CHALLENGES IN CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY

THEOLOGY IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

Church, Academy and Nation

Gavin D'Costa

Blackwell Publishing

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Challenges in Contemporary Theology

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For Sachin and Roshan

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Preface

I have been teaching theology of religions for some 22 years and inevitably one reflects on the institutional context of one's intellectual work, for me, the university. This book is the result of such reflection. I hope it will interest those concerned with the future of the university in Anglo-American culture and those who believe that the university might be other than the intellectual production line in the industrial halls of late postmodern capitalist society. This book is also addressed to those who teach and study the disciplines called "theology" or "religious studies" (or "comparative religion" or "history of religion"). To the former, it is yet another voice in a growing symphony that imagines a vital public role for theology so that it may serve both the Church and the wider secular and inter-religious culture in which we live. To the latter, it is a challenge to consider a theologizing of their discipline. In the final chapter of the book I indicate how this theologizing of *all* disciplines is what might characterize a theologized university—a Christian university. Thus, this book might also be of interest to Christian intellectuals who may sometimes wonder what their Christian identity has to do with their university work. Hence, I address a triangular and often overlapping audience: the Church, the university, and the "public square" made up, as it is, of the former two, but also other religions, secularism, and various ideologies.

In chapter one, "Theology's Babylonian Captivity in the Modern University," I reflect on the sense in which both theology and the major site of its production, the modern university, have been secularized. I speak of England and the United States in what follows. This has profound consequences, two of which I explore. The first, more related to my own intellectual interests, is the birth and development of religious studies. I argue that religious studies is locked into an Oedipal relation with theology, as it is in fact a child of secularized forms of theology, and its logic leads to the demise of theology.

Concerned as I have been with theology of religions, I suggest that the reverse would be more productive. I argue for a theological religious studies, for the theologizing of a discipline (religious studies) that should properly serve theology. An example of this is found in chapter five. The second consequence of the secularization of the university and theology within it has been the fragmentation of the disciplines. The rationale for the modern university is increasingly consumerist, reflecting our Anglo-American context. And often it is the Arts subjects, including theology, that are seen as most difficult to justify in financial and educational terms: a theology degree does not obviously help one to become a good economist, nurse, or bus driver. On the contrary, I suggest that theology's pivotal place in the origins of the university in Europe rightly implies that it, with philosophy, has the ability to unify the disciplines. I return to this unifying possibility in chapter six. The consequence of this analysis is my argument for a Christian university, rather than for internal plurality within the modern liberal university. I want to argue that theology can best serve secular society by being properly theological, capable of articulating a vision that both challenges and embraces the best of modernity. This is one virtue of theology.

I am Roman Catholic so I try to work this out in terms of a Catholic vision, drawing heavily on certain Catholic sources, even though many of the most inspiring theologians I have read have been non-Catholics. (I use "Catholic" to mean "Roman Catholic" for brevity's sake, fully realizing that the word can be properly applied more widely.) I started this book envisaging arguments for a Christian university, but soon realized that too many denomination-specific issues had to be faced. Hence, my strategy has been to present arguments for a Catholic university, not in an unecumenical spirit, but rather the opposite. It is important first to envisage what a Catholic university might look like, and other denominations might do the same, before we Christians might work together toward a "Christian university." Certainly, in England, this is more plausible than a denominational institution, even though historically all the major universities that were Christian were first Congregationalist, Episcopalian, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, or of other denominations, and then "Christian." I very much hope that non-Catholic readers can enter into the project, realizing that glorifying Christ in the academy has to be worked from the bottom up, through our respective ecclesial communities.

In the second chapter, "Babylon in the Church: The United States and England," I selectively test my comments about the state of the modern university in relation to the United States and England. Reading chapter one, a response might be: "what you say may be true of secular universities, but there are many church-based universities in the United States. Surely the

plurality of education you seek can be found in such contexts?" In the United States I focus on Catholic institutions primarily. Although there are glimmers of hope and flashes of brightness, I chart a slow "dying of the light," the growing secularization of the very institutions that might challenge modernity and postmodernity's habits of thought and practice. In England there is a very different situation. There are no great Christian universities left, even in name, as in the United States. However, the history of English universities follows some similar patterns: from church-based institutions of higher learning to secularized universities. Chapter two serves to act as an empirical fleshing out and testing of the thesis of chapter one. It leaves me with a number of further questions regarding the plausibility of the type of Christian university I am proposing, in terms of its social divisiveness, its academic freedom and accountability, and funding.

These issues are the topic of chapter three: "Cyrus Returns: Rebuilding the Temple in Babylon." I argue that liberal modernity is in fact committed to religious plurality and diversity in society and that these goals are best served, in some circumstances, by helping religious communities to learn and practice their traditions faithfully. In the intellectual realm, this means the funding of "sectarian" universities only in so far as they are committed to the "common good" and engagement with other traditions. These two requirements are actually generated from my own theological position, but overlap with elements of modernity. Hence, my metaphor of Cyrus, King of the Medes and Persians, who helped the Jews rebuild the temple, allowing a return to Jerusalem and suggesting that those who remained in Babylon help finance the project in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 36: 22). I inspect the arguments about sectarianism, in part, to explode some of the rhetorical stances taken by critics of the type of position I'm advancing, and in part to respond to some very genuine concerns. After trying to address such concerns, I examine the complex issues of the accountability, freedoms, and funding of a Catholic university in the United States. Can the university serve the Church and society at the same time? If it is Catholic, will it not skew things to the advantage of a minority interest group in our pluralist society? And should society pay for institutions that are accountable primarily to minority communities that can often launch truculent criticism of that wider society? Part of my answer is that the accountability of theologians and others in a Church university, while a complex matter, is no different, formally speaking, from accountability in all professions and all disciplines. And most importantly, there is no clear case that academic freedom is called into question. Rather, the opposite may occur: genuine creativity and interdisciplinary research may occur in universities accountable to a unified vision of life, grace, and love.

Having cleared the ground a little, and I realize that many objections still remain, I turn to a distinctive aspect of a Christian university in chapter four, "Why Theologians Must Pray for Release from Exile," that of prayer. At this point I abandon the rational argumentative mode of the first three chapters and will proceed *as if* the reader is in agreement with the basic project I'm advancing. Up until now, I have been trying to persuade those who might not share my view. This now changes and the following chapters (four–six) speak from within a model of a Catholic university to show how things might be otherwise. They are snapshots of a place that is yet to be built by ecclesial communities (together or alone) in democratic societies. They are also snapshots based on various fragmentary practices within existing Christian—and secular—universities. So in chapter four I chose prayer for two reasons. Prayer is hardly ever imagined as part of the methodology of a rigorous academic discipline. I argue that it is precisely this, both in the history of theology until the modern period, and as a necessary epistemological presupposition. Second, I trace the way in which this necessary requirement for the doing of theology actually forces a reconsideration of the traditional disciplinary lines internal to the discipline called "theology." Theology's own house needs a spring clean. As the argument proceeds I illustrate instances of the fruitfulness of dissolving traditional boundaries, thereby returning theology to a profounder integration with itself and with other disciplines in a manner not unknown prior to modern university "specialization." It is this rich dynamic tradition that offers both the Church and the secular world a considered alternative to the dead ends of modernity and postmodernity, while nevertheless recognizing their great strengths.

In chapter five, "The Engagement of Virtue: A Theological Religious Studies," I return to the discipline of "religious studies" to show what it might look like when theologized. It also allows me to draw together a number of themes. In the early chapters I argued for the practice of virtue for undertaking theology. I return to virtue in a case study of a Christian "saint," Edith Stein, and a Hindu "goddess," a *sati*, Roop Kanwar. I had argued in chapter four that the saint embodies theology, and thus the embodiment of both Stein and Kanwar is my focus here. Their theologically narrated lives generate a painful but challenging conversation regarding virtue and its cross-religious and gendered aspects. Edith Stein's canonization caused much controversy, leading to a high-level Jewish delegation's visit to the Pope in an attempt to block the process. A number of important Catholic theologians supported this Jewish plea. Roop Kanwar's death as a young *sati* caused horror and revulsion in India and abroad. What might these two women have in common, other than their controversial lives? Virtue? This chapter also exemplifies the sense in which I believe a Christian

university and its theologians can reach outwards, engaging creatively and positively, but not uncritically, with all creation—and in this instance, Hinduism.

In chapter six, I develop this theological vision to relate to other disciplines, with philosophy, as mediator, and pay particular attention to physics and cosmology, to see whether fragmentation can be overcome. I chose physics and cosmology as they are often presented as totally unrelated to theology, a discipline that many might think would look entirely similar were it in a secular liberal university or a Catholic university. I hope to show otherwise. Thus, I try to avoid two usual intersections between these subjects: points of conflict, and the need for an ethical or religious stance regarding the use of technology. I also take this test case, not in a search for an overarching philosophy or ideology, but to see whether the unity of all creation, assumed theologically, might promote health, interconnectedness, and developments between different disciplines. In chapter three I had touched on this issue with specific reference to the vision of a "Catholic university" set forth by Pope John Paul II. Chapter six fleshes that out a little, testing papal documents in terms of a specific discipline. If the results look promising, then there are further good reasons to argue for a Catholic university. What can be said of this relationship obviously cannot simply be applied to other disciplines. Carrying out this long meticulous and complex task belongs to the Catholic university and has hardly been started. Such a university's existence would be invaluable to the Church as it would provide the intellectual life-blood permitting a rich description of what all creation looks like from a Christian perspective. To facilitate this, alongside different views and practices of knowledge (postmodern, modern, Buddhist, Jewish, don't knows, and so on) will structurally supports real plurality. Only then can we have the debates that are necessary to deal with pluralism, peace, truth, and justice. Without such diversity, there will be little new progress, little challenge from really different alternatives, and in Christian terms, the stifling of a theological voice in the public square.

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Finally, thank you to Beryl my wife and to Roshan and Sachin our children. To the latter, a new generation, I dedicate this book with gratitude and hope.

(Feast of All Saints, 2004)

Chapter One

Theology's Babylonian Captivity in the Modern University

I Should "Theology" and "Religious Studies" Be Terminated?

Since this book is concerned with the health of theology and the Church's engagement with cultures, it might seem rather odd to begin with a question that intimates the termination of theology within the university, the very place that is central to the future of Anglo-American theology. But as the Israelites found out, living in Babylon can have the effect of purifying the faith as well as destroying it. In what follows I shall be suggesting that theology's location within the modern western secular liberal university is not unlike the Israelite captivity within Babylon. Theology, properly understood, cannot be taught and practiced within the modern university. This is not a view shared by all Christians, but is held by a number of post-liberal theologians and philosophers, such as Stanley Hauerwas, John Milbank, and Alasdair MacIntyre.[1]

One way of noticing this Babylonian captivity is in the arguments that are conducted in the modern university about the role of theology. The view

[1] See Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, The Labyrinth Press, Durham, North Carolina, 1988, esp. the two chapters, "Truth and Honor" and "How the Universities Contribute to the Corruption of Youth"; "On Witnessing our Story: Christian Education in Liberal Societies" in eds. Stanley Hauerwas and John H. Westerhoff, *Schooling Christians: "Holy Experiments" in American Education*, W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1992, pp. 214–36; John Milbank, "The Conflict of the Faculties: Theology and the Economy of the Sciences" in eds. Mark Thiessen Nation and Samuel Wells, *Faith and Fortitude: In Conversation with the Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 2000, pp. 39–58; Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Duckworth, London, 1985 (2nd edn.), *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, Duckworth, London, 1988, and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, Duckworth, London, 1990.

expressed by some scientific atheists (Richard Dawkins, for example) is that theology has no place in the modern university. It is a vestige of a religious world and society which has long since crumbled and been discredited. It is a disservice to a modern research university to include such a subject in the curriculum.[2] A similar voice is heard from some who teach in departments of religious studies. Donald Wiebe, for example, argues that a scientific, objective, rational study of "religion," without any privilege being granted to any one religion, is the only intellectually respectable practice in the modern university.[3] Dawkins and Wiebe have one presupposition in common, which I shall be calling into question: that there is such a thing as neutral objectivity in any mode of research, either science, Dawkins's own area, or religious studies, Wiebe's specialism. However, in another sense I agree with Dawkins's and Wiebe's conclusions, but for very different reasons. What are these reasons? In the next section of this chapter I want to look at the process of secularization, as it has affected both the university and the discipline of theology. Secularization is a much debated topic, and I use the word to connote two specific historical processes.[4] The foundation of the universities took place in a universe with a sacred canopy, whereby people understood their practices to relate to an organic and cosmic pattern participating in the nature of reality. This reality was divinely created for the good of men and women, for the flourishing of human society, and for participation in truth and love. The modern university, with some exceptions, in contrast, develops its programs and practices without any reference to a sacred canopy. Often finance is the chief criterion, without any organic vision of the relation of the different disciplines, without any shared values regarding the good of men and women, or concerning what truth might possibly be. Augustine, well before the universities were founded, carried out a scathing critique of pagan institutions of learning: their main purpose being vanity in so far as they served purely to gain better employment, and self-promotion.[5]

[2] Richard Dawkins, Professor of the Public Understanding of Sciences at the University of Oxford, contributes to popular discussion on the matter in English newspapers. For one example, among many other debates and discussions, see *The Daily Telegraph*, March 16, 2002.

[3] See Donald Wiebe, *The Politics of Religious Studies: The Continuing Conflict with Theology in the Academy*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1999.

[4] Most helpful on the secularization debate and its impact on theology are Kieran Flanagan, *The Enchantment of Sociology: A Study of Theology and Culture*, Macmillan, London, 1996, pp. 52–99; Peter Berger, *The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation*, Collins, London, 1980; and ed. Steve Bruce, *Religion and Modernisation: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularisation Thesis*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992.

[5] Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Maria Boulding OSB, New York City Press, New York, 1997, 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.16.30 and more trenchantly, *Teaching Christianity*, trans. Edmund Hill OP, New York City Press, New York, 1996, 2.26.40, 2.13.20, 2.61.

This removal of the sacred canopy in institutional terms is one definition of secularism and it is one reason why I believe Dawkins and Wiebe are correct. The attendant sense denotes the way in which the process of secularization both creates and is created by various intellectual presuppositions embedded in our intellectual institutions. Of course, institutions do not have ideas, people do. But, through their organization and processes, institutions always reflect ideas about the good, the true, and the worthwhile. By briefly examining the secularizing of the university and the discipline called theology, I hope at least to indicate why Dawkins is correct: theology cannot flourish in the modern university. However, I think Dawkins is also wrong for two reasons. The modern university, like modern secular societies in England and the United States, has a strong commitment to liberal pluralism: cultural, intellectual, and religious diversity. In principle, it should be committed to facilitating real diversity, as opposed to Dawkins's impulse to be rid of it. Further, if theology can argue that it is a real intellectual discipline and requires a different sort of university for its health, and, if it were healthy, would be a contributor to the common good, then in principle, liberals should be willing to entertain funding this alternative university for the common good, and the flourishing of real pluralism. In chapter three I shall be pursuing this argument in some depth, facing a number of serious objections to such a "sectarian" proposal, not least the question of funding, and the problem of the authority under which such a university is finally accountable. In much of this I draw on the experience of Roman Catholic universities in the United States. Every country is different and internally diverse.[6] However, because I happen to be a Roman Catholic Christian, I

[6] I deal only with universities in England, as the university system in Scotland and Wales has originated and evolved in differing circumstances. Furthermore, the Colleges of Higher Education have a different history from that of the universities, even though both are part of "higher education." Because of this, I exclude them from consideration, despite their now forming the "new universities." See "Religious Studies in the Universities," covering England (Adrian Cunningham), Scotland (Andrew F. Walls), Wales (Cyril Williams), and the Open University (Terence Thomas), in ed. Ursula King, *Turning Points in Religious Studies*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1990, pp. 21–67. Ireland is also excluded from this study although it presents a most interesting contrast. The university has developed very differently in Europe and North America. See on this: ed. Sheldon Rothblatt, *The European and American University Since 1800: Historical and Sociological Essays*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993; and for the period before that: ed. James M. Kittelson, *Rebirth, Reform, and Resilience: Universities in Transition, 1300–1700*, Ohio State University Press, Columbus, 1984; and the two-volume work edited by Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, *Universities in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1800*, vol. 1, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, and vol. 2, 1996. Antonio García y García traces the history of the faculty of theology during this period in volume 1. The practice of theology in the developing world is contextually so different that I do not attempt to engage with this important field.

have focussed more on Catholic universities. This is not intended as an unecumenical gesture, and I do believe that in England there is more chance of a Christian university than a Catholic university, but it is necessary to work out ideas and practice with some sensible focus. I very much hope that Christians of all denominations can find something in this exploration and bring their rich heritage to bear on the question and further the discussion.

But what of Wiebe's proposals? At least, unlike Dawkins, he wishes to retain the place of religion in the university. In the third section of this chapter, I shall be arguing that his type of position is called into question because of its methodological assumptions, shared by Dawkins: that a neutral, objective, rational study is the only method permissible in the university. In fact, I would wish to go further and argue that the discipline of "religious studies," as conceived by some of its major theoreticians, is intellectually flawed, such that it, not theology, has a contestable place in the modern research university. I want to argue that the legitimate place for the study of religions is within a theological religious studies, such that world religions are part of a theological curriculum. As it exists under Wiebe's model, it is a secular study of religions, privileging secularism, over against the objects of study. Wiebe's desire to escape from ideology is utterly ideological. I should make it very clear that I am not contesting religious studies' role in the modern university; rather, I contest some forms of it, regarding their self-description.

Two further clarifications before proceeding with my argument. In this first chapter I shall be making apparently sweeping comments about the modern university. I beg the reader's patience, as in chapter two I attempt to check these comments against empirical studies of universities in the United States and England. For certain readers, it may be worth reading chapter two first if they are unconvinced that there is a problem with the health of theology. Such a reader might say two things: there are Christian universities in the United States, so what is all the fuss about? They may add: Christians, like yourself, argue that it is impossible to do in the modern university precisely what you are doing. Does that not show that the modern university encourages pluralism far more than is admitted in the arguments of this book? To the first question, I respond in chapter two that American Christian research universities have already lost their salt, or are in the process of doing so. They retain their Christian character primarily by having a Mass on holy days, having well-resourced chaplaincies, and being actively involved in social work to the poor and less privileged. These features are very important, and I think they are a vital element of a Christian university, but they are not enough to constitute a Christian university. Many secular universities might boast all three of these features. Further, the deeper question is, how

does the Mass, or prayer meeting, affect the curriculum, the interrelationship of the disciplines, or the research methodologies utilized not only in theology but other disciplines? Very few universities, hardly any among those studied, can answer these questions in any form of thick description. I argue, with a number of significant American scholars, that Christian universities are dying or dead in the United States. The second question is admittedly uncomfortable. Yes, I write this book with research leave from my own secular liberal university, Bristol, and my colleagues generously tolerate my writing suggesting that our department be closed down. I also enjoy good rigorous conversation with colleagues within the university who come at issues from very different angles. I am not arguing that the modern liberal university be closed, but rather that alternative universities be encouraged alongside it, to facilitate long-term serious intellectual pluralism. Such universities can train new generations in alternative intellectual traditions of theory and practice, rather than perpetuating a single non-sacred intellectual canopy. Currently there is a worrying (although predictable) homogeneity, and a real commitment to pluralism is better served by training those who are different (from the secularist) to develop their traditions rigorously. This issue will be dealt with both at the end of this chapter and in the first section of chapter three.

II On (Not) Doing Theology in the Modern University

Let me now turn to plotting the narrative of theology in its pre-university days and then from the thirteenth century, its university career, which has lasted until today. Theology became deeply transformed from the fourteenth century on, with particular seismic movements in the Reformation of the sixteenth century and the Renaissance, and the earthquake of the seventeenth century with the rise of the new natural sciences. The nineteenth century was the decisive turning point, although the seeds for that moment had been planted much earlier, with the new Enlightenment research university founded in Berlin. Theology lived under a very dark cloud.

The four aspects that I shall focus on are as follows. First, I will show how the discipline of theology becomes separated from the practices that are required for its undertaking: prayer, sacraments, and virtue. Second, in rough tandem, but not with exact parallels, I will trace how university theology became prised from ecclesial life so that it now often succumbed to alien philosophies, methodologies, and models for its very life-blood, a blood that would subsequently infect Church life. Admittedly, this has

happened throughout the history of the Church. Third, I will focus on theology's role as queen of the sciences. It provided patterns for the unity of the disciplines and argued that the *telos* of all knowledge was the glorification of God. I shall chart the massive eclipse of this role so that theology now struggles to retain a place in the modern research university. Fourth, and due to the above pressures, I will (in the next section) see how this history eventually led to the Oedipal configuration between theology and religious studies, so that the latter claimed Enlightenment privileges and sought to exclude theology from the university.

The parameters of this survey require emphasis. The history of theological education is complex and vast and all I can do is provide snapshots, making observations and illustrating an argument.[7] Further, I only draw from the Latin tradition—and the rich history of the eastern churches cannot be examined at all, and nor can the wider tradition of the universities within the Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu contexts.[8]

The history of institutional theology is tied to the patronage of the Church. However, "theology" had pre-Christian roots in Greek culture. The Greek word θεολογια (the "science of God," or "words about God") is found in both Plato (427–347 BC) and Aristotle (384–322 BC) pertaining to gods or eternal principles. Plato, in the *Republic* (379A), gives an ordered account of the gods, and in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (XI, 1, 1025 a. 19; 1026 a 19–22), he explains the principle of the cosmos's existence in terms of an unmoved mover. Christians would rework these accounts, sometimes not successfully. The role of the unifying power of the gods in relation to other disciplines (curriculum structure) and the role of knowledge was also subject to intense debate in Greek culture. These issues would also be

[7] I am indebted to: Aidan Nichols, *The Shape of Catholic Theology*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1991; R. Latourelle, *Theology: Science of Salvation*, trans. Sr. Mary Dominic, St. Paul's, Slough, 1969 [1968]; G. VanAckeren, "Theology" in the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, vol. 14; P. De Letter, "Theology, History of" in the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, vol. 14; Yves Congar, *A History of Theology*, trans. Hunter Gutherie, Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1968; David Kelsey, *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate*, W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1993; and Arthur F. Holmes, *Building the Christian Academy*, W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2001.

[8] For instance, Muslim universities started with the University of Cairo in 970 and were also established with theology as the organizing subject (with the important exceptions of Ma'mūn in Baghdad and the Fātimids in Cairo). See F. E. Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs: The Aristotelian Tradition in Islam*, New York University Press, New York, 1968. The positive role of Islam in the development of the western university cannot be underestimated. But the question is relevant in contemporary western society. For example, Peter Steinfels reports briefly on the existence of Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist forms of higher education in the United States, in *A People Adrift*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2003, p. 145.

central concerns for the Christian tradition. Positions repeated to the present day are often to be found in Greek culture. Hence, Gorgias' emphasis on rhetoric and speech being all-important, or Protagoras' argument that man is the measure of all, or Socrates' scathing criticism of the Sophists' relativism and his concerns for virtue and truth, or Plato's emphasis on learning as wisdom, necessary for a just society and a just ruler, or Isocrates' "humanism," or Aristotle's "liberal" (*eleutheros*) education, indicating its necessity for "freemen," not slaves. Hence, the question of education for utility, aestheticism, liberalism, its own sake, the good of society, and truth (all in different hues) was thoroughly debated.[9]

The earliest Christian theologians were the New Testament writers, not conducting their work from any institutions of learning but from communities of practice, with varying educational backgrounds. In the patristic period (first to eighth century), the nearest thing to the university was the Nestorians in the Persian city of Nisibis in the fifth century, forming an institute of learning, teaching, and research, that is reputed to have inspired Cassiodorus' monastic school at Vivarium.[10] In this period, three strands emerge regarding the relation of theology to other disciplines. The first stresses that all truth and salvation is to be found in the Bible, therefore pagan knowledge is fundamentally useless. What has Jerusalem to do with Athens? This view is often associated with Tertullian (c.160–225), although in his writings he is far more nuanced.[11] The second, containing rich internal diversity, sees the Greek philosophical heritage as *preparatio* (preparation) and *paidagogos* (an education finally aiming at Christ). Origen (c.185–254) uses the metaphor of the ransack of the Egyptians for the future of Israel, so that all learning could in principle be turned to the service of God.[12] Earlier, Justin Martyr (c.100–165) had understood the seed of the logos as explaining such knowledge, after abandoning the position that the Greeks had read Moses or met some of the Old Testament prophets. The later giants Augustine, less so, and Aquinas, more so, belong to this strand. The third strand, at least in the eyes of the first and second, adopted Greek philosophy uncritically, so that it shaped the Christian message, rather than the Christian message critically employing conceptualities and categories from the Greeks and thereby transforming them. This led to heresy. Origen

[9] See Henri Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, Sheed & Ward, New York, 1956, and Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, trans. Gilbert Highet, 3 vols., Oxford University Press, New York, 1944.

[10] See George Every, *Early Eastern Christianity*, SCM, London, 1980, pp. 77–9.

[11] For Tertullian and the Fathers, see Henri de Lubac, *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, trans. James R. Dunne, Alba House, Staten Island, New York, 1969 [1967], ch. 4.

[12] Origen, *Commentarium in Joannem*, I. 24; II. 34.

was considered guilty of this, as was Arius, and in Aquinas's time, the Latin Averroësists and indeed Aquinas himself. After surveying the patristic period, Aidan Nichols writes that "in the ancient Church there were almost no theological academies dedicated to the systematic study of the subject."[13] Clearly, this does not mean that theology was in any way stifled; indeed, the opposite is true.

Augustine's (354–430) complex dialectical position would be a major shaper of the educational tradition.[14] On the one hand, he despised much of his own classical education, arguing that the academies led to self-glorification and self-advancement, and pagan knowledge itself was untruth.[15] On the other, he was to embark on an unfinished project to show how all of the seven liberal arts were important in exemplifying eternal archetypes in the mind of God. He only partly completed his study *On Music*. His *On Christian Doctrine* exemplified the usefulness of liberal arts in the reading of scripture, thereby turning all knowledge toward praise of God, a theme that would be central to Christian visions of knowledge. Augustine would be claimed by strands one and two, perhaps most powerfully by Aquinas in his synthesis of Augustine with Aristotle. The Emperor Justinian's closure of all pagan institutions in 529 "cleared" the field for Christian institutions of learning, and from the eighth century on, monasteries, convents, and cathedrals were to be the site of this new knowledge.

The Carolingian Renaissance, in the reign of Charlemagne (768–814), with brilliant educational advisors like Alcuin and Theodulf of Orléans, saw the emergence of education within monastic or convent settings, and also in the cities, under the wing of the cathedrals. Charlemagne's Palace School was probably the first school to give a classical education to significant numbers of laity, and involved the seven liberal arts, the learning of psalms, chanting, and grammar. These schools represented the first major institutional move that would later, in part, transmute into the university, widening the curriculum, but losing the monastic context. This new site of production had a number of strengths and weaknesses. Its greatest strength was the unity of theology with prayer and practice. While some monastic theologians were little interested in life outside the monastery or in the

[13] Nichols, *Shape*, p. 282.

[14] See the very nuanced accounts of Kevin L. Hughes, "The 'Arts Reputed Liberal': Augustine on the Perils of Liberal Education" in eds. Kim Paffenroth and Kevin L. Hughes, *Augustine and Liberal Education*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000, pp. 95–110; and Fredrick van Fleteren, "St. Augustine, Neoplatonism, and the Liberal Arts: The Background to *De doctrina christiana*" in eds. Duane W. H. Arnold and Pamela Bright, "*De doctrina christiana*"*: A Classic of Western Culture*, Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1995, pp. 14–24.

[15] *Confessions* 4.1.1; 4.2.1.

liberal arts of the classical world, most of its best theologians, such as Aelred, William of Auberive, and Geoffrey of Auxerre, utilized the disciplines and traditions of the pagan world, while Christianizing them through this process (strand two above). A second strength was that the monastic site of theology allowed a limited theological education to women in some of the convents and schools, whereas the creation of the university excluded women from the institutions of theological learning.[16] It was in a cathedral school that Abelard taught Heloïse. It has been noted that the convents were a "refuge for female intellectuals, as the monastery was for the male. Although the majority of nuns were at best literate, most of the learned women of the Middle Ages—the literary, artistic, scientific, and philosophical stars were nuns."[17] Such stars, bringing together many branches of learning in theological wisdom, were women such as Roswitha of Gandersheim, Hildegard of Bingen, and Herrad of Landsberg. Of course, whether women were admitted to the sacred discipline or not, it was still a clerical monopoly. The canonical definition of "clerical" in 1231 excluded women from being considered clerics, as they had been up until then, and further, only permitted masters and students of the universities to be clerics. A third strength, according to Jean Leclercq, was that the monastic setting allowed theologians to discern more quickly the abuses in the employment of dialectics in *university* theological reflection, an employment that was considered a hallmark of university scholasticism.[18] Leclercq goes so far as to say that scholastic university theology, being wedded to the form of disputation and dialectics, eventually "lost contact with the life of prayer."[19] This loss would eventually lead to the slow divorce between "knowledge and love, science and contemplation, intellectual life and spiritual life" and it would then become necessary to construct categories of mystical and spiritual theology, the worse for their separation from dogmatic theology.[20] While there was admittedly what Grabmann has called "hyperdialectic" in university scholasticism, it would be wrong to characterize scholasticism in such

[16] On the contribution of women to theology in this period, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*, Zone Books, New York, 1992.

[17] Frances Gies and Joseph Gies, *Women in the Middle Ages*, Thomas Y. Crowell, New York, 1978, p. 65.

[18] See Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catherine Misrahi, Fordham University Press, Fordham, New York, 1960 [1957], esp., pp. 189–231, 202, for a masterly overview of the background to the medieval monastic context of the study of theology.

[19] Leclercq, *Theology and Prayer*, St. Meinrad Seminary, Indiana, 1962, p. 13.

[20] Ibid., p. 13.

manner, as we shall see shortly.[21] However, Leclercq's point is still pertinent to my argument, rather because of the *telos* of the institutional setting, than of any inherent quality of scholasticism or dialectics, a point that Leclercq admits elsewhere.[22]

The twelfth century saw theology slowly moving out of the monastery and cathedral school into the university. By the thirteenth century, the University of Paris was ecclesiastically established, with what is often called the Magna Carta of the university, Gregory XI's bull *Parens Scientiarum* (1231). Soon the new *studium generales* took root across Europe. The curriculum at the University of Paris was very significant, both in its vision of the relation of the disciplines, with theology as queen of the sciences, and in its actual failure to provide the unity of knowledge. The division of the faculties in the University of Paris generated complex cross-currents. The faculties were structured into the "inferior": arts (made up of the *trivium*, where three roads meet, grammar, rhetoric, and logic; and the *quadrivium*, made up of arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy), followed by the "superior": canon law, medicine, and theology. The benefit of such division was the assumption that all the disciplines were founded on a common unifying principle: that creation was from God, ordered, for the good of man, and to be used as such. Each discipline's methods and objects of study were carefully defined and developed. All the disciplines were subject to theological unification, and sometimes, theological correction. The latter was not always fruitful, and sometimes misused.

However, in the division of faculties lay also the seeds of the fragmentation of knowledge. Prudence Allen argues that the University of Paris's experiment would lead to a disastrous outcome, despite its own intentions. She argues that the fragmentation of the disciplines actually resulted from the poor implementation of a rich vision of an organic whole. In the practices of the University of Paris the parts were not held together. The four faculties of arts, theology, medicine, and law were designed to operate in harmony, in the service of God, the Church, and civic society. All students would start with the seven liberal arts and then proceed to an equivalent postgraduate study in theology, medicine, and law (divided into civil and canon law), with students often studying in faculties other than their own. Hence, the key role of philosophy (embedded in the arts) was central to the training and development in the three other faculties. However, Allen argues that

[21] Grabmann, *The Spirit of the Scholastic Method*, 1911, pp. 98–100, cited in Leclercq, *Theology and Prayer*, p. 202.

[22] Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, pp. 212, 218.

> once the institutional separation of branches of knowledge was made, a slow but steady rupture in the unity of knowledge began to occur. Controversial questions began to bring the different faculties into conflict with one another. Ultimately, university education became more and more fragmented until philosophy became cut off from theology, medicine, or law.[23]

Theology became detached from the other faculties, thereby instigating the currents that led to the modern university. The circumstances that brought about these effects are complex. For example, the fact that revelation was the proper object of theology led to laws in the 1270s, prohibiting philosophers from discussing God. A law, it should be added, passed by the Faculty of Arts.[24] The same happened with medicine, with a law prohibiting clerics from studying medicine, based on the distinction between the soul (the province of theology) and the body (the province of medicine). Clerics, it was argued, should not be led away from their proper area of concern. The same happened with civil law and theology. Allen concludes:

> This process of fragmentation has continued to the present time. Universities now consist of a plethora of disciplines all vying for the central place in the determination of truth. Aristotle had correctly argued for the need to make significant distinctions in the search for truth. However, the institutionalization of Aristotle turned these distinctions into rigidly defined areas of knowledge that made a unified approach to the person nearly impossible. The shadow of the institutionalization of Aristotle haunts the corridors of the contemporary academic world like a ghost from the thirteenth-century University of Paris.[25]

This fragmentation of the person, and of the spheres of human and divine reality, was to remain embedded in the institutions that transmitted knowledge, with some exceptions. This *telos* would evolve, with the addition of new factors, into the Enlightenment university.

A second development in the university was the development and flowering of Scholasticism. Scholasticism can be traced back to Augustine, who stressed the need of dialectics in studying Christian doctrine. It ran through some of the "Schools" and received important formulation from Anselm (c.1033–1109), who inspired the *Sentences*, the first really systematic arrangement of theological questions, citing biblical and patristic authorities

[23] Prudence Allen RSM, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution 750 BC–AD 1250*, Eden Press, Quebec, 1985, p. 417.

[24] See John F. Wippel, "The Condemnation of 1270 and 1277 at Paris," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 7, 1977, pp. 169–201.

[25] Allen, *The Concept of Woman*, p. 419.

(*auctoritas*) on a question, followed by rational disputation (*ratio*) to settle conflicts and create harmonization. Abelard (1079–1142) refined the *quaestio*, *interrogatio*, and *disputatio* methods and Albert the Great and his pupil Thomas Aquinas (c.1225–74) probably represent the high point of Scholasticism. Scholasticism is important in my narrative for two reasons. First, dialectics becomes firmly established as part of Christian education, giving an important role to *ratio*, thereby providing a bridge between all forms of knowledge and learning and Christian revelation. This was embodied in Aquinas's great synthesis of the Aristotelian and Augustinian traditions in Thomism, providing an important role for philosophy, adequately Christianized, to expound doctrine. It also allowed Aquinas to relate the different disciplines and show the role of the virtues (both intellectual and moral) in education.[26] It also showed in practice how all knowledge can be integrated, critically, into the Christian vision. Aristotle, Islamic appropriations of Aristotle, and Greek philosophy are all brought to the aid of Christian theology in Aquinas. My own book flows out of this tradition.

Second, Aquinas offers an alternative to Nominalism, although historically Nominalism was very influential. Many argue that Nominalism sowed the seeds of secularism and atheism. Ockham's (c.1285–1347) version of Nominalism (rather than Roscellinus's) asserts that no universal can actually be found in reality, but only in the human mind. This would mean that God could not be conceptually understood, and was solely a reality based on revelation. But this sundering of reason, reality, and deity would eventually lead to fideism and its opposite, atheism. The role of Nominalism, as Francis Martin points out, is of course key to the transmission of the idea of a secular universe, with Duns Scotus's attempt to show that being was univocal, a property shared by both God and the creature. The consequence of this was that being could eventually be explained without recourse to God and seen as entirely autonomous.[27] Milbank sees Scotus as central to the *telos* of modernity.[28] In contrast, Milbank extols Aquinas's analogical understanding of

[26] See *Summa contra Gentiles*, Bk II, chs 2–4; *Summa Theologiae*, I–1, q. 1; a. I–10, q. 57.

[27] Francis Martin, *The Feminist Question: Feminist Theology in the Light of Christian Tradition*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1994, pp. 49–52.

[28] See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1990, pp. 302–6, and Gillian Rose, *Dialectics of Nihilism: Post-Structuralism and Law*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1984, pp. 104–7. However, note the important reading of Scotus by Richard Cross, "Where Angels Fear to Tread: Duns Scotus and Radical Orthodoxy," *Antonianum*, 76, 2001, pp. 7–41, who rightly questions Scotus's attributed role. Hans Urs von Balthasar also positions Ockham as key to the fragmentation of the disciplines and the internal implosion of theology, which now could only be "practical" and "fideistic" as it is removed from all other forms of knowledge. See *The Glory of the Lord: The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age*, vol. V, trans. Oliver Davies et al., Ignatius Press, San Francisco, California, 1991 [1965], pp. 9–47, esp. pp. 19–21.

being, a strategy that allows for the radical difference between God and creation, and at the same time, the participation of creation with God. However, this Thomist line with which I agree (and there are of course many Thomisms[29]) is contested, as is the question as to whether Ockham, rather than Scotus, is really the villain. It is unnecessary to settle these questions here, except to point out that Scholasticism is often falsely associated with hyper-dialectic and rationalism, when in fact its best representatives mark a brilliant Christian integration of the role of reason in relation to revelation. Leclercq's emphasis on disputation alone in his criticism of Scholasticism conceals the critical-confessional enterprise of Thomism.[30] Of course, there were problems with Scholasticism in its emphasis on logic and dialectics, rather than languages and literature, on reason rather than metaphor and poetry, the emphasis favoured in the Renaissance, and by Reformers like Luther.

Nevertheless, despite a very complex reality, at the beginnings of the European university, *both* those who taught and those who learnt in the university believed their task was in service to God, Church, and society.[31] Despite all these swirling cross-currents set in motion with the creation of the university, there are three important positive elements that followed from thirteenth-century Paris. First, the university would be a place of considered disputation, a location for rational argument, embedded within a tradition, to flourish and develop in engagement with rival traditions. A distorted fragment of this tradition is developed in the modern secular university, a place of rational discussion, without adequate attention to tradition-specific forms of enquiry or the *telos* of *ratio*. I will develop this point below. Second, even though university theology was the preserve of male clerics, the location of theology in the university meant that eventually in the Enlightenment university, lay theological education could develop, which would also be gender-inclusive. Third, theology was given a prime place in harmonizing and integrating the other three faculties of arts, medicine, and law. At least the vision of a proper relation between the disciplines

[29] See Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2002.

[30] See MacIntyre's insistence that Thomism was both confessional and dialectical, in *Three Rival Versions*, p. 201. Colin Gunton misreads Aquinas in *The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 138–42; and for a persuasive defense, see Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, pp. 380–438.

[31] See Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities in the Middle Ages*, 3 vols., new edn., Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1963, esp. vol. 1, ch. 5. See also Stephen C. Ferruolo, *The Origins of the University*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1985, and for the parallel origins in the UK, see Alan B. Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities: Oxford and Cambridge to c.1500*, Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1988, esp. pp. 209–38.

had become institutionally embedded. However, as Allen, Martin, and Leclercq have argued, a price was to be paid on all three fronts: theology became disassociated from prayer and contemplation, it was eventually possible to do theology without any Christian commitment, and the establishment of the Aristotelian divisions provided the possibility for the modern fragmentation of the disciplines.

The Reformation was to shake the structures of university theology in limited ways. First, theology faculties and universities were now divided along Protestant and Catholic lines. Hence, ancient universities such as Oxford and Cambridge, from their Catholic foundations, came explicitly to exclude Roman Catholics, just as Catholic institutions excluded Protestants. When such exclusions were eventually repealed at Oxford and Cambridge in the nineteenth century, with exceptions for the Faculties of Divinity, they reflected the structural implementation of secularism, not an ecumenical renewal with an open Christian university. There were both advantages and problems with this Reformation divide. One such advantage, noted by MacIntyre, is that such exclusions "provided some of the necessary preconditions for the Thomistic revival and thereby for the reappropriation of Aquinas's dialectical enterprise."[32] These exclusions allowed for the flowerings of the distinct Protestant and Roman Catholic theological traditions, even if the Calvinists remained essentially scholastic following Calvin's own Catholic tradition. It was Luther who was to steer the Reformation into a very different mold, with Catholicism initially reacting defensively, and only in the modern period taking on and developing some of Luther's positive themes (theology as salvation, theology of the cross), while robustly rejecting the anti-metaphysical tradition generated from Luther.[33] If these denominational universities contained mixed blessings, they both began to have something in common, which brings me to the second point.

Nichols writes that "perhaps the most lasting result of the period from 1500 to 1700 was the rise of theological specialization."[34] This was a result of many factors: rapidly expanding knowledge through the age of discovery (by Europeans) of new worlds, the emergence of the natural sciences, the rise of Humanism, and eventually, with the emergence of the middle classes in the nineteenth century, the growth of professionalism within the universities.[35]

[32] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, p. 224.

[33] The Lutheran tradition is well served and rehabilitated in the excellent work of Gerhard Ebeling, *The Study of Theology*, trans. Duane A. Priebe, Collins, London, 1979 [1975].

[34] Nichols, *Shape*, p. 318.

[35] This latter is perceptively traced in American culture by Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America*, W. W. Norton, New York, 1976.

