for each sin of war. Free-will matters not only for war-mongers who trigger war, but for all who obey morally reprehensible orders – provided they have the freedom to disobey. Free-will applies as well to those who profit from immoral sales of weapons. Workers who manufacture weapons, not knowing how they will be used, are not as much to blame.

But of all war participants, the soldier deserves the greatest attention – given the grievous ontological loss he suffers through engagement in war. Like the "sex-worker," the soldier is no ordinary worker. Both perform self-destructive "work." For, the price of taking life is the ruined life of the soldier who kills. Soldiers can vary in character – from the courageous and heroic, to the sadistic, the cowardly, and the violent – with mercenary adventurers in between. Those who join the armed forces (voluntarily or involuntarily) often know of war only theoretically. Sometimes they are kept in the dark about impending wars already in the making – wars, to which they will be sent, and wars from which they will return – their lives ruined forever. Nothing in their training teaches soldiers the universal commandment against killing, shared by all viable religions. Although trained in the art, technique, and rules of warfare, the soldier is rarely reminded of the commandment, "Thou shall not kill." Instead, he is indoctrinated to hate the enemy, who he must kill without hesitation, all for the sake of a cause – often hypocritical forms of patriotism in defense of ideals like "freedom" and "national integrity" that stand as fake frontispieces for the real sinister motives of war. In the throes of battle, the soldier forgets these ideals, caring only about his survival and that of his immediate fellow-soldiers.

Nothing in his training warns the soldier of the lifelong ontological loss he will suffer for breaking the prohibition against killing – a price that varies by context – whether he killed in offense or defense, whether he was sadistic or not, and whether his victim was an armed enemy soldier or an unarmed civilian. The direct *karmic* toll for taking life depends on the soldier's exact intentions and empirical contexts. Sadistic killing should fetch heavier demerit than killing in self-defense. Although always a sin, the act of taking life through war, is not always treated as a crime. Soldiers face at least three levels of punishment for taking life – the sin itself, the *karmic* toll this sin fetches, and formal punishment in a court of law. Inasmuch as sin is its own punishment, the degree of this punishment should depend on the seriousness of the sin. The act of killing is so great a sin that it, on its own, becomes the highest possible punishment – to which, the *karmic* toll of taking life is added. Unprosecuted acts of killing through war and torture, or worse – those that are celebrated by civilians – perhaps fetch the highest *karmic* demerit. On top of this, soldiers sometimes face punishment in courts of law.

Soldiers therefore return from battle, with not only broken bodies and minds, but also broken souls – for which, lifelong atonement is the only recourse. The act of killing leaves fatal footprints of anger that make intimacy impossible, leaving returning soldiers with an inability to form or sustain sincere relationships. The arduous labor of atonement exceeds mere political action (like anti-war protests). As an ultimate sin, the act of killing defies politics as a source of expiation – demanding the indispensable higher aspects of religion. But even religious expiation comes at different levels. More than sincere repentance, perhaps ceaseless yearning for God is the only expiatory force powerful enough to atone a sin as serious as killing.

The truism that to rise morally and spiritually, one must first fall into sin, comes with this caveat – the sinner must first be aghast by sin. Not all soldiers are even aware (let alone aghast) that in taking life "legitimately," they sinned. Of those that are, not all atone. Hence, the act of killing in war does not necessarily lead to atonement. More often than not, it leads to an impenitent life, plagued by searing *karmic* consequences, ghastly memories, and terrible addictions. The plight of the soldier, therefore, should haunt all discourses on war.

Yet, war can also spur heroism, extreme courage, and chance togetherness – all of which fetch *karmic* rewards. For, Heraclitus' metaphoric words – "War ... renders some gods, others men; he makes some slaves, others free" (Fr. 53)[16] – should apply also literally to physical war. For, war brings out the best and worst in us, thus rendering "some gods, others men" and making "some slaves, others free." War, therefore, sublimates the primary alienation inherent in violence, with the light of heroism, self-sacrifice, and chance togetherness. For, war witnesses perfect strangers defending, consoling, and sheltering one another. Using this chance togetherness, war dispels the secondary alienation of *ennui* that can plague passive political peace when it is bereft of inner peace.

---

[16] Heraclitus, 37.

War, Peace – and Tranquility

War and peace belong to the pairs of opposites that plague Immanence. Notwithstanding their innate strife, the opposites (in each pair) belong together – defining and limiting one another, conceptually and existentially. Like winter-summer, darkness-light, and cold-hot, war and peace belong together. Simultaneity with respect to time and place eludes all the pairs. For, as Augustine says – "… two contraries cannot be predicated at the same time of the same thing."[17] No pair applies to the same thing, at the same time, and in the same place. Thus, although war and peace can co-exist in a nation, no part of the nation can simultaneously be at war *and* peace.

Although twin-like in their inherent inseparability, the pairs of opposites are the total contrary of twins. Unlike identical twins, bound by similitude and intimacy, the opposites are marked by inherent contrariety – an ultimate otherness that makes them seethe with tension. Thus, where war expresses violence – inner tranquility radiates benediction, while external peace fosters prosperity and creativity. Moreover, where war affects people selectively, inner peace showers its external benediction equally on all. Where war, although mainly evil, can (as already stated) bring about *some* unforeseen good, peace (inner or outer) is entirely good. For, peace presupposes the virtues, even as it facilitates them. Where war is inauspicious, even when just – peace is auspicious even when superficial and external. Finally, where war combines its *tamasic* nature with *rajas*, and at best, a trace of *sattwa* – inner peace, is essentially *sattwic*, while outer political peace combines *sattwa* with *rajas*. Inasmuch as the opposites, as a whole, are always in a state of balance – acts of peace may rush to soothe the ravages of war, even as war may rush to destroy peace.

Although they belong to the pairs of opposites, war and peace are distinct in at least two ways. First, unlike other opposites, war and peace can each be inner *and* outer. Moreover, they share similar inner-outer dynamics. If by "inner war," we mean vices and passions, then war, like peace, expresses the inner in the outer. For, the raging passions, experienced inwardly, can unleash external war – quite as inner peace radiates exterior peace. But external political peace (through law and order, justice, etc.) need not bring about inner peace. Sometimes it co-exists with intense inner turmoil. War possesses greater consistency between its inner-outer expressions than external political peace. External war destroys inner calm, even as inner turmoil spills forth as outer fractiousness (even if not war).

Second, unlike other opposites, which can comingle to produce shades in between, war and peace cannot comingle to produce a third substance that combines them. Thus, black and white mix to produce gray, and hot and cold to produce warmth. But the same cannot be said of war and peace. While patches of war can prevail within peace and patches of peace within war – war and peace cannot comingle to produce a shade in between. At best, virtuous forms of neutrality serve as a gray area. But neutrality does not *comingle* war and peace. It avoids both – waging neither war, nor peace. War and peace cannot meld together, because each possesses its own unique substance. Unlike darkness, which is absence of light, and light, which is absence of darkness, war, although unpeaceful, is not mere absence of peace. Nor is peace, mere absence of war. Given their distinct substances, war and peace cannot *comingle* into a third substance. At best, they can co-exist.

---

[17] Augustine, *The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Love*, trans. J. F. Shaw, ed. H. Paolucci (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1961), 15.

The opposites fall into two genres – moral and non-moral (aesthetic, utilitarian, etc.). Accordingly, there should be a two-fold mode of transcending them. Yet, both genres – each possessing the teleological seeds of its own demise (through transcendence) – are tied inextricably to moral merit. For, the greater a person's merit, the more he transcends both genres. To transcend the moral opposites, he must consciously and deliberately exercise free-will to practice the morally superior opposite – thus accumulating moral merit. To transcend the non-moral opposites, he must relinquish attachment, which causes him to swing from extreme to extreme, within a pair. The first moral endeavor leads to the second detachment. In short, the more he practices the superior of the two moral opposites, the more he grows morally. As a result, the more detached he becomes towards the non-moral opposites. At the supra-moral summit of the One (*Brahman*), however, he becomes detached from even the moral opposites that include good and evil.