But specialisms would have a huge effect on the internal disintegration of theology, as of other disciplines that were undergoing rapid internal diversification. For example, the sixteenth century sees, for the first time, distinct treatises on moral theology written mainly by Jesuits for priests. In themselves, they represent remarkable achievements, but their form dictated a focus on morals divorced from grace and dogmatics. In Thomas's *Summa Theologiae*, morals and grace were dealt with together. The result of such specialism is that morality would eventually be given the aura of autonomy, separate from grace and God, a move that was consolidated through the Enlightenment. Of course no Jesuit author would have intended such a trajectory, but the institutional settings could easily work against individual intentions.

The earthquake of the seventeenth century with the development of the natural sciences cannot be underestimated, although the hostility between religion and science is often overestimated. I will return to this theme in chapter six, but for the moment it is worth noting three important effects of the growing dominance of science on the development of theology. First, as Michael Buckley has argued, theologians too often tried to defend theology from scientific criticism on scientific grounds or in purely philosophical terms, rather than Christological or experiential grounds.[36] This eventually assimilated theology to science, and in this process, theology lost sight of its different method and object: "Theology gives way to Cartesianism, which gives way to Newtonian mechanics. The great argument, the only evidence for theism, is design, and experimental physics reveals that design."[37] This is a version of what I called the third strand. The roots of atheism were partly planted by theologians, who failed to be theological enough. Second, this assimilation also ran in tandem with the mathematization of the disciplines, whereby subjects strove to be "scientific" (in a natural scientific sense), eventually finding institutionalization in the University of Berlin, the model of the Enlightenment research university. Third, this process across the disciplines, and within theology itself, led to the phenomena whereby the New Testament would become subject to positivist sciences, initially historical-critical methods. This, when employed as the major hermeneutical tool, would further erode the recovery of theology's unique object of study: God, as revealed in history. Nicholas Lash discussing both Buckley's thesis and Hans Frei, writes that in the seventeenth-century context

[36] Michael J. Buckley, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1987, pp. 65–6 makes clear how theologians like Lessius and Mersenne rebutted atheism as if it were a "philosophic stance towards life" rather than a "rejection of Jesus Christ as the supreme presence of god [*sic*] in history."

[37] Ibid., p. 202.

> we are evidently already in the presence of what Hans Frei called the "great reversal," that shift in interpretative strategy as a result of which theological interpretation became "a matter of fitting the biblical story into another world" (namely, the world now taken to be constituted by those ranges of experience deemed open to any human being) "rather than incorporating that world into the biblical story." In the self-assured world of modernity, people seek to make sense of the Scriptures, instead of hoping, with the aid of Scripture, to make some sense of themselves.[38]

Hans Frei sees the "great reversal" which shifted theology out of its ecclesial context embedded in the design of the University of Berlin at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Berlin was designed to reflect the "research university" along the lines of the Enlightenment vision of education.[39] In this respect, it intentionally defined itself against the earlier model of *paideia* which had characterized ecclesial forms of education (and dominant forms of pre-Christian Greek education) and instead emphasized a critical, orderly, and disciplined science of research. That is, no texts or ways of reading them were to be seen as authoritative because of spiritual authority or traditions deeming them so. Rather, all texts were to be critically scrutinized, using methods that were accessible to all rational men, and methods that could allow the repetition of tests to authenticate and establish results. In this sense, theology, whose authority rested on revelation, was an obvious problem for the University of Berlin and there was considerable controversy about its inclusion in the new research university.

It was only through the genius of Schleiermacher (1768–1834) that theology made it into the university, but on the easily corrosive grounds that it was important for professional training, rather than arguing its status as a "science," let alone queen of the sciences.[40] In this sense Schleiermacher conceded the most important point. He argued that just as medicine and law

[38] Nicholas Lash, *The Beginning and End of "Religion,"* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 147–8. He cites Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1974, p. 130 (citations), and see also pp. 51, 325.

[39] For the situation of the German universities at the time, see Daniel Fallon, *The German University*, Colorado University Press, Boulder, 1980.

[40] In 1808 Schleiermacher published (the untranslated) *Thoughts on German Universities from a German Point of View* and in 1810, *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology*, trans. Terrence N. Tice, John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1966 [1811]. For the historical context, see Martin Redeker, *Schleiermacher: Life and Thought*, trans. John Wellauser, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1973 [1968], III. 2 and IV. B. See also Hans Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1992, where he carefully charts aspects of the debate generated by Schleiermacher's proposals in "Appendix A: Theology in the University," pp. 95–132.

were included in the university, the historical and philosophical study of theology was also justified, for these disciplines provided the materials for a theological training that was required for ministers of the Church. However, there were strong criticisms of theology from the very disciplines to which it sought to ally itself: history and philosophy. Kant, like Fichte after him, could only tolerate theology as the practical working out of the truths available in philosophy via universal reason in a transcendental mode (Kant), or in an idealist philosophy (Fichte).[41] Later philosophies would replicate this pattern: Marxism, feminism, postmodernism. Likewise, positivist history demanded theology be reined in by its methods and findings (Harnack and Strauss) and to this would be added postmodern reading strategies.[42] It is not that theology cannot learn from these disciplines, but that it cannot be ruled and made to conform to them. Judging the dividing line is a complex matter. Nevertheless, the Enlightenment university began the process of translating theology into its own philosophical, natural scientific, or social analysis modalities. The Enlightenment *Wissenschaft* dictated to theology the preconditions and limits of its enquiry and also regulated its agenda. The question of the subservience of theology to secular disciplines would not be resolved formally, although the increasing secularity of the university institutionally favored one party over the other in subsequent debates.

The genealogical picture is extremely complicated, but there are two main points I wish to emphasize as an outcome of the above. First, the secularization of theology was a process that reached its culmination in the nineteenth century and we now live in the shadow of the "great reversal" embodied in the history of the Enlightenment, such that institutional university theology bears many of the marks of this secularized process. As we shall see in a later chapter, one such mark was the ascendance of alien methods and disciplines as the definitive interpreters of scripture, tradition, and authority. The ascendancy of historical positivism also explains the inevitable rise of the history of religions school, transferring its hermeneutical strategies designed for

[41] See Kant, "The Conflict of the Faculties" in *Religion and Rational Theology*, trans. Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 233–9.

[42] See Stephen F. Fowl, "Introduction" in ed. Stephen F. Fowl, *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1997, pp. xii–xxx with good reference to US scholarship in this field. See also the excellent overview of New Testament scholarship as falling into three camps: (1) historical critical (Philip Davies, Heikki Räisänen, Werner Jeanrond); (2) Christian theological (Peter Stuhlmacher, Brevard Childs, Francis Watson); and (3) postmodern (David Clines, Anthony Thiselton, Stephen Moore), with an argument similar to my own, regarding the shortcomings of the first and third: Markus Bockmuehl, "'To Be or Not to Be': The Possible Futures of New Testament Scholarship," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 51, 1998, pp. 271–306. However, at the last moment Bockmuehl steps back from the implications of his argument, fearing sectarianism (p. 291).

reading ancient texts to interpret texts used in living traditions, such as the New Testament, but without reference to its traditional forms of exegesis like the multiple senses of scripture and the role of the Holy Spirit for proper exegesis. This was of course one of the major contentions between Karl Barth and Adolf Harnack.[43] Harnack's historical positivist reading of theology would eventually result in the emergence of "religious studies," as we shall see in the next section.

Second, while various intellectuals within the university have constantly alerted theologians to this situation, the significance of this crisis in requiring a new type of university has been less fully explored. This is in part due to very pragmatic pressures: university culture in England and the United States is in deep recession, with funding ever tighter and a market-led economy becoming pervasive, even in the Ivy League institutions; departments of theology being a major casualty, such that for theologians to argue for alternative universities might almost seem tragi-comic, or aptly, farce. Without minimizing these pressures, it must be said that one of the reasons for this crisis in funding and support of university education is precisely that large numbers of the general public and the intelligentsia schooled in such institutions can see very little use for the universities. Apart from professional training (law, medicine, engineering, and so on), and scientific research where results are tangible, produce revenue, and finance themselves, the Arts are seen increasingly as a luxury. In 2003 the Minister for Education in Tony Blair's British Labour government publicly said that the study of medieval texts was a luxury that could not be justified from public funding.[44] This is hardly surprising, for when the university becomes part of the instrumentalist culture of modernity and the fragmentation of the disciplines is so complete, their importance and interrelation are not even debated by the British government. Later, I shall turn to the major exploration of the question of the need for a post-liberal university, in the work of MacIntyre.

Hence, to draw this story to a provisional conclusion, we have seen how theology started as part of the ecclesial practice within small communities, then engaged with the great currents of Hellenistic philosophy, not from any organized institutional base, but in an *ad hoc* manner. Later, in the monasteries and cathedral schools it was wedded to prayer and the practice of contemplation and love, and later it became established as the "queen of the sciences" in thirteenth-century Paris, faith taking on a positive and constructive relation to reason and the other disciplines, even if this synthesis was not always achieved well and the university emphasis on dialectics

[43] See their exchanges in James M. Robinson, *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology*, John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1968, pp. 165–87.

[44] See *The Guardian*, Monday, May 12, 2003.

sometimes lost its ecclesial moorings. The Reformation saw denominational flowerings, although perpetuating the scandal of disunity among Christians. However, in an increasingly secularized culture, theology was finally symbolically toppled at the University of Berlin, so that it would, if fortunate, eventually be part of the liberal arts, not a faculty on its own, and then be eclipsed by religious studies. In brief: from Queen of the Sciences to the laughing stock of the Arts Faculty.[45]

In relation to my four concerns, I hope to have traced the historical context for the following. First, the way in which the discipline of theology became separated from the practices that are required for its proper undertaking: prayer, sacraments, and virtue. It would be correct to say that the epistemological precondition for theology was the community of the Church and the Spirit.[46] Second, the way university theology became assimilated to alien methodologies, philosophies, and sciences, so that the very intellectuals who might safeguard the Church from de-Christianization often accelerated the process. Rather than "incorporating the world into the biblical story," theology became more and more a "matter of fitting the biblical story into another world" (which was constructed by secular modernity and "policed" by its rules and methodology).[47] Third, the way in which theology and philosophy's mediating role to discern the *telos* and unity of the different disciplines has almost totally disappeared, so that fragmentation, competitive professionalism, and utilitarianism in the universities have no check. Fourth, this scenario would not only relegate theology to the margins, but also threaten its very existence with the Enlightenment discipline of "religious studies."

Many readers will of course breathe a sigh of relief at these changes, and I do not want to turn the clock back—for that is in one sense impossible.[48]

[45] See the English Catholic novelist, David Lodge, *Paradise News*, Secker & Warburg, London, 1991.

[46] See Aidan Nichols OP, "The Habit of Theology, and How to Acquire It," *The Downside Review*, 105, 1987, pp. 247–59; and the aptly entitled, *Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian*, CTS/Veritas, London/Dublin, 1990, issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. I shall return to this latter document in the next chapter.

[47] See Frei, *Eclipse*, p. 130; and John Milbank's critical reconstruction of this process in *Theology and Social Theory*, esp. Part II: "Theology and Positivism," pp. 51–143, which accounts for my reference to "policing."

[48] See Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Lost Tools of Learning," *National Review*, January 19, 1979, pp. 90–9, who wants to go "back to the Middle Ages," for we must distinguish, "Does 'go back' mean a retrogression in time, or the revision of an error? The first is clearly impossible *per se*; the second is a thing which wise men do every day" (p. 93). Sayers's argument is persuasive except that she minimizes the many good things that modernity has introduced into education (including opportunities for women, like herself), and oddly abandons theology's synthesizing role at the end of the trivium for no apparent reason (see p. 99).

Instead, I only want to suggest that what masquerades as theology cannot intellectually and historically meet the description. What now exists is simply a study of texts that are concerned with religious matters. Strictly speaking, one cannot claim that theology departments are there to help teach people to theologize better and become virtuous. What is denied to theology departments is allowed to many others. History departments can claim to produce good historians, and English departments will often actively encourage "creative writing" within the academic curriculum. However, it is difficult to find a theology prospectus in England that claims to produce "good theologians."

III On the Secular Respectability of Doing Religious Studies

In England, as in the United States and Europe, a number of factors are worth noting in tracing the production of religious studies as both bed-fellow and successor to theology in the 1960s. In what follows I will refer to England to avoid generalizations. My contention is that religious studies in England adapted secular methodologies (positivist history and neutral enquiry) as key to the study of religion, contesting that it, not theology, was the proper subject to be embedded in the emerging modern university. Clearly, while the contexts are very different, some of the points here will be applicable more widely. The Oedipal configuration of "bed-fellow" and "successor" is not random, for religious studies explicitly claims to cohabit the academic territory with theology, but if taken seriously, implicitly seeks its destruction for it must rightly claim Christianity as its object of investigation, in the same manner as it claims Buddhism or Islam as its objects. Hence, at best, religious studies subconsciously desires to seize and control the academic territory regarding the "divine" from theology. As a prominent religious studies supporter notes: the "theological establishment is therefore, a problem in that it is a kind of conceptual albatross around the neck of religious studies."[49] The albatross became extinct! Despite this claim, it would be intriguing to know what would change in the practice

[49] Ninian Smart, "Religious Studies in the United Kingdom," *Religion*, 18, 1988, p. 8. For a more militant North American version of Smart, see Donald Wiebe, *The Politics of Religious Studies*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1999. Wiebe considers Smart to be a collaborator with theology in suggesting empathy is compatible with objectivity (p. 66), and likewise criticizes the American Academy of Religion (p. 248). Wiebe, like Smart, also exalts science, neutrality, and objectivity. See Kieran Flanagan's powerful critique of "Religious Studies" in "Theological Pluralism: A Sociological Critique" in ed. Ian Hamnett, *Religious Pluralism and Unbelief: Studies*

and curriculum in theology departments were they to metamorphose overnight to religious studies departments. I suspect very little.

The increasing secularity of theology in the 1960s, both institutionally and methodologically, produced a situation where many felt that what actually existed in the practice of theology was the study of religion. Historical accidents meant that the religion so selected was Christianity. In the context of England's multi-religious nature, its colonial conquests, and the growth of Indology, many argued that religions other than Christianity should be taught. If the study of religion was an academic specialty, it seemed right and obvious that to limit the menu to Christianity was parochial, to say the least. This trajectory was predictable in the Enlightenment's resistance to the particularity of Christian revelation. By this, I do not mean that the proper study of theology can be done in isolation from engagement with world religions, nor that other religions should not mount analogous arguments to the ones here presented. I am simply outlining the manner in which modernity came to homogenize the university. Furthermore, students in the period of the introduction of religious studies to the universities, in the late 1960s, were increasingly from secularized backgrounds. The attraction of Buddhism and Hinduism to these consumers, aligned with the Romantic European idealization of these traditions, meant that the market was right for religious studies.[50]

The final factor worth mentioning, and perhaps the most significant in the English context, was the introduction of an allegedly scientific, objective, and academic method appropriate to the study of religion: phenomenology. It is no accident that the main supporter of such a method in this country was also the founder of the first Department of Religious Studies in England, at

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Critical and Comparative, Routledge, London, 1990, pp. 81–113, esp. pp. 88–90. While few today follow Smart, his influence is deeply imprinted upon the academy; and universities, like the Church, take time to shift.

[50] For the appropriation of the "east" by the "west," see, for example, Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1984; Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding*, State University of New York, Albany, New York, 1988, Paul Hacker, "Aspects of Neo-Hinduism as Contrasted with Surviving Traditional Hinduism" in ed. Lambert Schmithausen: *Paul Hacker: Kleine Schriften*, Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1978, pp. 580–608. For the domestication of these differing construals of power (for that is what Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam are, like Christianity) within the (colonial) western academy, see Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1989; and Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, esp. chs. 6–10. Fitzgerald's critical analysis is helpful in showing how religions are cultural construals of power, but he brazenly caricatures theology as a "misleading obsession with superhuman beings and related notions that cluster around 'religion'" (p. 224). He is of course right in terms of modernity's shaping of theology.

Lancaster in 1967, and the author of the albatross statement quoted above. While Lancaster was the first department with this name, the study of "comparative religion" goes back to 1904, when Manchester University had the first Department of Comparative Religion, chaired by the Pali scholar, T. W. Rhys Davids. Nevertheless, Ninian Smart's *The Phenomenon of Religion* (1973) is central for understanding the Oedipal relations between theology and religious studies.[51] It is important to note that the understanding of the "phenomenological" method and approaches to "religious studies" are increasingly multifarious, and have a history going back to 1873, when the founding father of comparative religions, Friedrich Max Müller, published his famous study, *Introduction to the Science of Religion*. Eric Sharpe calls this the "foundation document of comparative religion."[52] Sharpe's study is one of the best in charting the emergence of religious studies, both in the UK and also worldwide. A constellation of titles describes this general approach: comparative religion, history of religions, religious studies. The first fell from grace due to its evolutionary associations; the second, based on the German *Religionsgeschichte*, is still found in Germany, Sweden, and Finland.[53] Note too, the term religious studies in its phenomenological sense has an entirely different genealogy in Europe to that in the UK.[54]

[51] Macmillan, London, 1973, and his *The Science of Religion and the Sociology of Knowledge*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1973, pp. 158ff. It would be churlish to question Smart's outstanding contribution academically and institutionally. I use him purely as a symbol in what follows. See also Wiebe's assessment of the US and Canada, in *The Politics of Religious Studies*. For a criticism based on avoiding Christianity's political influence, rather than exalting objectivity in the academy, see David A. Hollinger, "Enough Already: Universities Do Not Need More Christianity" in ed. Andreas Sterk, *Religion, Scholarship, and Higher Education: Perspectives, Models, and Future Prospects*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2002, pp. 40–50.

[52] Eric J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History*, 2nd edn., Duckworth, London, 1986 [1975], p. 35. See also Walter H. Capps, *Religious Studies: The Making of a Discipline*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1995.

[53] See Sharpe, *Comparative Religion*, pp. xii–xiv, 294–319: "From Comparative Religion to Religious Studies."

[54] See Smart's characterization of the differences between himself and Husserl in *The Science of Religion*, pp. 49ff. See, also for example, the survey in ed. Michael Pye, *Marburg Revisited: Institutions and Strategies in the Study of Religion*, Diagonal Verlag, Marburg, 1989. This volume neglects developments in gender studies in religion. See the entry on "Phenomenology of Religion" for a good overview by Douglas Allen, in eds. M. Eliade et al., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Macmillan, London, 1987, vol. 11, pp. 272–85. The theological study of religions that I am proposing needs to be worked out in closer engagement with differing approaches such as feminism, structuralism, psychoanalysis, materialism, constructivism, and so on. Clearly, one cannot essentialize "Religious Studies." However, what is common to the differing types (history of religions, comparative religion, religious studies) is the basic presupposition that the discipline can be conducted and practiced by Christian and non-Christian alike. Theology, properly speaking, cannot.

In explicit contrast to the memory of the dead mother (theology), whose distorted image masqueraded in the universities, the emerging prince of the religious academy proposed a method that definitely and distinctively should not and could not involve faith as its starting point. Faith as a starting point was both unscientific and unscholarly, according to the canons then acceptable to the secular academy and the cultured despisers of Christianity. Hence, the phenomenological method started with *epochē* or bracketing. *Epochē* meant the suspension of one's own beliefs, attitudes, and values, in order to avoid contaminating objective description with personal prejudice such as one's own personal religious commitment. It was allegedly only in this fashion that the enquirer could really attain the object of enquiry and understand it correctly, be it Hinduism, Buddhism, or Christianity.

However, the very notion of different "religions," related to each other as species of a common genus, was itself a seventeenth-century invention, as Peter Harrison has so persuasively argued.[55] The construction of such a field ("religion") is a project that is partly located in the Enlightenment's refusal to acknowledge the particularity of Christian revelation. Consequently, there followed the creation of a single secular history whereby different religions were organized within the Enlightenment's own over-arching narrative, rather than taking seriously the different organizations of time, space, and history within the various religions. Such a taxonomy also failed to attend to the epistemological pre-requisites required for comprehension specified by some of the religions under examination.

John Milbank makes an interesting connection between the growth of comparative religion in the discipline of religious studies and the assumption that all religions are equal paths to the one divine. He suggests this connection because in the very creation of the field of "religion" there is an in-built assumption of different species of a common genus, and with this assumption, the idea that the common genus is our "own" religion of which others are various manifestations. Milbank writes:

> The usual construals of religion as a genus, therefore, embody covert Christianizations, and in fact no attempt to define such a genus (or even, perhaps,

[55] Peter Harrison, *"Religion" and the Religions in the English Enlightenment*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, and also Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, Macmillan, New York, 1962, pp. 15–30, also shows the modern construction of the notion of "religion." However, Smith perpetuates this reification of modernity in his problematic notion of "faith" as the common generic "essence" of each tradition. See my: "A Christian Reflection on Some Problems with Discerning 'God' in the World Religions," *Dialogue and Alliance*, 5, 1, 1991, pp. 4–17.

> delineation of an analogical field of "family resemblances") will succeed, because no proposed common features can be found, whether in terms of belief or practice (gods, the supernatural, worship, a sacred community, sacred/secular division, etc.) that are without exceptions. The most viable, because most general definitions ("What binds a society together," and so forth) turn out to be so all-encompassing as to coincide with the definition of culture as such.[56]

It is no mere coincidence that Smart's phenomenological methodology bears striking resemblance to Descartes's and Locke's stripping down process to get to the foundations of knowledge; nor is its similarity to Hume's empiricist positivism insignificant.[57] In one sense the new scientific methodology of religious studies that was emulated by theology in its attempt to remain within the academy, was clearly a child of the Enlightenment. Admittedly, there has been much debate about Smart's model by practitioners of religious studies in England, but the point I wish to make is this. While the methodology and subject matter of religious studies in its institutional setting were increasingly successful (there are now a number of Religious Studies departments, while prior to 1967 there were none in this country), intellectually the presuppositions of Smart's approach are deeply problematic. Its problematic nature lies in its Enlightenment marriage to objectivity and scientific neutrality. Hence, and I must make this clear, my argument is in no way directed against the study of Buddhism and Hinduism and other religious traditions in the academic curriculum (far from it), but rather against the assumptions about how such subjects are studied and how they are related to theology within the curriculum.

There are important objections against *epochē* as a method and consequently all that follows from it.[58] As mentioned above, the success of the phenomenological method was in part due to the social context which looked favorably upon such an enterprise. Such consensus, though certainly not unanimous, is coming to an end, and the episteme is shifting in our times, in a period that is often described as "postmodern." The natural and

[56] John Milbank, "The End of Dialogue" in ed. Gavin D'Costa, *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered*, Orbis, New York, 1990, pp. 174–91: pp. 176–7. Milbank's point is precisely that of Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, that religion is power and cultural construction. Milbank, however, argues that theology has lost its sense that this is its proper concern.

[57] See Gavin Flood's brilliant criticisms of the Cartesian roots of phenomenalism in religious studies: *Beyond Phenomenology: Rethinking the Study of Religion*, Cassell, London, 1999. Flood's own approach typifies the new diversity within the discipline. Smart is not unaware of the sort of objections Flood and I are advancing. See his *The Science of Religion*, p. 58.

[58] See António Barbosa da Silva, *The Phenomenology of Religion as a Philosophical Problem*, Gleerup, Lund, 1982.

social sciences have tended to move away from the positivist assumptions they shared at the turn of the century—and which were imitated by Smart's religious studies. Both the former disciplines have tended to eschew objectivity and neutrality, and increasingly acknowledge that the role of the investigator and his or her socio-political location is crucial to the production of knowledge.

For instance, Thomas Kuhn's notion of scientific paradigms is widely, though certainly not unanimously or uncritically, accepted in the natural sciences.[59] Kuhn challenged the idea of some kind of neutral objectivity whereby the scientist can make judgements from a universally acceptable neutral starting point as the Enlightenment episteme assumed. There would be few contemporary scientists who would deny that the language of investigation, the methods and controls of experimentation, and the very questions asked in scientific exploration, are profoundly shaped by the paradigm inhabited by the research scientist. And there is no scientist who is not operating within a paradigm. This insight need not lead to relativism (as some argue), for the very fact of paradigm shifts suggests that the quest for truth is still maintained, even with the recognition that all enquiry proceeds from a particular epistemological and ontological tradition. *Epochē*, in this view, is not only epistemologically impossible (for how could one suspend one's beliefs?), but actually undesirable, for it both masks the operative set of beliefs held by the investigator (thinking they are neutral), and obscures the forceful eviction of contenders for intellectually respectable methods of study (in my case, the dead mother—theology).

IV MacIntyre and the Criticisms of Liberalism and Postmodernism

Kuhn's point can be seen to have its counterpart in moral philosophy and the social sciences. For example, Alasdair MacIntyre has argued persuasively against the possibility of neutral enquiry or a universal rationality, and has tried to show the tradition-specific nature of all moral and philosophical intellectual enquiry. In his three major books, MacIntyre has confined himself to western Christian and secular culture and generally ignored the pressures exerted on western culture from other religions. This is hardly a

[59] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd edn., Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1970. The more radical positions held by Paul Feyerabend (non-realist and relativist) and Mary Hesse (instrumentalist) are paralleled in theology by Don Cupitt and Richard Braithwaite respectively.

failing, given his mammoth achievement, but we should keep this in mind in what follows. MacIntyre's argument in his third main book *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (1990) is particularly germane to my own argument, but it needs to be placed in the context of the other two.

In *After Virtue* (1981) MacIntyre helps to highlight the problems and persuasiveness of modernity, or as he calls it, the Enlightenment project. MacIntyre argues that the Enlightenment project was doomed to failure. John Horton and Susan Mendus provide a lucid summary:

> The Enlightenment project which has dominated philosophy during the past three hundred years promised a conception of rationality independent of historical and social context, and independent of any specific understanding of man's nature or purpose. But not only has that promise in fact been unfulfilled, the project is itself fundamentally flawed and the promise could never be fulfilled. In consequence, modern moral and political thought are in a state of disarray from which they can be rescued only if we revert to an Aristotelian paradigm, with its essential commitment to teleology, and construct an account of practical reason premised on that commitment.[60]

The Enlightenment project, in so much as it has dominated philosophy and moral and political thought, has inevitably affected religious thought and the intellectual institutions in which they developed (the universities). John Milbank's work is a complement to MacIntyre's in charting the impact of modernity on Christian theology and practice in two particular ways. First, the Enlightenment trajectory in part accounts for the demise of trinitarian theology and Christian practice in rendering and reconstructing the world within the grand narratives of philosophy (Kant, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and eventually Marx and Hegel), sociology (Comte, Durkheim, Weber), and science (both the natural and social sciences). Within these narratives the world is best understood and analyzed without God, who is always positioned as moral authorizer, social cement, and expedient but ultimately redundant explanatory principle. Deism was the initial home for this vaporized God, but redundancy was inevitable. As noted earlier, Milbank sees nominalism as a major factor in this process, and, like MacIntyre, sees Aquinas as a major resource to counter modernity.

Second, the relationship between morality and deity underwent a radical shift. The Christian *telos* was ousted, in that universal reason and freedom became both the ethical means and ends. The Kantian move toward a uni-

[60] Eds. John Horton and Susan Mendus, *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1994, p. 3.

versal ethics, which would be grounded in pure reason and fleshed out in practical reason, was inevitable. Kant could view the religions, with Christianity as the unsurpassable best, as more or less embodying the ethical universals he was able to arrive at through reason alone. This form of ethical thinking required an impartial state to arbitrate political, social, and ethical matters. Christianity would have to align itself with these ethical universals or lose social credibility and privilege, wherever it still had any. This narrative, by Milbank and MacIntyre, provides the canvas on which the brief history of theology I have been narrating can be painted. The emergence of modernity would not only erode Christianity intellectually, while admittedly providing the resources for many resurgences, it would shape the very intellectual institutions within which Christian theology might flourish.

After Virtue (1985) had many failings, the major one, in my opinion, being that its Aristotelianism required fuller explication and grounding in a community of practice (as opposed to an idealized past, based on heroic violence, as Milbank so pertinently points out), from which it might create an alternative society of virtue.[61] This was slightly remedied in his second work, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988), but would have to await *Three Rival Versions* (1990) to be most fully explicated. *Whose Justice?* contains a defense by MacIntyre against the charge of relativism, a charge also aimed at Kuhn. MacIntyre tries instead to show that different positions might be able to engage in rational debate so that there may be a successful outcome. His example is the debate that takes place in thirteenth-century Paris between Aquinas and the Aristotelian and Augustinian traditions, with Thomism emerging the victor. Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches summarize the argument succinctly:

> Crucial to [MacIntyre's] position is the possibility that the Christian account of the virtues can be successfully grafted onto the Greek heritage. Hence, he attempts to demonstrate how Augustine was able to resolve antinomies intrinsic to and yet unresolvable within the Greek account of virtue, and how Aquinas, revising and extending Augustine's insights, did the same, producing the most satisfactory version of morality we have had so far.[62]

[61] See Stout's balanced and thoughtful critique of MacIntyre's earlier work, much of it rectified in MacIntyre's later work: Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics after Babel: The Languages of Morals and their Discontents*, James Clarke, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 191–220; and Milbank's charged differentiation between the Christian and antique *polis* (which was written before *Three Rival Versions*), *Theology and Social Theory*, pp. 326–76.

[62] Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches, *Christians Among the Virtues: Theological Conversations with Ancient and Modern Ethics*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1997, p. 62.

One might say that MacIntyre's intellectual search was driving him into Roman Catholic Thomism, as the only intelligible intellectual moral position on offer. This is confirmed in *Three Rival Versions*, which finally takes more seriously the socio-political context that nourishes such practices: the Church.

Three Rival Versions continues MacIntyre's project and his final chapter addresses the question of the university specifically. MacIntyre argues that western European society is confronted by three rival versions of moral enquiry, each with its own epistemological, ontological, ethical, and methodological assumptions. While they may seem incommensurable, MacIntyre also seeks to show that there may be the possibility of an historically narrated rational debate between them, so that one might emerge the superior.[63]

What are the three rival versions? There is, of course, the Enlightenment project, which MacIntyre here calls the "Encyclopaedic," for he characterizes it in its embodiment in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The second tradition, which has always been on the horizon of MacIntyre's project, is that of the "Genealogical," or the postmodern, typified by Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*. The postmodern is parasitic upon the Enlightenment. To understand how, we must briefly return to MacIntyre's critique of Enlightenment morality. In the words of Kelvin Knight, MacIntyre argues that, despite all their important differences,

> [what] united Hume, Kant and others in a single project was . . . their agreement that the prerequisite for Enlightenment was the rejection of their Aristotelian heritage. A central part of what they thereby rejected was a syllogistic way of justifying the rules of morality on the basis not only of an apprehension of "man-as-he-happens-to-be" but also of "human-nature-as-it-could-be-if-it-realised-its-*telos*." In so doing, claims MacIntyre, they [such Enlightenment thinkers] rejected the only way of coherently moving from an apprehension of what is to an apprehension of what ought to be. Only when approached as the only means by which to move from one's present self to one's *telos*, to one's true good in society with others, can it be concluded that the rules of morality are categorical. What followed from Enlightenment philosophers' rejection of teleology was their interminable disagreement about how the rules of morality might be justified, insoluble problems in the proposals of each being identified by others.[64]

[63] *Three Rival Versions*, p. 5.

[64] Kelvin Knight, "Editor's Introduction," *The MacIntyre Reader*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1998, p. 8.

Eventually all that could be agreed was that people ought to be free to agree or disagree, and the birth of the modern nation state and liberal democracy was its social and political counterpart. However, with no common *telos*, even this minimal consensus would eventually come into question. Nietzsche was inevitable, given the unresolvable lacunae within the Enlightenment project that replaced the *telos* of the common good with the formal requirement of human freedom. Nietzsche saw that there could be no real foundation for ethics in this stance and consequently celebrated the will to power, which was always the repressed truth within the Enlightenment matrix. For MacIntyre's own argument to work, he develops a further critique of the postmodern or Nietzschean Genealogical "tradition" which focuses on its internal contradictions regarding the continuities of a narrative self.[65]

The third position from which MacIntyre can reveal and narrate the shortcomings of the Encyclopaedic and Genealogical traditions is Thomism, mediated by Pope Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris*. Finally, MacIntyre has found his flicker of light; the vague gesticulation at the end of *After Virtue* turns out not to be neo-Benedictine, but a neo-Thomism.[66] My own project can be thus located within this position identified by MacIntyre, although I am not a Thomist as such, but write out of a fluid and complex "tradition": Roman Catholicism.

In the final chapter, MacIntyre calls for a postliberal university. He notes three characteristics vital to the premodern university, essential to healthy intellectual enquiry. First, the emergence of agreement upon standards of rational justification through the work of enquiry itself, not only in the explicit discussion of the philosophers but also through the intellectual practice of professors of mathematics and history and law and theology.[67] MacIntyre recognizes that such agreements are never static, but some shared consensus is important. Second, were "enforced exclusions from the universities and colleges of points of view too much at odds with the consensus underpinning both enquiry and education."[68] Of course, this system led to losses, and even grave injustices. MacIntyre bemoans the systematic injustice spawned, most notably toward Jews. Nevertheless, such exclusion was also

[65] Admittedly, this criticism is only focussed upon Foucault and Deleuze, and de Man's unmasking, and cannot be said to be an exhaustive engagement with postmodern texts. Milbank, in this respect, is more thorough: *Theology and Social Theory*, pp. 278–326.

[66] His final plea was for a neo-Benedict who might construct "new forms of community within which the moral life could be sustained so that both morality and civility might survive the coming ages of barbarism and darkness." *After Virtue*, p. 263.

[67] *Three Rival Versions*, p. 223.

[68] Ibid., p. 223.

the precondition of great success in building traditions of enquiry, and as MacIntyre wryly notes, the natural sciences have always best succeeded with "quiet, informal, characteristically unstated policies of enforced exclusion, unacknowledged and unnoticed except by sociologists of science."[69] Third, a counterpart to such exclusions was "the use of preferments and promotions to ensure that upholders of the consensus, including those who extended, corrected, and otherwise improved the standards of rational justification embodied in it, occupied the relevant professorial chairs."[70] Again, he is fully aware of "error and abuse," but notes that this sort of abuse is present in every system. MacIntyre concludes, repeating my earlier arguments:

> For those who require sufficient resolution of fundamental disagreements in morals and theology in order that rational enquiry in those areas may proceed, the liberal university can provide no remedy. And by providing no remedy it has successfully excluded substantive moral and theological enquiry from its domain. . . . the dethronement of moral philosophy, like the dethronement of theology in an earlier period, would in any case have deprived the curriculum of any but pragmatic principles of ordering.[71]

In one sense moral philosophy had already lost the plot with the dethronement of theology, a point that takes MacIntyre some time (three volumes) to recognize, but the significance of this loss of ordering, vision, and orientation is all-important.[72] It is precisely why there is no ability to argue for the "flourishing of the whole."[73] It is also precisely why the Great Books curriculum, suggested by intellectuals who realize the depths of the catastrophe in the modern university, is ineffectual. Alan Bloom, for example, clearly sees the closing of the "American mind" and berates the universities in a manner not unlike MacIntyre.[74] However, his proposed study of great books, the great classics of western civilization from Homer, Plato, and Aristotle, through Augustine, Chaucer, Shakespeare, to Austen and Mark Twain, cannot really restore any cultural tradition, as it bypasses the double question: how are we to read these texts, and how is their eurocentricism to be justified? Paul Griffiths sums up many of these issues nicely:

[69] Ibid., p. 225.
[70] Ibid., p. 224.
[71] Ibid., pp. 226–7.
[72] This lack of theological sensibility is raised in a balanced manner by David Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 135–7.
[73] *Three Rival Versions*, p. 227.
[74] Alan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1987. William J. Bennet is another example.

> Pedagogically, modernity is the cafeteria-style university catalog of courses from which consumers (provided they have paid their tuition fees) can choose what most pleases them; it is the row of paperback editions of sacred works from a dozen religious traditions jostling one another on the bookstore's shelves. Religious pedagogy, by contrast, is the single curriculum, identical for all, like that in place in Nālandā in India in the eighth century, or at Clairvaux in France in the twelfth; and it is a single set of sacred works that cannot be placed on a par with (much less on the same shelf as) others. Religious learning therefore requires explicit appeal to authority in ways that consumerist pedagogy does not. The former wants to make choices for its learners, while the latter wants to equip them to choose for themselves . . .[75]

MacIntyre finally makes clear the implication of his proposals in seeing that real plurality, apparently sought after by liberal moderns, might best be promoted by "rival universities":

> each modelled on, but improving upon, its own best predecessors, the Thomist perhaps upon Paris in 1272, the genealogist upon Vincennes in 1968 [and one might add, the modern, upon Berlin in 1810]. And thus the wider society would be confronted with the claims of rival universities, each advancing its own enquiries in its own terms and each securing the type of agreement necessary to ensure the progress and flourishing of its enquiries by its own set of exclusions and prohibitions, formal and informal. But then also required [*sic*—according to whom?] would be a set of institutionalized forums in which the debate between rival types of enquiry was afforded rhetorical expression.[76]

These conclusions and MacIntyre's reasons for arriving at them account for my extended attention to his work, both in my indebtedness and also in our different emphases. In chapters two and three, I try and deal more seriously than MacIntyre does with the objection of utopianism and sectarianism. He argues that these objections may be "best understood more as a symptom of the condition of those who level it than an indictment of the projects against which it is directed."[77] While this may well be true, it is not an entirely adequate response.

There are two particular intersections between MacIntyre's and my own argument that I would like to highlight. First, religious studies, as I have been charting it above, is part of the Encyclopaedic tradition and is properly

[75] Paul J. Griffiths, *Religious Reading: The Place of Reading in the Practice of Religion*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, p. 68.
[76] *Three Rival Versions*, p. 234, my additional brackets.
[77] Ibid., p. 235.

located within that mode of enquiry. In this sense its murderous Oedipal desire toward theology can now be located within a wider picture. Theology must rightly contest religious studies' autonomous existence and its claim to objective production; although any sensible theologian would also recognize that there are invaluable skills, tools, methods, and insights present within the phenomenological approach of Smart's religious studies. The only point I am contesting is Smart's epistemological claims for religious studies. It is not an objective and dispassionate methodology by which to approach "religions," but an historically and philosophically situated enterprise, just like theology. Second, MacIntyre's material account lacks attention to the intellectual traditions of enquiry within other religions. Rather than MacIntyre's isolation of three traditions of enquiry (liberal modernity, parasitic genealogical criticism, and neo-Thomism), each requiring their own institutions of learning as their conceptions of education vary so profoundly (even if genealogy can only exist parasitically on the other two and, in this sense, could not exist on its own), there are good reasons to consider further traditions for institutional developments within the formal, rather than material, terms of MacIntyre's discussion.

Indeed, a sympathetic Muslim critic of MacIntyre, Muhammad Legenhausen, has made this very point. He notes Islam's relationship to the Aristotelian tradition upon which MacIntyre is so dependent, and therefore criticizes MacIntyre's inexplicable omission of Islam in the debate. Furthermore, Legenhausen, writing in Iran, also suggests that Islam can account for the aporia within MacIntyre's argument in *After Virtue*, whereby MacIntyre's espousal of the necessity of small sectarian communities to counter barbarism, after the order of St. Benedict, fails entirely to engage with the problem of nation states that MacIntyre identifies as one of the roots of the malaise. Susan Mendus and John Horton make the same point: "Moreover, given the importance which MacIntyre attaches to the social embeddedness of thought and enquiry, his largely negative view of modernity continually threatens to undermine any attempt to root his positive proposals in the contemporary world of advanced industrial societies."[78]

According to Legenhausen, Islam, on the other hand, is able to offer a theocratic solution, allegedly avoiding both "nationalism and liberalism," an alternative that is "not taken seriously by Western theorists."[79] Hence, Legenhausen takes up MacIntyre's critique of modernity, but points to the same

[78] Horton and Mendus, *After MacIntyre*, pp. 13–14.

[79] Muhammad Legenhausen, extended book review of *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, *Al-Tawhid*, 14, 2, 1997, pp. 158–76: p. 169. See also H. H. Bilgrami and S. A. Ashraf, *The Concept of an Islamic University*, Hodder & Stoughton, The Islamic Academy, Cambridge, 1985, esp. pp. 16–39 for a helpful perspective on the matter. Islamic universities were important influences on the development of Christian universities, in part through their shared Aristotelian heritage.

weakness located by Horton and Mendus within MacIntyre's alternative, and at that point thereby commends Islam. In institutional terms, given MacIntyre's premises, this would amount to an argument for an Islamic university. Certainly the existence of such an entity within western Europe and the United States might better facilitate systematic theology's rigorous engagement with a living religious intellectual tradition other than Judeo-Christianity. It may also have many other important benefits and consequences. The Jewish community has already established higher educational institutions within western Europe, the USA, England, and of course, Israel. Whether and how these arguments and considerations should be related to the various religions and whether such institutions would even be desirable is a question that would have to be pursued by intellectuals within those communities. For example, it seems clear that Tibetan Buddhism presupposed a very precise epistemological and pedagogical set of assumptions in its construction of the four major Tibetan universities operating in Tibet—prior to the Chinese occupation.[80] In my own desire to see the true flourishing of pluralism, rather than domesticated plurality regulated by modernity, I can see many advantages in encouraging such alternative universities. However, I cannot go further with this suggestion here, as it would take me well beyond my remit.

Admittedly, the above discussion does not address the question of how religious studies would be taught within "sectarian" theology departments. I shall address this issue in chapter five below.

To return to my main argument, to show that the crisis in the liberal Enlightenment project runs across the disciplines, I want finally to turn to the social sciences and anthropology. Bernard McGrane has argued that anthropologists and ethnologists should eschew their desire for objectivity and neutrality, for it simply masks forms of ethnocentrism that can only be discerned properly when the location of the studying subject is taken into consideration. McGrane's survey of ethnographic work from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries is provocative and he argues that the construal of objects of study always takes place within a definite and specific horizon and in this sense is historically tradition-specific, and cannot assume a universal neutral platform for enquiry.[81] While McGrane tends toward too neat a

[80] Anne Klein, *Knowledge and Liberation: Tibetan Buddhist Epistemology in Support of Transformative Religious Experience*, Snow Lion, New York, 1986, p. 49.

[81] Bernard McGrane, *Beyond Anthropology: Society and the Other*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1989. Foucault is of course the inspiration behind McGrane's project and Edward Said's. See Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1978. See a fuller discussion of these writers in my "Trinitarian Différance and World Religions" in ed. Ursula King, *Faith and Praxis in a Postmodern Age*, Cassell, London, 1998, pp. 28–46.

schematized catalog, it is worth considering his findings. He begins at the Renaissance and argues that during that period, non-Christian western European cultures and religions were always:

> interpreted on the horizon of Christianity. It was Christianity which fundamentally came between the European and the non-European other. Within the Christian conception of Otherness anthropology did not exist; there was, rather, demonology. It was in relation to the Fall and to the influence of Sin and Satan that the Other took on his historically specific meaning.[82]

According to McGrane, after the Enlightenment, ignorance and error replaced sin. With the slow erosion of religious belief, there developed a "psychology of error and superstition, an ontology of ignorance, and an epistemology of all the forms of untruth and unenlightenment."[83] Demonization was replaced by ignorance, by a lack of enlightenment. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) emblematically reflects both these periods and anticipates the next in the representation of Friday: partly fallen, clearly ignorant, and definitely uncivilized. In the nineteenth century the influence of geology (George Lyell), evolutionary theory (Charles Darwin), and anthropology (Edward Tylor) provides the horizon of interpretation, so that the non-European Other is organized in terms of stages of development, "between the prehistorically fossilized 'primitive' and the evolutionary advancement of modern Western science and civilization."[84] The evolutionary ladder of savage, primitive, civilized is established and different groups positioned along its rungs with the European at the top. Finally, when McGrane comes to the twentieth century, he fiercely contests the predominant episteme of cultural relativism in which difference is rendered as cultural difference alone, thereby masking the real challenge that the Other poses.

McGrane rehearses the arguments against such relativizers: their absolute claim that all is relative must itself be relative, and their hidden imperialism in assuming a non-relative vantage point from which to make this observation about all cultures.[85] McGrane argues that culture becomes the dominant

[82] McGrane, *Beyond Anthropology*, p. ix. McGrane's use of "his" ironically adds to the occlusion of the feminine Other.

[83] Ibid., p. ix.

[84] Ibid., p. x.

[85] See such arguments in their more developed forms: Hilary Putnam, *Reason: Truth and History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981; Peter Berger, *A Rumour of Angels*, Penguin, London, 1970; and more recently Ernst Gellner, *Postmodernism: Reason and Religion*, Routledge, London, 1992. While these three make similar criticisms of relativism, they defend very different notions of rationality and tradition.

paradigm for interpreting the Other. Cultural relativity becomes the grand text into which difference is encoded; the non-European Other is seen as "fundamentally and merely, culturally different."[86] Ironically, in this modernist mode of portrayal, difference is reduced to sameness and inoculated from any real interaction. So while in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries there was a tendency to portray the Other in metonymic mode, a distorted mirror image of the European, in the twentieth century, the Other is simply a mirror of the European, homogenized by assimilation, culturally relative, made same, rendered safe, and thereby able to "achieve" the respect of secular liberalism.

The roll-call of figures to support my argument could be extended (to include Michel Foucault, Edward Said, Donald Davidson, and others) to show the crisis in liberal modernity's intellectual assumptions and the institutions that enshrine and perpetuate this tradition (especially the university and the nation state).[87] Of course, there are supporters of all positions lodged within the university. Nevertheless, notions of *epochē* and neutral objectivity have been radically questioned in just those citadels that the method of religious studies sought to emulate. In this respect, it is theology that can offer religious studies (of an admittedly different kind) a home and proper role within a postliberal Christian university.

The fact that these different disciplines can be called upon to support my case is not in itself a decisive argument, but part of a cumulative case against the epistemological basis of religious studies relying as it does on *epochē* and the subsequent belief in the objective production and examination of the subject of study.[88] Another argument that could be deployed which is not dissimilar to the above, but derives from a different provenance while contesting the same institutional territory, comes through the voice of the nearly

[86] McGrane, *Beyond Anthropology*, p. x.

[87] Against the relativist difficulties often imputed to the perspectivalism advanced here, see W. V. O. Quine, *Pursuit of Truth*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1990, pp. 37–59, and Donald Davidson, "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual System" in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1984, pp. 183–98.

[88] A similar assault has been made on religious studies and theology by feminist and liberation theologians. See, for example, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Commitment and Critical Enquiry," *Harvard Theological Review*, 82, 1, 1989, pp. 1–11; Jon Luis Segundo, "Capitalism Versus Socialism: Crux Theologica" in ed. Rosino Gibellini, *Frontiers of Liberation Theology in Latin America*, trans. John Drury, SCM, London, 1980 [1975], pp. 240–59. The concerns of liberation and feminism come together in María Clara Bingemer, "Women in the Future of the Theology of Liberation," and Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "Reflections from a Third World Woman's Perspective: Women's Experience and Liberation Theologies"—both in ed. Ursula King, *Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader*, SPCK, London, 1994, pp. 308–17, and 23–34 respectively.

dead mother (theology). The theologian could rightly argue that the study of religions is only properly located within the horizons of Christian theology precisely because all creation was made for praise and worship of the triune God. This would also be the basis for arguing more widely for the transfiguration of different disciplines within a Christian university, a matter with which I shall deal later in the book.

For the moment, let me recall the second stage of my argument. Religious studies was born into English universities: partly because of the anachronism of theology being located within the secular academy; partly owing to the search for scientific and objective ways of carrying out research in religions to avoid theological sectarianism (but nevertheless creating another form); and to gain the approval of the secular academy (which has, in many other disciplines, moved on). Put together with part one of my argument, the cumulative case will require, if it is accepted, at least one of three possible responses, only the third of which I support. One would be to abolish both theology and religious studies departments altogether and integrate them into history, literature, politics, and so on. On secular grounds, this seems to be logical and possibly inevitable. Second, one could rename theology and religious studies as the historical critical study of religion and continue what went on previously. On secular grounds this option is attractive for two reasons. First, no hermeneutical privilege is given to any one religion in the study of "religions." Second, the world is full of religions and therefore justifies a field related to this social reality. Clearly, both these options are not attractive to theology as presented here. Or third, one might allow specific starting points to flourish, label them clearly, and allow them to interact. Within this third option, many different models are possible.[89] My own specific theological option would be to argue for a Roman Catholic university (in principle, the first step before being able even to argue for a Christian university) within a pluralist academy on the lines advanced by Alasdair MacIntyre.[90] This is not in any way supposed to privilege,

[89] See, for instance, Alan Wolfe, "The Potential for Pluralism: Religious Responses to the Triumph of Theory and Method in American Academic Culture" in ed. A. Sterk, *Religion, Scholarship, and Higher Education*, pp. 22–39. My own position actually embodies elements from all three of Wolfe's options, no single one of which I would identify with exclusivists. His options are rejectionism (returning "religious institutions to a position of instruction in the faith"—p. 31; a necessary part of the discipline); parallelism ("the existence of more than one kind of academic culture within an institution"—p. 32; or, as I would argue, within different institutions) and his own preferred pluralism or "opportunism," whereby institutions encourage the practice of differing approaches (p. 34). Wolfe gives no theological reasons for why this approach "ought" to be attractive to Christians, let alone others.

[90] Such "plurality" already exists in the USA, but the extent to which it represents real "plurality" is called into question in the next chapter.

ghettoize, or sanctify Roman Catholics, but to recognize that tradition-specific forms of enquiry should be facilitated on good intellectual grounds. However, before proceeding with the theoretical argument, it is time to turn to a brief historical inspection, to see if my thesis relates to US and English university institutions.

Chapter Two

Babylon in the Church: The United States and England

I A Brief Review of the United States: The Secularization of the Christian University

In what follows I shall briefly examine some key studies of Christian universities in the United States, with a special focus on Roman Catholic institutions. This special focus is justified because it repeats the story of Protestant universities, as well as allowing a slightly more manageable field of material to be covered in such brief compass. I shall then turn to England to see if there are any significant parallels with my findings in the United States. Admittedly, in England there is nothing quite comparable to the numbers and denominational diversity of Christian universities in the United States. The contexts and histories of England and the United States are quite different, but I hope to highlight three common themes: (1) the secularization of the university, with minor exceptions; (2) the fragmentation of the curriculum so that specialisms flourish with little sense of any Christian vision relating and harmonizing these different fields; and (3) the secularization of the study of theology, so that it resembles its secular counterpart—religious studies. This overall picture, painted with a broad brush, misses out many counter *individual* practices, or *groupings* within institutes, but this is inevitable and necessary, as I am focussing on the institutional dimensions of the question. We need not only counter-cultural individual scholars, or in some cases, groups of scholars, but counter-cultural universities—and many of them, for real plurality.

Turning to the United States, I shall explore my three themes through three important studies. To explore the process of the secularization of Catholic universities and the impact on the curriculum I shall begin with a close reading of Philip Gleason's influential work, published in 1995,

Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century.[1] The first attempt at such a survey had been Edward J. Power's *Catholic Higher Education in America: A History* (1958),[2] but analytically it did not advance any major thesis, nor obviously could it account for the watershed of the 1960s which so drastically changed the face of Catholic higher education in the United States when many Catholic universities slowly became indistinguishable from secular universities except that Mass was regularly celebrated.[3] Gleason's book is probably the most comprehensive study of the topic to date (even though the intervening years since its publication have brought about further changes—which, however, do not call Gleason's analytical argument into question). Gleason surveys the period 1900–95, covering many aspects of institutional, organizational, curricular, personal, international, socio-political, ideological, theological, and philosophical issues. Even given the bewilderingly complex patterns and shifts he charts, it would still be possible to summarize his thesis under two headings: institutional/organizational, and curricular/ideological. The first refers to issues of management, mission statements, institutional character, and aims, and the second refers to detailed questions of how the curriculum reflects mission statements, and how it implements an ideology, possibly at variance with a mission statement. The title of his study (*Contending with Modernity*) brings those two foci together, so that the overall argument can be summarized nicely in Gleason's own words:

> what happened in the 1960s climaxed the transition from an era in which Catholic educators *challenged* modernity to one in which they *accepted* modernity. This too oversimplifies because modernity means many different things, and Catholics' new readiness to accept it was not altogether uncritical. But this formulation comes closer to capturing the fundamental shift that took place in Catholic higher education when the assimilative tendencies that had been gathering strength since World War II met and intermingled with the seismic forces unleashed by Vatican II and the social, political and cultural crisis of the 1960s.[4]

[1] Oxford University Press, Oxford/New York, 1995. The page numbers in the text refer to this work. Gleason's account is taken to the present, in part supported and in some details contested, in Alice Gallin, *Negotiating Identity: Catholic Higher Education since 1960*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2000. I shall return to her (and David O'Brien's) differences below.

[2] Macmillan, London, 1973 [1958].

[3] Power's work was so obsolete as not to be discussed in any detail in Gleason's magisterial study, *Contending with Modernity*, with minor exceptions, e.g. p. 405, note 20.

[4] Gleason, *Modernity*, p. 318.

In a word: Catholic higher education institutions were increasingly indistinguishable from their secular counterparts after the 1960s. Prior to this time, Gleason shows that there was a sustained attempt, even if never centrally orchestrated and certainly not without deep internal factions, to establish and sustain Catholic universities which at least attempted to contend with modernity, and represent an alternative practice and vision to both its Protestant and (later on) its secular counterparts.

American higher education began primarily in terms of Christian denominational institutions. The single most comprehensive study of Christian institutions in American higher education is, without question, James Tunstead Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light. The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from their Christian Churches*.[5] The first, Congregationalist Harvard, was founded in 1636 and was followed by at least 16 other denominational foundations (counting only those that still survive) including William and Mary (1693: Church of England/Episcopalian), Yale (1701: Congregationalist), Princeton (1746, originally called "The College of New Jersey": Presbyterian), Dartmouth (1769: Congregationalist), and Rutgers (1766, originally called Queens: Dutch Reformed). The first Catholic institution, Georgetown, appeared in 1789, founded by John Carroll SJ also the first American Catholic bishop (1788). He had been educated by Jesuits, became a Jesuit and taught for them in Europe under the Jesuit-devised *Ratio Studiorum* (plan of studies).[6] This Continental model of the curriculum was central in initially distinguishing Catholic higher education, as we shall see. By 1885 many of the major Catholic institutions had been founded: Saint Louis University (1818), Xavier University, Cincinnati (1831), Fordham University, New York (1841), Villanova University (1842), University of Dayton (1850), Boston College (1863), Marquette University (1881), and the Catholic University of America (1885). The last was the fourth institution sponsored by the Holy See in Rome or by the local See, therefore called Pontifical institutions. Catholic University is the largest of all, representing the first united actions by the American bishops in the sponsoring of Catholic higher education. Between 1920 and 1970 Catholics founded 76 institutions that are still extant, while during this same period all the other denominations taken together opened 32 comparable institutions. Burtchaell observes the steep decline after the 1960s: "One Catholic

[5] W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1998.

[6] Two helpful studies on the *Ratio* are: Thomas Hughes, *Loyola and the Educational System of the Jesuits*, Heinemann, London, 1982, and Robert Schwickerath, *Jesuit Education: Its History and Principles, Viewed in the Light of Modern Educational Problems*, Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1903.

observer recalls that in the early 1970s the mortality rate (through closing or merger) was about one per week."[7] Gleason's book is an attempt to examine this chronic decline.

Gleason, to return to the title of his book, is very clear that there is no simple or singular definition of "modernity" as applied to Catholicism as it was historically unravelling. It is associated at different times with Americanism (the assimilation of Catholicism to American ideals and culture), biblical studies, Vatican II, and Scholasticism in various ways, with different consequences. In Gleason's book it might be better construed as the "secularization" of Catholicism, indicating the assimilation of key features of American secular society: emphasis on freedom for the individual; repudiation of authorities external to the individual; favoring Christian action in terms of social service.[8] Gleason is also critical of the manner in which church institutions sometimes acted in response to these shifts in society.[9] For example, there are three cases of turbulent disputes over "academic freedom" where staff at Catholic institutions were eventually dismissed.[10] The first, and the only one I shall mention here, exemplifies the powerful tensions *within* ecclesial circles and also the growing expression of hostility in non-Catholic circles to certain aspects of Catholic polity.

In 1965, at St. John's University in New York, 31 professors were fired abruptly for their unorthodoxy. They were not even able to finish teaching their courses that semester. The entire faculty boycotted teaching, the institution was severely censured by the American Association of University Professors, and St. John's came to represent to many Catholics and non-Catholics, old-fashioned pre-Vatican II authoritarian high-handedness, disregard for human rights and due process, and a failure to take intellectual integrity seriously. Some faculty members made it clear that the problem resided in the "highly paternalistic" Vincentian administrators (earlier called the Congregation of the Mission) who also controlled the board of trustees.

[7] Burtchaell, *Dying*, p. 562.

[8] See especially Gleason, *Modernity*, pp. 283–323.

[9] This is also true of Burtchaell, whose rhetoric is "cantankerous" (*Dying*, p. 850) at times, but he is equally critical of some members of the Curia, e.g. pp. 587–90.

[10] See Gleason, *Modernity*, pp. 308–16 for all three cases; and also Joseph Scimencca and Toland Damiano, *Crisis at St. John's: Strike and Revolution on the Catholic Campus*, Random House, New York, 1967, for more on St. John's. Scant evidence was produced to justify the unorthodox doctrinal beliefs or immoral actions of the dismissed staff. Despite St. John's being one of the largest and "more tradition-oriented" Catholic universities, Frank D. Schubert has shown in his sociological analysis of its religious curriculum, that it too has been deeply secularized. See Frank D. Schubert, *A Sociological Study of Secularization Trends in the American Catholic University: Decatholicizing the Catholic Religious Curriculum*, Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York, 1990, quote above from p. 45; see Part II (pp. 49–129; and pp. 136–9).

In turn, the administrators defended their action in terms of the need to preserve the basic religious character of the institution. It should be noted that only a year before, as reported in John Donovan's *Academic Man in the Catholic College*, Catholic academics in the US were reporting job satisfaction in terms of "catholic environment," "faculty cordiality," and "academic freedom"—in that order.[11] Quite suddenly, this freedom was called into question. The number of such cases increased in the late 1960s and after, indicative of one of two views, depending on where one stands. For liberals, these struggles were generated from the angry flailings of the authoritarian mentality of a conservative rear-guard shocked by the modernizing influences of Vatican II. For conservatives, even if inelegantly executed, these actions were required for a Church aware that if it did not reclaim its higher educational institutions from secularism and modernity there would be no intellectual resource to regenerate Catholicism. The issues are of course more complex, and the labels "conservative" and "liberal" hopelessly inadequate, but the St. John's case is indicative of the complex nature of Catholic identity in terms of institutional/organizational and curricular/ideological issues.

To further illustrate this, I will take examples of each of these two foci to give some detail to Gleason's argument. His book contains multiple detailed descriptions, and Burtchaell complements this in his finely textured narrative that follows the same tracks regarding non-Catholic Christian institutions of higher education.[12] The institutional/organizational and curricular/ideological issues can in this instance be taken together if we look at the role of the *Ratio Studiorum* in early Catholic education. It was the backbone for the pioneers of American Catholic (Jesuit) universities, especially in the Missouri Province under the very traditional provincial Rudolph Meyer SJ, who requested a "Course of Studies" be drawn up in 1887 so that the *Ratio* could be implemented.

This Jesuit education plan of study had been canonically set forth in 1599 and was employed, with various changes, in Georgetown, Fordham, and other Catholic Jesuit institutions in the pre-war period when such institutions were developing. It is worth focussing on, for it indicates an ancient pedagogic pattern that saw the unity of all branches of knowledge being related definitively through philosophy and theology. Hence, this was a distinct Catholic vision that affected the curriculum and also indicated a

[11] Sheed and Ward, New York, 1964, pp. 181–2.

[12] Burtchaell argues that the broader picture (Christian colleges, denominations other than Catholic) is the same, although Protestant colleges went down the secularizing road at least 20 to 30 years in advance of their Catholic counterparts—*Dying*, pp. 561–3, 715–16.

theological and philosophical position regarding the very meaning of all the disciplines taught at the different levels of education. The *Ratio* consisted of a period of around seven years of studies taken in three stages (or cycles): humanistic, philosophical, and theological. The humanistic goal was *eloquentia perfecta*, a command of Latin and training in the classics, rhetoric, grammar, and logic. Some American Jesuits would later argue that this first stage was central to developing the virtues of the intellect and self-discipline, and criticized the "utilitarian" demands of contemporary education in America (such as commercial studies). Ironically the first stage had been historically formulated, in part, to help the advancement of a number of elite career paths that required Latin, such as law, medicine, government, and theology (pp. 51–5). The second cycle required three years of study of philosophy, followed by the queen of the sciences, theology, allowing for all these different branches of knowledge to be interrelated and seen as a reflection of God's glory in man's knowledge. This latter stage was envisaged for clerics.

Implementing the *Ratio* faced severe difficulties. First, the demands of a student group eager for vocational training meant that when, for example, Fordham dropped its commercial courses in the early 1890s "a severe decline in enrolment led to its reinstatement and the creation of a six-year, non-classical program leading to the Bachelor of Science degree" (p. 54). Likewise, such a program meant that many of the Jesuit institutions were "in most cases well nigh deserted" (p. 55).[13] The need for Catholics to advance themselves in American society meant that professional and vocationally oriented degrees were in demand. The aristocracy (or the wealthy in the US) and the Church were not the main clients of these new universities, as in early Europe, but often incoming immigrant populations, sometimes from poorly educated backgrounds.[14] Second, during and after the First World War, disagreements about the *Ratio* in Catholic circles began to call its authority into question for some educators. Its implementation in different countries with different resources, needs, and academic timetables and expectations presented innumerable problems. In the United States, for example, it did not fit into the normal distinctions between high school education and university education. Hence, the world assembly of Jesuits in 1906 ruled that it was no longer possible to draw up a universally binding *Ratio*, so each province could adapt it to local conditions. In the face of such

[13] Citing Roman Benert, "A Study of the Responses of Jesuit Educators in Theory and Practice to the Transformation of Curricular Patterns in Popular Secondary Education between 1880 and 1920," PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1963, p. 243.

[14] Donovan, *Academic Man*, pp. 191–2 focuses on the Irish factor, arguing that the Irish carried on in their pattern of being "intellectually incurious"!

changes, when Meyer was replaced by Alexander J. Burrowes SJ, a moderate progressive, the Committee he set in motion in 1914–15 produced a new Course of Studies, yet another attempt at implementing the *Ratio*, and hailed as a "landmark in Jesuit educational modernization" (p. 56). Changes followed as Jesuit institutions (at various levels of education) accepted the notion of standardization of curriculum which required compatibility with the state's standards and goals. In the words of Burrowes: "we shall have to follow" the state (p. 57). The result was a reduced number of courses, less time required to complete a cycle, and options and choices (electives) at each stage of the cycle that reflected economic and commercial needs.

Gleason argues that by 1920 the Missouri Province practiced "effective abandonment of the *Ratio*" (p. 57), although not without many Jesuit traditionalists regarding these moves as "foolish and a betrayal of their heritage" (p. 59). This is a small case study of one province, Missouri, and the point to be gleaned from Gleason is that a once distinct Catholic vision that united both curriculum and the theology and philosophy of education was dismantled to be replaced by a secularized model dictated by financial and educational authorities outside the Church. One might speculate about the outcomes had the Jesuits of Missouri gone in a different direction.[15] One possibility, of course, is that Jesuit educational institutions would have been virtually empty. The more significant point is that many within the Church did not see this process as a falling away from the distinctness of a Catholic vision undergirding education, even though they were hard-pressed to defend what exactly was Catholic about the newer institutions apart from their personnel and their board of governors and trustees.

This curriculum example is echoed throughout Gleason's account, but there are also examples of refusal to assimilate, and indeed for nearly 50 years until the 1960s, a Catholic intellectual revival took place, with multiple tributaries feeding into it. Gleason argues that the dual effects of Pope Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris* (1897), calling for a revival of Thomism, and Pope Pius X's *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907) condemning Modernism, meant that energies were channeled into the development of neo-Scholasticism which "furnished the cognitive foundation for American Catholic intellectual and cultural life—including higher education" (p. 16).[16] Jacques Maritain's move

[15] On Jesuit trajectories in American higher education, see the highly critical overview by Burtchaell, *Dying*, pp. 563–634; and for a more complex, because more detailed, assessment, but one nevertheless not in contradiction to Burtchaell, see William P. Leahy SJ, *Adapting to America: Catholics, Jesuits, and Higher Education in the Twentieth Century*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC, 1991.

[16] Gleason, *Modernity*, chs. 5 and 6 trace this flourishing history, and chs. 11 and 12 its decline.

to the United States and Etienne Gilson's chair in Toronto meant that two of the greatest Thomists of the Scholastic revival were "local." Further influences in this counter-modernist move included "developments in the religious sphere—the liturgical movement and the theology of the Mystical Body of Christ—meshed beautifully with the understanding of Catholicism as a culture," as well as the understanding of history championed by Christopher Dawson, who helped also establish the idea of a "Catholic culture."[17] There were of course tensions between the neoscholastic philosophical and theologically oriented syntheses and Dawson's more historical project, but a joint vision was still possible (even if only in very general terms). Hence, in 1935 the Committee on Educational Policy and Program of the National Catholic Educational Association was able to affirm the following:

> The Catholic college will not be content with presenting Catholicism as a creed, a code, or a cult. Catholicism must be seen as a culture; hence, the graduates of the Catholic college of liberal arts will go forth not merely trained in Catholic doctrine, but they will have seen the whole sweep of Catholicism, its part in the building up of our western civilization, past and present . . . They will have before them not merely the facts in the natural order but those in the supernatural order also, those facts which give meaning and coherence to the whole of life.[18]

However, what was being produced in Catholic higher education during these years was also severely questioned, not only in terms of the 1960s' liberal movements, but also from within by those who, while holding to the importance of a Catholic university, found that it failed to emulate the non-Catholic universities of America, or match up to the best medieval traditions. After all, so it was argued: if one hired on the basis of faith commitment, the field of top academics was substantially reduced; if one sought to provide a wide-based liberal arts program oriented toward the development of the whole person, specialisms and higher research often suffered as a consequence—and this was supported by empirical research between the 1920s and 1950s indicating low levels of achievement of excellence of both staff and students at Catholic institutions.[19] If a Catholic culture was confident that it had all the resources for the future, it inevitably generated a smug, insular, ghetto-like culture failing to interact with the best and most

[17] Gleason, *Modernity*, p. 148, and ch. 7 for these developments.
[18] Gleason, *Modernity*, p. 149; citing NCEAM 32, November 1935, pp. 70–1.
[19] See John Tracy Ellis, *American Catholics and the Intellectual Life*, Heritage Foundation, Chicago, 1956; and for further reference to empirical studies: Thomas F. O'Dea, *American Catholic Dilemma: An Inquiry into the Intellectual Life*, Mentor, New York, 1962.

challenging currents in non-Catholic culture. Just such charges were leveled in 1955 at Catholic universities by one of the most distinguished Catholic historians from the Catholic University of America, Professor John Tracy Ellis.[20] Ellis was not seeking to challenge the idea of a Catholic university, just its falling short of such an ideal. His arguments were widely, though of course not universally, accepted.

Twelve years later, in 1967, one of the most high-powered Catholic educational meetings presided over by Father Theodore Hesburg, who held the presidency of Notre Dame University for a record 35 years, produced the Land O'Lakes Statement.[21] It opened with a resounding claim that expressed the drive for institutional independence from the Church, which had already been increasingly established in universities by the growth of lay people and non-Catholics on boards of trustees, governors, and academic staff. However, it is striking in its clear clarion call: "To perform its teaching and research function effectively the Catholic university must have a true autonomy and academic freedom in the face of authority of whatever kind, lay or clerical, external to the academic community itself."[22] This was a vision of the Catholic university cut adrift from the Church, from society, and only accountable to "the academic community itself." If Ellis had wanted Catholic universities to better their secular counterparts, then as a charter, the Land O'Lakes Statement could not have been more apt. Of course, in the context of the heated debates and practices regarding academic freedom and tenure, touched on above, the open (and loyal) theological dissent by some Catholic theologians, and the climate of the 1960s, such a statement was welcomed by many for good reason. However, Gleason rightly says the Land O'Lakes Statement was "a declaration of independence from the hierarchy and a symbolic turning point" (p. 317) from opposition to modernity to cohabitation with it. Here, after all, were the presidents and leaders of the Catholic university community insisting that their organizational structures and powers of accountability be cut adrift from the ecclesia. It is in this context that the

[20] John Tracy Ellis, "American Catholics and the Intellectual Life," *Thought*, 30, 1955, pp. 351–88; and Powers, *Catholic Higher Education in America*, pp. 382–94 for an alternative (positive) assessment of Ellis's speech.

[21] The meeting represented seven Catholic universities in the United States, four from Canada and Latin America, and the document is to be found in the appendix in ed. Neil G. McCluskey SJ, *The Catholic University: A Modern Appraisal*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1970, pp. 336–41, with participants on p. 336, history and background to this meeting on pp. 3–8, and subsequent involvement of the Roman Curia in response on pp. 8–28, 342–65.

[22] In ed. McCluskey, *Catholic University*, p. 336. See also David Schindler's elegant critique of Hesburg's idea of a Catholic university in Schindler, *Heart of the World, Center of the Church*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1996, pp. 143–76.

subsequent American debate as well as the 1990 Apostolic Constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (trans. *On Catholic Universities*, subsequently *CU*), from Pope John Paul II, on the Catholic university is to be understood.

Gleason's study concludes with a lucid diagnosis. The diagnosis, penned in 1995, notes that while Catholic institutions are still there, and still managed by Catholics (by and large), they are unable clearly to articulate a curriculum and ideology that is distinctly Catholic:

> Most Catholic institutions have, to be sure, survived; indeed, they have, in most cases, improved their academic standing, or at least kept pace with improvements elsewhere. Only an insignificant handful have outrightly abandoned their Catholic character. The identity problem that persists is . . . not institutional or organizational, but ideological. That is, it consists in a lack of consensus as to the substantive content of the ensemble of religious beliefs, moral commitments, and academic assumptions that supposedly constitute Catholic identity, and a consequent inability to specify what that identity entails for the practical functioning of Catholic colleges and universities. More briefly put, the crisis is not that Catholic educators do not want their institutions to remain Catholic, but that they are no longer sure what remaining Catholic means.[23]

In one sense, Gleason's conclusions as cited, though not his text as a whole, minimize the crisis of authority in the organizational running of Catholic institutions. The papal constitution on Catholic universities, *CU*, for instance, implicitly connects the lack of Catholic vision or ideology in Catholic universities with the question of how the institutional management is formed. Crudely put, it expresses a view that unless there is centralized management (the Holy See in Rome, mediated via the local bishops, although always answerable to Rome) overseeing curriculum and ideology, and administration in terms of governing charters, Catholic universities will often fail to live up to their potential. *CU* is important as it puts the correct issues back on the agenda. A Catholic university is not just a matter of liturgical celebrations on feast days, social work oriented to the poor, or a large number of faculty as Catholics. While these are all important, the vital intellectual relation of the disciplines unified under a theological

[23] Gleason cites, at this point (p. 320), a 1975 doctoral thesis that studied 25 Catholic institutions, reporting that their presidents confessed "inability to articulate properly their religious objectives today, even though they want the college to have a strong religious orientation." See Edward F. Maloney SJ, "A Study of the Religious Orientation of the Catholic Colleges and Universities in New York State from 1962 to 1972," PhD thesis, New York University, 1973, abstract page.

vision is central to the nature of a Catholic university (see below). That is, in Gleason's terms, it is the ideological component that makes the Catholic university salt to the intellectual world, or in MacIntyre's terms, a light in the darkness. However, it is a moot question whether subsidiarity is properly attained in supposing that Roman management is vital to the regeneration of Catholic universities.

To pursue Gleason's findings further I want briefly to look at my second important study: James Tunstead Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from their Christian Churches* (1998), with subsequent page references referring to this book. Here we will see Gleason's thesis verified and given further concrete specification in terms of three Catholic institutions sponsored by three of the more experienced Catholic teaching congregations that are trailed in detail: the Jesuit-run Boston College, the Ursuline-run College of New Rochelle, and the Brothers of the Christian Schools-run Saint Mary's College of California. I will not summarize any of Burtchaell's detailed stories. Burtchaell's findings are remarkable in two ways. First, they fully corroborate Gleason's major study, a point acknowledged by Burtchaell (p. ix). Like Gleason, Burtchaell isolates a number of factors that led to the "dying of the light": a decline of religious orders in the 1960s, so that personnel were not available to staff universities; an increasingly secular society, leading to the decline of Catholic students and their loyalties to Catholic institutions; financial crises in these institutions requiring them both to change the curriculum to recruit students and also to change their forms of governance quickly to ensure massive state aid when the question of their religious nature was questioned as being in conflict with the First Amendment (an issue only resolved in the mid-1970s, after most institutions had already changed); the low level of excellence achieved, leading to emulation of secular (latterly Protestant) rivals; a movement in the curriculum away from rigorous confessional theology to academic historically oriented study of Christianity, followed by the growth of religious studies (known by various names); the decline of worship and Catholic praxis being central to all staff and students; the decline in religious having key positions as presidents;[24] and finally, the acceptance of modernity within lay and ecclesial circles. Here Burtchaell works with a different and overlapping notion of modernity. It has at least two strands running through it.

[24] This is a curious indicator, as Burtchaell is extremely sensitive to the way in which some "religious" orders and individuals were central to promoting secularism (*Dying*, pp. 563–634, 826–7). It was the policy of the president, not their belonging to a religious order, that was central. Land O'Lakes was drafted mainly by "religious," not lay people.

Philosophically, Burtchaell analyzes modernity in terms of the growth of piety initially in Protestant Christianity. Priorities here were "the primacy of the spirit over letter, commitment over institution, affect over intellect, laity over clergy, invisible over visible, and they [Pietists] looked to the earliest Christian communities for their models" (p. 839). He sees in this move the growth of individualism as the tripos of history, tradition, and community became less and less valued, leading eventually into either liberal pietism, where ecclesial form is very secondary, or another version of this, rationalism, where ecclesial forms are seen to be the cause of violence, conflict, and strife. Faith is put in the nation state and its laws as the arbiter of such petty disputes. Rationalism produced Deism, "the religious equivalent of safe sex" (p. 842) and the resultant impact on institutions was "indifferentism and rationalism" (p. 843), whatever the rhetoric in some catalogs and brochures advertising such institutions. In other catalogs a concerted attempt was made to erase all reference to religious foundations. Burtchaell is not laying blame on the university *per se*, for "it must be repeated, this self-destructive pathology arose first within the churches, not within the colleges" (p. 847). Soon however, the pathological condition would be rife within both university and Church. Burtchaell bitterly outlines such a case:

> Jesuit father William Byron, who presided over both Scranton and Catholic Universities, has also argued on behalf of diversity: "It would not be a good thing to have an all-Catholic board, an all-Catholic administration, faculty, staff and student body." No one cautions against a board composed entirely of Americans, or a faculty composed only of publishing scholars, or a student body in which every member could write effectively. A shared faith seems to be the only hazardous affinity (p. 831).[25]

Rationalistic modernity would eventually affect Catholics as much as Protestants, although here Gleason's analysis is more subtle in differentiating the impact of modernity upon American Catholics and American Protestants. The other sense of modernity that Burtchaell employs concerns the manner of institutional formation and management, a key theme in Alasdair MacIntyre's analysis of modernity.[26] Two particular factors account for the

[25] Burtchaell is citing William J. Byron SJ, *Quadrangle Considerations*, Loyola University Press, Chicago, 1989, p. 22.

[26] See A. MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, Duckworth, London, 1990; although Burtchaell does not refer to this work. He cites MacIntyre's argument (pp. 335–6) against liberal models of education in "Values and Distinctive Characteristics of Teaching and Learning in Church-Related Colleges" in *Institutional Integrity and Values: Perspectives on United Methodist Higher Education*, Division of Higher Education/Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Nashville, Tennessee, 1989, pp. 12–35.

growing darkness in Burtchaell's account, forces not so highlighted by Gleason, although certainly not ignored: the importance of a single president in running large institutions; and the increase in specialisms and professionalism, leading to the fragmentation of learning, and the emergence of career academics. The former allowed that changes could be made rapidly, while the latter meant that faculty members were generally less and less interested in anything other than their career prospects and resources to support their research. In brief, the universities had become their own worst enemy.

The second remarkable finding in Burtchaell's study is, as we have already begun to see, that what happened to the Catholics in the 1960s had been happening to the Protestants since the 1890s (p. x). Burtchaell's study examines Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, and Evangelical denominations and his analysis leads him to the conclusions outlined above. Admittedly, he omits the Mennonites, Mormons, Quakers, Disciples of Christ, Episcopalians, and Seventh Day Adventists as they have founded only a small number of institutions. Therefore, any vast generalizations resulting from his study must be carefully limited. Nevertheless, his conclusions about Protestant universities in America are echoed in two further major studies on the issue: George Marsden's *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (1994) and Douglas Sloan's *Faith and Knowledge: Mainline Protestantism and American Higher Education* (1994).[27] Marsden's argument is interesting in that it too accords secularism a leading role in transforming major universities. Christian theology was not part of the general curriculum and, indeed, would eventually be removed from the faculty altogether. This caused some Church institutions that were sponsors of the universities to found alternative theological establishments in their dismay at such changes. Princeton and Andover at Harvard are two examples and Marsden examines Johns Hopkins, Chicago, Yale, Columbia, Michigan, and others.

Sloan's study grounds the analysis more clearly in terms of the theological roots of modernity already mentioned above that are analyzed by Burtchaell, and will be strongly focussed in Schubert's study (see below). Sloan sees the process of secularization as central and charts it as beginning in the nineteenth century, rather than at the Reformation where some put the blame for the prising apart of intellect and faith. He attributes to secularism the undermining of the rationale for a Christian university. Sloan

[27] Oxford University Press, New York, 1994; and Westminster John Knox, Louisville, Kentucky, 1994, respectively. Marsden has edited a companion volume with Bradley J. Longfield which is also helpful: *The Secularizing of the Academy*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1992.

examines various theological attempts to reunite the two orders of secular and sacred, natural, and supernatural, but argues that most Protestant divines in the twentieth century viewed "knowledge" in terms of the findings of the faculties of the natural and social sciences and the humanities. Theology, based on faith, was of a different, but less secure, order of knowledge. Thus, theology was secularized in the very process through which it was being allegedly rejuvenated. In my attempt to focus on just one element (Catholic universities) in this wide canvas of America, I will not pursue the analysis regarding Protestant universities, except to note that the major studies in this field point to the same outcome: the disengagement of these institutions from their ecclesial roots, the secularizing of the curriculum, and the demise of any uniting role that theology and philosophy might play.

Burtchaell's view of the recovery of the light lies quite simply in relocating the university in the heart of the Church (*ex corde ecclesiae*):

> the gospel within the church has continually been at the centre of intense and critical dialectic: textual, hermeneutical, historical, intercultural, philosophical, theological. Further, the church has steadfastly recognized the revelatory powers of inspiration, witness, repentance, and communal conflict within and without, as a stimulant to continuous redefinition and purification. These are the intellectual resources about which the contemporary academy, for the most part, has only crude and tendentious intimations.[28]

Burtchaell overstates his case regarding "redefinition and purification" and his own brief sections on heavy-handed and anti-intellectual Curial interventions regarding Catholic institutions should have tempered his claims. But a more serious objection to his and my basic argument is to be found in David J. O'Brien and Alice Gallin. O'Brien contests Burtchaell's and Gleason's reading that Catholic institutions followed the same road as those of Protestants, in Avery Dulles' words, from "denominational to generic Christianity, then to vaguely defined religious values and finally to total secularisation."[29] He cites Gallin's study to show that there were significant differences between the Catholic and Protestant stages of change and also differing social forces at play within and external to the ecclesial communities in question.[30] Furthermore, Gallin argues that secularism can act as a

[28] Burtchaell, *Dying*, pp. 850–1.

[29] Avery Dulles, *The New York Times*, May 1, 1991, cited in David J. O'Brien, *From the Heart of the American Church: Catholic Higher Education and American Culture*, Orbis, New York, 1994, p. 97.

[30] Alice Gallin, "American Church-Related Higher Education: Comparison and Contrast," paper delivered at Convention of American Historical Association, December 29, 1992; discussed by O'Brien, *Heart*, pp. 103ff.

scapegoat for the lack of coherence in disciplines like theology and philosophy and can mask the lack of confidence on the part of administrators and faculty in clearly presenting their own faith and values. While Gallin's qualifications are appropriate, her study, and indeed Henry C. Johnson's work also cited by O'Brien in contesting the appropriateness of "secularization" as the last step in the process, do not really call into question the secularization that took place.[31] Rather, it indicates that this "secularization" was identical with what certain Christians regarded as "Christian," a faith commitment that makes no intellectual difference to intellectual enquiry, and a faith that is primarily hermeneutically answerable to wider society, rather than normatively to its own traditions—and then only, secondarily, to society. Indeed, Gallin concedes this point some eight years later when she writes of the period 1965–80: "The university presidents regarded the changes they had made and were making as adaptation to American academic culture, not an acceptance of godless "secular" values. This distinction was a hard one to maintain."[32] Hence, while there may be grounds for a more nuanced understanding of "secularism," I would contend that this term is both helpful and accurate. Importantly, both Gallin and O'Brien are agreed on the need for curriculum changes to make Catholic universities more clearly Catholic, and in this at least, both "liberals" and "conservatives" have something in common.

Before concluding this overly brief section on the United States, I want to turn to my third study that closely examines the relationship of theology to religious studies, to see if Burtchaell's argument on this one aspect bears closer scrutiny. Clearly, if it does, then my own argument gains strength. Frank D. Schubert's sociological study of the curriculum in the religion faculty of three Catholic universities during the period 1955–85 strongly supports Burtchaell's and Gleason's findings and my argument about the relationship between theology and religious studies. (All subsequent page references in the main body of the text are to Schubert.) Schubert chooses

[31] See Henry C. Johnson, "Down from the Mountain: Secularization and the Higher Learning in America," *Review of Politics*, 54, 1992, pp. 551–8; discussed by O'Brien, *Heart*, pp. 104–7.