Applied to war and peace, this means we must consciously choose peace over war. For, peace is an unalloyed good, even as war is an unalloyed evil. By practicing peace in our thoughts, words, and deeds, we grow morally. As a result, we grow detached from the non-moral opposites, transcending them to reach the summit of the One (*Brahman*), where we experience an all-holy indifference to all opposites.

But the heart or essence of the opposites lies beyond themselves – at the *nirvanic* pinnacle of *unio mystica*, where multiplicity vanishes, as the ascending soul returns to the solipsistic One that towers high as the Being Absolute that underlies and sustains all relative being. If we define God (*Brahman*) in Vedāntic terms – as a supra-moral, transcendent-immanent, solipsistic, ultimate Reality – then *Brahman* must transcend the entire vista of the opposites (including war and peace).[18] Yet, *Brahman* must also be immanent as the universal Substratum of every being in the created worlds – including the opposites. Moreover, inasmuch as *Brahman qua* Being Absolute sustains relative being, it avoids literal pantheism, by being – not each being as such – but the inalterable divine Substratum that shines *through* each relative being. Thus, *Brahman* is distinct from Heraclitus' God, which *is* war-peace and other opposites – changing the way fire, when mixed with spices, is named according to the scent of each (Fr. 67).[19]

Finally, *Brahman* matters more than anything else in this discourse on peace, because *Brahman* is, in essence, unconditional and unqualified tranquility. Although supremely indifferent to all opposites, including good-evil, and hence, war-peace, yet, *Brah-*

---

[18] In Vedānta, good and evil belong to the pairs of opposites. So do the virtues and vices that represent good and evil respectively. Evil is not privation of good.

[19] Heraclitus, 45.

man is the originary-origin of true tranquility, which is not an attribute or limiting adjunct, nor the peace that opposes war – but rather, the very essence of concord. Hence, the greatest difference between war and peace – a difference that distinguishes them from all other pairs (including good and evil) – is that while peace has a triple presence, war has a double presence. Peace can be inner or outer – with both, immanent, secondary, and lower. But at its highest, peace becomes the supreme tranquility that *is Brahman* – a Peace that therefore surpasses all pairs of opposites, including war and lower peace. This primary Peace inspires the two secondary levels of lower peace. Moreover, inner peace transfigures itself from ordinary dispassion at the lower level, to a truer tranquility, which blossoms fully in the *nirvanic* state of complete divinization, when the individual awakens as *Brahman* – thus becoming the primary Peace that *is Brahman*. But war comes in only two forms – inner or outer. Always Peace incarnate, *Brahman* is never war incarnate. At best it is the divine Substratum that underlies both war and peace.

What is external peace? Like inner peace, external peace also comes in different categories (positive-negative, human-nonhuman) and at different levels (higher-lower). Moreover, if inner peace means freedom from the passions and iniquities, then outer political peace means freedom from war and disharmony. In its negative sense, external peace is mere absence of war. But in its positive sense, it is a state of harmony that yet allows vigorous differences. Presupposing individuality, this positive peace vanishes when the "we" suffocates the "I." External peace can also be human or nonhuman (in Nature) – with the latter sometimes conflicting with the former. Although Nature generally echoes human states of mind, the two need not concur. Thus, peace in human affairs can co-exist with tumult in Nature. Conversely, human turbulence can co-exist with uncanny peace in Nature. In the throes of war, a tranquil sunset feels uncanny.

External peace varies by level, ranging from the lower, human, political peace, to the higher tranquility in Nature. This lower external peace that politics seeks in vain, can come from individual *praxis* of external virtues – like social justice and freedom – but also from systemic sources – like law and order, ethical democracy, active demilitarization, and all deterrents of war (negotiations, sanctions, disarmament, etc.). Given the exigencies of *Realpolitik*, however, the civic freedom that results from external political peace, sometimes entails weapons. For, as Zelenskyy said, "Freedom must be armed no worse than tyranny."[20]

Moreover, external political peace is to be distinguished from the outer tranquility we radiate through our inner tranquility – but also from tranquility in Nature. For, tranquility – whether inner or outer – transcends politics. Higher than ordinary inner-outer peace, tranquility, which expresses the presence of *Brahman*, is always tinged with holiness. Yet, mental and natural tranquility are distinct, although both express the presence of *Brahman*. For, a tranquil state of mind is distinct from a tranquil sunset. Unlike the mind, which can *will* itself to tranquility, the sunset cannot. At best, a passive conduit of *Brahman*, the sunset serves as a screen through which the divine Light shines.