[32] Gallin, *Negotiating Identity*, p. 161. This is not to say that "Americanism" or American culture, to use O'Brien's term, is thoroughly secular, but to note that in this instance of Higher Education identity, this tends to be the case. See my chapter three regarding further objections by O'Brien and Gallin. Some go even further. William Shea, "Catholic Higher Education and the Enlightenment: On Borderlands and Roots," *Horizons*, 20, 1993, pp. 99–105, argues that Catholic identity is determinate upon discovering the identity of the "Other." While his concern for the "Other" is germane to my concerns, he makes the "Other" falsely "determinate," thereby replicating the problem with secularism, but replacing secularism with other religions.

the Catholic University of America (Washington, DC), St. John's University (New York) and Boston College (Chestnut Hill, MA) for his study on the basis of their location in major metropolitan centers, and because of their cross-section of religious foundations: the collective effort on the part of the American Bishops with no religious order in charge, the Vincentians, and the Jesuits respectively.[33] He looks at their curricula in terms of two categories: theology and religious studies. He defines theology as the investigation of the sacred order of the sponsor, that is, as an intra-Catholic exposition, development, and critical reflection on the Catholic "sacred order," whereby the world is seen through this lens (pp. 10–13). He defines "religious studies" as the outsider examination of any particular sacred order (pp. 5–10). He suggests an analytical framework to help isolate the possible secularization of the curriculum and tabulates it in a helpful manner on page 14.

The distinctive orders of "theology" and "religious studies"

Theological	*Religious*	*Secular*
Sacred history	Historical foundations of religions	History
Sacred morality	Moral systems of religions	Morality
Sacred scripture	Literature study of religions	Literature
Sacred polity	Polity of religions	Politics
Sacred apologetics	The study of world religions	Culture

It is worth quoting Schubert's use of this table, for upon these assumptions his entire argument rests:

> The items within these columns can be understood as polar points between which a particular curricular item might fall. Characterizing the items under theological, then, one notes a certain givenness to the order which is under investigation, while the items under religious retain a sense of inclusiveness among major world perspectives. If such an understanding is allowable, it is clear that any movement in the above categories from theological to religious

[33] It is worth reading Schubert in parallel with Burtchaell, *Dying*, pp. 563–92 who looks at Boston College in some detail, showing *administrative* changes that paralleled the *curriculum* changes, whereby the Jesuits relinquished executive control so that Boston would not be disqualified from State funding, as well as a theology of lay and pluralist (non-Catholic) involvement in the formation of the Church.

> and beyond is also a movement toward greater secularization in this sense: *The categories under religious can equally appear in a traditionally secular curricula* [*sic*] *(such as history, literature or social studies), while the reverse (towards theological) is not the case*. (pp. 14–15)

It is important to note that Schubert develops his secularizing theory based on sociological work ranging from Weber, Durkheim, Parsons, Bellah, Berger, and Luckmann, and in this sense his is not, like mine, a theological argument, but a sociological observation.[34] Schubert is also out to test how resistant Catholicism is, as is suggested by some of his sociological sources, to modernity and secularization. While there is obviously room for questioning elements of Schubert's reading of curriculum catalogs,[35] a point of which he is well aware, his findings are well documented from the primary source materials and he tracks three periods regarding his data. First, through 1955–65 (although this period is during the Second Vatican Council, the effects of the Council are not felt until after the mid-1960s) Schubert finds the sacred order of theology "promulgated." Then in 1965–75 this order is "questioned," and finally, during the period 1975–85, this order is "dissolved."[36] His summary of the third period isolates the main factors leading to his analytical conclusion:

> Perhaps the most distinctive change in these courses as opposed to the earlier courses, then, remains that of the proliferation of courses beyond the traditional range of Roman Catholicism, and even the slightly wider range of Christianity as a whole. In the introduction of courses concerning world religions from every type of source and background and means of investigation, it is clear that the most documentable change within the curricula of the entire period of our study is the move from theology (the study of religion from *within* a particular sacred order) to religion (the study of *all* sacred orders). (p. 128)

The key factor to isolate in Schubert's study is not the introduction of world religions into the curriculum *per se*, but rather the way in which these religions were studied: from the viewpoint of religious studies, rather than a theological or sacred viewpoint; that is, "the *authoritative sway of secular disciplines has within this period eclipsed the authority of the traditional Roman*

[34] Schubert's work was a doctoral dissertation supervised by Peter Berger.

[35] For instance, one might have a very "sacred view" analysis of secularization in the classroom (due to the teacher's approach), although the curriculum data might simply indicate a study of secularization. Burtchaell makes this point in *Dying*, p. 729, note 151.

[36] The citations are the thematic summaries of the three chapters that deal with each period: chs. 4–6.

Catholic sacred order itself" (p. 131). While Schubert draws six conclusions from his study, I am particularly interested in his fifth and sixth as they illuminate aspects of my own argument:

> 5. The order of Roman Catholicism in the present day has taken its place within the curricula [*sic*] chosen for investigation only as one possible order among the many *orders* of religion.
>
> 6. In order to incorporate the study of world religions into a curriculum previously reserved for one sacred order, it is necessary to rely upon a common language. Such common languages, unavoidably, are those of secular disciplines. (p. 132)

Schubert argues that this process began in the middle period of his investigation, in Catholic attempts to include Protestantism in the curriculum. This form of ecumenism required the search for common points of agreement so that respectful engagement and co-operation might result. For instance, the hiring of scholars from outside the Catholic Church increased during this period. Consequently scholars could rely less on the particularities and authority of their specific sacred order if they were in conflict, and the eventual inclusion of world religions meant that the only common order that all could refer to were secular disciplines. It is important not to force this pattern into too neat a schematization, nor is Schubert blind to the limitations of his study: it "is regional, not exhaustive; second, it is limited to catalogued data and not to classroom access, and third, it is limited to religious curricula and does not evaluate the curricula of other fields" (p. 130). We might draw two conclusions from Schubert's work.

First, while it is clear that there are grounds for the study of religions to take place in the university, there are also good grounds to suggest that a *theological* study of religions is much more necessary than a positivist "religious studies." Three further points sustain this first. The approach of religious studies has an inbuilt *telos* toward secularization and in that sense, one might argue, there is no justice done to any of the sacred canopies, except the new one of secularism. Schubert's mentor, Peter Berger, suggests that "secularization fosters the civic arrangements under which pluralism thrives, while the plurality of world-views undermines the plausibility of each one and thus contributes to the secularizing tendency."[37] Further, within a particular sacred viewpoint, it is entirely legitimate to examine

[37] Peter L. Berger, "From the Crisis of Religion to the Crisis of Secularity" in eds. Mary Douglas and Steven Tipton, *Religion and America: Spiritual Life in a Secular Age*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1983, pp. 8–24: p. 15.

"the world" from that viewpoint according to the methods and presuppositions of that viewpoint. This is the burden of my argument throughout this book. Third, if there is to be any public funding and interest in such scholarship, then there may be a requirement that these viewpoints articulate their world-view in critical engagement with pluralism (other world-views). How this will be done is clearly unpredictable and a point to which I will later return. The second conclusion that might be tentatively drawn from Schubert's study is that despite the institutions' clear commitment to upholding a sacred order in the very place in which one might expect to see it most clearly, in their departments of theology, it is barely discernible. Hence, regardless of the institutional control of Catholic universities, the curriculum bears the power of transmitting a pedagogy, ontology, and epistemology that may be at variance with the intended aims of the institution.

I do not want to end this section as if the overall picture is relentlessly unitary regarding all Christian universities in the United States. I have already commented on the fact that there are many individuals who lament this situation and are engaged in counter-cultural practices within the liberal university. Many of the authors I have drawn on in this section are examples. Furthermore, recent studies show that although the light might be nearly extinguished in institutional terms, there are places where it is burning bright.[38] This should not be forgotten as we turn to look briefly at the situation in England.

II A Brief Review of England and the Secularization of the Christian University

In this section I shall first look at the way in which the two ancient English universities, Oxford and Cambridge, became exclusivist Anglican universities for the most part of their history, despite their Roman Catholic foundations. However, currently they must be reckoned as secular universities (with

[38] For a slightly more optimistic reading of the current situation in the USA, see especially Robert Benne, *Quality with Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Religious Traditions*, W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2001, and ed. Joseph M. O'Keefe, *Catholic Education at the Turn of the New Century*, Garland, New York, 1997. See also the reports of important changes: O'Brien, *From the Heart*, pp. 74–6, 79–92, 180–2; Gallin, *Negotiating*, pp. 158–9, 181–3; Peter Steinfels, *A People Adrift*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2003, pp. 142–4. For England, see Sinclair Goodlad, "Christian Universities and Colleges: A Conceptual Inquiry," being The St. Matthias Lecture: September 12, 2002, unpublished ms. Clearly, there are institutions, especially non-research intensive, that keep the light burning, including the recently created Christian Academic Network in the UK.

interesting exceptions—see below). Second, I shall look at the contemporary situation of Christian universities in England. Admittedly, in the mainstream traditional research universities, there are no Christian universities as in the United States. We have to look at the new universities created in the 1990s to find two "Christian universities," although this is not how they advertise themselves. There are a small number of "University Colleges" or "Higher Education" colleges which I will not examine as, technically, they are not universities.[39] In these two Christian universities I shall be focussing on my three questions regarding: the institutional vision; the manner of integration of curriculum within a Christian vision; and the teaching of theology and religious studies. Third, given the paucity of Christian universities in England, I shall briefly look at the curriculum in English universities in general regarding their teaching of "theology" and "religious studies." Historically, we will see some very close parallels to the US situation, where theology as a subject is now widely taught *with* religious studies, with very little attempt made to articulate the difference between the two except in terms of subject matter: the former being the study of Christianity, the latter being the study of Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and other religions. The manner in which these religions are studied is, I shall be arguing, indistinguishable. Finally, I shall end this section on English universities with a brief comment on two recent inaugural lectures given by Professors in the Divinity Faculties at Oxford and Cambridge, charting their own visions for the future of the discipline.

The situation in England has important similarities to that in the United States, although there are significant differences regarding Church–State relations, and consequently, state funding. The prising apart of State and Church in the US through the First Amendment of the Constitution is not mirrored in England where the Queen is currently both head of state and head of the Anglican Church.[40] However, the effect of the Reformation and the Protestant monopoly over the universities in England and some of

[39] These two categories reflect institutions that did not gain university status, although not all tried. My exclusion is technical and not a comment on the level of teaching and research that exists within such institutions. I do not include Heythrop College, University of London, as it only teaches theology (as I understand the word) rather than other disciplines, or the Catholic colleges at Oxbridge since they are not, properly speaking, university departments or faculties as such, even though they might act as microcosms of Catholic universities in their interdisciplinary membership.

[40] However, the two decision-making legislatures, the House of Commons and the House of Lords, while formally loyal to the Queen, have become secularized and pluralist (with the sole exception in the Lords of including Anglican bishops), reflecting English society at large. The current Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has publicly favored dis-establishment and so have some other senior Anglican figures.

Europe until around the last part of the nineteenth century had its impact in the United States. For example, the earliest university in the States, Harvard, was founded by pioneers from the Congregationalist elements of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Emmanuel was itself originally built on the site of a former Dominican house, but soon became a favorite for Puritans. The fact that many of America's pioneering intellectuals were educated at Berlin also meant that the model of the Enlightenment university had deep roots in American soil.[41] The Catholic influence in the United States came mainly through immigrants from Ireland and continental Europe.

However, in England the oldest universities are Oxford and Cambridge. Both relied heavily on Roman Catholic orders for the setting up of their colleges in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.[42] Cambridge was proclaimed a *studium generale* in 1318 by Pope John XXII. To all intents and purposes, they were Catholic universities, even though Cambridge alone was given formal papal approval. It was under the Elizabethan statutes of 1570 and the Laudian statutes of 1636 that both universities eventually required subscription to the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity.[43] This meant that not only Catholics but also Non-Conformists were excluded. Oxbridge did not then teach theology. They only did when the complaint was made that the curriculum had lost its Christian character and the University was doing nothing to preserve it.[44] The Reformation in England was a state affair, as was the persecution of Catholics. Most of the major cultural institutions were seized by the crown and only varying traces of Catholicism were left, even though it was powerful at the grass roots level.[45] Even when the exclusionary statutes were finally revoked three

[41] In *Between Athens and Berlin*, David Kelsey offers a very careful reading of the debate that started in the 1980s in the United States regarding theological education, showing how it might be located in Athens or Berlin. He is clear that the dominant model was Berlin, only because it was the model which the earliest American research institutions imitated, with virtually all of Johns Hopkins faculty in 1884 coming from German universities. Since theological education needed to imitate "respectable education," Berlin permeated the theological schools as well (see pp. 18–19).

[42] The Colleges are listed in the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1st edn. (eds. Staff of Catholic University of America), Palatine, Illinois, and McGraw-Hill, 1981, under "Oxford" and "Cambridge."

[43] For histories of Oxbridge, see S. Rothblatt, *The Revolution of the Dons: Cambridge and Society in Victorian England*, Faber, London, 1968; V. H. Green, *Religion at Oxford and Cambridge*, SCM, London, 1964; and Arthur Jason Engel, *From Clergyman to Don: The Rise of the Academic Profession in Nineteenth Century Oxford*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1983.

[44] See David Bebbington, "The Secularization of British Universities Since the Mid-Nineteenth Century" in eds. G. Marsden and B. J. Longfield, *The Secularisation of the Academy*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1992, pp. 259–77: p. 266.

[45] See Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1992.

hundred years later (in 1858 for the BA, with the MA following in 1871), owing to pressures of a Royal Commission and Parliamentary support, the Divinity Faculty in Oxford remained immune from the changes instituted by Parliament. In Oxford, all masters and students of the Divinity Faculty had to be Anglicans right into the twentieth century. The struggle to establish a Grace in 1898 for St. Edmund's House in Cambridge, my own college, to be a recognized college of the University was defeated at Senate, exemplifying stark levels of anti-Catholicism. For example, Revd. J. Ellis MacTaggard wrote to the editor of the *Cambridge Anti-Popery Gazette* that the fight for "the Pure Gospel for which Cranmer and Ridley offered their saintly lives" was on:

> That the Roman Church should venture in this age of enlightenment to attempt this assault on the liberties of the University is to some a matter of surprise; but those who look at the past history of this Great Apostasy will, I think, feel that the conduct of Cardinal Vaughan and his satellites is consonant with all the traditions of Rome. What is really surprising is that, within the precincts of the University, there should be found Members of the Senate who are willing to prostrate themselves before the pretensions of an Italian bishop.[46]

However, it is fair to say that after the 1850s there was a real attempt at separation between Church and State in the ancient universities, and this obviously affected the subsequent foundations of the second wave of universities in England.[47] This also meant that theology in the new universities (1850s onward), when it was taught, was no longer designed for ordinands and increasingly became non-denominational (although mainly taught by Anglicans). In line with this, methodologically it inevitably became secularized, depending on disciplinary procedures that were "acceptable" to secular colleagues in the Arts faculties. Historical critical studies of the Bible and early Church history flourished, as did languages, but systematic theology did not. In Oxbridge, at the turn of the millennium the situation was such that only four Chairs in Oxford are still reserved for Anglicans (but two of these are now open to members of churches that have ecumenical relations to the Church of England), and Cambridge has repealed all such canonical

[46] *Cambridge Anti-Popery Gazette*, May 1898. For a good discussion of the St. Edmund's House struggle, see Vincent Alan McClelland, *English Roman Catholics and Higher Education: 1830–1903*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1973, pp. 409–26. It was only in 1964 that it was formally approved as a Graduate Society.

[47] See Bebbington, "The Secularization of British Universities." He argues that the two major periods of change were 1850–1920, where rival Christians resolved their antagonisms through a secularization process, and 1920–90 where wider society became secularized.

requirements for its Divinity Chairs.[48] The Regius Chair of Divinity in Cambridge was the last to be uncoupled from its ecclesial moorings in 1997. The current holder of the Regius Chair, David F. Ford, at the time of writing (2003) is the first non-clergyman to hold the Chair in its 452 years. Nicholas Lash, the retired Norris-Hulse Professor, was the first Roman Catholic to hold that Chair in the Theology Faculty at Cambridge and has been followed by another lay English Roman Catholic, Denys Turner. Hence, we might say that while the Anglican monopoly has ended at Oxbridge, with tiny vestiges lingering in tied Chairs at Oxford's Divinity Faculty, the two universities have not instead become ecumenically Christian but, rather *in institutional terms*, secular, so that the religious profession of a teacher is deemed insignificant. That is, the religious beliefs of those who teach theology are institutionally irrelevant. In this respect, other than in the college chapels, we find that all Christian intellectual activity has no proper place *institutionally* within Oxford and Cambridge, except perhaps in the Divinity Faculties (by circumstances rather than design), but that too is questioned—even by those listed within those Faculties.[49]

The first university to open its doors to Catholics and other non-Anglicans was King's College, London in 1827. A little later, Durham was founded by an Act of Parliament in 1832, and, like London was designed for students of limited means. However, it was endowed with the revenues of Durham cathedral and diocese, which explains why still today a Chair in the Divinity School is reserved exclusively for an ordained Anglican. The spate of universities that followed, however, were distinctively non-religious and non-denominational: Manchester (Owens College) in 1851, Leeds (Yorkshire College of Science) in 1874, and University College of Bristol in 1876. The Redbrick universities of the twentieth century were utterly secular without exception, even to the extent that some forbade the teaching of religion. This was not only due to secularism, but to Christians who had previously experienced exclusion. For example, John Owens, a Non-Conformist, founded Owens College, banning any theological subject

[48] Durham is the only other research university with an Anglican Chair.

[49] Professor Richard Gombrich is listed in the "Association of University Departments of Theology and Religious Studies Handbook 2001" Leeds, AUDTRS, 2001, under Oxford University, although in the Oriental Institute at Oxford. In a public lecture on the question of universities pursuing truth, Gombrich asks whether they alone do this, and turns to religions: "religious bodies may claim to, but they are only interested in a few issues and perfectly indifferent to most of the questions asked in academia; moreover, they are not prepared to question absolutely anything or to follow the truth wherever it leads them." Ms. of lecture delivered on January 7, 2000 in Tokyo at the Graduate Institute of Policy Studies, p. 14, privately circulated by Gombrich. See also Gombrich's liberal "tolerance" in "Reflections of an indologist" in ed. Hamnett, *Religious Pluralism*, pp. 243–61.

"which shall be reasonably offensive to the conscience of any student." Thus Colleges like Firth (1879; later University of Sheffield) and University College, Liverpool (1881) prohibited religious tests.

It should be said that with the expulsion of Catholics from mainstream university education at Oxford and Cambridge, Catholic higher education in England (and Ireland) took on complex twists and turns, with constantly failing attempts to set up Catholic equivalents to Oxbridge, the most famous perhaps, being Newman's Catholic University for Ireland. This, and the collegiate link with London and the attempt to re-enter Oxford, are all carefully charted in Vincent Alan McClelland's *English Roman Catholics and Higher Education, 1830–1903*. McClelland argues that there were three main phases during this period:

> a period of withdrawal, isolation, and dogged self-help, characterized by efforts to provide enlightened collegiate education and by a realization of the need for professional qualifications recognized by the State; a period of compromise and modification, typified by attempts to erect denominational university institutions for English Catholics in Ireland, Oxford, and London; and thirdly, a period of gradual assimilation, combined with efforts to retain a recognizable community identity. The process of gradual absorption has not yet been fully completed.[50]

In many respects our investigation of Christian universities, their curricula, and their valuing of theology is nearly at an end, and that appropriately reflects the situation in England. However, there are two new universities that are in limited senses "Christian universities." They deserve brief attention as does the only research that I am aware of that is being undertaken in this area, that by Sinclair Goodlad.[51] In this section all three of our research

[50] Vincent A. McClelland, *English Roman Catholics, and Higher Education, 1830–1903*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1973, p. i. At the time of writing, the process is complete, with the exception of Heythrop College, University of London, and Maryvale Institute, Birmingham. See the judicious review of "Catholic Theology in Britain: the Scene since Vatican II," *New Blackfriars*, 80, 1999, pp. 451–71, by Aidan Nichols. Nichols does not extend his argument to the university itself.

[51] See Goodlad, "Christian Universities and Colleges," p. 9. See also his "The Bear's Hug: Hazards and Opportunities for Church Universities and Colleges in accommodating to secular society," *Prologue*, 3, 2002, pp. 46–60. Goodlad's work also calls into question whether the exclusion of church colleges (they are not technically universities) from my study skews my findings. Presently (2004) the Council of Church Colleges encompasses 16 institutions, two of which have university status. This Council has produced a number of publications showing their collective vital interest in pursuing their Christian identity, often against difficult market forces. On the extent of such market forces in the USA, see Mark Schwehn, *Exile from Eden: Religion and the Academic Vocation in America*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993, ch. 1.

questions can be partly addressed: have Christian universities been secularized? What is the vision of the broad curriculum in Christian terms, the connection between the disciplines, and their relation to theology in such institutions? And, finally, what is the role of theology departments in such institutions?

The two new universities in question are the Universities of Gloucestershire and Surrey, Roehampton. Gloucestershire has its roots in the evangelical freethinker Francis Close who founded a teacher training college in 1847 with a Church Foundation Trust, which according to the University "influences the governance of the University today and provides a framework for its mission."[52] One-third of the governing Council of 200 derives from the Trust and these members sign a document stating their active sympathy with the Trust Deed of 1847 which states that "the Religious Education to be conveyed in the Colleges shall always be strictly SCRIPTURAL, EVANGELICAL AND PROTESTANT and in strict accordance with the ARTICLES and LITURGY of the CHURCH OF ENGLAND AS NOW ESTABLISHED BY LAW." The evidence of this in institutional publicity documents is the Mission Statement that reads, quite uniquely for English universities (apart from Roehampton):

> Our aim is to provide for our stakeholders accessible high quality learning environments that are innovative, challenging and enterprising.
>
> We achieve this by working in partnership with individuals, organizations and communities to develop their full potential within a culture which is:
>
> Excellent but not inaccessible
> Christian but not exclusive
> Supportive but not constraining
> Proactive locally but not parochial.[53]

While such a high level visibility is significant, it is also significant that there is no ecclesial sense of this non-exclusive "Christian" identity in any of its documents. Clearly, there was an important transition from a staunchly evangelical Protestant scriptural outlook to that of non-exclusive Christianity. This non-exclusive Christian identity is absent from any of the program publicity for any of the courses offered by the institution, including the

[52] All quotations from the University webpages, accessed December 2003: A New University with a history. Basic web page reference: gloucester.ac.uk. I have relied exclusively on the image presented of themselves by these two institutions, via their web pages and their undergraduate and postgraduate prospectuses. This type of information is of course tendentious and limited, but important for discerning the image that the institution wishes to project to the public.

[53] Webpage: Mission Statement.

fare available in the School of Theology and Religious Studies. When, in 2003, the previous Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey of Clifton, was appointed Vice-Chancellor, the University and its new Chancellor made clear that it was ecumenical, a phrase which included an inter-religious dimension.[54] Regarding the latter, the School of Theology and Religious Studies offers an undergraduate pathway in "Theology" which is described entirely in terms of a study of Christianity and its doctrines, not in any "theological" sense in the way I have been using the word, and certainly making no reference to the university mission statement. It also offers a pathway in "Religious Studies" that includes some of the same units making up the Theology program, plus others on philosophy and the religions of India. In one sense the inclusion of so many units from the Theology program in the Religious Studies program highlights my point about there being no real difference between the two fields methodologically, and here the distinction in content has begun to dissolve. Significantly, in 2003, a move was made to change the nature of the department of Theology and Religious Studies, turning toward long-distance learning and developing a new program in "Religion, Philosophy and Ethics." The outcome is unresolved at the time of writing. If we utilize Burtchaell or Gleason's criteria, Gloucestershire might count as a "dying light," a thinly Christian, but really secularized university in all three respects that I am investigating, despite its mission statement. However, and none of this should be minimized, it should also be noted that in England, it does represent an institution that is at least keeping the light burning in terms of its governing body, its directorate, and disparate theological projects with which it is involved. For example, it is collaborating with three Church Institutions in two projects related to education/church schools and Christian theology under the title "strengthening the mission." Given the financial pressures on the new universities, Gloucester should also be congratulated.

What of Roehampton? At the time of writing (2003), the University of Surrey, Roehampton is at least headed by a religious: the Rector of the University is Sister Dr. Bernadette Porter. This is actually unique in contrast to all the other Christian institutions in the University, University College, and Higher Education sector.[55] Roehampton was created as a result of the

[54] See glos.ac.uk/uog/content.asp?pid=369 (accessed December 2003).

[55] All quotations from the University webpages, accessed December 2002. Basic web page reference: roehampton.ac.uk. Checking the webpage prior to submission of this ms. in 2004, the website has been modified considerably. One interesting shift is that the Christian nature of the institution is further hidden, including the erasure of the fact that the Rector and Chief Executive is a member of a religious order. See "Welcome from the Rector" (address as above, plus: /about/index/asp.). In 2005 Sister Porter was replaced by a layman.

merger of three church colleges: Digby Stuart, Whitelands, and Southlands (Catholic, Anglican, and Methodist respectively) with a secular college, Froebel, to become Roehampton Institute. In the late 1970s it entered into association with the University of Surrey, awarding, through validation, University of Surrey degrees from 1982. In 2000 it attained university status as a partner in the Federal University of Surrey. Roehampton is like Gloucestershire in terms of institutional mission statements, and equally inclusive:

> Roehampton has a strong Christian tradition. Three of the Colleges are Christian foundations (Catholic, Anglican and Methodist) and have their own chapels, while the University also has Muslim Prayer Rooms and an active Jewish Resource Centre. Religion is not compulsory but it's there to help you make sense of life when you need to.[56]

This indicates the unifying vision that "religion" (not Christianity) might offer, but like Gloucestershire there is no return to this Christian or religious dimension outside of the pages about the chaplaincies and chapels at the different sites, except for a brief cross-reference to the history of the foundation in the theology and religious studies prospectus. Indeed, the statement quoted above is not to be found on the web pages of Roehampton, but only in the published prospectus. Certainly there is no trace of it in any of the undergraduate programs on offer. Roehampton's "theology and religious studies" program, which is offered both as a single honors and a joint-honors pathway, is part of the School of Humanities and Cultural Studies. When presenting this pathway, the Christian background is noted and given description in two ways: "Theology and Religious Studies (TRS) has always been one of the core subjects offered at Roehampton; and the religious foundations have a long tradition of providing pastoral care and a congenial environment for students."[57] These two latter claims are undoubtedly true, but cannot be distinctive Christian claims as such, for pastoral care and congenial environments are found mentioned in most university catalogs. The advertising goes on to emphasize that the program is not "geared only toward students with a faith" (again, wide generic cover) "but toward all those interested in religion as a spiritual, cultural, and social phenomenon." It is clear that Christian theology is not given any high visibility, but a general religious ethos is. However, Roehampton's Theology and Religious Studies program does offer a student the chance to be trained in a number of units in Christian studies, as well as undertake religious studies in a non-

[56] Roehampton Institute Prospectus, 2001, p. 4.
[57] All these statements came from Roehampton's webpage in November 2002.

theological fashion, comparative studies, and languages—a remarkably wide range, given its size. The institution has also formed a theological forum in the South West that actively explores issues of Christian identity and co-operation among like-minded institutions. These latter features are important sparks to the light, despite the strong market winds working against the flames. There is an apparent market un-attractiveness to institutional Christian identity.[58] In conclusion: despite important individual and structural efforts to the contrary, on Burtchaell or Gleason's criteria both institutions represent the secularization of the Christian university.

Sinclair Goodlad, a far more optimistic interpreter than I am, says of his more wide-ranging investigation of English Christian universities' and colleges' prospectuses:

> Christian institutions in England take great pains to stress that they welcome students of all faiths or none. Indeed, so strongly is this message of inclusiveness purveyed that it is really quite difficult in some cases to discern from prospectuses which are Christian institutions and which are not. Even within the covers of their prospectuses, some institutions simply mention their Church roots but without indicating what the church affiliation might signify.[59]

It is also worth commenting briefly on Goodlad's research on the wider English picture, even though his study primarily takes into consideration institutions I have not included above, in the University College and Higher Education sector.[60] Goodlad makes a very pertinent comparison in his research, which certainly relates to my minor findings about English Christian universities: "The UK [church] colleges' histories . . . paint very similar pictures of change within the colleges to that chronicled by Burtchaell in the American ones."[61] Goodlad isolates five factors of Burtchaell's analysis to establish this similarity: (1) reductions in staff and students from a particular denomination thereby changing the nature of the institution; (2) a movement from the inculcation of religious beliefs and practices toward academic

[58] Roehampton's Marketing Director, Tricia King, reports: "Research conducted with prospective students demonstrates that the Christian nature of our colleges is of low interest" (March 2004, letter to author).

[59] Goodlad, "Christian Universities and Colleges," p. 9.

[60] In my research for this section, Liverpool Hope was the most striking example of integration at the institutional level in terms of presentation of a Christian inclusive vision that amounted to more sustained detailed description than any other comparable institution. However, it failed to relate any of its provisions to this vision/mission statement, except marginally in its theology and religious studies offerings which are akin to those of Roehampton.

[61] Goodlad, "Christian Universities and Colleges," p. 6.

theology, and eventually toward religious studies so that the curriculum becomes detached from the institution's Christian aims; (3) compulsory worship giving way to optional worship, thereby changing the nature of communal unity; (4) the lifting of restrictions on student behavior so that "moral" and "religious" forms of life become independent of intellectual activity; and, finally, (5) a move from clergy or religious to lay presidents (principals or rectors).[62] Goodlad's important study shows that all these five factors (isolated in Burtchaell) were pervasive in English church colleges. These and other important factors (such as rapid and abrupt changes in government policies regarding the training of teachers) precipitated the collapse of the majority of them in the twentieth century, the initial wave after the First World War, and the next more severe wave, almost tidal, after the Second World War.[63]

Goodlad goes on to assess the remaining Christian institutions in terms of three criteria: (1) institutional integrity (meaning their explicit sense of mission and purpose, understood as encouraging a Christian ethos and culture); (2) research; (3) college life, curriculum, and teaching methods.[64] His findings under the first and third of these categories (which are closest to my own concerns) lead him to be cautiously optimistic, and he highlights a number of impressive features, although Goodlad's use of his criterion are far more minimally applied than I would wish.[65] He pays little attention to the wider curriculum issue in relation to mission statements.[66] He only tests whether theology and religious studies is offered, rather than the nature of

[62] Goodlad's attitude to modernity is quite different to that of Burtchaell and Gleason. See his "Bear's Hug."

[63] Goodlad, "Christian Universities and Colleges," p. 6. This pattern is also close to the US one. Finance also plays a major role, as it did in the US For a chronicle of cuts in the higher education sector see, for the early period, M. Lofthouse, *The Church Colleges 1918–1939: The Struggle for Survival*, J. Billings, Leicester, 1992; for post-1939 cuts, see D. Hencke, *Colleges in Crisis*, Penguin, London, 1978, and, up to 1982: M. Locke, J. Pratt, and T. Burgess, *The Colleges of Higher Education: 1972–1982*, Critical Press, Croydon, 1985.

[64] Goodlad, "Christian Universities and Colleges," pp. 6–11.

[65] Regarding research he notes that while "most church institutions in England now have respectable portfolios of research," 75% of research award monies go to the 20 largest universities in England (Goodlad, "Christian Universities and Colleges," p. 8). I would add that in terms of current government research assessment ratings (2001), no Christian institution (in all three sectors) attained a top mark (5*) or second highest (5) in theology/religious studies, but the two universities (and two others) attained 4. The two lowest ratings in the subject were to church colleges, and a church college that had been absorbed into a new university.

[66] Admittedly, on the wider curriculum front, Goodlad does note the development of a collaborative project by the Council for Church and Associated Colleges entitled "Engaging the Curriculum," which has produced three very helpful books exploring theology's interaction with different areas of the curriculum (sociology, English literature, and a more general

that offering, and he places strong emphasis on chapel provision and social work projects that he calls "service learning." I have not focussed explicitly on this latter significant dimension in my own study, and would not want to exclude it as an important indicator, although I am at pains to discern what is specifically Christian about Goodlad's proposals regarding service learning.[67] Despite his many good findings (according to his criteria), which are grounds for real optimism, on my criteria using Goodlad's work, one might conclude that what Burtchaell said about US institutions is also true of English institutions: Christian institutions are dying, although there are embers glowing and sparking. I should make it clear that these are not Goodlad's conclusions.

In this penultimate section, I want to comment briefly on the shift in English universities from theology to religious studies.[68] I want to do this to see if there is any distinctive sense in which the universities distinguish

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look at spirituality and the curriculum). See: ed. Leslie J. Francis, *Sociology, Theology and the Curriculum*, Cassell, London, 1999 (as for all the volumes); ed. Liam Gearon, *English Literature, Theology and the Curriculum*; and ed. Adrian Thatcher, *Spirituality in the Curriculum*. Disappointingly, only Mary Grey and Adrian Thatcher really address issues concerning the entire curriculum in the third book. These volumes indicate that thinking is going on regarding this issue, but there is no evidence of institutional implementation of any of these curriculum issues in these institutions, at least from the web pages and prospectuses Goodlad or I have examined.

[67] In email response to this question Goodlad wrote: "No: service learning is not a specifically Christian activity . . . It is an area in which people who are not Christians can experience the agapeic dimension of Christianity. What chaplains might do is to celebrate with and for Christians the Christian dimensions of the work." September 25, 2002.

[68] It is worth mentioning that three of the four ancient Scottish universities, St. Andrews, Glasgow, and Aberdeen all had divinity faculties that undertook the entire training for the ministry of the national Church and were therefore confessional, professional, and postgraduate in the early twentieth century. Scotland did not undergo the separation of university and Church that happened in England and Wales in the 1850s, and as late as 1962, legislatively, this situation persisted. In this respect, my arguments about the secularization of theology and the emergence of religious studies require careful nuance in the Scottish context. Nevertheless, Andrew Walls argues that the profound changes in society (secularization, end of empire, pluralism in society, internal changes within the Church in Scotland—and world-wide) precipitated radical changes such that during 1960–75 religious studies emerged in Scottish universities and the ancient universities began to change (alongside the emergence of the new Scottish universities). This change was consolidated during the expansion of the universities so that in "1980 Religious Studies in Scotland appeared to be thriving" (Walls in ed. U. King, *Turning Points in Religious Studies*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1990, p. 45). Walls shows that in the 1980s all the expansion tended to be in religious studies, but ten "years later [after radical cuts to funding for the universities] all its bases except Edinburgh had contracted, the Glasgow presence had ceased, and Aberdeen had lost departmental status" (ibid.). Despite Walls's pessimistic tone, in 2000 all of the ancient four except St. Andrews offer study of non-Christian religions within their degree programs, and undergraduate theology degrees are no longer designed for ordinands. Stirling, the only other Scottish university offering either theology or religious studies, offers a religious studies program, with virtually no Christian theology. Some

these two disciplines, and if anything like confessional theology exists. In no published prospectus or website of the 23 English universities offering theology or religious studies is there a single definition which distinguishes between method in "theology" and "religious studies" (or religion, study of religion, cultural studies), and no single public affirmation that theology is basically a confessional discipline involving an ecclesial context. Even though this is hardly surprising, it is worth noting. Clearly, in these 23 institutions, there are scholars, including myself, who would distinguish the disciplines and see theology as an ecclesial activity but institutionally this registers a simple conclusion: there is no discernible *public difference* between method in "theology" and "religious studies" in English universities. Furthermore, while "theology" tends usually to refer to the study of Christianity, there are theology departments that offer units from their own teachers or outside the departments that would clearly be deemed religious studies in another department. This is true of all the Theology or Divinity departments, which do not (yet) include Religious Studies in their name: Birmingham, Durham, Exeter, Heythrop, Hull, Nottingham, and Oxford.

We can also see the shift from theology to religious studies in terms of the naming of departments. In 1990, Adrian Cunningham noted:

> In the mid-1950's there were no more than sixteen people in English universities teaching religions other than Christianity. In 1990, all of the sixteen relevant departments include at least an option in another tradition, either taught within the department or drawing upon a cognate department or school of, say, Middle Eastern or oriental studies. While there are only two departments described simply as "Religious Studies" (Lancaster and Newcastle), another eight now have "Religious Studies" as part of their title.[69]

Updating this information, given the increase of the (new) universities, of the relevant 23 departments, all offer at least an option related to a religion

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of the posts in world religions from Glasgow and Aberdeen were taken up by Edinburgh, so were not lost but regionally centralized. This is not to deny that Scotland, like England, has been seriously hit by education cuts and that the *development* of the new field of religious studies was certainly a casualty. I have briefly digressed to note that Scotland's situation initially seems more favorable to confessional theology. Nevertheless, the development of religious studies has been significant as well as the secularization of the university. This analysis is certainly confirmed in George Newlands, "Theology and Cultural Change: A Variety of Students" in eds. Martien E. Brinkman et al., *Theology between Church, University and Society*, Royal Van Gorcum, Assen, 2003, pp. 164–74.

[69] Adrian Cunningham, "Religious Studies in the Universities: England" in ed. U. King, *Turning Points*, pp. 22–31, p. 21.

other than Christianity,[70] and in title only seven are called "Theology" or "Divinity," with Sheffield as an exception, called Department of Biblical Studies, but its fare might well be assimilated within Theology (or Cultural Studies?). This is in stark contrast to the fact that before 1967 there were no departments of Religious Studies (although admittedly Manchester University had the first Department of Comparative Religion back in 1904). Hence a further conclusion is that religious studies is advancing and gaining ground, statistically and ideologically. Admittedly, these are conclusions based on limited findings. For example, gender studies and political theologies are calling into question the neutrality of religious studies and these issues do not necessary register in the prospectuses I have been examining, for they have no institutional force, just as there are many Christians teaching theology with a lively faith commitment, but this too does not show through a prospectus, possibly as it is not ideologically acceptable. Faculties might keenly advertise such wares if they were thought to attract students.

So far I have been conducting this enquiry from an official public relations angle: prospectus and web pages tell only a limited amount. In this final section, I want to turn to two leading theologians at two ancient English universities, to examine their vision of theology, its role, function, and purpose as presented in their inaugural lectures: Professor John Webster (Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford—delivered in 1997) and Professor David F. Ford (Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge—delivered in 1992).[71] The titles of the two lectures are particularly pertinent to my concerns. Webster's is called "Theological Theology," and Ford's, "A Long Rumour of Wisdom. Redescribing Theology." Page numbers for these lectures subsequently appear in the text. They indicate that the questions I am asking are vibrantly alive in England's academic institutions, despite the slightly bleak picture above.

Webster wants to argue that theology has been assimilated into the Enlightenment *Wissenschaft*. He draws heavily on thinkers like Alasdair MacIntyre, Eberhard Jüngel, and Michael Buckley to argue that in this new *Wissenschaft* the inner self is privileged, in either its instrumentalist or representational ideologies. Rational instrumentalism means that

[70] This is a difficult area to press, as Jewish Studies sometimes contains what in pre-war departments would have been viewed as Christian Studies (Old Testament, Hebrew Bible). Also, as with Gloucestershire, we saw that much offered in the Religious Studies program was to be found in the Theology program.

[71] John Webster, *Theological Theology*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998; see also "Hermeneutics in Modern Theology: Some Doctrinal Reflections," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 51, 1998, pp. 307–41; David F. Ford, *A Long Rumour of Wisdom: Redescribing Theology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992; and further elaborated, *Theology: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000. Webster has since moved to Aberdeen.

> [the] modern research university is dominated by ideals of procedural rationality, context- and conviction-independence, and representation and judgement. The effect of this anthropology is to isolate and then privilege an ideal of rational competence: "human rationality is such and the methods and procedures which it has devised and in which it has embodied itself are such that, if freed from external constraints and most notably from the constraints imposed by religious and moral tests, it will produce not only progress in enquiry but also agreement among all rational persons as to what the rationally justified conclusions of such enquiry are."[72]

Instead, Webster wants to reassert the authenticity of a tradition-specific discipline, a *Bildung* where

> [the] goal of schooling is the cultivation of a particular kind of person who has acquired certain habits of mind and will, a certain cast or temper of the soul, and so is oriented to what is considered to be the good and the true. Schooling is transformation, and involves the eradication of defects and limitations, as well as the fostering of skills which are learned through engagement in common intellectual practices.[73]

This schooling has an ontological and noetic dimension. Here Webster strategically draws on the seventeenth-century Reformer, Johannes Wollebius. His argument continues that such a schooling is ontological:

> giving priority to the object immediately calls into question any notion that methods of enquiry are set by the subjective conditions of enquirers and not by that to which they direct their loving attention. For theology as Wollebius envisages it, the being of God is not simply a hypothesis into which theology enquires, but rather the reality which actively constitutes and delimits the field of theological activity. Talk of God and God's actions will not just describe theology's ultimate horizons, as it were the furthest boundaries of the field, within which theologians go about their business unconstrained. Rather, the field of theology and the activities which theologians perform within that field—its texts, its modes of interpretation, its standards of assessment, its rhetoric and modes of persuasion—will be described by talk of God. What Wollebius calls "the principle of the being of theology," what we might call its intellectual ontology, has priority over anthropology and epistemology. Theology is simply not a free science.[74]

[72] Webster, *Theological Theology*, p. 6, citing MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, p. 225. See further Webster, *Theological Theology*, pp. 16–17.
[73] Ibid., p. 6.
[74] Ibid., pp. 18–19.

Clearly, this is utterly inimical to the Enlightenment university, but this is not all. Noetically, this object of theology for Wollebius and Webster is:

> nothing less than the eschatological self-presence of God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit . . . In a very important sense, the notion of the Word of God undertakes the duty which in later theology will be performed by epistemology and anthropology: it shows how it is that knowledge of God is possible and real.[75]

Webster is acutely aware that this vision of theology sits uncomfortably with Oxford University's view that "theology's place in the university is to be won by its conformity to an ideal of disengaged reason."[76] He suggests that theology's voice should be a deeply critical presence in today's secular university, an articulation of "Christian difference," a kind of thorn in the flesh.[77]

I have quoted from Webster in some detail for his inaugural indicates some very important points in relation to my argument—and I have learnt much from him. First, Webster's voice presents a very similar challenge (as articulated in this book) to the discipline of theology, although he develops his argument in a profoundly Barthian and Reformed manner, rather than in a Catholic fashion. Prayer, practice, and communal-ecclesial context are vital to Webster, even though his ecclesia is different from my own.[78] Clearly, the implications of Webster's picture of a theological theology as found here, and in other writings, have no place for a "theological religious studies" as I have been proposing, as this would be assimilated to "apologetics" which is ascetically rejected, or seen as a form of "correlation."[79] I think they need be neither. The exclusive focus of interest for Webster's project is theology as *explication* of the Bible, and dogmatics as the same. This has the strength of fully relating biblical studies and dogmatics. David Ford criticizes

[75] Ibid., p. 18.

[76] Ibid., p. 20. Here he cites the views of the 1850 University Reform Commission.

[77] Ibid., p. 20, here supportively citing Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p. 381.

[78] See *Holiness*, SCM, London, 2003, pp. 8–30, where Webster argues: (1) theological reason is under the Church's authority; (2) because the Church is under the authority of truth; (3) only in so much as the Church lives in deference to the claim of the gospel. Surely this means that ecclesia has a much more central role in dogmatics for the gospel is canonically formed through the authority of the Church deciding its texts, and in this process there is therefore an interaction between Bible–tradition–authority in more circular a manner than Webster's hierarchically descending order of these three.

[79] I am drawing on his review of Ford's *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed* in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 54, 2001, pp. 548–59. See also Webster, "Discovering Dogmatics" in ed. Darren C. Marks, *Shaping a Theological Mind*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2002, pp. 129–36.

Webster for severely downplaying the value of culture as a mode of theology's practice, and in a very limited sense Ford is correct.[80] Nevertheless, Webster's argument here indicates that despite differences he and I might have, there are important similarities in our argument. There are of course others in England with similar disquiet.[81]

Second, Webster does begin to relate his argument about theology to the other disciplines in the university. Webster's theological theology would require that other subjects, both their methodologies and objects of study, are called into question by his critique. He writes: "what is needed is a renewed 'conflict of the faculties,' though not one driven by [citing Richard Rorty] 'the quest for commensuration,' but by a confident sense of the importance of nonconformity."[82] Given the context of Webster's remarks, it would be wrong to criticize their allusiveness, but clearly the theological sense in which other disciplines may be affected requires further fleshing out. Webster's highlighting "nonconformity" might be taken in a theological sense (to be unpacked further by him?) or a colloquial sense (that requires the faculties to do the unpacking, Christian or otherwise?), or it might imply some joint action between theologians and Christian academics.

Third, Webster registers the institutional impact on the university of his view of theology, which again bears fruitful relation to my own argument. Given Webster's own background (prior to Oxford) at Christian institutions in Toronto, Canada, it is odd that his notion of theology as "critical presence" goes no further than to suggest that theology be a constant thorn in the flesh of the secular university. He does not push his own argument to its logical conclusion: theology can only flourish in a theological (Christian) university. Webster is probably too realistic to suggest this, but he does seem to encourage utopian thinking, to the degree that "the function of utopias is to encourage ironic distance from prevailing conceptions, and to recount the past and envisage the future from a different point of view."[83]

[80] See David Ford's reply to Webster's review in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 54, 2001, pp. 559–63.

[81] For English theologians see, for example, from a Reformed perspective, Colin Gunton, "Doing Theology in the University Today" in eds. Colin E. Gunton, Stephen R. Holmes, and Murray A. Rae, *The Practice of Theology: A Reader*, SCM, London, 2001, pp. 441–55; for a more Thomistic perspective from the Anglican theologian, John Milbank, "The Conflict of the Faculties: Theology and the Economy of the Sciences"; and the irenic synthesis of Daniel D. Hardy, *On Being the Church*, SCM, London, 2002.

[82] Webster, *Theological Theology*, pp. 22–3. See also Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1979, p. 317. Milbank more fully explores this conflict in Milbank, "The Conflict of the Faculties."

[83] Webster, *Theological Theology*, p. 24.

Let us now compare Webster's inaugural to the inaugural of one of England's foremost theologians, David Ford. Like Webster, Ford did his doctoral work on Barth, but very little of that influence can be seen in Ford's irenic inaugural. Ford's strategy (which is usefully carried through in other writings) is to dissolve many disciplinary boundaries,[84] thereby conflating theology and religious studies (perhaps reflecting Cambridge's more diverse faculty and funding sources) into a practice called "public theology" which is said to exist in the academy. Ford notes the decision in 1969 to change the Cambridge Theological Tripos to the Theology and Religious Studies Tripos. "Public theology" is then fleshed out in relation to three groups: the university, the religious communities, and wider society. The ordering of these three groups is Ford's, and it is significant. It compares interestingly to Webster's where the ecclesial is prioritized.

For Ford, theology is an enterprise that is undertaken by anyone, from any religious group or none, and proceeds according to intellectually respectable and pluriform criteria in the university. While he acknowledges that the subject matter(s) of theology are to be studied with methods "appropriate to them" (p. 7) he fails to explore the possible irreconcilable methodological tensions that I explored in the previous chapter, let alone those raised by Muslim theology or Buddhist practice. Admittedly, Ford does not deny that there are problems in his proposal, but he does not address them in the terms that I am urging. However, in so much as this entire discussion regarding theology's relation to the university is carried on with a very broad sense of the subject matter, Ford implicitly seems to assimilate different "religions," which he must if he is to use the umbrella term "public theology."

When Ford gets to the next question of "Responsibilities to religious communities," similar unresolved tensions emerge. First, he really only addresses Christian concerns, never once indicating that the concerns of a Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist might be quite radically different.[85] At one point he adopts a magisterial position as spokesperson for all religions (which I am sure is far from his intention): "What are the theological needs of the main religious communities? I would suggest that they are for a high quality of engagement with what comes from the past, for discernment

[84] See Ford's *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

[85] Admittedly Ford (p. 24) is sensitive to this criticism: "You may have sensed a certain abstraction, the inability of that level of talk [his lecture so far] to come to grips with many of the most urgent and interesting issues. The main reason is that one does not have to press far before one comes upon the deep particularity of concepts such as responsibility or wisdom." Indeed!

and judgement about the present and future significance of their traditions, and for the provision of 'ordered learning.'" (p. 13).[86] It may well be the case that this articulation is empirically correct, although I imagine it is open to question. What is significant is that Ford, a Christian, by force of his rhetorical strategy unwittingly becomes the spokesperson for the "main religious communities" without citing a single authority to support this contention.

Second, Ford does nevertheless grant that each community should "play a full part in the discipline," (p. 12) and happily criticizes those concerned to maintain neutrality and objectivity. He responds to charges that religious commitment entails improper advocacy, by arguing that this affects not only theology, but also economics, law, history, architecture, and all the disciplines. Further, rather than banning advocacy in the university, it must "take place in a setting [the university] where rigorous argument and consideration of alternatives are normal" (ibid.). Again, this general setting of the rules of academic study is resistant to, let us say, a Websterian picture, where theology's advocacy is *not* accountable to the "considerations of alternatives" as a "normal" theological procedure, for this normality according to Webster is the Enlightenment's normality.

Finally, when Ford does come to address the Church's role in academic theology, he refers to the ecumenical Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges and his comments are telling. These colleges differ from the university Faculty "not necessarily in content, standards or even in personnel; but simply, I suggest, in the priority the theological colleges must give to the welfare of the particular faith communities they represent and to preparing their students for one type of vocation" (pp. 13–14). The difference is not to be found in the curriculum or methodology or intellectual presuppositions. In this sense, university theology is removed from its ecclesial basis, or rather this ecclesial basis is privatized, so that a Muslim and Christian student can both do Christian theology at Cambridge and publicly they are said to do the same thing.[87]

My reading of Ford is that quite subtly, in trying to accommodate theology and religious studies under the umbrella of "public theology" he has

[86] Here he refers to Edward Farley, *The Fragility of Knowledge: Theological Education in the Church and the University*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1988, ch. 5. Farley is not discussing religious communities, but specifically the Christian community.

[87] I think this is what leads Kieran Flanagan in *The Enchantment of Sociology*, Macmillan, London, 1996, p. 94 to say of Ford's proposals that they are "vague in a liberal Anglican way. The denominational responsibilities of such a theology and the issue of its authority are hardly sketched. Little attention is given to the issue of the way an academic theology disembodied from spiritual practice and ecclesial accountability is a contradiction in terms."

instead replaced it with an imaginative, rich, and creative form of religious studies. That this form of religious studies is not explicitly secular shows the limitations of my own analysis regarding "religious studies," as well as calling into question whether Ford's harmonious marriage between the two can be sustained. Certainly, Webster's theological theology can have no place in Ford's redescription, for if Webster's Trojan horse were admitted, the Fordian project would surely collapse.

In the final part on "Responsibilities to society," Ford makes some very significant points, insightfully fleshing out certain aspects of Webster's thesis. In his refusal to allow theology to be a private interest, Ford calls for high-level engagement with other disciplines, while being painfully aware of the general lack of such publicly acknowledged engagement. "On the whole it is hard to think of theological treatments of the legal system, the economy, education, science, technology, medicine and the formation of our culture that have entered the mainstream of debate" (p. 17). Ford calls for collaboration across disciplines, and in this respect he, like Webster, avoids an argument for a Christian university. However, unlike Webster, Ford forges instead a vision of a rich religiously pluralist university, which is probably far more likely than a Christian university.

Having now viewed the complex and rich picture that actually exists in England, and equally if not more so in the United States, we can finish this section with some basic generalizations. First, Christian universities (by name or mission statement or foundation) have generally been secularized, with little real institutional evidence of what makes the university Christian. Second, in such institutions there is very little evidence of any Christian vision affecting the different disciplines, either in their intellectual practices or procedures, or in their being related to theology or philosophy in some sort of holistic manner.[88] Third, theology in such institutions has been increasingly secularized, admittedly in differing degrees, but in terms of public self-presentation it is very difficult to tell the difference between theology and religious studies except in their different fields and subject matters. The methods of study and the anthropological presuppositions of study are usually the same for both subjects. Fourth, in both the US and England there are staunch critics of this process, with varying counter-strategies: those who want a thorough reform of theology (Webster), those who call into question the fragmentation of study and the isolation of the disciplines (Ford, Burtchaell, Gleason), those who call for the importance of

[88] This is true of English church school education, and of course, much of this debate relates to earlier pre-university years. See, for example, Trevor Cooling, *A Christian Vision for State Education: Reflections on the Theology of Education*, SPCK, London, 1994.

worship and religious practice as central to intellectual enquiry (Goodlad, Burtchaell, Webster), and, finally, those who call for a new sort of university (Burtchaell, Gleason, Webster, and MacIntyre). I suggest that all these strands have to be pursued together for any one of them to be pursued intelligibly. To push for one alone means that in the long run all will probably fail, and certainly to ignore the last is to seriously imperil the others. I acknowledge that this last judgement is contentious, but intellectually I see no alternative, even if in England it smacks of utopia. In England, due to resources, an ecumenical Christian university is perhaps more practical, although more complicated regarding questions of authority and accountability.

In the next chapter I turn to the defense of such a utopian idea. Critics see this "utopia" as an undesirable "sectarianism."

Chapter Three

Cyrus Returns: Rebuilding the Temple in Babylon

I Desirable Sectarianism

At the end of chapter one, we saw Alasdair MacIntyre's not quite sufficient rebuttal of the charge of sectarianism and utopianism. He argues that the charge reflects the fact that moderns "insist upon seeing only what it [modernity] allows them to see," hence they cannot even "identify, let alone confront the problems which will be inscribed in their epitaphs."[1] It is not quite a matter of who writes such epitaphs, or that MacIntyre's response is not without truth, but rather that his response needs to engage more closely with the very real concerns expressed by the best thinkers, both modernists and those who are in varying degrees critical of modernity, but who see that there is much to salvage, much to be grateful for, and much to learn from.[2] He also needs to face more squarely the concerns of those who have witnessed the ravages of sectarian societies, where separate education has become a form of apartheid and segregation, creating economic and political injustice. In this chapter I want to face squarely some of these critics and argue for a desirable "sectarianism," for there are good theological reasons to

[1] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, Duckworth, London, 1990, p. 235.

[2] The best examples of such critics would be Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989, and *Ethics of Identity*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992; Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics After Babel*; and Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986. Nussbaum, however, is the most hostile to MacIntyre: "Recoiling from Reason," *New York Times Review of Books*, 19, 1989, pp. 36–41. Taylor is rightly questioned for his Christian orientation by George Marsden, in "Matteo Ricci and the Prodigal Culture" in ed. James L. Heft, *A Catholic Modernity? Charles Taylor's Marianist Award Lecture*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1999, pp. 83–94, 88–92; and for the vagueness and lack of specificity of his key notion of "transcendence" by Rosemary Luling Haughton, "Transcendence and the Bewilderment of Being Modern" in ed. Heft, *Catholic Modernity?*, pp. 65–82.

be a sectarian committed to the common good. I also want to address the attendant questions of the public funding and differing forms of accountability of such sectarian enterprises, focussed as they are, at least in terms of a Catholic university, on the "common good." As such, I am not attempting to justify all forms of sectarianism, but simply this tradition-specific form in terms of a Catholic university, although much of the argument would equally apply to an ecumenical Christian university, or indeed other denominational foundations. There may well be some types of sectarianism that the liberal modern state should not fund or even encourage.

Roman Catholic, Methodist, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jewish higher education institutions have a long and complex international history and it would be futile to essentialize these projects, or deal with their dynamics outside their specific historical and political contexts. Here I simply want to concentrate on a dilemma posed by two critics of MacIntyre's postliberal university proposal. John Horton and Susan Mendus call MacIntyre's proposal "interestingly Janus-faced":

> On the one hand, his recognition that there is a variety of traditions in the modern world, each with legitimate claims to serious investigation, intimates a pluralism which, if not straightforwardly liberal, is at least an embodiment of mutual toleration between proponents of different traditions. On the other hand, his insistence on the role of authority within traditions and his apparent acceptance of the idea that the guardians of a tradition can, for example, legitimately exclude from their own universities those who do not share the basic assumptions of their tradition seem potentially more authoritarian and socially divisive.[3]

Janus was the gate keeper to heaven and the two faces of the dilemma are vital. Let us take the second face first. There is a curious irony that this same criticism could be directed at the present liberal monolithic university system that MacIntyre is criticizing. The "guardians of tradition" can presently exclude those who do not share their liberal assumptions in a plethora of ways, all of which would be thought of as respectable and perfectly legitimate. For instance, the whole notion of specific entry requirements that must be possessed before entering the university is firmly established, and exclusion of those who do not possess such training and abilities is enshrined to help safeguard the standards and quality of these institutions. And one might recall MacIntyre's point about how the natural sciences have always operated with "unstated policies of enforced exclusion," often only

[3] Horton and Mendus, *After MacIntyre*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1994, p. 13.

noticed by sociologists of science.[4] Of course, such exclusions are sometimes relaxed for ideological reasons related to political quotas for intake of students. Why is it that Horton and Mendus do not see this as "authoritarian and socially divisive"? Or again, it is usually assumed that what is required for gaining a good university degree is the acquisition of skills and abilities that are possessed in a higher degree by the guardians and teachers within the universities, than in the students whom they seek to teach. It is precisely by successfully imparting these skills to these students through a long apprenticeship that they are deemed to "succeed." The guardians of tradition within the secular university constantly exclude those who are not worthy of their traditions and this is seen as "maintaining standards," not authoritarianism and social divisiveness. Of course, in many student-based learning programs there is an abandonment of the model of teacher as wise person who is deeply immersed in a tradition of learning and enquiry, who needs mimicking, rather than being a pure facilitator of students making up their own education. One could elaborate upon this point with reference to the entire set of epistemological and ontological presuppositions that underpin the secular university.[5]

In this second face of Janus, Mendus and Horton rightly focus upon the unresolved question of the "role of authority" within different traditions and therefore within different universities. For instance, we are faced with the question of how these different authorities might envisage the task of engaging in controversy with rival traditions that is required by MacIntyre's tradition-specific Thomistic model.[6] Here indeed, we touch upon a serious objection to the "sectarian" proposal, for the requirement to engage with rival traditions is a tradition-specific requirement, that may well be unacceptable to all the traditions in question, or mean quite different things. I do not think a theoretical resolution to this problem is possible. One would first have to see what type of universities were being proposed, and what type of universities do exist and how they operate in terms of this issue. Only then could one explore possible responses to the theoretical and practical difficulties that are raised. However, I hardly think this weakens MacIntyre's case *per se*, as his Thomism is committed to engagement with all forms of different traditions, as his work clearly exemplifies. So does the historical narrative of Thomism's engagement with rival traditions since the

[4] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, p. 225.

[5] One very perceptive accounting of these differences is to be found in Paul J. Griffiths, *Religious Reading*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, and see chapter one above.

[6] This specific type of argument would help Wolfe defend his pluralist position in "The Potential for Pluralism" in ed. A. Sterk, *Religion, Scholarship and Higher Education*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2002, pp. 22–39.

thirteenth century, with some exceptions. After Leo XIII's encyclical in 1897, Thomism has begun to flourish in differing schools within the Roman Catholic tradition. Indeed, the entire argument of MacIntyre's trilogy is that liberalism cannot really promote radical pluralism, as the liberal university is incapable of fostering real difference.

The first Janus-face of MacIntyre located by Mendus and Horton is his inadvertent, if not "straightforwardly liberal" promotion of peaceful pluralism. However, such a charge is strangely ahistorical and monopolist in assuming that it is only liberal modernity that can claim to provide the social, political, and intellectual conditions whereby difference and pluralism can flourish.[7] The burden of MacIntyre's argument has been to show otherwise, and to challenge just such a claim. Horton and Mendus must dislodge MacIntyre's basic argument against liberal modernity before they can assume liberalism's ownership of the conditions that might foster real diversity. Their very suspicion of a proposal that takes pluralism seriously, in suggesting the development and support of different intellectual institutions of enquiry, betrays the weakness of their criticism that MacIntyre is an inadvertent liberal. Might it be that precisely MacIntyre's Thomism is capable of supporting a social and intellectual plurality in a radical way hardly even imagined by liberal modernity? John Milbank, for one, has forcefully argued that Augustinian Christianity is capable of constructing the social and political conditions within which real difference is allowed to flourish, for difference and relationship is seen as the form of creation's original goodness.[8] Vatican II's *Declaration on Religious Freedom* also suggests a question mark against the suspicions of Horton and Mendus that fostering, within limits, and valuing pluralism must be equated with "liberalism."[9] Horton and

[7] For a nice turning of the tables regarding the accusation of religion as the greatest cause of European wars, see William T. Cavanaugh, "'A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House': the Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State," *Modern Theology*, October 1995, pp. 397–420.

[8] See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1980, pp. 380–438, even if Milbank is committed to out narrating all difference! See the perceptive critique of Milbank advanced by Gerard Loughlin, "Christianity at the End of the Story or the Return of the Meta-Narrative," *Modern Theology*, 8, 1992, pp. 365–84, and also Gillian Rose, *The Broken Middle*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1992, pp. 277–96, registering similar disquiet at Milbank's violent peace.

[9] See the "Declaration" and the introduction by John Courtney-Murray SJ in ed. Walter M. Abbott, *The Documents of Vatican II*, Guild Press, New York, 1966, pp. 672–4 for Murray's introduction. All citations from Vatican II will be taken from Abbott. However, it should be acknowledged that the influence of modernity upon Vatican II's documents is undeniable, and its consequences much debated and it is precisely the *Declaration on Religious Freedom* that is seen as modernity's Trojan horse. See Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, Neumann Press, Minnesota, 1992. Davies is right to see this document as an about-turn on earlier positions, such as held by Pius VII (p. 56).

Mendus's criticisms tend to show that objections to such a postliberal pluralism within the universities reflect the very liberal presuppositions that are being called into question. These very criticisms undermine their allegedly tolerant stance and unveil just the type of authoritarianism that MacIntyre exposes and questions.

There would be a problem, such as Horton and Mendus envisage, were MacIntyre's Thomism to be replaced by a religious view that desired perfect hegemony and monolithic ideological control over all society. Ironically, this precise situation is structurally enforced by the hegemony of the liberal university. Of course, the desire for social hegemony and control is hardly foreign to the history of Christianity. But until specific proposals for different intellectual establishments are examined in detail, the charge by Mendus and Horton does not really fit MacIntyre's Thomism, nor can it be applied *a priori* to non-liberal approaches.

A comment on the word "sectarian." The *Oxford English Dictionary* relates some interesting definitions showing that the word's earliest written usage goes back to 1649, conjuring up both schism and heresy, as well as denoting irrational or bigoted beliefs. It was initially used by Presbyterians against Independents and later by Anglicans against Non-Conformists, or those in power against minorities with less power. The *OED* indicates that more recent usage applies it to zealous allegiance to any party or group, although more often to religious groups. From this a couple of preliminary comments are in order, in the light of my employment of "sectarian" to denote my own position. The word can be retained as a sign of struggle, in the way in which some groups employ the words used pejoratively of them, such as "black," "gays," and so on. Alternatively, given the complex freight of the word, it might be better to leave it now as it obscures the real issues that are of concern to my project. I am sympathetic with this latter alternative, but still more needs to be said before leaving this term aside and moving forward in the argument.

When "sectarianism" is employed in the modern period by non-religious people to denote the activity of religious people, it usually betrays the former's own allegiance to modernity. This amounts to one (usually powerful) sect (modernity) calling the other (religious) group a "sect." The label can easily, and perhaps more appropriately, be reversed, especially in the light of the critique of modernity that we have suggested above. This point is well made, although in a different context, by Walter Brueggemann. He nicely turns the tables, in his commentary on the exchanges between Hezekiah, Isaiah, and the Assyrian ambassadors in II Kings 18–19, when he suggests that we might profitably think of "empire as sect," rather than seeing the numerically smallest group as deviant. Israel's formation *behind*

the walls (thus traditionally accused of sectarianism) gives it the very resources to criticize the language of the Assyrians *at* the wall, to expose their self-seeking interests.

> The Assyrian negotiators at the wall are not offering a policy in the general interest, but under such a guise are pursuing Assyrian policy at the expense of all those behind the wall. Then the dominant conversation partner acts and speaks only from a narrow interest that is sectarian. We are not accustomed to thinking of the voice of the empire as a sectarian voice. But so it is when it serves only a narrow interest. *Empire as sect* is a theme worth pursuing in our own situation [Brueggemann is writing in the USA] because it may be suggested that the voice of American power, for example, claims to be the voice of general well-being and may in a number of cases be only the voice of a narrow range of economic and political interest. The ideological guise is effective if large numbers of people can be kept from noticing the narrow base of real interest. That narrow base will not be noticed unless there is another conversation behind the wall which gives critical distance and standing ground for an alternative assessment. In ancient Israel, the prophets are the ones who regularly expose the voice of the empire as a sectarian voice not to be heard as a comprehensive, disinterested voice.[10]

Brueggemann's point is enormously helpful in reversing the spotlight: small cultic groups are now not the dangerous sectarians, but rather, the empire, state, or ruling powers that wish them to conform, are exposed as the partisans. It also nicely highlights the way in which the particularity of the gospel is not a hindrance to its universality; it is open to all, meant for all, and draws all creation into the universal covenant. Of course, we are potentially a few steps away from verbal abuse, each side calling the other the dreaded "sectarian." But Brueggemann's story is also interesting, as the metaphor of "behind the wall" conjures up a fortress or siege mentality, in contrast to Pope John XXIII's image of opening the windows to the world, when announcing the Second Vatican Council, and embracing the modern world in *aggiornamento*.[11] And here we encounter an intra-Christian controversy, which takes us a step away from the modernity versus religion debate. This also moves us closer to the interesting epicenter of the debate over "sectarianism" in Christian circles.

[10] Walter Brueggemann, "II Kings 18–19: The Legitimacy of a Sectarian Hermeneutic," *Horizons in Biblical Theology*, 7, 1985, pp. 1–41, 22–3.

[11] For an historical contextualization of Catholicism and "modernity," see ed. Darrell Jodcock, *Catholicism Contending with Modernity: Roman Catholic Modernity and Anti-Modernism in Historical Context*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, esp. pp. 1–27, 88–112, and 308–36.

The substantive issues connected with the use of the word sectarian are nicely exposed in a modern instance of the Lutheran ethicist and theologian, James Gustafson, accusing the Methodist Stanley Hauerwas (and the Lutheran George Lindbeck) of sectarianism.[12] In examining this exchange, I will suggest that one very important theological issue related to the use of this term revolves around the centrality of Christology for epistemology and ontology, and that this is perhaps the heart of the intra-Christian debate on sectarianism. To put it differently, it is a debate between Christians who believe they share a common world with non-Christians, although one group believes that by virtue of being human, all people encounter a common "world," which offers the basis for common discourse, the common good, and a "public theology" on social, ethical, and other issues (e.g. Gustafson, David Tracy, Richard McCormick—and to include some non-Christian philosophers, Martha Nussbaum and Edith Wyschogrod). The other group believes that the "worlds" encountered by different groups are culturally and religiously shaped, hence no such presumption of public discourse is *a priori* possible (e.g. Hauerwas, Lindbeck, Michael Banner, Oliver O'Donovan, John Milbank—and philosophers like MacIntyre and Alvin Plantinga). There is no shared moral language, although this need not mean that public discourse is not possible. In theological terms, the first group believes that by the use of reason all people can discern and use common "natural" ethical laws, Christian or otherwise; the second group believes that such laws may exist, but are related to and properly disclosed in the self-revelation of God in Christ. For the second, Christology is central to epistemology and ontology, but not so for the first. This distinction serves only to highlight the issues, not to suggest that all those named would subscribe to what has been stated without various qualifications.

Before turning to the Hauerwas–Gustafson exchange, it is worth also noting Ernst Troeltsch's observations on sectarianism. He defines it as:

> a voluntary society, composed of strict and definite Christian believers bound to each other by the fact that all have experienced "the new birth." These "believers" live apart from the world, are limited to small groups, emphasise the law instead of grace, and in varying degrees within their own circle set up

[12] Gustafson, "The Sectarian Temptation: Reflection on Theology, the Church, and the University," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America*, 1985, 40, pp. 83–94; and see Hauerwas's response: in "Why the 'Sectarian Temptation' is a Misrepresentation: A Response to James Gustafson" in eds. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright, *The Hauerwas Reader*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 2001, pp. 90–110; in relation to Lindbeck see the very incisive piece by William C. Placher, "Revisionist and Postliberal Theologies and the Public Character of Theology," *The Thomist*, 49, 1985, pp. 392–417.

> the Christian order, based on love; all this is done in preparation for the expectation of the coming Kingdom of God.[13]

Troeltsch opposed "sect" with the "church type," the latter characterized by its all-embracing and "universal" outlook, open to all. Thus "sect" is made derivative, in so much as it is a breaking away from the Church in order to maintain the sect's distinctiveness from the world. In this sense, the sect often sees the Church as conforming to the world (and therefore the state). Far from Troeltsch's definitions being sociologically descriptive, Duane Friesen has carefully shown that it was normatively balanced, containing many hidden assumptions about the normative nature of the "church type."[14] Be that as it may, the sect's *alleged* disregard for the "universal" is seen in its living apart from society and lack of concern for those outside its walls. This has been interpreted as a disregard for the common good of humanity and a self-centered concern for the sect's self-privileging and self-perpetuation. Interestingly, these are precisely the characteristics attributed to Hauerwas by Gustafson.

Gustafson's critique suggests that Hauerwas's position is established without recourse to non-theological discourse (social, human, and natural sciences) and as such it has little to say to these discourses, insulating itself from them, and is thus sectarian. It is ideologically closed, as it is impenetrable to criticism from non-theological discourse. It therefore does not belong in the university. Further, it isolates the Church from the world, and fails to provide any serious engagement with civic and public life, as it has cut off this interdependency, the very life-blood for a real theology. Gustafson suggests that this sectarian option is tempting, given Christianity's crumbling self-identity and its lack of public support due to secularism. Hence the title of his piece: "The Sectarian Temptation." Gustafson's own alternative relies on creating an ethics that does not depend on Christ or Christianity, but on "theism," rationally established:[15]

> Faithful witness to Jesus is not a sufficient theological and moral basis for addressing the moral and social problems of the twentieth century. The theologian addressing many issues—nuclear, social justice, ecology, and so forth—must do so as an outcome of a theology that develops God's relation

[13] Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, trans. O. Wyon, Macmillan, New York, 1931, vol. 2, p. 993.

[14] Duane Friesen, "Normative Factors in Troeltsch's Typology of Religious Association," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 3, 2, 1975, pp. 271–83.

[15] See Gustafson's sectarian theocentricism, hardly helpful to Buddhists and Advaitin Hindus, let alone humanists and atheists: *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective*, vols. 1 and 2, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1981, 1984, respectively.

> to all aspects of life in the world, and develops those relations in terms which are not exclusively Christian in a sectarian form. Jesus is not God.[16]

Hauerwas's response is very helpful as it shows that he is not guilty of many of the charges made by Gustafson. Hauerwas does engage in all sorts of public debates and sees Christian engagement with secular powers as necessary, sometimes harmonious, other times deeply contentious, but inevitably *ad hoc*: he does not hold that theological discourse is unanswerable to other forms of discourse, but rather questions the normative status given to scientific discourse (and therefore modernity?) in Gustafson's approach. Further, Hauerwas strongly believes that theology has a critical place in the university, precisely as critique. Hauerwas also notes, as I have, the potential superficiality of the use of "sectarian" in theological debate: "Show me where I am wrong about God, Jesus, the limits of liberalism, the nature of the virtues, or the doctrine of the Church—but do not shortcut that task by calling me a sectarian."[17] However, Hauerwas also helpfully locates the most basic theological disagreement: Gustafson's desire for public discourse in terms of commonly accepted premises, his claim for a doctrine of creation in natural-law terms, and Hauerwas's refusal of these terms of engagement with the world. That is, for Gustafson, Christians must address non-Christians *on grounds that are acceptable to non-Christians*. In effect, those who eschew apologetics are sectarian, and here we have located the theological underpinning of the charge.[18]

In answer to Gustafson's charge, I think a decisive response is possible. Hauerwas dismantles Gustafson's criticisms into three basic issues: truth versus fideism; Christian social engagement versus irresponsibility; creation versus a theological tribalism (meaning the claim: my group is right, and that's it, there is no need to account for this claim). It is the third of these which is most important to me, although it is important to note pre-emptively that under the first, Hauerwas makes it clear that he is not a postmodernist nihilist, but rather, "Christian theology has a stake in a qualified epistemological realism."[19] It is not that Hauerwas denies God as creator of a good and blessed order, which is narrated Christologically and ecclesiologically,

[16] Gustafson, " The Sectarian Temptation," p. 93.

[17] Hauerwas, "Why the 'Sectarian Temptation' is a Misrepresentation," p. 97.

[18] This is also the position held by David Tracy and Richard McCormick in their criticisms of sectarianism: see Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, SCM, London, 1981, pp. 3–46, McCormick, *Notes on Moral Theology: 1981 Through 1984*, University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1984, pp. 23–6, 123–6.

[19] *Hauerwas Reader*, p. 99; and Hauerwas cites Sabina Lovibond's, *Realism and Imagination in Ethics*, University of Minnosota Press, Minneapolis, 1983, as spelling out the realism to which

but rather "I have refused to use that affirmation [God as creator] to underwrite an autonomous realm of morality separate from Christ's lordship."[20] He writes elsewhere, "appeals to creation too often amount to legitimating strategies for the principalities and powers that determine our lives," forgetting that eschatologically the Fall still means that we deceive ourselves rather easily.[21] For Hauerwas the order of creation is only understood in terms of its *telos*, understood eschatologically, and therefore Christologically.[22] Ethics cannot be separated from its Christological and ecclesiological base and *telos*, and, therefore, neither can Christian discourse. Hauerwas is not arguing that Christians cannot engage with other forms of discourse. Rather, the warrants for Christian discourse are necessarily Christian, based on revelation, and thereby *sui-generis*. They nevertheless can make a claim on non-Christians both by their truthfulness and by their ability to call the non-Christian into question. The latter is precisely why Hauerwas spends much of his time attacking the presuppositions of liberalism. This historically mediated and negotiated sense of universality does not constrain the universality of Christian ethics but rather, takes the negotiation of such universality with difference, utterly seriously. This is precisely the point that is missed by McCormick, writing from a rationalist, natural law, Thomist position, when he criticizes postliberal ethics. McCormick claims that Hauerwas's methodology must commit him to thinking that Christian moral claims are "limited in application to a particular historical community—as if it were wrong to abort Catholic babies but perfectly all right to do so with Muslim, Protestant or Jewish babies."[23] Michael Banner rightly criticizes McCormick's serious misunderstanding:

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he would subscribe. Lindbeck is also defended against non-realism very convincingly by Bruce Marshall, "Aquinas as Postliberal Theologian," *The Thomist*, 53, 1989, pp. 353–402. Hauerwas is similarly charged with non-realism by David Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 68–72, clearly a common perception of the post-liberal school with its caution against some models of truth as correspondence.

[20] *Hauerwas Reader*, p. 109.

[21] Hauerwas, *Dispatches from the Front: Theological Engagements with the Secular*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 1994, p. 56.

[22] Michael Banner is right to call Hauerwas to task for his over-hasty dismissal of Oliver O'Donovan's *Resurrection and the Moral Order*, Inter Varsity Press, Leicester, 1986. Hauerwas wrongly claims that O'Donovan "seeks an account of natural law which is not governed by the eschatological witness of Christ's resurrection."—*Dispatches*, p. 175. See Banner, *Christian Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 16–19. Gustafson is therefore wrong when he says that "Nature is . . . of no ethical significance as a source of direction in Hauerwas' ethics. Hauerwas becomes a twentieth century Marcion," in James Gustafson, "A Response to Critics," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 13, 1985, pp. 185–209: p. 191.

[23] McCormick, *Notes*, p. 127.

> Here McCormick misses the point that the universality of the Christian story, and thus the universality of the demands it makes on human action, are logically quite distinct from the universality of knowledge of that story and its demands; thus, while denying the universality of knowledge of the Gospel, we may still say with Bonhoeffer (*Ethics*, 322) that "the whole law and the whole Gospel belong equally to all men."[24]

The decisive issue, in my opinion, is this. The charge of sectarianism when theologically related to the question of the autonomy of the created order, serves to show the assimilation of the accusers to a form of rationalist modernity. McCormick, in this instance, and Gustafson in his project, presume to read creation *neutrally*, and then relate this reading to one that fulfils the natural reading supernaturally in the gospel, or for Gustafson in rational theism. The reason why I have spent some time on this issue is critically to focus on the problematic assumption of a neutral, and therefore universally shared, sense of the order of creation. My main argument in this chapter and book calls into question the assumption that any neutral reading of creation such as this is epistemologically possible, and in this respect Gustafson and McCormick rely on presuppositions that can be criticized theologically.[25] Hence, on their own criteria, they are covert sectarians, in so much as their assumptions are not universally shared. Rather than continuing the name calling, it would be better for both sides of the debate actually to focus on the theological issues at stake, and this brief excursus on the word "sectarian" has at least tried to make clear why this is a necessity.

Before returning to the MacIntyre and Mendus/Horton debate, it will be worth briefly looking at a *theological* attempt to find a middle ground between communitarianism and modernity, advanced by a neo-Barthian, David Fergusson, in *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics* (1998). This work is significant as it comes out of the postliberal camp, but maintains "a

[24] Banner, *Ethics*, p. 33, n. 101. I do not think Banner's criticism of Hauerwas is sustainable (p. 19) where he assimilates Hauerwas and Moltmann, and criticizes him for lack of *present* discernment regarding God's presence in his creation, emphazising only *future*. See Arne Rassmusson, *The Church as Polis: From Political Theology to Theological Politics as Exemplified by Jürgen Moltmann and Stanley Hauerwas*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1995, who shows the wide gulf of difference between Moltmann and Hauerwas on precisely this point. There is a sense in which this debate perennially replays itself in many forms: Barth versus Brunner, corrected by Balthasar on analogy versus Barth: see Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, trans. Edward T. Oakes, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1992 [1951], being another recent replay.

[25] O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p. 19 puts it nicely: "the *epistemological* program for an ethic that is 'natural,' in the sense that its contents are simply known to all, has to face dauntingly high barriers."

commitment to a residual liberalism," based on the theological insight that moral goodness and true moral reasoning can be found outside the Church.[26] The latter is founded, according to Fergusson, on the Barthian "understanding of human action as determined by the prior, ongoing, and future action of the triune God" that results in the possibility "of human action outside the church also being determined by God."[27] Hence, apart from various interesting criticisms of each, his main criticism of both MacIntyre and Hauerwas is that they resist any possibility of contributing to a common moral consensus, which is the basis of a democratic society. Fergusson carefully nuances his position, so that he is arguing neither for neutral natural law ethics, nor for a common consensus based on "common moral theory."[28] I find two main problems with Fergusson's position. First, and negatively, his criticisms of Hauerwas and MacIntyre on this particular issue are surely misplaced? Both, in different circumstances, are willing to argue for joining non-Christians in fighting some common ethical cause, as does Hauerwas about abortion or non-violent resistance to war. And both are willing to recognize that modernity and other cultures have, to utilize a phrase from Vatican II, "rays of light and truth" within them, as does MacIntyre about neo-Confucianism. It is precisely *as a whole*, as a political, philosophical, and moral project that modernity is rejected, for in these basic respects the project rests on deeply problematic assumptions. Neither has given any sustained attention to non-western religious traditions, so they cannot be found guilty in this respect either. If Fergusson is realistic that no common moral theory can be found, then his criticism of Hauerwas and MacIntyre on this point begins to dissolve. They can accept *pragmatic* co-operation and joint social action, and in this sense common *consensus*, but they resist the notion that such common action will be generated from *common moral theory* in the case of modernity and Christianity. However, at times Fergusson's proposal seems to edge further toward the possibility of a common moral theory, despite his rejection of this possibility. This happens when he draws on Michael Walzer's account of thick and thin moralities.[29]

[26] Fergusson, *Community*, p. 172.

[27] Ibid., p. 162.

[28] Ibid., pp. 72–9. He notes, with typical fairness, that some of MacIntyre's most recent work seems to advance a version of natural law theory requiring "some minimal rules requiring truthfulness and justice from all participants" (p. 164). In my view, this is a predictive stipulation, not one describing an actual state of affairs. It is the necessary requirement, discovered *ad hoc* and *a posteriori*, that these minimal rules allow for real moral exchange, not that they imply or require shared moral theory.

[29] See ibid., pp. 75–9, 142, 162–5. See also Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad*, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1994.

The latter are:

> minimal standards and practices which should be demanded of all people and societies. They are a function of thicker and culturally determined moral understandings, but the convergence of these on minimal common ground provides some basis for the maintenance of pluralist societies.[30]

This then leads Fergusson in his drive to find common ground, to argue tentatively that the "only plausible candidate for a universal moral discourse is that of human rights." To abandon this "is to leave one without the moral vocabulary for making common cause with agencies and forces whose goals are not wholly antithetical to those of the church."[31]

This line of argument is open to a number of objections. First, Walzer's research has only shown that there can be overlap *pragmatically* between thick description in terms of some thin description. This does not mean there is moral consensus, except negatively: a general agreement that "thou shalt not kill" is a good moral maxim. However, if we unpack what this might mean, in terms of both moral consensus and social action, we would see all sorts of problems, with some strongly opposing others, while both share the thin description. Hence, anti-abortionists, pacifists, and vegetarians might argue for legislation against "killing," while those who would oppose them would argue that all these examples do not constitute "killing" properly speaking, but preserving the rights of a woman, the legitimacy of self-defense, and that animals are not part of the remit of such an injunction. The point I am making is that the very notion of agreement on thin description implicitly requires thick description, or narrative specificity, to test whether there is agreement. So thin description is both uninteresting and uninformative regarding real moral agreement in society.[32] This is not to say that there may be sufficient overlap between thick description so as to attain moral consensus *pragmatically* (say, on abortion), but that would not require endorsing the other person's moral theory *in toto*. Second, there is within Catholic theology in modern times the central social doctrine of the "common good," which requires that Catholic morality serves the common good, and should be interpreted in that context. Hence, a communitarian Catholic like MacIntyre or a high Anglo-Catholic like Milbank, or a high

[30] Fergusson, *Community*, p. 75.
[31] Ibid., p. 78.
[32] I have pursued this further in reference to Hans Küng's use of Walzer for his global ethics project in my "Postmodernity and Religious Plurality: Is a Common Global Ethic Possible or Desirable?" in ed. Graham Ward, *The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2001, pp. 131–43.