---

[20] V. Zelenskyy, "Speech by President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the Norwegian Storting," March 30, 2022, accessed, August 15, 2022, https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/promova-prezidenta-ukrayini-volodimira-zelenskogo-v-parlamen-73961.

At the highest level of the mystic, tranquility (whether inner or outer) is at its fullest. Through her primary vertical *nirvanic* oneness with *Brahman*, the mystic reaches the very source of Peace – then expresses this consecrated tranquility externally, through her secondary horizontal oneness with all beings. While lower levels of spiritual *praxis* (through prayer, contemplation, meditation, etc.) can uplift the collective consciousness – their impact is limited compared to the omnipresent reverberations of *unio mystica* – a tidal wave of pure holiness that inundates this universe in an abiding tranquility that redeems matter of its corporeality. If mere potential for *nirvanic* oneness already deters war – by promulgating greater unity – *nirvanic* actuality, being infinitely greater, should quell war altogether. For, perfected *nirvanic* Self-knowing, while rooted in the individual, has a cosmic import that shakes the foundations of Time-Space-Causation – transforming the course of History, and unifying the collective consciousness. The divinized sage therefore protects us by her very presence – which, in her *nirvanic* state, means being the Being Absolute of every being.

Today, nothing haunts us as much as the specter of a nuclear holocaust. Given our global stockpile of nuclear weapons and the prospect of further "improvements," this fear is justifiable. Although we have reduced this stockpile since the Cold War, this need not thwart us from blowing ourselves up. Treading a razor's edge, we are walking in the shadow of death – not ordinary demise, but a gruesome apocalypse. Our chief protection comes, not from treaties, but from silent sapient sages, immersed in the *nirvanic* state. Shaking the foundations of History, they radiate, by their very presence, a force of holiness powerful enough to quell our most violent propensities. Compared to their titanic oneness, the destructive power of the most dangerous nuclear war is minute. But greater still – in fact, the greatest ever protection – comes, not from disarmament, nor from Eisenhower's "atoms for peace"[21] – not even from the presence of unknown divinized sages – but from that which causes all this – namely, *Brahman*, which ensconces or envelopes this universe – permeating it, even as it transcends it.

Bibliography

Aristotle. *Politics*. Translated by B. Jowett. New York: Random House, 1943.

Aristotle. *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics Translated*. Translated by J. A. K. Thomson. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955.

Atomic Heritage Foundation in partnership with the National Museum of Nuclear Science & History. "Eisenhower's 'Atoms for Peace' Speech." December 8, 1953. Accessed August 15, 2022. https://www.atomicheritage.org/key-documents/eisenhowers-atoms-peace-speech.

Augustine. *The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Love*. Translated by J. F. Shaw. Edited by H. Paolucci. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1961.

---

[21] Atomic Heritage Foundation in partnership with the National Museum of Nuclear Science & History, "Eisenhower's 'Atoms for Peace' Speech," December 8, 1953, accessed August 15, 2022, https://www.atomicheritage.org/key-documents/eisenhowers-atoms-peace-speech.

The Bhagavad Gita. Translated and edited by Swami Nikhilananda. New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1944.

Gandhi, M. K. *All men are brothers: Autobiographical Reflections*. Edited by K. Kripalani. New York: Continuum, 2004.

Greenblatt, L. "Dalai Lama shares statement on Russian invasion of Ukraine." Lion's Roar, February 28, 2022. Accessed, August 15, 2022. https://www.lionsroar.com/dalai-lama-shares-statement-on-russian-invasion-of-ukraine/.

Heraclitus. *Fragments*: *A Text and Translation with a Commentary*. Translated by T. M. Robinson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

Zelenskyy, V. "Speech by President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the Norwegian Storting." March 30, 2022. Accessed, August 15, 2022. https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/promova-prezidenta-ukrayini-volodimira-zelenskogo-v-parlamen-73961.