Methodist like Hauerwas may still strive in their communitarianism to serve the common good, without recourse to shared moral theory with non-Christians or the language of human rights. This leads to my third difficulty here. I think that Fergusson is right in arguing that human rights may be compatible with Christian ethics, and Pope John Paul II has certainly developed this language during his pontificate with much effect. However, Fergusson is surely wrong in arguing that it is the "only contemporary candidate for a universal moral discourse."[33] Not only are there severe objections to the language of rights from Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism but genealogically, as MacIntyre has shown, they arise out of the project of modernity. It is surely only modernity's global pretensions that would suggest this as a "universal moral discourse," over-riding complex multifarious thick descriptions, especially religious thick description. For example, the great Indian legal historian P. V. Kane critically comments on the Indian Constitution of 1950, after conducting a magisterial survey of traditional Hindu legal ethics. Kane argues that in one stroke, the new Constitution erased India's historical traditions:

> The Constitution makes a complete break with our traditional ideas. *Dharmaśātras* and *Smritis* begin with the dharmas ("duties") of the people (*varnas* and *āśramas*). Prime Minister Pandit Nehru himself says in his Azad Memorial Lectures on "India today and tomorrow" (1959), "All of us now talk of and demand rights and privileges, but the teaching of the *dharma* was about duties and obligations. Rights follow duties discharged." Unfortunately this thought finds no place in the Constitution . . . The Constitution engenders a feeling among common people that they have rights and no obligations whatever and that the masses have the right to impose their will and to give the force of law and justice to their own ideas and norms formed in their own cottages and tea shops. The Constitution of India has no chapter on the duties of the people to the country or to the people as a whole.[34]

It should be noted that Kane was a Brāhmin. Many lower caste groups rejoiced at the Constitution for the very reason that Kane criticizes it. Nevertheless, Kane's point still stands: the Indian Constitution is inimical to Hindu ethics, which is based primarily on duties, not rights. The Buddhist Craig K. Ihara makes a very similar point regarding the introduction of the notion of rights within Buddhism:

[33] Fergusson, *Community*, p. 129.

[34] P. V. Kane, *History of the Dharmaśastras*. 2nd rev. edn., Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1968, pp. 1664–5.

> In my view there is a much more significant change being proposed and which I fear [some] are overlooking. The change to a modern concept of rights is one from conceptualising duties and obligations as the role-responsibilities of persons in a cooperative scheme to seeing them as constraints on individuals in their interactions with other individuals all of whom are otherwise free to pursue their own objectives.[35]

Kane and Ihara reflect the rights/duties, individual/communitarian, divide that runs across most traditional religions in their relation to modernity. In this respect, these brief illustrations will have at least indicated that there are, in the discourse of rights, the pretensions of modernity to replace the thick descriptions variously provided by the different religions. Fergusson is perhaps optimistic in his estimate of rights providing the "only" universal discourse on which moralities might overlap or come together in common concern.

What I have been trying to show is that the mid-ground construed between communitarianism and modernity by Fergusson sometimes unwittingly slides into modernity's camp. To suggest a mid-ground is perhaps already to capitulate to modernity. Of course, there can be shared actions and overlapping theoretical agreements, but that should not assume that the truth of the gospel is compatible, *in toto*, with other "truths." It is not. And even when there is a strong appreciation of the abundance of goodness and truth found in all cultures and societies, such that the Church has admittedly much to learn, there is still a sense in which this recognition and learning is subject to and required by the gospel, and not any specific demands of modernity or other religions. The point is really a methodological one.

To return to the MacIntyre and Mendus/Horton debate, the unresolved question raised is very important as to "how traditions are to be individuated and, in matters of policy, whose interpretation of what counts as a tradition is to be treated as authoritative."[36] There is no easy answer for any tradition-specific community, for even within Roman Catholicism there is a contested understanding of "authority." Forms of Babylonian captivity can also exist within the Church. It is precisely because such questions of authority are so central to real pluralism within the university that I must now turn to the question of the funding and governing of sectarian universities.

[35] Craig K. Ihara, "Why There Are No Human Rights in Buddhism: A Reply to Damien Keown" in eds. Damien V. Keown, Charles S. Prebish and Wayne R. Husted, *Buddhism and Human Rights*, Curzon, London, 1998, p. 49.

[36] Horton and Mendus, *After MacIntyre*, p. 13.

II Funding and Accountability: A Clash of Authority?

In the case of a Roman Catholic model, the theologian's accountability to the magisterium and the university's accountability to the bishops raise a host of questions, some related, many distinct, and all horribly complex. This complexity is, in part, due to the different funding arrangements of Catholic universities in different areas of the world. As Catholic nation states are a thing of the past, the variety of civil legislation bearing upon the question of funding Church or sectarian universities ranges from total prohibition of state funding to Catholic universities or educational institutions, to degrees of funding, with various qualifications, such as in Germany, the United States, England, Italy, and France. For instance, in England all universities currently receive government funding, but in the United States, only state universities are recipients, although private universities gain huge indirect funding from federal and state sources, funding that is also open to state universities. And in proportion to the largesse of state funding, the "problem" about "outside" interference (from the Vatican, local bishops, other ecclesial authorities) sometimes increases.

In the following discussion I want to isolate and explore three questions, using the United States as a test case. Such a test case method clearly limits any conclusions, but it allows some of the theological issues to be laid bare, and such questions apply outside the United States. The first regards the nature of ecclesial accountability: to whom are American Catholic universities accountable, regarding the nature of their "Catholic" character? The second question is linked, but distinct: to whom are Catholic theologians, within such universities, accountable? The third question follows on from the previous two: is the idea of a Catholic university, understood maximally or minimally (given the spectrum of answers), compatible with public funding in a democratic, modern, secular society? Or to phrase it differently, can a sectarian institution be publicly funded? The answer to this question will be, to summarize: a sectarian institute might not be publicly funded under certain maximal models, although this is not certain; and it will almost certainly qualify for state and federal funding under minimal models. The point of such a limited conclusion is simply to strengthen my argument that a Catholic university and a theological theology (as well as other disciplines) are not only theologically desirable, but also attainable in practice in a secular and pluralist society, using the funds of that state. If a state is committed to a non-pluralist society, clearly the situation will be entirely different, but since we are only concerned with the US and England, two countries committed to religious tolerance and healthy pluralism, we can proceed.

As we have seen earlier, the necessity of state and federal funding was a major factor in driving American Catholic institutions into an inadvertently secularizing process, in terms of their governance and subsequent curriculum and hiring policies. These institutes wanted to compete with the best and it is better to exist with compromise than not to exist at all. Admittedly, this way of putting it clashes with the good faith of the many religious communities involved, who believed that such moves were consolidating their establishment, and therefore Catholic identity, in American society. The long and complex history prior to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 1990[37] in the United States, is well told in a number of sources, and in part in the previous chapter.[38] It results fundamentally from a tension that developed from the mid-twentieth century between Catholic universities (institutions chartered directly by the Holy See when Pius XII formed the International Federation of Catholic Universities, and broadened in 1963 to include non-ecclesiastical universities) and the Vatican as to the role of the Catholic university, especially its theologians and general accountability and Catholic character. In 1973 changes were put in place by Cardinal Garronne to establish these three factors, eventually resulting in canon laws in 1983, and *CU*, which combines both the intellectual rationale for the Catholic university and canon law.

The Apostolic Constitution *CU* (from the Latin opening words, very significantly: "Born from the heart of the Church," *ex corde ecclesiae*) is a succinct summary of recent papal and Vatican thinking about the nature of the university in the modern world, following on from Vatican II's *Declaration on Catholic Education* (1966) that contained two specific paragraphs on the Catholic university. *CU* does not address ecclesiastical universities and faculties, that is, universities entirely organized and controlled by the Holy See and addressed in an earlier papal allocution, *Sapientia Christiana* (1979). Instead it addresses those universities that consider themselves Catholic, and those that were established and/or owned by dioceses and religious orders. The first part, devoted to the identity and mission of such universities, is a powerful vision of the nature and role of the Catholic university, and the second part contains general norms (or regulations) building upon canons 807–14, to secure the implementation of the Apostolic Constitution. (Canon laws are ecclesiastical rules regarding matters of faith, morals, and disciplines. Canons 807–14 pertain to Catholic universities and other

[37] Paragraph references given in the main body of my text, abbreviated *CU*.

[38] For a "liberal" telling of the narrative see ed. McCluskey, *The Catholic University*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 1970, and for a more "conservative" account, see James Jerome Conn, *Catholic Universities in the United States and Ecclesiastical Authorities*, Editrice Pontifica Universita Gregoriana, Rome, 1991.

institutions of higher education. Later, we will return to these canons.) Here, I will briefly summarize only section one of part one, dealing with the nature and objectives of the university, for this is the main concern of my book. A Catholic university is certainly no less than the best of the secular universities in so much as it is "an academic community which, in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and cultural heritage through research, teaching and various services offered to the local, national and international communities" (12). But it has a special vocation and character, best summarized in four ways:

> 1. a Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such; 2. a continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research; 3. fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church; 4. an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life. (13)

In this respect, the university has its mission from the "heart of the Church" (*ex corde ecclesiae*): the promotion of the good and true in close critical engagement with the "treasury of human knowledge," oriented toward a single vision of the meaning of human life as fulfilled in praise to God. This is not a pragmatic or economic *telos* or rationale, and the special character of the Catholic university is further specified in terms of four requirements permeating all research (understood as "studies," thereby including teaching and learning), not just theological, but in every faculty and discipline. It offers the possibility of slowly ending the fragmentation of knowledge, not by having Mass on campus, or taking part in good works, both of which are central to the document, but in terms of an intellectual enterprise.

The first requirement nicely frames the awesome task: "the search for an integration of knowledge" (16). It is necessary to work toward "a higher synthesis of knowledge" on theological grounds, for in this "alone lies the possibility of satisfying that thirst for truth which is profoundly inscribed on the heart of the human person" (ibid.). There is no attempt actually to spell out any particular model of integration, except to denote that theology and philosophy have a vital role in developing this integration: "Aided by the specific contributions of philosophy and theology, university scholars will be engaged in a constant effort to determine the relative place and meaning of each of the various disciplines within the context of a vision of the human person and the world that is enlightened by the Gospel" (ibid.).

There is no attempt to deny the *proper* autonomy of disciplines and their varying methods in making this claim, but the insistence that their overall place and meaning be defined in terms of a Christian vision.

The second requirement for all research is the promotion of the "dialogue between faith and reason." This section is vital, for it indicates that there can be no improper interference with the proper autonomy of different disciplines, and academic research is in one sense the free pursuit of truth. However, there is a confidence, born out of the theological insight that God is creator, that there is a genuine harmony between reason properly exercised and faith correctly understood. Hence such a dialogue demonstrates that "methodological research within every branch of learning, when carried out in a truly scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, can never conflict with faith. For the things of the earth and the concerns of faith derive from the same God" (17). This is not to deny that historically this tension has been explosive at times, and a particular conception of faith has sometimes blindly resisted the force of graced reason, but then to imagine otherwise is surely naive. However, to imagine that there is no real harmony between faith and reason (understood as graced reason, not pure reason or pure rationality) falls short of the Christian vision here presented.

Third, and dependent on the truth of the first two, is that all research must bear a "concern for the ethical and moral implications both of its methods and of its discoveries" (18). That both methods and discoveries are highlighted, reflects concern with both means and ends in all research, with a single abiding priority, especially relevant to the natural sciences: "It is essential that we be convinced of the priority of the ethical over the technical, of the primacy of the person over things" (ibid.). What is important about this is that all human endeavor is constrained by a moral purpose, which cannot be divorced from the intellectual. Research for its own sake is not possible, unless it conform to this questioning.

The final point returns to the "theological perspective" underpinning all research, one of the major concerns of my own work. In contrast to the one-way traffic of the University of Paris, where theology dictated to the other disciplines, the theological understanding suggested here, although not unpacked in minute detail, envisages mutual conversations and enrichment, with theology as the initiator, as it is able to straddle the disciplinary boundaries of each subject. Theology:

> serves all other disciplines in their search for meaning, not only by helping them to investigate how their discoveries will affect individuals and society but also by bringing a perspective and an orientation not contained within

> their own methodologies. In turn, interaction with these other disciplines and their discoveries enriches theology, offering it a better understanding of the world today, and making theological research more relevant to current needs. Because of its specific importance among the academic disciplines, every Catholic university should have a faculty, or at least a chair, of theology. (19)

The latter is in stark contrast to the demise and even prohibition of theology in many universities. What is significant about this part of the document is its refusal to leave any corner of human knowledge untouched by the gospel, and a refusal to inhibit the university in any inappropriate manner. As we shall see, the practice and the theory are not always one, but then it would be impossible to judge one without the other.

The document then attends to the university community (21–6) specifying the necessity of its Catholic character, without being exclusive, and the vital role of lay Catholics in the current and future development of the Catholic university. It also addresses the Catholic University "in the Church" (27–9), in terms of local, national, and universal loyalty. The institutional fidelity of the University means a "recognition of and adherence to the teaching authority of the Church in matters of faith and morals." It is worth noting the special mutual respect called for in regard to non-Catholic members: "Non-Catholic members are required to respect the Catholic character of the University, while the University in turn respects their religious liberty" (28). The role of the theologian will be addressed in chapter four of this book, while also addressing another 1990 Vatican document, referred to in *CU*, issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian* (subsequently *IEVT*). Here I will only say that theologians are asked to be involved in "creative research" and enjoy the same freedom as other researchers within the bounds of their employing appropriate methods and principles. They must also "respect the authority of the Bishops, and assent to Catholic doctrine according to the degree of authority with which it is taught" (29). Obviously, all Catholics require this respect of authority, but the theologian's role is particularly significant. As to the travails this may involve, see chapter four. The document then attends to the mission and service of the university to Church and society (31–7). To the former it gives the tools to engage with the world, with full intellectual seriousness, thus helping in the Church's mission, as well as the complex task of cultural dialogue (43–7): extending to dialogue with the modern sciences, ecumenical, and inter-religious dialogue. To society, the Church is most concerned with the promotion of "social justice" (34), even if this requires speaking

"uncomfortable truths," and the promotion of the "emerging nations" (34). No one can accuse a Catholic university of not being concerned with the common good, as this section of the document makes clear that the purpose of the university is precisely in promoting the common good, which constantly attends especially to the poor and minority groups (34), as well as advancing human culture. The next section is on pastoral ministry (38–42), followed by cultural dialogue (43–7), and ends with evangelization (48–9), stressing that the university's existence, like the Church, is primarily to proclaim the gospel.

The background of *CU* in the United States can be briefly summarized, with considerable loss of nuance, as the American Catholic Church defending its universities from what was perceived as "outside" interference from Rome, not in a desire to be unaccountable, but in the belief that their accountability was, for the most part, already well established in a number of ways and was delicately related to state and federal funding.[39] The view of the American bishops and the American Catholic universities, at the highest structural levels, was that a good relationship existed between university and Church and that the American situation demanded freedom from canon law requirements, regarding issues related to governance, staffing, curriculum, and academic processes so that universities did not violate the legal requirement for funding that they be not "*pervasively* sectarian."[40] From the viewpoint of the Congregation for Seminaries and Universities, the issue was quite different.[41] The 1917 code of canon law was often interpreted to mean that Catholic universities were under the canonical jurisdiction of the Congregation, and therefore, while answerable to their local and national

[39] Michael Buckley puts it well: "Many in the Catholic academy have been alienated by what they see as an excessive centralization in the church and more particularly in the fields of education—by the impositions of mandates, professions of faith, and oaths of fidelity and by repeated reports of the unwarranted use of the present powers of the Holy See to inhibit academic appointments or promotions or public recognition through honorary degrees. This is admittedly a very serious situation, but to cite it as grounds for denying the central summons of *Ex corde Ecclesia* a sympathetic hearing would be tragic." in ed. John P. Langan, *Catholic Universities in Church and Society: A Dialogue on Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Georgetown University Press, Washington DC, 1993, p. 87.

[40] See Philip R. Moots and Edward McGlynn Gaffney Jr., *Church and Campus: Legal Issues in Religiously Affiliated Higher Education*, Notre Dame University Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1979, pp. 21–5, covers the three landmark decisions on this issue regarding whether Catholic universities are "pervasively sectarian." See also the legal discussion in ed. Langan, *Catholic Universities*, pp. 153–96. Conn, *Catholic Universities*, pp. 185–242 examines episcopal and university responses to Roman curial attempts to resolve outstanding issues.

[41] In 1967 Pope Paul VI gave it the name 'Sacra Congregatio pro Institutione Catholica.' Today's name, the Congregation for Catholic Education (in Seminaries and Institutes of Study), was established in 1988 under Pope John Paul II.

bishops, were finally answerable to, and could be directed by, the Congregation.[42] There was recognition of the complex funding issue by the Congregation, but it was felt that this did not necessarily bear upon the canonical jurisdiction under which the university was obliged. These two differing views were pronounced on from the Congregation when it officially disagreed with the widely influential view of a canon and civil lawyer at the Catholic University of America, John J. McGrath.[43] McGrath had argued that American universities were exempt from canonical regulation as they were not ecclesial juridic persons. They were constituted through the state by federal authority and were therefore "governed by the American law and not by canon law."[44] McGrath was clear that those in religious orders, who worked in the university, were obliged by canon law, but the institution *per se* was not. The Congregation responded in 1974 clearly stating that the "so called 'McGrath thesis' . . . has never been considered valid by our Congregation and has never been accepted."[45] The Congregation's view was that even if a university was not canonically founded (instituted by the Holy See directly, or by its mandate) by virtue of being founded by religious, the body thus founded was an ecclesial juridic person. Two questions were central: first, were Catholic universities, as institutions, bound by canon law? That is, were they or were they not ecclesial juridic persons? And if so, second, to whom were they bound? Resistance to the first was strong, and even when the first was conceded, the subsequent binding was then often understood in terms of the local and national hierarchy and not to the Roman See.

In some respects, as with this entire issue, there was a simple underlying issue at stake: *ecclesiology*. The Americans tended toward subsidiarity (the principle of allowing decisions to be made at the lowest appropriate level), helped here by the non-juridical and pastorally oriented Vatican II—hence their emphasis lay on universities working together with the US bishops, not with the Roman Congregations. On the other hand the Congregation

[42] Canon 1376, s. 1 was contested from the outset regarding its scope. See Alexander F. Sokolich, *Canonical Provisions for Universities and Colleges: A Historical Synopsis and Canonical Commentary*, Catholic University of America Press, Washington DC, 1956, who traces the debate.

[43] McGrath's position was not unopposed from within the US, see for example Adam J. Maida, *Ownership, Control and Sponsorship of Catholic Institutions*, Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1975, who cites other important objectors to McGrath's thesis. Maida also notes the wide acceptance of McGrath's position, pp. 7–9.

[44] Cited in an interview: Carl Balcerak, "Path to Institutions' Autonomy"; *The National Catholic Reporter*, 20 December, 1967, p. 9; cited in Conn, *Catholic Universities*, p. 196.

[45] Ed. William A. Schumacher, *Roman Replies 1982*, Canon Law Society, Washington DC, 1982, pp. 7–8.

was not bypassing subsidiarity, but rather wanting to see it through to its apparent logical conclusion: answerability to Rome, and the provision of channels for this to take place. In this sense James Provost's comments are most germane: "The difficulty with subsidiarity is that it means different things to different people. What is one person's 'appropriate level of responsibility' may be seen by another as inappropriate intervention."[46]

The revision of the code of canon law in 1983 simply raised these questions again, specifying further definition to controversial questions, which in turn were further controverted. However, they represent a significant step in terms of the issues we are examining, and *CU* and *IEVT* advance no further than restating these canons as determinative for understanding the nature of a Catholic university, but they do help clarify what counts as a Catholic university. I shall look at three issues in canons 807–14 dealing with "Catholic Universities and Other Institutes of Higher Education."[47] These canons are found in *The Code of Canon Law*, Book III, dealing with "The Teaching Office of the Church." Canon law reflects the laws germane to the Church as a social body and it is binding upon members of that body. The code of 1917 was revised after the Second Vatican Council, with a draft of the revision in 1980, the revision in 1983, and then subsequent clarifications in *CU* and *IEVT* in 1990. This examination will allow us to identify minimal and maximal models, although these labels are loose and the field is far too complex to yield such a clear spectrum of answers. This will, nevertheless, allow us to address the three issues of this section.

On the first issue regarding ecclesial juridic persons (institutions who act as official representatives of the Church), Conn nicely summarizes a number of significant US responses to these canons: "These commentators essentially argued that the canons did not apply to US universities since most of them were not juridic persons and were therefore not subject to rights and obligations within the Church."[48] This focuses the first of the three issues of this section in a helpful manner. The accountability of a Catholic university is determined by whether it is an ecclesial juridic person. If it is, then canon law clearly specifies the manner in which accountability is to take place. Admittedly, the interpretation of canons 810–14, and especially 810 and 812,

[46] James Provost, "A Canonical Commentary on 'Ex corde Ecclesiae'" in ed. Langan, *Catholic Universities*, pp. 105–36: p. 129.

[47] See *The Code of Canon Law*, New Revised English translation, HarperCollins, London, 1997; and see Conn's commentary in *Catholic Universities*, on "US Catholic Universities and the 1983 Code of Canon Law," pp. 243–90, and James A. Coriden, "Book III, The Teaching Office of the Church" in eds. Coriden, Thomas J. Green, and Donald E. Heintschel, *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, Paulist Press, New York, 1985, pp. 574–5.

[48] Conn, *Catholic Universities*, p. 288.

has been subject to extensive debate (see below). However, in principle, the canons (and *IEVT* and *CU*)[49] stipulate that the local bishops and the episcopal conference are one important locus of ecclesial accountability for Catholic universities. How this relationship is implemented is left unclear in the canons, but made more concrete, although no less problematic in *CU*. *CU* requires that canons 810 and 812 (included in the general norms of *CU*, Part II) "be applied concretely at the local and regional levels by episcopal conferences and other assemblies of Catholic hierarchy . . . taking into account the statutes of each university or institute and, as far as possible and appropriate, civil law" (Pt. II, art. 1, s. 2). Provost's commentary on this explication is important. He rightly argues that "This provision is a clear example of healthy subsidiarity within the church," acknowledging that the differences of situation make "a precise law for application to all Catholic universities . . . impossible."[50] The same section of *CU* continues that of these new ordinances: "After inspection (*inspectio*) by the Holy See [note 44], these local or regional 'ordinances' will be valid for all Catholic universities and other Catholic institutes of higher studies in the region." There is considerable debate as to whether *inspectio* implies *recognita* "reviewed," such that the Holy See would have the power to amend and change episcopal decrees, or simply that *inspectio* means that they be submitted to the Holy See before being enacted. The problem lies in footnote 44 of *CU*, referring to canon 455, section 2, where *recognita* is used, and grants the power of revision. However, some lawyers maintain that in so far as *inspectio* is used in the main body of the text rather than *recognitio* the former interpretation should hold.[51]

Hence, despite all these problems, it would be right to conclude that even were a university an ecclesial juridic person, the manner of its relation to the national episcopacy and its relation to Rome in terms of the governance of Catholic universities is still open to differing legal interpretation and national variations. A maximal position would require *recognitio* authority for Rome. A minimal position must at least hold *inspectio*, but a minimal position may also avoid inspection by deeming the university a non-juridic person. It would also be correct to say that in so much as a university were

[49] *IEVT*, 37; *CU*, pt. II, art. 1, s. 1; art. 5, s. 2.

[50] Provost, in ed. Langan, *Catholic Universities*, p. 109; the second quote is a citation from the official commentary on the 1985 draft of the 1990 document found in *Origins*, 15, 43, 1986, p. 708.

[51] James Provost for example. See in contrast, Conn, *Catholic Universities*. It should be noted that the Holy See employed both *recognita* and *inspectio* in their review of the US bishops' first draft of *CU*'s Application (1966), rejecting it, and then requiring significant revisions to the second draft (1999), then finally approving the third version (2000). I am grateful to Patrick J. Reilly for alerting me to this "resolution" of the debate. The published version of the Application can be found at: www.usccb.org/bishops/mandatumguidelines.htm

not an ecclesial juridic person the precise manner in which they are Catholic universities is left to individual institutions to pursue with the appropriate ecclesial authorities (local and national bishops), without change of statutes or introduction of ordinances.[52] While the debate is unresolved, the minimal position is sometimes viewed as incoherent and illogical by supporters of the maximal. For example, the maximalist Conn proposes that:

> if the argument is correct that the lack of juridic personality frees the institutions from legal obligations and from any relationship with ecclesial authority, it would follow that those same institutions would also be deprived of certain rights, most significant of which is the right to present themselves as Catholic.[53]

The problem for Conn's argument is that the minimal model does not break free from "any relationship" with "ecclesial authority," but only a juridical canonical one. Conn is entirely correct, in my view, as is the dominant minimal view, that some "relationship" to the episcopacy is required for an institution to be deemed "Catholic."

As a statement of fact it must be said that both the minimal and maximal positions currently exist within the Roman Catholic communion without a definitive pronouncement excluding either. *CU*, following seven years after the revision of the Code of Canon Law in 1983, still failed to resolve the question of whether American Catholic universities were ecclesial juridic persons.[54] Finally, in 2000, after a six-year consultation process with representatives of the American university presidents and other bodies, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops published *Ex Corde Ecclesiae: An Application to the United States*. This took effect from 2001, and, despite many concerns, has not (yet) resulted in lawsuits against Catholic institutions or a brain drain away from them. The *Application*, with careful qualifications that possibly allow ample room for maneuver, makes five definite moves, without, however, fully resolving issues discussed above or below on certain

[52] See Frederick R. McManus, "'The Canons on Catholic Higher Education' prepared for the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities," April 1983 (ACCU)—cited frequently by Conn. I have not consulted this document myself. See also Ladislas Orsy, "The Mandate to Teach Theological Disciplines: Glosses on Canon 812 of the New Code," *Theological Studies*, 44, 1983, pp. 476–88; and Coriden's "Book III," for legal interpretations of the 1983 code.

[53] Conn, *Catholic Universities*, p. 288.

[54] None of the respondents calls into question James Provost's canonical commentary on Pt. II, art. 1, s. 1 of *CU*, where he says that "This norm does not determine which institutions of higher learning are included as 'Catholic universities' and 'Catholic institutes of higher studies.' It merely asserts that whatever institutions fall within these categories are bound by these norms." in ed. Langan, *Catholic Universities*, p. 109.

points of canon law. First, university presidents should be Roman Catholic and are obliged to make a profession of faith to the local bishop or his delegate. If the person is not a Catholic, they must make a commitment to the university's Catholic mission and identity. Second, the majority of boards of directors should be Catholic, whenever possible, and be informed of their responsibilities for the Catholic character of the university. Third, the same applies to university professors. Fourth, academic freedom is proper to research and teaching, within the confines of "the truth and the common good." Fifth, and most contentiously, it agrees that all those teaching theological disciplines must receive a mandate from the local bishop, but it is up to the local bishop to pursue this matter. It is too early to see whether the *Application* will help restore the character of Catholic universities.

The second interesting issue of the revised code was the responsibility of the university to oversee hiring and firing in line with Catholic doctrinal and moral teaching. Canon 810, s. 1 and s. 2 state:

> s. 1: In catholic universities it is the duty of the authority which is competent in accordance with the statutes to ensure the appointment of teachers who are suitable both in scientific and pedagogical expertise and in integrity of doctrine and uprightness of life, and if these qualities are lacking, to ensure that they are removed from office, in accordance with the procedure determined in the statutes.
>
> s. 2: The Bishops' Conference and the diocesan Bishops concerned have the duty and the right of seeing to it that, in these universities, the principles of catholic doctrine are faithfully observed.

These two sections raise a crucial question: what is the relationship of the local bishop and the national bishops' conference to the process of assessing the credentials of staff appropriate in a Catholic university? The maximal position tends to see a strong and important role for the episcopacy in these matters, so that the Catholic identity of the institution is safeguarded. Perhaps Francisco Javier Urrutia, writing before *CU*, expresses the strongest maximalist position. Urrutia argues for the bishops' right of vigilance, as operative within the concept of canonical mission (that is, the university as a whole is carrying out the work of the Church, and therefore are representatives of the bishops), such that the *entire* teaching staff of the institution be bound to obedience to the bishop in their academic role.[55] Conn, more cautiously, and with greater textual fidelity, argues that only theologians are

[55] Conn, *Catholic Universities*, p. 263.

required to gain a formal mandate from the local bishop (see below), but Conn is in agreement (in spirit) with Urrutia, viewing all members of a Catholic university as under the jurisdiction of the local bishop. The way the local or national bishops oversee the Catholic nature of the university must be discreet and prudent, but the overseeing role must be exercised—and can be legitimately required.

Obviously, section 2 does make it clear that no Catholic university can be Catholic without some episcopal oversight. Interestingly enough, and not surprisingly, the minimal model would also share this position. It would differ on the legal nature and scope of this "overseeing" role. Hence, James Coriden admits to the importance of the episcopal "influence," but not to any legal involvement in due process sanctioned by the university's statutes. In his commentary on s. 1, he argues that this canon grants full autonomy in hiring and firing to the competent university authority.[56] This reading, contrary to Conn and Urrutia (admittedly, writing pre-*CU*),[57] does not minimize the final sentence of s. 1, regarding removal from office, but rather interprets that process, as with hiring, as part of the "standards of fairness and good practice which are accepted in the academic community of the country or culture."[58] (In US universities there are usually a number of clauses for "termination of cause" such as "acts of moral turpitude" or "unbecoming conduct.") We will return to this issue in a moment, but the point to be made here is that s. 1 can be interpreted, in the light of the revisions of the earlier draft of s. 2 in 1980 (see below), and the fact that s. 2 is made distinct from s. 1, to emphasize that the Catholic university is free from legal intervention from bishops into its due process, unless its ordinances or statutes require or allow for this. The way in which national episcopates implement *CU* will vary and it is too early to make any judgement as yet.

It is important to note that the resistance to the 1980 draft of s. 2, regarding the authority of bishops, came not from those who opposed any episcopal influence whatsoever. This was taken for granted in a Catholic university. The resistance was to the form in which the canon expressed this. It stated that the episcopal conference and appropriate diocesan bishop had the "right and obligation" to "likewise demand that, if faith and morals

[56] Coriden, "Book III," pp. 574–5. But, even if universities were not ecclesial juridical persons, were they to implement this, they would require massive legal resources to change the contractual terms of employment, so as not to be vulnerable to damaging litigation: see Philip Burling and Gregory T. Moffatt, "Notes from the Other Side of the Wall" in ed. Langan, *Catholic Universities*, pp. 158–62.

[57] Conn, *Catholic Universities*, pp. 261–2.

[58] Coriden, "Book III," p. 574.

require it, teachers be removed from their office."[59] This draft was strongly opposed by American Catholic universities and some American bishops for failing to acknowledge the appropriate autonomy of the university and the laity, affirmed in Vatican II, and for being utterly inapplicable in the US context.[60] Significantly, it was dropped and revised with the present wording.

Hence regarding the question: "What is the role of the bishops' conference in overseeing the university?' canon 810 can be interpreted minimally and maximally, with both minimal and maximal positions assenting to the necessary "relationship" of university with episcopacy, while the manner of this relationship in exact legal terms is open to considerable variation. This canon therefore simply raises the same issues as above: if ecclesial intervention takes on a maximal form, this could jeopardize the autonomy of the university in the view of the general public and of state or federal funding bodies. It need not, but it might. If episcopal relations take no form at all, then strangely "Catholic universities" would be totally unrelated to the hierarchic Church. This latter stance would fall below a minimal relation. Between minimal and maximal positions there is considerable variety and it is important to note that the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) never once suggests that there be no relationship with bishops, local or national, and thus never strays below the minimal position (as I have defined it). *CU* does not clarify this matter further, except requiring the "local bishop" to resolve any concerns with the "competent university authorities in accordance with established procedures, and, if necessary, with the help of the Holy See" (art. 5, s. 2). However, since "established procedures" only relate to "ecclesial juridical bodies," a category denied by most American Catholic universities (relating to art. 3, s. 3 of *CU*), the only advance here is putting the initiative for resolving differences with the local bishop.

Even if a maximal reading of canon law were held, there are important unresolved questions regarding the potential clash between civil and canon law as to hiring and firing. This factor is central to the US debate. In so much as staff are chosen or dismissed on religious grounds, the university begins to stray into the territory that might constitute "pervasive sectarianism" and disqualify it from funding, as well as make it vulnerable to costly litigation. The civil law issues are complex and untested. Philip Burling and Geoffrey Moffatt make a strong case for avoiding reliance on canon law regarding hiring and firing, given the high probability of litigation and

[59] Canon 765, 1980 draft, recalling can. 1381, s. 3 of the 1917 code.

[60] Conn, *Catholic Universities*, pp. 259–60 citing the ACCU and the Canon Law Society of America.

possible disqualification from state and federal funding.[61] On the other hand, David Thomas Link and Patrick J. Reilly are confident that these are surmountable problems.[62] What is clear is that both maximal and minimal positions are agreed that hiring and firing are legitimately related to ecclesial identity, but they differ concerning the manner of implementing this in relation to "outside" intervention. Episcopal "influence" is uncontested.[63]

Maximalists and minimalists on the relationship of the episcopal influence on understanding and utilizing right belief and practice in the hiring and firing of staff both agree that maintaining a Catholic character in staff is a legitimate enterprise, requisite for the intellectual character of the institution, not just for pastoral duties. Some minimalists would construe "influence" extremely vaguely and argue implementation is both impracticable and undesirable. Such is the position of David J. O'Brien, but in my construal of the matter it would be difficult to see what constitutes a Catholic university for such a minimalist.[64] Some ultra-maximalists, like Francisco Urrutia, seem to see the university as almost identical to the Church, and entirely in terms of "canonical mission," such that it be granted no appropriate autonomous character and thus be understood as an ecclesial university, fully subject to the episcopate. Intellectually, Urrutia's position is at least cogent in refusing autonomy to the secular order, and seeing the entire intellectual processes of the university as bearing upon its Catholic character. The main problem with such a maximalist position is its nonconformity to episcopal teaching in *CU*!

The third issue about the revised code concerns canon 812, one of the shortest but most contentious, and reiterated and cited in *CU* and in *IEVT* in 1990: "Those who teach theological subjects in any institute of higher studies must have a mandate [mandatum] from the competent ecclesiastical authority." This canon was entirely new and not found in the earlier 1917 code of canon law. During the drafting of the 1983 code, it aroused serious protest on three grounds: well-qualified faculty and students would not be

[61] In ed. Langan, *Catholic Universities*, pp. 153–75.

[62] Link, "Comments," in ed. Langan, *Catholic Universities*, pp. 187–92. See also Patrick J. Reilly, "Funding for Faith-Based Higher Education," *Capital Research Center: Foundation Watch*, March 2002, pp. 1–7.

[63] I have left untouched a host of other questions related to this canon, such as: who is to determine, and in what manner, the doctrinal orthodoxy and uprightness of life of academic staff; how are these to be defined in legal contracts if they are to be binding? Leaving these untouched does not indicate their unimportance, but I am presently attending to specific questions that do not require us to address such questions here.

[64] O'Brien in ed. Langan, *Catholic Universities*, pp. 20–8, and Michael J. Buckley, *The Catholic University as Promise and Project: Reflections in a Jesuit Idiom*, Georgetown University, Washington DC, 1998, ch. 3.

attracted to Catholic institutions on the grounds that this canon would "immediately render suspect the legitimate freedom of professors";[65] the reputation among other American institutions would be diminished; and funding (around $500 million per annum) would be jeopardized. The Canon Law Society of America also commented quite sharply that "Rather than safeguard the orthodoxy of Catholic teaching . . . this legislation would, in fact, destroy the ability of the American Catholic collegiate enterprise to survive."[66] The protests were submitted but did not lead to any revision of canon 812.

In one sense, there was no real question that those teaching Catholic theology were accountable for what they taught, and had a responsibility to the Church and the faithful. There was concern about the impact of this requirement in terms of its apparent conflict with academic freedom. Despite maximalist criticisms of sections of the American Church, this point is often overlooked. The real dispute was whether this responsibility was part of the institutions' canonically legal responsibility. When the revisions were published and included canon 812, Ladislas Orsy formulated a response that was representative of the response of most American institutions.[67] Given that they had interpreted canons 807–14 as not applying to American universities as they were not ecclesial juridic persons, Orsy interpreted the canon as a requirement upon an individual theologian to gain from his or her own local bishop, the "mandate." This reading overcame the serious reservations aired in the drafting period. Every term of Orsy's conclusion was open to contention. Who was responsible for seeking the mandate? Who could grant it? And what indeed was a "mandate"? In so much as a "mandate" was not a "canonical mission," the term dropped from the 1980 draft of the 1983 revisions, there was considerable debate about the very meaning of "mandate."[68] Why did this situation arise?

"Mandate" was a term used in Vatican II's *Decree on the Apostolate of the*

[65] Conn, *Catholic Universities*, p. 267. Note the use of "suspect." There is concern about its public relations effects, not *per se* a question against the importance of accountability.

[66] Michael C. Cannily, OSFS, "De Munere Docendi: Some Observations" in *Proceedings of the Forty-fourth Annual Convention, Hartford, Connecticut, October 18–21, 1982*, Canon Law Society of America, Washington DC, 1983, p. 231.

[67] Ladislas Orsy, "The Mandate to Teach"; see also the more detailed interpretation by Robert P. Deeley, *The Mandate for Those Who Teach Theology in Institutes of Higher Studies: An Interpretation of the Meaning of Canon 812 of the Code of Canon Law*, Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, 1986.

[68] See Orsy, "The Mandate"; Deeley, *The Mandate*; John J. Strynkowski, "Theological Pluralism and Canonical Mandate," *The Jurist*, 43, 1983, pp. 524–33; Sharon A. Euart, "Comment" in ed. Langan, *Catholic Universities*, pp. 137–46; and the essays in ed. Leo J. Donovan SJ, *Cooperation between Theologians and the Ecclesiastical Magisterium*, Canon Law Society of America, Washington DC, 1982.

Laity, para. 24, to describe the hierarchy's closer association with legitimate forms of lay activity, which have their own autonomy, but as being related to the mission of the Church. "Canonical mission" in the same paragraph denotes functions "which are more closely connected with pastoral duties" normally undertaken by ordained priests or religious, such as the teaching of doctrine, certain liturgical functions, and the care of souls. Here the laity are proper representatives of the hierarchy and therefore subject to supervision. Nevertheless, subsequent interpretations of "mandate" vary enormously. Conn, for example, acknowledges that it should *not* be conflated with canonical mission:

> The teacher of theology who has such a mandate teaches in his own name and not in the name of the bishop, for the roles of the two are distinct. Still, the theologian does his teaching, writing, and research on behalf of the Church, that is, for the Church's benefit and within its communion. The bishop's mandate is an attestation that the theologian is in ecclesial communion. That a theologian needs no canonical mission suggests that he holds no ecclesiastical office.[69]

It is interesting that he distinguishes his position from that of his teacher, Urrutia, who sees the terms as interchangeable. In this respect the CDF's use of the terms "canonical mission" and "mandate" in its interpretation of canon 812 in *IEVT*, para. 37, does not clarify the matter, for canonical mission would clearly apply to ecclesiastical universities and could thus be discounted as an interpretation of "mandate."

John Strynkowski interprets it as an "expression of communion" between theologians and hierarchy in so much as a Catholic theologian is required clearly to present the teaching of the Church, and identify his or her own private opinions and views that depart from those teachings.[70] Ladislas Orsy reads it as a specific commission to teach, clearly "less ponderous than a canonical mission, which suggests that an ecclesiastical office is being conferred, but more significant than a simple permission since mandate involves the notion of the deputy teaching in a name other than his own alone."[71] Conn tries to avoid this implication, and a minimalist like Orsy, in some situations, adopts a more maximalist view of mandate. John Alessandro gives a similar reading, but defines the specific role of the theologian in terms of the hierarchy's "deputation" or "agency."[72] McManus denies to it any specific

[69] Conn, *Catholic Universities*, 278.
[70] Strynkowski, "Theological Pluralism."
[71] See note 18 in Orsy, "The Mandate," p. 480.
[72] See note 17 in ibid., p. 480.

legal, juridical, or ecclesiastical force, based on the fact that "canonical mission" was dropped from the text and "mandate" used instead. In his view "mandate" allows a "degree of recognition and perhaps attestation of one's role within the church community."[73] This amounts to a purely administrative gesture. Coriden seems also to give this minimal (and legitimate) reading when he says the mandate is "not a formal association with the Church's mission or ministry of teaching."[74]

It is not possible to adjudicate between these views, although it seems clear, at least in a negative definition, that a mandate cannot be seen to entail the work normally undertaken by a bishop. Nevertheless, it is more than simply carrying out duties appropriate to the laity's status which relate to the purely "secular" realm. Furthermore, negatively, it does not seem to be interchangeable with "canonical mission"; otherwise this would make nonsense of the latter term being dropped and replaced by "mandate." For the purpose of my argument, the important point is that there is agreement between the minimalists and maximalists on one very important issue.[75] It is nicely summarized by Sharon Euart, who writes as a member of the National Conference of American Catholic Bishops, after a very helpful survey of the variety of definitions of mandate: "What is common to the various interpretations is that some ecclesiastical authorization is required for those who teach theological disciplines in Catholic colleges and universities. The implications of that authorization continue to be explored."[76]

[73] As cited by Conn, *Universities*, p. 276, from McManus, "The Canons," p. 14.

[74] Coriden, "Book III," p. 576.