Philotheos **22.2** (2022) 207–209

BOOK REVIEWS

Graham Oppy and Kenneth L. Pearce, *Is There a God? A Debate*, New York: Routledge, 2022, 365 pp.

In this book Graham Oppy and Kenny Pearce debate the question of God's existence in an engaging and constructive manner. Both are leading philosophers of religion. Pearce has published widely in the field and Oppy is perhaps the foremost atheistic philosopher of religion of our time. The book is nevertheless quite accessible and suitable for students as well as scholars in the areas of philosophy and theology. Pearce starts off their conversation with an exposition and defense of *classical theism*. Classical theism, for Pearce, holds to the existence of a God that is necessary, immutable, impassible, and atemporal. He views Philo of Alexandria, Avicenna, Maimonides, Thomas Aquinas, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz as historical examples of classical theists (p. 18-19). The particular version of classical theism that Pearce defends is the view that spacetime and everything it contains exists because of rational and free choice of a necessary being. He argues that classical theism is able to explain 'History', the complete sequence of causes and effects in the past, present and future, while naturalism is not. The sort of explanation Pearce envisions *grounds* History in a free choice of God. The divine choice in turn is based on reasons. God's existence itself can be explained with the real definition of God, i.e. in terms of what it means to be 'God' (p. 29-65). It is important to note that for Pearce this relation of grounding is *noncausal*. It is supposedly similar to the way a statue relates to, is 'grounded' in, the clay from which it is made (p. 42-43). This indeed avoids making God's choice a part of History, the very thing in need of explanation, but also leads to various difficulties. It seems, for instance, that on this theory God is not really the first cause of reality. If so, that would set Pearce at odds with much of natural theology, and especially *first cause theology*, which seeks to show that the first cause is God. Arguments for the divinity of the first cause thus seem to count against his theory.

In addition to his cosmological argument, Pearce also sets forth an interesting argument from monotheistic religious experience (p. 65-90, 202-208, 249-258). The argument is (very roughly) as follows: Theists are able to maintain a more uniform approach to human experience and the reliability of our cognitive faculties, starting from a general position of trust, while naturalists are forced to discount supposed experiences of God, even though religious experience is highly similar to sensory experience, which they do take to be reliable. Since theistic worldviews are able to treat religious experiences as more reliable than naturalistic ones, they are, all else being equal, to be preferred. Now, Graham Oppy levels various criticisms at the arguments of Pearce. With regard to the argument from religious experience, Oppy argues that religious experience is relevantly different from sensory experience and that it is clear from the degree of religious disagreement that religious experience is unreliable (p. 232-237, 292-297). Moreover, he makes several points about Pearce's cosmological argument. Oppy maintains that he does have an explanation of History, argues that Pearce's worldview is less simple, and points out that if God's grounding of History is chancy, this introduces chance outcomes that his own view does not contain (p. 222, 275, 280).

In his own opening statement Oppy interacts with various arguments for God and lays-out his version of naturalism. This is very interesting since he touches on many different issues in metaphysics and philosophy more generally. On Oppy's view, some initial part of our universe exists necessarily. He thus agrees with theists that there is at least one necessary being, but holds that it is not divine. Moreover, he rejects the view that the universe has a cause (p. 97). Oppy is further inclined to think that causation is more fundamental than time and that there are non-temporal parts of reality (p. 109). He thinks that causation is sometimes *chancy*, i.e. indeterministic. The specific outcome of such causation is a matter of chance and "nothing explains why the outplaying of chance yields one outcome rather than another" (p. 111). Although Oppy uses this sort of causation to explain contingency, it is, in my view, a major drawback of his theory. After all, these chancy events threaten to make reality *ultimately* inexplicable. In his criticism, Pearce, however, focusses on another matter, namely Oppy's necessary truths in the realms of mathematics, ethics and aesthetics, coupled with his treatment of all necessity as *brute*, i.e. without explanation. For Pearce, it is clear that some necessary truths can in fact be explained and, moreover, that the (infinitely) many brute necessities of Oppy's worldview are problematic (p. 185-194). It is not clear to me that Oppy is committed to as many brute necessities as Pearce claims, but he does raise an important issue. In reply, Oppy seemingly (1) distinguishes two kinds of necessity, placing mathematical necessities in the domain of *a priori* necessity, and the necessity of the initial singularity in the domain of *a posteriori* necessity, (2) emphasizes that many *a priori* necessary truths follow logically from necessary axioms, thus minimizing the number of fundamental necessities, while (paradoxically) insisting that their necessity is unexplained, and (3) attempts to show that he can mirror Pearce's explanation of God's necessary existence in his own account of fundamental reality: the initial singularity's existence and properties are explained by its real definition (p. 276-282).