[75] It would be accurate to say that most American academic theologians have resisted the "imposition" of the mandate on pragmatic grounds. O'Brien and Gallin, for example, contest the need for juridical reform, while nevertheless calling for serious reforms in curriculum and personal orientation among faculty and administrators. See Alice Gallin, *Negotiating Identity*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 2000, pp. 162–74; David J. O'Brien, *From the Heart of the American Church*, Orbis, New York, 1994, 69–95; and also Peter Steinfels, *A People Adrift*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2003, pp. 131–61, who is also very critical of juridical reform. All three are committed to developing the project of a Catholic University. Theirs is a "bottom-up" approach, based on sensitivity to the importance of inner and organic rather than imposed changes from outside, to the different populations and social contexts of each institutions rather than a centralized and universalized model serving all contexts. However, their ecclesiologies oddly minimize the institutional and juridical aspects of being an ecclesial community, citing the American context rather than theological arguments for this lacuna.

[76] Euart, "Comment," p. 141. See the US Conference of Bishops "Guidelines Concerning the Academic *Mandatum* in Catholic Universities (Canon 812)," 2001, currently (2004) in force: www.usccb.org/bishops/mandatumguidelines.htm. The two issues particularly pertinent at the time of writing (2004) are: should universities and/or bishops make public the names of those who have received the *mandatum*; and should a Catholic university require the *mandatum* for theology professors as a condition of hiring and tenure? In current practice, both are not the case. William L. Portier makes the pertinent point that the heated and

In this bewildering pluralist context the achievement of canon 812, for both maximalist and minimalist, is to stress the ecclesial context of theology—such as I have been arguing for in this book, while leaving it an open and complex question as to the institutional arrangements of this practice.[77] This inspection of canon 812 has also addressed the question: to whom are Catholic theologians responsible? The answer by both minimal and maximal positions is: Catholic theologians are accountable to academic colleagues properly trained in the discipline, and to the magisterium of the bishops.[78] This answer clearly leaves open the exact and appropriate channels of this relationship. However, it does allow us tentatively to resolve the questions of this section.

We might draw an initial conclusion: the models of ecclesial accountability for a Catholic university can be understood both minimally and maximally. The minimal understanding certainly allows for a Catholic university (in a non-juridic canonical sense) that qualifies for state or federal grants and funding as is the current situation in the US, and regards accountability to variously understood forms of ecclesial authority as part of its purpose. This might be in terms of its relationship either to its local bishop, or the episcopal conference, or the religious congregation that relates to its foundation, and the practical manner in which these relationships are institutionally embedded might vary enormously. While this approach is not centrally controlled, or uniform, it relies on an ecclesiology that emphasizes the local and national Church's responsibility for its institutions. Its ecclesiology emphasizes subsidiarity. Its alleged benefits are twofold: Catholic universities can compete with the best, and can retain their character while retaining state and federal funding. Without the latter, they could not achieve their purpose. In contrast, the maximal position holds that canonical requirements upon an institution would not compromise funding as the US Constitution also

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protracted debate on the mandatum has sadly distracted Catholic institutions from focussing on the wider and deeper question: the transformation of the curriculum. His use of *Fides et Ratio* and *Ex Corde Ecclesia* to show how both the mandatum and curriculum changes are deeply compatible with academic freedom is most instructive. See William L. Portier, "What Does it Mean to be *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*? Toward an Alternative Academic Culture," *Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal*, 42, 3, 1997, pp. 77–84; and "Reason's 'Rightful Autonomy' in *Fides et Ratio* and the Continuous Renewal of Catholic Higher Education in the United States," *Communio*, 26, 1999, 541–56.

[77] In researching this chapter, I wrote to my own bishop seeking a mandate, as I interpreted canon 812 along with Conn and Deeley to oblige an individual theologian working in a non-Catholic institution to seek the mandate if they were teaching Catholic theology. He did not share my interpretation and I was released from this obligation.

[78] In this sense, *IEVT*, para. 30 makes out a very legitimate case for the limits of absolute freedom self-imposed by a Catholic theologian.

safeguards the rights, privately and institutionally, to practice one's religion.[79] The issue of "pervasively sectarian" has never been properly defined in US legal history, but once that fuzzy line has been crossed, funding would be at stake. Many argue that keeping the line fuzzy is of enormous benefit for Catholic universities. However, maximalists are confident that they would not be trespassing over the line. In this sense, for them, the future of US Catholic universities is not at stake, but simply their refusal to be juridically accountable to the ecclesia, understood in terms of the appropriate Roman Congregation and the magisterium, notwithstanding the role of the local and national US Church. I am not concerned to adjudicate on this complex matter. In terms of my own argument, there is no guarantee that a minimal model would withstand the secularizing process I have been lamenting, and indeed, may accelerate it. But, of course, it may not.[80] The maximal model, as portrayed above, is concerned to safeguard the character of Catholic universities through canon law. In one sense, without resolving the thorny question of ecclesial juridic persons, this concern is entirely legitimate. However, neither the minimal nor the maximal position succeeds if it is not driven by a vision of what constitutes a Catholic university, and in this respect, there is no better guide than *CU*.

We have also seen that the theologian requires a special mandate, and that this mandate is not really objectionable, but intrinsic to the vocation of the theologian. The ACCU's and the Canon Law Society of America's objections to canon 812 were never against either the requirement of the theologian's ecclesial accountability, or that it strictly contravened academic freedom. The objections were concerned with the adverse legal-financial and recruitment-publicity effects of such a public requirement. Hence, despite the chasms between minimalists and maximalists, there is some theological agreement that is germane to my argument. In this respect, my limited conclusion is that extra-ecclesial funding and proper ecclesial accountability (both minimal and maximal) are not incompatible in our test case scenario. The requirement for theologians to be especially accountable is also not incompatible with academic freedom, proper research methods, and genuine research. Thus, their Catholic character need not hinder the best research universities. Indeed, the opposite could be true. My argu-

[79] See especially David Thomas Link's legal comments in ed. Langan, *Catholic Universities*, pp. 187–92; and the nuanced commentary from civil and ecclesial lawyers Burling and Moffatt, ibid., pp. 153–75, and especially their constructive suggestions, pp. 174–5.

[80] Buckley, *Catholic University*, argues a minimal position in full accord with *CU*, relentlessly criticizing the secularizing process. See also his optimistic reading of *CU* in ed. Langan, *Catholic Universities*, pp. 74–89.

ment only required me to establish this possibility—and I believe I have established it using my test case scenario. It is clear that such a conclusion could not be applied to other ecclesial traditions until tradition-specific investigations were concluded. Further, it is clear that other countries with different funding assumptions will reach different outcomes. In this section I have sought to show why public non-ecclesial funding is compatible with a maximal and a minimal understanding of a Catholic university.

This chapter will by no means have convinced readers who are in basic opposition to my proposals. However, what I have sought to do is provide both a practical and theoretical argument for the desirability of a Christian (Catholic) university, which by its very nature is open to engagement with culture (in the broadest sense), and that such an institution is deserving of public monies in societies that are officially either unaligned to any religion (US) or, in some constitutional manner, aligned to Christianity (England). This is the case in the latter even though the majority of people in England are not church attenders.

In the next chapter I continue my argument by attending to the role of prayer. The Babylonian exiles often turned to prayer in their despair. The modern exiled Christians should join their ancient ancestors.

Chapter Four

Why Theologians Must Pray for Release from Exile

I A New Context for University Theology: Ecclesial Prayer

If theology needs to break free from its Babylonian captivity within the confines of the secular university, then theologians need to learn to pray, as part of their vocation as theologians. Such advice may sound impotent in the light of the structural power of modernity, and the type of postliberal university being advocated here is going to require a lot more than prayer. However, I shall be arguing that the type of tradition-specific theology that I am advocating requires prayer as its epistemological presupposition, precisely because theology is primarily concerned with a communal love affair with the living God. Its communal location involves taking seriously, at an epistemological level, much that is involved in prayer: the community of saints, the concept of liturgical time, and the importance of cultivating the virtues. Without prayerfulness in students and teachers of theology, the university cannot produce theologians. I have chosen this specific focus for a number of reasons that should become evident as the argument unfolds. However, by specifying prayer as a "qualification" for being a theologian, I am advancing a vision of theology that might break free from the homogeneous secularization of the disciplines that currently predominates, and offer to students within the university an intellectually rigorous alternative. If I am told that I should teach in a Roman Catholic seminary—a frequent response to my argument—I suggest that one vocation of the Roman Catholic Church requires the rigorous and careful educating of the lay faithful—not just a priestly elite.

> You must be made new in mind and spirit, and put on the new nature. (Eph. 4: 23–4)

> Have mercy on me, O God, in your kindness, In your compassion blot out my offence.
>
> O wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin . . .
>
> Indeed you love truth in the heart; then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom . . .
>
> A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, nor deprive me of your holy spirit. (Psalm 51: 1–2, 6, 10–11)

Quoting biblical texts like this might irritate historical-critical biblical scholars, for I have snatched verses out of historical context and stitched them together in an unchronological fashion. But this is not all. I might also offend those concerned with Jewish-Christian issues, in suggesting an imperialist anti-Jewish hermeneutic, whereby the "New" Testament, placed first, interprets the "Old." And worst of all, some readers may now wonder if this is a pious tract, indistinguishable from a sermon. However, other readers will recognize, if they cultivate certain sectarian habits, that they have prayed these scriptures, perhaps today if they are reading this text on a Friday, from their *Divine Office*. The rest of this chapter works with the specificity of the prayers for Friday, week four, when I began on this chapter. It seems most appropriate to argue for the importance of prayer in the professional training of the theologian by using a communal set of prayers prayed by the universal Church. This is not to privilege the saying of the *Office*, but one has to start somewhere.

The *Divine Office* is a series of prayers, probably dating back to the fourth century, and continuously modified. It is dependent on the psalms, also called the *Liturgy of the Hours*, originating within a monastic setting—sanctifying the different times of the day through prayer and meditation. The Office was sung in Latin until 1963, when Vatican II's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* allowed for the vernacular, and for the first time encouraged lay participation in this prayer cycle. The *Office* was fully revised in Latin by 1971, and the English authorized version that I am using was completed in 1974. A new revision is being prepared. Besides the Proper of the Seasons (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter) and Special Solemnities (such as the feasts of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Body and Blood of Christ, the Trinity), there is a four-week cycle of prayer, and optional and non-optional feast days celebrating saints, sites, and ceremonies.[1]

[1] On the *Divine Office* in the modern Church, see Vatican II's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, ch. IV, paras. 83–101, and Commentary by Josef Andreas Jungmann, in ed. H. Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 1, Burns and Oates, London, 1967, esp. pp. 57–69.

However, those readers disposed toward the martyrs may have used a different set of prayers in their optional celebration of Saint Januarius whose feast day occurs on 19 September (Friday at the time of writing). Perhaps I should have celebrated him, for he was persecuted for not giving due honor to worldly authorities and was beheaded after the wild beasts "could not be provoked" to devour him.[2] Alternatively, I could have celebrated the dour and troubled Saint Emily de Rodat, whose feast day also occurs "today." She was the founder of the Congregation of the Holy Family of Villefranche. Her celebration would have required an alternative Common. The use of either would have raised different questions in their emphases upon the different charisms of our two saints. However, in what follows I shall stick to week four.

To return to my argument: the reader may ask, why cite prayers from the Friday morning *Divine Office* in an "academic" discussion on the nature of theology? Because, as I have been arguing, theology, if it is to be done with full intellectual rigor, cannot be done outside the context of a love affair with God and God's community, the Church. And one cultivated habit of the greatest lovers (and the best theologians) within the Church, is that of prayer. I shall be arguing that good, intellectually rigorous, theology within the university can only be done within the *context of a praying community*, not just nourished by prayer as if an optional and private extra, but also *guided* and *judged* by prayer. These are three distinct epistemological functions.

As a lay Roman Catholic in a secular university, one of these preconditions (a confessional praying communal starting point) is structurally problematic. This involves me in some odd anomalies, such that I could only do my job well if I suggested, which I cannot, that my students take prayer as seriously as their reading lists (although some might fare better with prayer than their reading lists). This is not to argue for either a pietist or a fideist theology department where intellectual rigor and accountability are surrendered, so that bad arguments or poorly researched materials can be acceptable because those who have produced them pray. Nor is it an argument for some magical status for prayer, whereby the painful, laborious slog of research evaporates, and the complex intellectual questions dealt with are miraculously answered. The opening line of this morning's Psalm: "Have mercy on me, O God, in your kindness," indicates that prayer, if anything, should remind us of our creatureliness and our propensity to forget this. Rowan Williams translates this penitence in terms of a warning against theological idolatry when he writes that a prayerful theology "declines the

[2] Rev. Alban Butler, *The Lives of the Fathers: Martyrs and Other Principal Saints*, edited for daily use by Rev. Bernard Kelly, Virtue & Company Ltd, London, vol. 3, 1936, p. 1123.

attempt to take God's point of view (i.e. a 'total perspective')."[3] Likewise, I shall be arguing that prayer, as part of a disciplined love affair with God, has profound epistemological and methodological consequences for the practice of theology.

In 1990 the Vatican Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), in an interesting and contentious document, addressed the role of the theologian. The title of the document is telling, for it indicates the proper location of theology: *Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian*,[4] subsequently *IEVT*. What is especially startling in this document, at least for those like myself who inhabit secular university theology departments, is the claim that other than the absolutely vital and necessary academic skills (philology, geography, history, philosophy, and so on), prayer and a commitment to virtue and holiness are *equally* vital and necessary for the academic to be a theologian. Imagine the University of Bristol or Cambridge or Harvard putting into its theology prospectus: "candidates are required to have three very good A levels (or whatever equivalent academic qualifications), and need to be committed to prayer, virtue, and holiness. Frequenting the sacraments is encouraged, sinners are especially welcome—as is a sense of humor."[5]

Let me return to the *IEVT* document and cite a key paragraph:

> Since the object of theology is the Truth which is the living God and His plan for salvation revealed in Jesus Christ, the theologian is called to deepen his own life of faith and continuously unite his scientific research with prayer, [as explained in footnote]. In this way, he will become more open to the "supernatural sense of faith" upon which he depends, and it will appear to him as a sure rule for guiding his reflections and helping him assess the correctness of his conclusions.[6]

There are three very specific claims being made here about prayer, all of which run counter to the institutional presuppositions of secular theology

[3] Rowan Williams, "Theological Integrity," *New Blackfriars*, 72, 847, 1991, pp. 140–51: p. 143.

[4] Also pertinent as a backcloth to this discussion are the Apostolic Constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (1990) and the joint document from the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Pontifical Councils for the Laity and for Culture: *The Presence of the Church in the University and in University Culture* (1984)—in *Briefing*, July 21, 1994, pp. 2–9.

[5] I add the latter qualification of humor in memory of the dead body in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, trans. William Weaver, Harcourt Brace, San Diego, 1994, and the danger of idolatry ever present in the proposals I am defending. See Karl Josef Kuschel, *Laughter*, SCM, London, 1994 [1993], pp. 22–32 on the dead body in the novel.

[6] *IEVT*, para 8; after the word prayer, there is a reference to John Paul II, "Discorse in occasione della consegna del premio internazionale Paulo VI a Hans Urs von Balthasar," June 23, 1984: Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, VII, 1 (1984), 1911–17. Balthasar is the only modern theologian mentioned in this document and is a significant role model of the ecclesial theologian, not least in terms of method and style.

departments: first, that it facilitates cohabitation with the "object" of study—the triune God, second, that it guides this study, and third, that it helps theologians assess the truthfulness of their study. In this chapter I briefly explore the first two claims, which are not as fully developed in the document.

IEVT attends to the third claim in considerable detail (paragraphs 13–42), and some very important questions regarding "accountability" and "authority" are raised in that section (some of which were discussed in the previous chapter). As we have seen, the precise structural relations between a Christian department of theology and its ecclesial community are open to many possibilities and historically have taken no one single form. Even within one ecclesial group, such as Roman Catholicism, there can be very different university structures within which authority is exercised and accountability practiced. Compare, for example, the Catholic University of America, Boston College in Massachusetts, the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Nijmegen University in the Netherlands, and the University of Leuven in Belgium. These institutions exemplify very differing forms of practice and structural organization and forms of accountability. Were a department to be ecumenical, as would be highly desirable in certain contexts, the question of accountability and authority would be further complicated, but not in principle irresolvable. These questions cannot be addressed here but they are clearly important. In what follows I stay with the issue of prayer, for the notion of prayerful theology is structurally absent from the academy and is required in the revival of theology. Without prayer, worshipping the triune God will remain an increasingly marginalized concern and not the heart of theological endeavor. If indeed a pure heart and steadfast spirit are required for the wisdom that is theology (Ps. 51), am I asking for Jerusalem in Bristol? Is a postliberal university system a dream?

II Cohabiting with One's Beloved

> He showed me the holy city of Jerusalem and it had all the radiant glory of God. (Rev. 21: 10–11)

> How blessed are those who love you! They will rejoice in your peace. Blessed are those who grieved over all your afflictions, for they will rejoice for you upon seeing all your glory, and they will be made glad for ever. (Tob. 13: 14) (Part of the "Old Testament Canticle," following the "Morning" Psalm from Friday, week four, *Divine Office*.)

Let me turn to the first claim, that cohabitation with God through prayer is a prerequisite for doing theology. Besides the vital technical skills required by the student of theology (languages, drama, art history, music, literary criticism, abstract thought and reasoning, and so on), there is a need to know the "object" of study via cohabitation. Here theology has similarities and differences with other disciplines. Regarding the most profound difference, the "object" of study is unique. The formal "object" of all other disciplines is part of the created order. The formal "object" of theology is the living God, creator of all things, dissimilar to and different from the entire created order, but who nevertheless reveals Himself in flesh and blood, in time and place, and in narrative particularity: that is, within the created order of signs. Hence, in a very real sense, faith is a necessary prerequisite for theology, because without faith as a gift, God cannot be known. However, despite these differences, theology is not without analogy to other disciplines in two very important respects. I employ these analogies to indicate that all forms of enquiry require different skills and disciplines and that theology should not conform itself to, nor be defined by, norms essentially alien to its nature. Conversely, nor is theology able to adjudicate between methods and skills related to other disciplines which have their own limited degree of autonomy. However, theology is able to relate the other disciplines to one another in its analysis of their functions, limitations, and co-operative possibilities toward helping co-create God's kingdom.

Let me explore the two analogical similarities between theology's requirement of prayer and other disciplines requiring appropriate practices to make two related points regarding prayer. First, theology, like other disciplines, requires the student to inhabit a tradition of enquiry which is a *living tradition* characterized by various *dogmas* and *practices* that facilitate a structured and disciplined co-habitation with the object of study, appropriate to that object.[7] This has been argued for in a variety of disciplines. For example, both Michael Polanyi and Thomas Kuhn, in different ways, have shown that the successful scientist is one who is trained and apprenticed so that he or she eventually inhabits a paradigm or outlook which is constructed and sustained by numerous presuppositions, both in regard to intellectual sets of beliefs (analogically: dogmas), and appropriate and

[7] See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia. 1. Aquinas, following Aristotle, realizes that method and skills can only be formulated in the light of the proper object of study. All references to the *Summa* are from the Blackfriars translations published by Blackfriars/Eyre and Spottiswoode, London/McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York. Victor White OP and Thomas Gilby OP are co-responsible for the appendices to the first volume which have been invaluable, especially appendix 10: "Dialectic of Love in the *Summa*" (pp. 124–33), and appendix 6: "Theology as Science" (pp. 67–88).

corresponding experimental and empirical practices (analogically: liturgy and ethics). The scientist always operates from within a world-view with more or less established sets of dogmas and practices that are assumed, so that the living tradition might develop and explore new questions. If the established dogmas and practices come under severe strain and such tensions cannot be resolved, there may be a "revolution" followed by a paradigm shift.[8] That is, the scientist might then inhabit another tradition, and analogically the Roman Catholic might become an atheist, or Buddhist. They may even radically shift within the Roman tradition, but this may be at the limits of the analogy. The point is that there are no non-traditioned scientists, just as there are no non-traditioned theologians. Hans-Georg Gadamer, likewise, has developed an analogous argument in the liberal arts to suggest that every reader always interprets texts within a particular framework of aesthetic, moral, and philosophical presuppositions. The good reader, in Gadamer's view, is one who both questions the text's world and allows that textual world to question his or her own presuppositions. In this sense every reader, as every scientist, inhabits a tradition of enquiry with specific dogmas and practices as epistemological requirements for intellectual engagement.[9]

We have already seen similar arguments in the previous chapter, advanced by MacIntyre (in moral enquiry) and McGrane (in anthropology). There is no naïve *epochē* being proposed within these different approaches, but instead, the recognition that living traditions of enquiry form the epistemological preconditions of all types of enquiry. And a "living tradition" is just that: dynamic, and to that extent unpredictable, while also being part of a structured set of beliefs and practices. But the notion of "living tradition" will mean very different things to different research communities. Hence, if the formal subject matter of theology is God, then appropriate cohabitation for the disciplined enquiry into this subject matter will surely involve prayer, especially since, as Rowan Williams puts it, "if theology is the untangling of the real grammar of religious practice, its subject matter is, humanly and specifically, people who pray."[10]

To be specific, prayer, according to the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in communion with him."[11] This is stated despite the immense variety of

[8] See Michael Polanyi, *Knowing and Being*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1969 and *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, Harper & Row, New York, 1962; and Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago University Press, 1970.

[9] See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1975 (trans. of 2nd German edn.).

[10] Williams, "Integrity," p. 149.

[11] Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1994, para. 2565.

prayers and traditions that constitute Christian history. Communing in God's presence is precisely what constitutes the living tradition, an on-going love affair with the loved one of Eve, Sarah, Mary, Adam, Abraham, Joseph, Hildegard, Teresa of Avila, Mother Teresa, Aquinas, and Padre Pio, along with many ordinary everyday Christian men and women. It is the developing dogmas and practices of this particular community, called "Christians," that form the context of theology.[12] But we can only explore and understand these dogmas in the practices of those who lived them, for they were forming an embodied community, the "body of Christ." The point I am making is that prayer facilitates a complex cohabitation and participation with a "living tradition" of saints, sinners, fasts and feast days, dogmas and doctrines, the repressed and the explicit emblems of what communing with God might mean. Praying the *Office* illustrates the praying theologian's necessary (critical) dependence on this complex living tradition and its detailed descriptive character. A Methodist and a Baptist and a Roman Catholic pray differently and inhabit different, even though significantly overlapping, worlds. In joining this prayer, the theologian participates in and contributes to this on-going, unfinished tradition. The theologian becomes part of a tradition-specific community by participating in its central practice.

The polymorphous complexity of tradition that prayer allows us to cohabit also alerts us to the sometimes impoverished training received by graduating theologians. University theology, which has become so detached from the life of prayer, tends to structure the study of theology as if it were concerned solely with three types of texts: biblical, philosophical, and theological. Many university theology courses pay little attention to poetry, rhetoric, art and music, festivals and pilgrimages, liturgy, or lives of the saints. All these cognate disciplines, areas of study, and traditions, are central to the Church's living tradition that forms the theologian and his or her sensitivity, judgement, and skills. Praying the *Office* is a dramatic experience of engagement with pluriform modes and genres that constitute the lives of "people who pray," as Williams puts it.

One important feature of the liturgical calendar is that it actually challenges the time–space constructs imposed by different regimes of power. Cohabiting the living tradition means living in a different world from those who do not live within this tradition, where the liturgical calendar determines the diachronic and synchronic context of our existence. To put this point theologically, one might say that the liturgy continues the action of the incarnation, and the incarnation is the alpha and omega of all history. If

[12] See John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Longman, London, 1890, for a rich theological exploration of the complexity and historicism of tradition.

theology is nothing but a reflection upon this event of the Word made flesh, then theology cannot actually take place outside a liturgical context in so much as it is subject to God in Christ, the action made present at the heart of the liturgy, the eucharist, the transubstantiation of the human into the divine.[13] Catherine Pickstock has made this point very well in her book *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*.[14] Her work helps relate the Office, as liturgical prayer, to the Mass's transformation of creation, instigating a new time and space through this eucharistic event. Pickstock's argument is also important as she too is concerned with the way in which modernity (and its mirror, postmodernity) has misformed liturgy, and because of this, theology. Pickstock's argument, to summarize, is that liturgical action is the consummation of Plato's understanding of orality. Plato in the *Phaedrus*, contrary to Derrida's reading of him, actually did not institute "presence" as the correlate of the sign—and the beginning of western metaphysics. Rather, "Plato favours orality because of its temporality, open-endedness, and link with physical embodiment."[15] Ironically, it is Derrida's own focus on writing rather than orality (hence the title of the book, *After Writing*) that unwittingly pushes Derrida into the mirror opposite of modernity's metaphysic of presence, that of absence, the *nihil*. The endless deferral of language in postmodernity is the reverse side of modernity's fetish that the sign delivers the real. Hence postmodernity's focus on ambiguity and absence. Pickstock's positive contribution comes in the second part of her book where she argues that the liturgy challenges both modernity's and postmodernity's understanding of writing and orality, space and time, the real as given and the real as gift, the empty subject and the liturgically constructed subject, death and life, presence and absence, as well as consummating Plato's understanding of orality. She argues that in the eucharist, the sign (the bread and wine) and the signified (Jesus Christ) are both coincidental and contrary, identificatory, and dissimilating, thereby making Christ present in the breaking of bread, transforming not only the nature of the eucharistic elements or signs, but of all creation. An extended quote of Pickstock nicely summarizes this part of her argument regarding the eucharist within the liturgy:

> The circumstance of the greatest dereliction of meaning [speaking of bread as "This is my body"] is here read as the promise of the greatest plenitude of

[13] This type of argument is also to be found in the work of Jean-Luc Marion, Jean-Yves Lacoste, Gerard Loughlin, and John Milbank.

[14] *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1998.

[15] Pickstock, *After Writing*, p. xiii, and see also pp. 3–118, for the textuality of this argument.

> meaning. However, if we do trust this sign, it cannot be taken simply as a discrete miraculous exception, if we are true to a high medieval and Thomistic construal of the Eucharist. First of all, we have seen how Aquinas sees bread and wine as the most common elements of human culture. Hence, if these become the signs of promise, they pull all of human culture along with them. Second, "This is my body" cannot be regarded as a phrase in isolation any more than any other linguistic phrase. Here, the Saussurean point holds true, that every phrase of language in some sense depends for its meaningfullness upon the entire set of contrasts which forms the whole repertoire of language, such that, for example, "this" only makes sense in contrast to "that," "my" in contrast to "your" and "his," "is" in contrast to "is not" and "was" and the other verbs, and so forth *ad infinitum*.
>
> For this reason, if this phrase is guaranteed an ultimate meaningfulness, it draws all other phrases along with it.
>
> In the third place, these words and events only occur in the Church. And we only accept real presence and transubstantiation because the giving of Body and Blood in the Eucharist gives also the Body of the Church.[16]

Pickstock's liturgical point then, is that the time–space regime instituted by the liturgy, and more specifically by the Roman rite, constitutes a different world through which the believer is shaped and formed. (Her concern with the Roman rite is related to her criticism of the reforms of Vatican II and the argument that much subsequent liturgy was inculturated into modernity, a point with which I am in some agreement, but a point that should not detain us at this stage of my argument.[17]) It is not just a pious sense in which theologians must pray, but an epistemological requirement for proper engagement with the subject of study. I started this chapter with the praying of the office, but it is central, at least to the Catholic tradition, that the eucharist forms the heart of the world, the heart of an alternative community.[18]

[16] Pickstock, "Thomas Aquinas and the Quest for the Eucharist" in ed. Sarah Beckwith, *Catholicism and Catholicity: Eucharistic Communities in Historical and Contemporary Perspective*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1999, pp. 47–68: 65–6. While this is specifically on Aquinas, it also summarizes aspects of her argument in *After Writing*, pp. 259–61.

[17] A moderate position, with which I find myself in agreement, is found in Eamon Duffy's "Rewriting the Liturgy: The Theological Implications of Translation" in ed. Stratford Caldecott, *Beyond the Prosaic: Renewing the Liturgical Movement*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1998, pp. 97–126. I have learnt much from Kieran Flanagan's analysis of the liturgy in *Sociology and Liturgy: Re-presentations of the Holy*, Macmillan, London, 1991, although Flanagan is uncritical about some of the cultural norms embedded in his alternative proposals.

[18] It is for this reason that I find David Fergusson's Barthian criticisms of Hauerwas both unconvincing and misdirected. He writes, criticizing Hauerwas' ecclesiocentricism: "The church is not the extension of the incarnation, but exists to bear witness and to live faithfully

Another feature of this liturgical calendar is that of the celebration of saints' days that act as the disciplined recalling of our indwelling the different narrated lives that construct the tradition of which we are part. Saints Januarius and Emily are two models of holiness among many thousands, both sung and unsung. Another feature of celebrating the saints is in our learning the parts that the saints took in the drama of salvation. In so much as we inhabit the dramatic *personae* of the saints, say in the praying of the *Benedictus* every morning and the *Magnificat* every evening (the dramatic "lines" of Zechariah and Mary), and through familiarity with their differing roles in the one drama of salvation which we quite literally act out in ecclesial prayer, we are called to improvise and continue the story of God's dealing with men and women through our own "acts" and "speech." The learned and holy improvisation in the drama of redemption is liturgically celebrated by the Church's recognition of a *saint* as also a *doctor* of the Church (*doctores ecclesiae*). These doctors are "virtuoso" in their learning and sanctity. It is this unity between the intellectual and the practical, the life lived and the textual writing and teachings of the doctor, that is occluded in the Encyclopedic university where rationality and disembodied reason alone are extolled. That the actual lives and practices of women and men are so important for intellectual enquiry is a facet increasingly noticed in the academy. We have already seen MacIntyre's exploration of this matter in the previous chapter. Edith Wyschogrod's *Saints and Postmodernism: Revisioning Moral Philosophy* is a rich and interesting Jewish and allegedly "universal" turn toward the lives of "saints" as the source and method of moral philosophy. However, Wyschogrod still maintains a form of positivism (and therefore modernism) in failing to recognize that the accounts of the saints are tradition-mediated and not historically and conceptually self-present, as she methodologically assumes.[19]

The necessity of prayer for cohabiting with this tradition of enquiry, in this polymorphous manner, opens up various neglected areas in the current theology curriculum. It also calls into question the assumptions

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in the light of this unrepeatable and unsubstitutable event." See Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. 69. Surely it only bears witness to this event, if it is able to re-present this event, which also in Catholic theology is "'a once for all' achievement" (Fergusson, *Community*, p. 69). Christ's presence in the eucharist is an extension of the incarnation in the sense that the incarnation is the continuing transformation of all creation (see 2 Cor. 5: 14–21, Rom. 5: 6ff.).

[19] See Edith Wyschogrod's *Saints and Postmodernism: Revisioning Moral Philosophy*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1990 who recovers the importance of saints for the discipline of moral philosophy. See also David McCarthy Matzo's criticism of Wyschogrod in "Postmodernity, Saints and Scoundrels," *Modern Theology*, 9, 1993, pp. 19–36.

regarding who is an appropriate teacher, and who are appropriate students of theology. The answer I am suggesting is that besides the necessary academic requirements, there are also necessary ecclesial requirements for a theology department actually to be engaged in theology, rather than in a positivist examination of Christian history. Secular history departments are the appropriate place for that activity. I am certainly not suggesting that only saints be allowed to teach and study theology. The universities would be virtually empty—and I certainly would be out of a job. What I am stressing is the very real ecclesial epistemological requirements for the study and teaching of theology, that are properly facilitated by prayer.

The second point of analogy between theology and other disciplines concerns my point regarding saintly or "virtuoso" lives. Within scientific communities, or indeed within other communities of enquiry, respect is often given to those skilled and highly able practitioners who have inhabited the living tradition of enquiry. They have cohabited with the paradigm, with both heart and intellect, so that they may be looked to as wise role models whose intuition, judgement, and learning are especially valued. It is not by chance that innovation within a tradition is usually brought about by those most schooled in it. It is for this reason that the line between heresy and genuine doctrinal development is sometimes so thin, and heresy advanced by sometimes saintly figures. Newman rightly says that it is "almost a definition of heresy, that it fastens on some one [correct] statement as if the whole truth, to the denial of all others," thereby "erring rather in what it rejects, than in what it maintains."[20] Such skilled and highly able theological practitioners within the Church are seen as "doctors" and "saints": "doctors" because the only role of the intellect is to minister truthfully to the ailing body of Christ, of which the saint is a part; "saints" because the criterion of excellence in theology is inseparable from the holiness of life. These two virtues are inseparable for the theologian. If the greatest practitioners of the discipline of theology enjoin the practice of prayer for the discipline, then it is surely appropriate seriously to entertain this claim.

We need to be careful here regarding the cult of saints, for all sorts of reasons. History testifies to the fact that bishops and churchmen, and also the theologians of the University of Paris, can deliver negative judgements on saints and even send them to the stake, as was the case with Joan of Arc,

[20] In "Sermon XV: The Theory of Development" in *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford Between AD 1826 and 1843*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1996, p. 296.

who was only retrospectively recognized as a saint.[21] Nor do I want to idealize, for some were probably insufferable. Hagiography is a complex genre. One of the greatest doctors of the western tradition, St. Jerome, whose portrait adorns the front of the English translation of the *IEVT*, was renowned for his intemperateness in controversy and savage invective. Some try to excuse this in terms of classical rhetorical models, but Pope Sixtus V may have been closer to the truth. He is reported as saying, when looking at a picture of Jerome beating his breast with a stone, "You do well to use that stone: without it you would never have been numbered among the saints."[22] Furthermore, some great theologians and even "doctors"—such as Aquinas—were silenced or condemned by the Church and being declared a doctor does not mean that all the person's writings are free of error. And the process of saint selection is far from unproblematic. For example it has taken nearly two thousand years to proclaim women officially as doctors of the Church—Catherine of Siena and Teresa of Avila were named by Pope Paul VI only in 1970, and Thérèse of Lisieux in 1997 by Pope John Paul II. This lack of female doctors of the Church only partially reflects the crisis mentioned in chapter one, whereby women have been excluded from the universities since the thirteenth century. It also reflects some intellectual misogyny that runs through the Christian tradition.

Clearly, given the vastly complex notion of the living tradition that I have been exploring above, the analogy between theology and other disciplines begins to break down a little. Of course, in one sense, the analogies have already broken down, for the living tradition in question is (and is sometimes not), testimony to the triune God, who is like no other object of study. However, prayer keeps this similarity and difference in appropriate

[21] Michel Foucault reminds us of the power of "tradition" to persecute, tyrannize, and marginalize, so as to sustain itself—and this we should not forget. See Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1972. *IEVT* is remarkably sensitive to this complex issue (paras. 32–41). Certain elements within the Church, especially within the feminist tradition, have painfully struggled to negotiate tensions between fidelity and critique. See, for example, the work of Roman Catholic feminists such as Janet Martin Soskice, "Can a Feminist Call God 'Father'?" in ed. Alvin F. Kimel Jnr, *Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism*, W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1992, pp. 81–94; Anne Carr, Elizabeth Johnson, and Catherine Mowry LaCugna in the collection edited by Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in a Feminist Perspective*, Harper, San Francisco, 1993 (pp. 5–30, 115–38, and 83–114 respectively), and Tina Beattie, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate*, University of Bristol, Bristol, 1999.

[22] Donald Attwater, *Dictionary of Saints*, Penguin, London, 2nd edn. revised and updated by Catherine Rachael John, 1983, p. 182. Steven M. Oberhelman, *Rhetoric and Homiletics in Fourth-Century Christian Literature: Prose Rhythm, Oratorical Style, and Preaching in the Works of Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine*, Scholars Press, Atlanta, Georgia, 1991, contextualizes Jerome's language in the terms of fourth-century rhetorical style.

tension, for it both enjoins a living relationship with God and gestures toward a major site of enactment, its mediated ecclesial culture. Tradition, in this sense, cannot be understood as a static deposit. The theologian is entrusted with this "deposit" of faith, which requires endless recovery and re-presentation, and in doing so the theologian adds to and enriches the deposit of faith.

This very point can be nicely illustrated in terms of *The Divine Office*. It is not atemporal, and has had a long history, with some major revisions at the Council of Trent, and then again at Vatican II, where it was especially modified and shortened to facilitate lay participation. Presently it fails to reflect many ancient prayers and traditions that employ feminine metaphors for the divine, and prayers or poems from women saints and mystics. Furthermore, the official English translation employs exclusive language in the intercessionary prayers—which is quite unnecessary. One hopes (perhaps vainly) that at the next revision these points will be addressed, as well as the lack of artistic images for meditation. Nevertheless, the praying of the *Office* is quite an unpredictable experience, for the different contexts and concerns of the various users will affect the manner in which the prayers are prayed. Hence, the *Office*'s use in daily prayer constantly invites re-readings, fresh insights and practices, and non-identical repetition of the life of Christ, for there is never a single stable context of interpretation. As the Church is also a constructed, concretized set of social practices, its readings and the practice of its texts cannot be atemporal or essentialized.[23] Every day in the life of the Church represents the negotiation of the gospel within culture. Hence, we recall "today" that after the emergence of a saint like Emily de Rodat, her theology and practice give further shape to the "body of Christ," in the emergence of the congregation she founded, the Holy Family of Villefranche, a type of spirituality and social formation not so formalized until her opening of a free school in Villefranche-de-Royergue.[24] This kaleidoscopic and developing canon called "tradition" allows for theological plurality in a quite extraordinary manner, as well as for plurality in practice—without succumbing to relativism or indifferentism. This internal

[23] See Joseph Ratzinger's insightful "Commentary on the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*" in ed. Herbert Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 3, Herder & Herder, New York, 1969, esp. p. 197. He criticizes Pope Pius XII's *Humani Generis* (1956) for advocating a regressive understanding of tradition, whereby it is seen as a fixed unambiguous deposit. See also Karl Rahner's extremely helpful exploration of the organic relationship between theologian, magisterium, and tradition in "Magisterium and Theology," *Theological Investigations*, vol. 18, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1984, pp. 54–73.

[24] See Doris Burton, *Saint Emilie de Rodat: Foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Family*, Paternoster, London, 1951, for an account of her life.

pluralism is often played down in criticisms that theologically tradition-specific forms of enquiry are univocal and monolithic. They rarely are.

In conclusion, regarding my two points of analogy between theology and other disciplines, I have been arguing that prayer, and the accompanying call to virtue, are indispensable prerequisites to the study and practice of theology. It is one form of cultivated habitual practice that constitutes cohabitation with theology's proper object of study: the triune God and His community, the Church.[25] Theology can demand this from its students as justly and legitimately as geologists can demand attendance at field trips from theirs, or musicologists can demand competent practice of one musical instrument and attendance at various recitals from their students.

My argument so far has been to show how prayer helps us in our cohabitation with the triune God and His community, the Church. I now want to develop this argument a little further such that it will act as a bridge to the second claim made by *IEVT*, which I will explore later.

The second claim is that prayer *guides* theological study. The point I now want to press is that by virtue of cohabitation with the living and triune God through prayer and all that it involves and the life of virtue, the theologian increases in love, and love is the lamp of knowledge. Prayer, one might recall, is finally and only worthwhile in so much as it gives glory to God: adoration for its own sake. But in this slow laborious process of learning to pray, learning to let go, learning to discern and check our constant use of prayer toward other ends (pious self-image, public status, and so on), we are learning to love. As the Catechism puts it, prayer "is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in communion with him." This is no easy process. We should recall that a major symbol of prayer is Jacob's wrestling with the strange and unnamed figure—who blesses him after putting his thigh out of joint! (Gen. 32: 22–32).

I now want to push the argument, to claim that the disciplined habits of prayer can engender love—and love is the lamp of knowledge, such that prayer can properly be said to guide study. In *IEVT* it is noted that: "The theologian's work thus responds to the dynamism found in the faith itself" (para. 6). This "dynamism" is trinitarian love. The next paragraph of the document continues:

> Obedient to the impulse of truth which seeks to be communicated, theology also arises from love and love's dynamism. In the act of faith, man knows God's goodness and begins to love Him. Love, however, is ever desirous of a

[25] The *Divine Office* as an example of ecclesial prayer is one point within the liturgical tradition. The eucharist is another, as are the six other sacraments.

> better knowledge of the beloved. From this double origin of theology, inscribed upon the interior life of the People of God and its missionary vocation, derives the method with which it ought to be pursued in order to satisfy the requirements of its nature. (para. 7)[26]

This is a startling claim: that theology's *method* is dictated by love's dynamism. I want to focus on this in terms of the "double origin," this restless movement between love and knowledge, by briefly looking at Aquinas.[27] In the *Summa Theologiae*, 2a. 2ae. q. 45, Aquinas discusses "The gift of wisdom," which should, for the purpose of our discussion, be read with the *Summa* la. 1. 6, where he argues that theology is "wisdom." In 2a. 2ae, he makes two very important points concerning our question. First, in article 2 he argues that theological wisdom is a gift of the Holy Spirit, precisely because it arises from cohabitation with the divine life which facilitates right judgement. Note, Aquinas's stress is on judgement: it is presupposed that the technical skills required of the theologian are gained by long, hard, and rigorous training. He writes:

> So it is with divine things. A correct judgment made through rational investigation belongs to the wisdom which is an intellectual virtue. But to judge aright through a certain fellowship with them [divine things] belongs to that wisdom which is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Dionysius [*De Divinis Nominibus* 2. PG 3, 648.] says that Hierotheus is perfected in divine things for he *not only* learns *about* them but *suffers* them as *well*. Now this sympathy, or connaturality with divine things, results from charity which unites us to God [compassio

[26] After the word "beloved," the document cites St. Bonaventure, *Prooem: in I Sent.*, q.2, ad. 6. I shall, however, follow Aquinas to illuminate this point. There are many ways in which this avenue could be explored, for instance, in comparing Benedictine, Dominican, and Jesuit understandings and practices related to "love of God." See, for instance, Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, Fordham University Press, Fordham, New York, 1960 [1957].