Throughout the book it becomes increasingly clear that there are important differences as well as similarities in the approaches that Oppy and Pearce take. Both value *simplicity*, *explanatory power* and the comparison of *worldviews*, but for Oppy it is seemingly more important that the worldviews are first spelled out (as much as possible), while Pearce appears content to compare key aspects of worldviews and deal with secondary matters at a later stage. There is also disagreement about the function and value of *arguments*, with Oppy stressing that an argument must have premises that the other agrees with (cf. p. 298-301). Although that is a laudable aim, it is not clear that Oppy's own arguments about the merits of his naturalistic worldview (can) pass that test. That theists such as Pearce remain unpersuaded that Oppy has a better worldview suggests, for example, that they reject at least some (of the premises) of his arguments concerning its simplicity and explanatory power. What also becomes clear in the book is that it is not always easy to adjudicate which theory is better. Is Oppy's view of the necessary part of reality simpler, or simply less developed than Pearce's classical theism? Does Pearce's grounding explanation of

History give his view an advantage or not? Which of them has the better account of religious experience? Questions thus remain at the end of the book. Nevertheless, *Is There A God?* presents us with an interesting and worthwhile exchange between leading philosophers of religion and furthers the conversation about one of life's deepest questions.

Mark J. A. Shaw, Utrecht

philotheos.gnomon.rs

PHILOTHEOS International Journal for Philosophy and Theology

Published by

Gnomon Center for the Humanities, Belgrade
in cooperation with
Sebastian Press, Los Angeles
Center for Philosophy and Theology, Trebinje

Philotheos is indexed in the following databases:

ATLA Religion Database, EBSCO Discover, Gnomon Bibliographische Datenbank, Google Scholar, International Bibliography of Periodical Literature on the Humanities and Social Sciences (IBZ), International Philosophical Bibliography, L'Année philologique, Philosophy Documentation Center, ProQuest Summon, Revue philosophique de Louvain, WorldCat Local.

Call for papers

Unpublished papers should be sent per e-mail to
editor.philotheos@gnomon.rs

prof. dr. Bogoljub Šijaković
Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet
"Philotheos"
Mije Kovačevića 11b
11060 Beograd
Serbia

All rights reserved.
© Gnomon Center for the Humanities, Belgrade

CIP – Каталогизација у публикацији
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

1:2

PHILOTHEOS : International Journal for Philosophy and Theology / Founding Editor and Editor-in-Chief Bogoljub Šijaković. - Vol. 1 (2001)- . - Belgrade : Gnomon Center for the Humanities, 2001- . - 24 cm

Polugodišnje. - Uporedni naslov na grčkom jeziku. - Tekst na svetskim jezicima.

ISSN 1451-3455 = Philotheos
COBISS.SR-ID 185353479

Philotheos is supported by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia

PHILOTHEOS

ISSN 1451-3455 UDC 1:2 e-ISSN 2620-0163

Philotheos (**Φιλόθεος**) is an international scholarly journal that provides a forum for a dialogue in philosophy and in theology respectively, with a special focus on the dialogue between the two. Founded in 2001, it brings together articles and book reviews of philosophical and theological interest in the broader Christian tradition. Contributions are published in several European languages and they cover diverse field of inquiry from antiquity to the present. The overarching goal is to overcome the disciplinarian entrenchments in philosophy and theology and reintegrate professional questions with the need to answer to problems placed before us by life itself.