[27] One might equally use Augustine. His first book, *On Christian Doctrine*, makes it clear that Christians are schooled within the Church of love (Christian *paideia*), rather than by pagan education—and that love is both the prerequisite (within seven steps) which teaches us how to read the scripture, as well as being the goal of scripture. See Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, The Liberal Arts Press, New York, 1958, esp. pp. 7–34. See also Andrew Louth, *Discerning the Mystery*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, ch. 4, esp. pp. 76–84. 1 am deeply indebted to Louth's book, although his generous ecumenical approach sometimes obscures the importance of locating the tradition-specific starting point for which he argues. Louth's own later denominational shift from Anglicanism to the Orthodox Church may be significant in accounting for such textual ambivalence. One might also use Augustine's *Confessions* to show his critique of secular *paideia*; one not dissimilar to the critique of modernity's *paideia* and its monstrous consequences in the Holocaust—see Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991.

> sive connaturalitas ad res divinas fit per caritatem, quae quidem unit nos Deo]; *he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him* [1 Corinthians 6: 17]. [28]

Aquinas makes it clear that love is central to the process of theological judgement and that this quality is a gift given to us. Hence, any notion that prayer automatically attains various goals and qualities within the theologian must be countered and rightly criticized. Prayer does not act magically, but is a major formative practice of love. Aquinas also makes a related distinction between two types of wisdom: first:

> [when a] "wise person" comes to a correct judgment, arrived at from a bent that way, as when a person who possesses the habit of a virtue rightly commits himself to what should be done in consonance with it, because he is already in sympathy with it. Hence Aristotle's remark that the virtuous man himself sets the measure and standard for human acts. (*Ethics* X, 5. 11 76a 17) Alternatively, the judgment may be arrived at through a cognitive process, as when a person soundly instructed in moral science can appreciate the activity of virtues he does not himself possess.[29]

Hence, being in "sympathy with" is precisely what is referred to in *IEVT* as a "supernatural sense of faith," for Aquinas is clear to point out that the first type of wisdom is classed among the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the second is primarily the hard workings of the intellect, with requisite training. My argument above has been concerned with the first type. This first type, according to Aquinas, works through cohabitation, or in his words, through "sympathy" or suffering with; and this amounts to a gift of wisdom by the Holy Spirit, a point that our opening prayer-psalm from the Friday *Office* also labors. Aquinas writes:

> The first way of judging divine things belongs to that wisdom which is classed among the Gifts of the Holy Ghost; so St. Paul says, *The spiritual man judges all things* [1 Corinthians 2.15], and Dionysius speaks about *Hierotheus being taught by the experience of undergoing divine things, not only by learning about them*. [*De Divinis Nominibus* 11, 9] The second way of judging is taken by sacred doctrine to the extent that it can be gained by study; even so the premises are held from revelation.[30]

This reiterates the requirement both of correct training and knowledge, but also of virtue, which allows for greater receptivity to the Holy Spirit. This

[28] *Summa*, 2a. 2ae. 2.
[29] *Summa*, la.1.6.
[30] *Summa*, la. 1. 6, a. 3.

connaturality with divine things, according to Aquinas, results from a life of love and contemplation, a life of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance which is both affected by, and results in, continuous participation with the life of God—a gift of the Holy Spirit. Striving after the virtues requires the will, but attaining them is finally a gift. For Aquinas, the acquisition of the virtues is a slow process that takes a lifetime; although it does not always develop in a straightforward, evolutionary line. The process can be violently disrupted and derailed by mortal sin: a serious infidelity to God whereby one prefers "sin to the divine friendship" (*Summa* 2a. 2ae. 24.12). In Thomas R. Heath's commentary on question 45, Heath implicitly attends to what *IEVT* calls the "double origin" of theology. Heath argues that Aquinas's basic insight is this:

> knowledge of the goodness of an object causes us to love it; love then brings about a different and a better kind of knowledge; this new appreciation deepens the love which, in turn, intensifies the appreciation, and so on. In the life of grace the first kind of knowledge about God comes through faith; the love is charity; the second kind of knowledge comes through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.[31]

The seriousness of Aquinas's contention that sound theological judgement is predicated upon the "gift of the Holy Spirit" and requires "sympathy, or connaturality with divine things" resulting from, and leading to, a life of contemplative love of God, entirely accords with, and illuminates, *IEVT*'s focus on this "double origin" of theology. And this indwelling within love means that the Holy Spirit is properly present, guiding and leading all believers, including theologians, into a deepening indwelling with God, through increased knowledge (faith), through tireless struggle (hope), and most vitally, through the practice of charity (love). Needless to say, this process is fragile and to invoke infallibility for any saintly theologian (or straightforwardly, for the Church) would be folly. As Nicholas Lash puts it, "To believe in the 'infallibility' of the Church is not to suppose that we are reliable, but that God is."[32] Love thus plays this central part in Aquinas because of the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. For Aquinas it is only love that endures, for in our final rest with God, faith and hope (which are always mediated in this life) are required no longer, whereas love endures, and in our present state has no intermediary; for it is only through and with the love of God that we learn to love God and our neighbor properly. In another context Aquinas explains:

[31] *Summa*, vol. 34, p. 200.
[32] Nicholas Lash, "The Difficulty of Making Sense," *New Blackfriars*, 70, 824, 1999, pp. 74–84: p. 74.

> we have to say that love, which is an act of an appetitive virtue, even in our present state tends first to God, and from him follows to other things: in this way charity loves God without any intermediary. The case is directly the opposite with knowledge, since it is through other things that we come to know God.[33]

Love's dynamism, flexibility, and kenotic nature are startlingly brought out in Aquinas's subtle discussion of the four proximate effects of love: melting, pleasure, languor, and fever. Of melting he writes:

> The opposite of this is *freezing*, for frozen things are so tight-packed that they cannot easily let other things penetrate them. But with love, the orexis [appetitus] is quick to take into itself the object loved: this is how that object "dwells" in the lover, as we have seen [referring to art. 2]. Coldness or hardness of heart is therefore a state incompatible with love; whereas "melting" or warmth suggests a certain softness which means that the heart will be quick to let the object loved enter into it.[34]

Aquinas's metaphor of the transformation required by love, what he calls a "certain softness," is echoed in the second reading from Tobit this morning, that reminds us how those who have "grieved," who have shared Christ's sufferings, as Paul puts it (Col. 1: 24), will find in this "softness" a rejoicing, for they will find life in God: "How blessed are those who love you. They will rejoice in your peace" (Tob. 13: 14).

It is, I hope, now more clear how the second claim (that prayer is a key "method" in theology) is intrinsically related to the first and third claims. It is related to the first, for by cohabitation with God, through prayer, the theologian's enquiry may be guided by love. And it is related to the third claim, for the correctness of the theologian's conclusions is assessed by a traditioned and disciplined love—that starts and ends in communal prayer. This does not obscure the importance, autonomy, and integrity of the various critical tools and methods employed by the theologian. Rather, it suggests a discernment, a judgement, and guidance that are required in their utilization. To put flesh on this, let me further explore the second claim of prayer guiding study and being an appropriate theological method. Such a claim belongs within the logic of understanding theology as an offspring of a passionate love affair with God and God's world.

[33] *Summa*, 2a. 2ae. 27. 4. See also 2a. 2ae. 26. 1 and 2. See also, Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992, pp. 288–96.

[34] *Summa*, la. 2ae. 28. 5. See vol. 19, p. 105. For "orexis" see *Summa*, vol. 19, p. xxiv for Eric D'Arcy's helpful notes on this term.

III The Nuptial Love Affair

> Come and I will show you the bride that the Lamb has married. (Rev. 21: 9)
>
> He sends out his word to the earth and swiftly runs his command. He showers down snow white as wool, he scatters hoar-frost like ashes.
>
> He hurls down hailstones like crumbs. The waters are frozen at his touch; he sends forth his word and it melts them: at the breath of his mouth the waters flow.[35]

The marriage of the bride and the Lamb generates the momentum of the love affair, upon which theological method is based, a rhythm and momentum characterized by both joy and affliction (Tob. 13), guilt and mercy (Ps 51), in which we pray that a "pure heart" be created within us so that we might be taught "wisdom" (Ps 51); but a wisdom that is attentive to the reality of God's action which cannot be controlled or predicted. Thus He will choose to "send forth his word" and melt the icy waters, and thaw out our frozen hearts so that united with Christ our head, our blood may quicken and our bodies may be rightly animated.

This biblical metaphor might illuminate the significance of the well-attested liquefying of St. Januarius's blood, going back to 400. It is said that when St. Januarius's dry blood, which is kept in an old glass vial, is brought into the presence of his head, which is kept separately, the blood becomes volatile. Christ as the head, gives his body life, through his blood—without him the Church is lifeless.[36] Might this tradition emblematically embody the profound Pauline metaphor of Christ's life-giving power as head of the body?

However, to return to prayer being the guide and method for an intellectually rigorous theology, we might first note an important insight by Newman who places the theologian within a Marian typology. In his *University Sermons*, Newman perceptively recognized that Mary is a prime model of the theologian, for her life is a clue to theological method; something alluded to in the final paragraph of *IEVT*.[37] Newman writes:

[35] Psalm 147: 15–18; taken from a "Psalm of Praise," following the previous two from the Friday week four *Office*.

[36] This particular genre of miracle is a Southern Italian specialty—see Attwater, *Saints*, p. 181, and Butler, *Lives*, p. 1124.

[37] Para. 42; although an allusion is all that it remains. See further Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, St. Paul's, Slough, 1977, pp. 33–41. However, his Marian ecclesiology is potentially problematic in identifying the feminine as primarily passive, with all the attendant

> [Mary] is our pattern of Faith, both in the reception and in the study of Divine Truth. She does not think it enough to accept, she dwells upon it; not enough to possess, she uses it; not enough to assent, she develops it; not enough to submit to reason, she reasons upon it; not indeed reasoning first, and believing afterwards, with Zacharias, yet believing without reasoning, next from love and reverence, reasoning after believing. And thus she symbolizes to us, not only the faith of the unlearned, but of the doctors of the Church also.[38]

Newman sees Mary as the prime theologian, displaying the theologian's organic dependency on the Church, in both Mary's responsiveness to God and her co-creative activity with God, as Church. This dynamic corresponds to the theologian's accountability (third claim) to the living tradition; and the theologian's being guided (second claim) by the multiple impulses within this never fully explored tradition as it interacts with contemporary culture.[39] Admittedly, the notion of watertight and separate "contemporary" and "ecclesial" cultures interacting is highly artificial. Nevertheless, let me take one feature of today's *Office* to further my exploration of the manner in which the theologian is *guided* by prayer: how God's love is the dynamism that dictates method.

If theology's method is dictated by love's dynamism, then this is to say that *God's own trinitarian love should dictate the method* by which God is known and loved. Theology requires to develop its shape critically from the liturgical life of the Church. This does not mean that prayer in its different forms has any privileged ahistorical position, free from critical engagement, exemplified by the passionate debate on the liturgy since Vatican II. That theology's method be prayerfully mediated is a point too often neglected in Anglo-Saxon academic circles.[40] Even some writers who stress the ecclesiological grounding of theology sometimes neglect the liturgical heart constituting the Church.

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socio-political-sexual ramifications. See further, my "Queering the Trinity" in ed. Gerard Loughlin, *Queer Theology*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2005, forthcoming. *Faith and Reason* (1998), 108, identifies Mary with philosophy and right reason; and this allusion is richly explored by David Vincent Meconi, "*Philosophari in Maria: Fides et ratio* and Mary as the Model of Created Wisdom" in eds. D. R. Foster and J. W. Koterski, *The Two Wings of Catholic Thought*, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, DC, 2003, pp. 69–90. Koterski also downplays the active social role played by Mary. Her actions in John 2: 1–12 are overlooked.

38 "Sermon XV: The Theory of Development" in *Fifteen Sermons*, p. 313.

39 It is vital that tradition be seen as "living," for otherwise there would be no resources to draw upon by which it develops and criticizes itself. For a more dynamic Catholic appropriation of Lindbeck and Frei's category of narrative, see Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church and Narrative Theology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996.

40 For some of the many exceptions, see: Rowan Williams, *The Wound of Knowledge*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1979; David Ford and Dan Hardy, *Jubilate: Theology in Praise*,

Vatican II was instrumental in emphasizing the role of liturgy in the study of theology. In the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, it is stated:

> The study of sacred liturgy is to be ranked among the compulsory and major courses in seminaries and religious houses of studies; in theological faculties it is to rank among the principal subjects. It is to be taught under its theological, historical, spiritual, pastoral, and juridical aspects. Moreover, other professors, while striving to expound the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation from the angle proper to each of their own subjects, must nevertheless do so in a way which will clearly bring out the connections between their subjects and the liturgy, as also the unity which underlies all priestly training.[41]

Bringing out the connections between the different disciplines that constitute theology and the Church's liturgy needs more careful exploration and I shall pursue my point here with one example: biblical studies. I also use this example for it helps to illustrate my wider argument that theology critically utilizes various and contextually autonomous disciplines in an *ad hoc* manner, rather than theology itself being determined by such disciplines. To a limited extent, I have already hinted how the useful disciplines involved in religious studies (languages, sociology, history, philosophy, and so on) can be turned into a theological religious studies and in chapter five I will show this in operation. Here I shall focus on the Bible due to its partial capture by historical biblical criticism and the secular presuppositions embedded within that discipline.

One important aspect of praying the *Office* is its intriguing deployment of scripture, as is seen, for example, in the configuration of texts from the Old and New Testaments and the tradition. This has profound implications for biblical studies within the university. Consider two points. First, scripture is constantly mediated via tradition. For example, in this morning's *Office* we have Ephesians (4: 23–4) and Revelation (21: 10–11 and 21: 9) guiding our prayerful reading of the Psalms (51, 147) and the Old Testament Canticle

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Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1984; Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship. Doctrine and Life: A Systematic Theology*, London, Epworth, 1980; Webster, *Holiness*, SCM, London, 2003; A. Nichols, *The Shape of Catholic Theology*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1991; Pickstock, *After Writing*; Flanagan, *The Enchantment of Sociology*, Macmillan, London, 1996, esp. chs. 3 and 6. All these offer a sociological argument for the liturgical importance of determining theology's method. There are many others who could be included. The fact that only two writers in this list are Roman Catholic indicates both the specificity and the shared sense of the task I am proposing.

[41] Josef Andreas Jungmann points out in his "Commentary" how this paragraph relates to *Deus Scientiarum* (1930) which placed Christian archaeology and patrology as compulsory principal subjects. See also *Decree on Priestly Formation*, ch. 5, esp. para. 16, in ed. Abbott, *Documents of Vatican II*.

(Tob. 13), which in turn guides our reading of the New Testament passages. Had we instead used the Common of Pastors celebrating Saint Januarius, or the Common of Women Saints celebrating Saint Emily, we would not only have had scriptural co-mediation, but also spiritual writers from varying moments within the tradition prefixing the psalmody: Hesychius today, but it could equally be Cassiodorus, Irenaeus, Augustine, or Athanasius (although, sadly and shamefully, always men). In the English translation of the *Office*, the poets Gerard Manley Hopkins and John Donne are also allowed to sing in this sublime, albeit all-male, choir. Furthermore, the scriptures today are actually mediated via the lives of St. Emily or St. Januarius, inviting us to read both their lives in terms of the scriptures and the scriptures in terms of their lives. This is well reflected in the scripture reading for St. Januarius's Common today:

> Remember your leaders, who preached the word of God to you, and as you reflect on the outcomes of their lives, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same today as he was yesterday and as he will be for ever. Do not let yourself be led astray by all sorts of strange doctrines (Heb. 13: 7–9a).

Note the endless possibilities of non-identical repetition included within the idea that St. Januarius, Paul, and those who imitate Christ's faith, actually reproduce, in very different lives and contexts, the reality of Jesus Christ in the world.[42] Leaders, thank goodness, are never the same, nor are the saints, yet they are all in various and historically differing fashions possible "imitations of Christ." The point I am making is that reading the scriptures as scripture is a profoundly ecclesial activity.

This can be further developed in a number of ways, two of which I will briefly outline. First, reading and praying with scripture require us to examine how it has been read and used in the life of the Church over two thousand years, not in a slavish desire to reproduce ancient procedures and methods, but rather to allow those past readings to call us into question and to incorporate what might be useful and illuminating into our current practices. Stephen E. Fowl writes that with "a few notable exceptions, modern biblical scholars have paid little attention to premodern biblical interpretation," except to "treat it as a form of error."[43] While there is cer-

[42] See John Milbank, "The Name of Jesus" in *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language and Culture*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1997, pp. 145–70.

[43] Ed. Stephen F. Fowl, *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1997, p. xvii. He cites Brevard Childs as a prominent American exception, only then to comment that after 1979 there is a decreasing interest in premodern exegesis in Childs's work (ibid., p. xxviii).

tainly a move away from a univocal notion of meaning within biblical texts (the premise of historical-critical exegesis), Fowl observes that the current challenge to historical-critical forms of reading often comes from those who drink from postmodern, not premodern, wells. One very significant exception, included in Fowl's collection, is the great Catholic scholar, Henri de Lubac, who pioneered a recovery of the patristic and medieval tradition precisely as a form of richer engagement with scripture than that offered by the modern historicist perspective.[44] David Steinmetz develops this in his argument for "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis" on epistemological grounds, the focus of much of my argument in this chapter. He argues that medieval exegetes had a sober middle way between extreme subjectivism (such as some literary theory has spawned, whereby the meaning of the text is entirely a function of the reading community) and historical-critical positivism (which ties the text purely to the authorial intention). While medieval exegesis is not without its faults and problems, it at least rescues the Bible, for it holds "that the meaning of scripture in the mind of the prophet who first uttered it is only one of its possible meanings and may not, in certain circumstances, even be its primary or most important meaning."[45] Steinmetz is thus able to conclude, after trawling through various patristic and medieval materials to substantiate his point:

> The medieval theory of levels of meaning in the biblical text, with all its undoubted defects, flourished because it is true, while the modern theory of a single meaning, with all its demonstrable virtues, is false. Until the historical-critical method becomes critical of its own theoretical foundations and develops a hermeneutical theory adequate to the nature of the text which it is interpreting, it will remain restricted—as it deserves to be—to the guild and the academy, where the question of truth can be endlessly deferred.[46]

Hence, in contrast to the positivist readings advanced by a strict application of the historical-critical method we might well find that critically returning to the allegorical, moral, and typological forms of earlier times has much to

[44] Henri de Lubac, *The Sources of Revelation*, trans. J. O'Neill, Herder & Herder, New York, 1968, speaks of the "spiritual understanding" of scripture (ch. 1), and see also his masterly *Medieval Exegesis*, four volumes; two of which have been translated and published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, vol. 1 trans. Mark Sebanc, 1998; and vol. 2 trans. E. M. Macierowski, 2000.
[45] In "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis" in ed. Fowl, *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, pp. 26–38: p. 27.
[46] Ibid., p. 37.

say to current hermeneutics.[47] Postmodern approaches to the Bible like those of David Clines, Anthony Thiselton, and Stephen Moore are problematic for different reasons. I cannot pursue that matter here.[48]

A second way of reading the scripture through tradition is via the lives of the saints and its explication through the production of lives of virtue. It is curious and encouraging that this emphasis on "performativity" is being recovered from both the so-called "liberal" and "postliberal" wings of the Christian community.[49] From the liberal side, liberation and feminist theologies have insisted on the socio-political liberating strategies opened up in reading the scriptures in regard to the poor and women respectively.[50] Likewise, both groups have reflected on life histories of key figures central to furthering their cause. For instance, the Brazilian Leonardo Boff uses the Virgin Mary as an icon of women and liberation, thereby combining both feminist and liberationist hermeneutics.[51] Often, feminists are more sensitive to the problem that the primary text is sometimes resistant to their strategies, while both feminists and liberationists are more confident that it is the history of exegetical strategies rather than the Bible itself that has caused the problem of recovering its proper meaning in respect to the poor and women.

[47] See James S. Preus, *From Shadow to Promise: Old Testament Interpretation from Augustine to the Young Luther*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969, who offers a survey of medieval exegesis and relates it to the modern historical project. See also Neil B. MacDonald, "The Philosophy of Language and the Renewal of Biblical Hermeneutics" in eds. C. Bartholomew et al., *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*, Paternoster Press, Cumbria, 2000, pp. 123–40 for an interesting recovery of "typology." The Roman Catholic notion of the "Sensus Plenior" has sadly been little developed. However, see Raymond E. Brown, "The History and Development of a Sensus Plenior," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 15, 1953, pp. 141–62, and in the same journal, "The Sensus Plenior in the Last Ten Years," 25, 1963, pp. 262–85, and his book, written in between these two pieces: *The Sensus Plenior of Sacred Scripture*, St. Mary's College, Baltimore, Maryland, 1955.

[48] See Bockmuehl, "'To be or not to be': The Possible Futures of New Testament Scholarship," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 51, 1998, pp. 271–306, for a superb criticism of postmodern strategies.

[49] See David Fergusson's excellent outline of these two camps in: *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, pp. 161–73. He rightly questions the boundaries of such definitions.

[50] See, for instance, ed. Letty Russel, *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1985; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretations*, Beacon Press, Boston, Massachuetts, 1984. For liberation theology, a good overview can be found in ed. Rosino Gibellini, *Frontiers of Liberation Theology*, SCM, London, 1980 [1975]; and third world perspectives: ed. Deane William Ferm, *Third World Liberation Theologies*, Orbis, New York, 1986.

[51] Leonardo Boff, *The Maternal Face of God: The Feminine and its Religious Expressions*, trans. Robert R. Barr, Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1987; as do Mara Clara Bingemer and Ivone Gebara, "Mary—Mother of God, Mother of the Poor" in ed. Ursula King, *Feminist Theology from the Third World*, SPCK, London, 1994, pp. 275–83.

On the postliberal side, George Lindbeck, Stanley Hauerwas, and John Milbank are clear examples of those requiring that the Bible interpret the world, emphasizing "performativity" and "narrative" as the categories that help the Bible unfold via the practices of the Church.[52] While they advance quite different positions between them, they commonly differ from the liberals in arguing that the Bible interprets the world, rather than its use for supporting various political or hermeneutical fashions. Hence they are often critical of feminism and liberation theologies for their ideological control over Christian discourse. It is not that they are unsympathetic to socialism (Hauerwas is strongly anti-capitalist and Milbank is more explicitly a Christian Socialist) or to feminism (Hauerwas indicating a sympathy), but rather they want to state that the meanings and practices of liberation cannot be decided in advance of its multi-layered sense within the Bible and tradition, and its application is primarily ecclesial, this latter practice acting as a critique of secular or multi-religious society.[53] This is a complex field and while I am sympathetic to both socialism and feminism, I am more inclined to engage with these issues on postliberal terms. I simply want to gesture to the significance of the Bible being read within a very different context—performativity—to highlight another way in which the Bible can be recovered from the absolute control by historical-criticism. That these varied strategies have emerged within the academy in close engagement with ecclesial practices is significant.

Another feature reiterating that we are not simply speaking of texts interpreting other texts (so that the Church is like an interactive on-line library), but are engaged with living texts interpreting our lives and practices and vice versa, and presenting God to the world—is the fact that the scripture in the *Office* is contextualized by "Intercessions." For example, one formal intercession for this Friday morning reads:

[52] See Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*, SPCK, London, 1984, or more succinctly, "The Story-Shaped Church" in ed. Fowl, *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, pp. 39–52; Stanley Hauerwas, *Unleashing the Scripture: Freeing the Bible from Captivity to America*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1993; and John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1990.

[53] For Hauerwas's stringent critique of liberation theology, see "Some Theological Reflections on Gutiérrez's Use of 'Liberation' as a Theological Concept," *Modern Theology*, 3, 1, 1986, pp. 67–76; and for Hauerwas's sympathy with feminism, which is somewhat underdeveloped, see his response to Linda Woodhead, "Can Women Love Stanley Hauerwas? Pursuing Embodied Theology" in eds. Mark Thiessen Nation and Samuel Wells, *Faithfulness and Fortitude: In Conversation with the Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 2000, pp. 161–88; and Hauerwas's reply: pp. 327–9. For Milbank's critique, see chapter 8, "Founding the Supernatural" in *Theology and Social Theory*, and "The End of Dialogue" in ed. D'Costa, *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered*, Orbis, New York, 1990, pp. 174–91.

> "You continue to work in your faithful people: create through them a new world where injustice and destruction will give way to growth, freedom and hope."
>
> *Response:* "Lord Jesus, come to us today."

Each local church avoids saying its prayers seriously if in reading its scriptures it is not moved to the practice of justice and hope, even if it never fully knows what these terms mean, apart from continuously engaging with scripture and tradition. Praying and reading the scripture are a profoundly practical activity as well as an intellectually complex and rigorous one, as Augustine so well explains in Book One of *On Christian Doctrine*. It takes a lifetime of schooling to learn how to read, pray, and live. The life of the Church today is part of the continuing tradition that forms the complex contexts of pluriform scriptural interpretation. This hermeneutical plurality also has the delightful consequence of entailing that the meanings of scripture are never exhausted, otherwise praying the *Office* would be like reading and re-reading the telephone directory rather than being washed in the cyclical rhythms of sacred time. Closure of meaning is precluded, for as long as the Church continues to pray its scripture, it expands the endless contexts of interpretation, and the complex, murky, and moving love affair (called tradition) is fueled, nourished, and critically re-appropriated while remaining an open-ended project.

These features that I have been charting have profound implications for biblical study within university theology departments. My own limited biblical studies as a student were shaped exclusively in the Germanic Anglo-Saxon historical-critical tradition. In many respects this tradition still dominates in many countries, though by no means uniformly and there are many hopeful signs of change. What I would suggest is that the dominance of historical-critical biblical studies is radically called into question by a theology whose methodology is generated by prayer. This, for a number of reasons.

First, while philological and historical investigations into scriptural texts are absolutely necessary for an understanding of the text within the remit of such disciplines, to exalt this single way of reading as *the* way of reading the scripture is a form of hermeneutical myopia.[54] Not only has the historical-

[54] I would characterize Edward Sanders's type of approach to the Bible as precisely the sort that I am criticizing. See, for example, *Jesus and Judaism*, SCM, London, 1985, and especially his criteria for establishing what count as "valid" materials (pp. 3–22). Even so, his historical theses and reconstructions are not without importance. For an opposite approach in practice, see Stanley Hauerwas, *Unleashing the Scripture*.

positivist approach been challenged hermeneutically within the Humanities by Gadamer, Foucault, de Certeau, and others, the exclusivist exaltation of this approach seriously marginalizes an open ecclesial tradition as the appropriate context for reading and practicing scripture. Keeping this allegedly hard-science reading strategy in place was part of theology's gaining respectability in the secular academy. Hence, strictly speaking, this was the hermeneutical strategy of secular positivism.

George Lindbeck argues this point forcefully in relation to North America in the late 1980s:

> If anything controls Scripture today, it is the exegetical establishment. The exegetical establishment in North America consists of the institutions which train the overwhelming majority of the people who teach Scripture in a vast array of colleges and universities—some church schools, some Catholic, some Protestant. But the majority of them are secular institutions. Most of the people who currently receive doctorates in biblical studies in this country end up teaching in institutions which are secular. The American Academy of Religion (AAR) is the establishment. This establishment is unified. That is to say, confessional boundaries make very little difference. One teaches in the prestigious graduate schools in such a way as to prepare people who will be viewed as reputable academic scholars everywhere. So, what one emphasizes has very little to do with personal faith.[55]

Training students to imagine that the historical-critical method is the proper way to read the Bible today does not allow for the deconstruction of the historical-critical method's own theological and philosophical presuppositions. In this way secular theology departments exclusively utilizing historical-critical methods exalt one moment of the modern world as the unexamined Archimedean point from which to read all history.[56] I am not suggesting that interpretation can or should be premodern or that it can avoid contemporary

[55] Ed. Richard John Neuhaus, *Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: The Ratzinger Conference on Bible and Church*, W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1989, p. 120. Lindbeck's claim about the A.A.R. is disputed by some—see pp. 120–2. It is ironic that Donald Wiebe castigates the A.A.R. as a "religious association" that "does not wish to be a scientific or academic society," in Wiebe, *The Politics of Religious Studies*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1999, p. 248. See also the Roman Catholic theologian, Francis Martin, *The Feminist Question: Feminist Theology in the Light of Christian Tradition*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1994, pp. 50ff, who also argues that the historical-critical method is partially responsible for prising theology out of its proper ecclesial context. See also eds. Carl Breaten and Robert Jenson, *Reclaiming the Bible for the Church*, W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1995, which makes out a similar case to mine from a broadly Lutheran perspective.

[56] For some searching examinations into the philosophical presuppositions of historical criticism, see Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: On the Question of

hermeneutical issues. These are not options for theology. Rather, contemporary hermeneutical strategies need also to be questioned by alternative and past interpretative strategies—and finally, by revelation itself, which is only accessible to us as mediated through the Church. *IEVT* notes that all the tools, concepts, and disciplines adopted by theology are judged by revelation, "which itself must furnish the criteria for the evaluation of these elements and conceptual tools and not *vice versa*" (para. 10). However, in *IEVT*, revelation is at times invoked in an almost positivist fashion, as if it were not itself subject to mediation through culture. In contrast to such a position, in another context, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) argues against both a biblical fundamentalism (the Bible interprets itself without mediation, or is seen in a purely positivist manner, not requiring ecclesial mediation), and an ecclesiological fundamentalism or positivism (the Church owns and controls the meaning of the text). He writes:

> Certainly texts must first of all be traced back to their historical origins and interpreted in their proper historical context. But then, in a second exegetical operation, one must look at them also in the light of the total movement of history and in light of history's central event, Jesus Christ. Only the *combination of both* these methods will yield understanding of the Bible. If the first exegetical operation by the Fathers and in the Middle Ages is found to be lacking, so too is the second, since it easily falls into arbitrariness.[57]

Ratzinger's point is important for it rightly locates the ecclesial context of reading scripture, without suggesting closure as a result. In a rather nicely balanced fashion he expresses the future-oriented dynamic between the Church and the Bible when he says: "The Bible interprets the church, and the church interprets the Bible. Again, this must be a mutual relationship. We cannot seek refuge in an ecclesiastical positivism. Finally, the last word

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the Foundations and Approaches of Exegesis Today" in ed. Neuhaus, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 1–23; and John Coventry's excellent critique of this method with specific reference to *The Myth of God Incarnate*: "The Myth and the Method," *Theology*, 81, 682, 1978, pp. 252–61; and Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, pp. 149–52. Questioning the very notion of "writing" history and its interpretation—see Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, Routledge, London, 1990 .

[57] Ratzinger, "Biblical Interpretation in Crisis," pp. 20–1. However, Ratzinger never specifies how the Fathers and Medievals were "lacking" and some participants within the subsequent conference rightly question this claim: e.g. pp. 117, 155–60. Avery Dulles, rather briefly, but very provocatively, suggests the rehabilitation of the medieval threefold spiritual sense of scripture married to the three theological virtues: ed. Neuhaus, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 154. See also Louth's defense of allegory over against the historical critical method—in Louth, *Discerning*, esp. ch. 3.

belongs to the church, but the church must give the last word to the Bible."[58]

Such considerations make it clear that within confessional Christian departments of theology there may be radically different ways of construing biblical studies. For example, and these are crude generalizations, some Protestant departments may not give such a role to tradition, while most Roman Catholic and Orthodox departments would certainly wish to locate biblical studies *within* the engagement of traditioned readings. Some Roman Catholic departments may require prompting from Orthodox departments to focus more rigorously on the significance of liturgy in exegesis. I say this, as in the conference from which I have been quoting Ratzinger, it took Thomas Hopko, from St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, to remind Ratzinger that the "hermeneutical key [to biblical exegesis] is liturgy," not tradition.[59]

Locating biblical studies within the context of traditioned readings results in a dangerous and delicate destabilizing of existing disciplinary boundaries, rather than shoring up any pious conservatism. For instance, there could be no such discipline as biblical studies that is in any way isolated from patristic, medieval, reformation, historical, structural, and postmodern reading strategies (to name a few). Biblical scholars, who cannot of course be experts in all these areas, will nevertheless have to be sensitive and alert to these different forms of reading if they are to be competent readers themselves. But this blurring of disciplinary boundaries does not stop here, for it also requires that the biblical scholar be a moral theologian, for if the Bible has a moral sense, as Augustine, Aquinas, Barth, and others have rightly insisted, then biblical scholarship must relate to moral practice. This near-divorce from moral theology and biblical theology was subtly registered at Vatican II: "Special attention needs to be given to the development of moral theology. Its scientific exposition should be more thoroughly nourished by scriptural teaching."[60] In briefly outlining the implications of my argument both for

[58] Ratzinger, "Biblical Interpretation in Crisis," p. 23. Ratzinger's balance can be seen as developing Vatican II's *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, para. 12, which suggests both the necessity of technical exegesis and its insufficiency and inadequacy apart from tradition: see Ratzinger's commentary on this point, in ed. Vorgrimler, *Commentary*, vol. 3. See also his criticisms of Pius XII, in ibid., p. 197.

[59] Ed. Neuhaus, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 118. Ratzinger is of course well aware of this. Elsewhere he writes: "The Church's liturgy being the original interpretation of the biblical heritage has no need to justify itself before historical reconstructions: it is rather itself the standard, sprung from what is living, which directs research back to the initial stages." Joseph Ratzinger, *Church Ecumenism and Politics*, trans. Robert Nowell, St. Paul Publications, Slough, 1988 [1987], pp. 84–5.

[60] *Decree on Priestly Formation*, para. 16. Cardinal Ratzinger also makes the point well: "I am against the reduction of orthodoxy to orthopraxy, but without concrete Christian action,

"biblical studies" here and for "religious studies" (in chapter one) within a freshly reconceived "theology," one begins to see just some of the profound institutional ramifications.

To conclude: I want briefly to situate my own position in relation to that which is sometimes called "postliberal" theology. The interpretation of the tensions between the three implicit poles that I have been discussing above (Bible, tradition, authority) is also related to the context of the Church's engagement with its own living traditions while being situated in a pluralistic culture. In this sense, every engagement with the contemporary, pluralistic world is already and always an engagement with the biblical world, and the tradition-specific history out of which Christianity operates. Unless the Church has become so assimilated to the world's cultures, it will constantly explore its own traditions while *simultaneously* engaging with the Other. It is for this reason that I have reservations regarding George Lindbeck's notion that the biblical text "absorbs" the world. In a key (and oft-quoted) passage, Lindbeck writes: "Intratextual theology redescribes reality within the scriptural framework rather than translating scripture into extrascriptural categories. It is the text, so to speak, which absorbs the world, rather than the world the text."[61]

Both Lindbeck and Hans Frei, as with what has been termed "postliberal" theology, seek to instigate a counter-"reversal" in common with my own proposed project.[62] While I may well be pressing Lindbeck's metaphor about "absorbing" the world, too far, it worryingly suggests a rather unilateral process whereby the world has nothing to offer to the Church and does not in any way disrupt and challenge the narrative traditions of the Church, its reading and practice of scripture. The Church simply makes sense of and interprets the world within its "framework." Both the singular and the impersonal nature of this latter metaphor ("framework") give cause for disquiet. (Admittedly, Lindbeck is talking about scripture, not the Church, but the concern still applies.) Rowan Williams registers a similar worry.[63]

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biblical interpretation will be found wanting" in ed. Neuhaus, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 188. I would suggest that John Paul II's encyclicals are one possible model of this re-marriage between ethics and biblical scholarship, as is the work of John Howard Yoder. See, for example, *The Politics of Jesus*, W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1972.

[61] George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*, SPCK, London, 1984, p. 118.

[62] For a good introduction to postliberal theology, see William C. Placher, "Postliberal Theology" in ed. David F. Ford, *The Modern Theologians*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1997 (2nd edn.), pp. 343–56.

[63] Rowan Williams, "Postmodern Theology and the Judgement of the World" in ed. Fredrick Burnham, *Postmodern Theology: Christian Faith in a Pluralistic World*, Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1980, pp. 92–112: p. 93.

In contrast, he stresses the messy, two-way process that takes place in the interpretative interaction, for "the very act of interpreting affects the narrative as well as the world, for good and ill."[64] Furthermore, the notion of *the* text absorbing the world also raises a further question. It concerns the way Lindbeck specifies rules that are embedded within doctrines, but then utilizes these rules so that they become almost atemporal and ahistorical constructs for determining doctrinal development, in the time-bound need for the constant re-presentation of Christian truth. For example, the various doctrinal statements about the incarnation are said to exemplify three rules that must always be observed in all Christological discussion.[65] While there is an important insight in Lindbeck's example, which is derivative from Lonergan in regard to a very specific analysis of a particular Church council, what is problematic is the ahistorical manner in which these rules and narratives are proposed as guides to how Christian history should develop. John Milbank presses this point with incisive force:

> Thus [for Lindbeck] Christians are seen as living within certain fixed narratives which function as schemas, which can organize endlessly different cultural contents. These "hypostasized" narratives are not seen as belonging within the sequence of history itself, but instead as atemporal categories for Christian understanding. . . . There is no real possibility here for Christianity to exert a critical influence on its cultural receptacles, nor for these in turn to criticize Christianity. This possibility is occluded by Lindbeck, not because he is a good postmodern relativist, but rather because he has artificially insulated the Christian narrative from its historical genesis. A narrative that is falsely presented as a paradigm is seen as over and done with, and easy to interpret.[66]

Milbank overstates a tendency or danger within Lindbeck's project, but it highlights the formalist manner of Lindbeck's hermeneutics. In contrast, by using prayer as the key to deal with the notion of "living tradition" (which is analogous to Lindbeck's concept of "framework"), I have tried to emphasize the shifting relationships that constitute my tradition-specific approach. Prayer at least guards against atemporal and ahistorical notions, for it points to a living, struggling relationship that has taken on endless forms between ecclesial persons and God. It, should therefore also help to counter abstract

[64] Ibid., p. 94.

[65] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, pp. 92–6.

[66] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1990, p. 386. See also in a similar vein, Geoffrey Wainwright, "Ecumenical Dimensions of George Lindbeck's *The Nature of Doctrine*," *Modern Theology*, 4, 1988, pp. 121–33: esp. 125–6. Ironically, Milbank is criticized similarly by Rowan Williams for assuming an ahistorical ecclesia in, "Saving Time: Thoughts on Practice, Patience and Vision," *New Blackfriars*, 73, 861, 1992, pp. 319–26.

and system-oriented approaches, which Lindbeck inadvertently perpetuates by using "text" as his key metaphor.

One final minor reservation. Lindbeck's apparent emphasis on the biblical text as providing all categories of interpretation, rather than the living reality of Jesus Christ in his community, is in danger of emphasizing scripture as the norm for "Christianity."[67] This outlook neglects the fact that the very notion of scripture is *dependent* on a Church which judges and names what it takes to be scripture. Furthermore, this notion of Church also requires the concept of authority (in making a decision) and tradition (in making subsequent such decisions) to be taken as part of an interconnected organic historical reality within which interpretation takes place. In my use of the *Office* in this chapter I have sought to show how the very notion of "living tradition" is constantly reconfigured and developed (or mutilated and disfigured) within the historical project called the Church. Hence, to put it sharply, Lindbeck's approach is perhaps too biblical and formalist and insufficiently ecclesial.[68]

In this chapter I have been outlining the importance of prayer and a life of virtue and discipline for academic ecclesial theology within a postliberal university system. It is an implication of this argument that such a theology may structurally and institutionally be more successful, in the long run, for returning theology to its proper task that is still unfinished: appropriately focussed, intellectually and practically, upon worship of the triune God who reveals Himself in the particularity of a complex narration of the life of Jesus and his companions, the Church. In developing the picture of what this theology might look like, I turned to the traditions of prayer, saints' days, liturgical feasts, and the practice of charity and virtue as some of the prerequisite skills necessary for the university theologian—whose only task is to worship God truthfully. The argument so far has been that theology is in danger of becoming assimilated to modernity. This is inevitable within the context of theology as a discipline within the secular university. In engagement with MacIntyre, I called for a postliberal plurality of universities with differing traditions of enquiry, and within such institutions, the renewal of tradition-specific ecclesial forms of theological enquiry. The study of religions finds its proper home within theology and it is to this that we now re-turn.

[67] This is seen in the way "church" is produced from the "biblical texts" in Lindbeck's "The Story-Shaped Church"; whereas, in contrast, Loughlin indicates the priority of ecclesia—see Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, pp. 38–42, 46–51, 56–61.

[68] See Reinhard Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things: Theology as Church Practice*, trans. Doug Scott, W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000, pp. 35–54, where Hütter develops this point.

Chapter Five

The Engagement of Virtue: A Theological Religious Studies

I An Example of Theological Religious Studies: A Methodological Note

I now want to draw together some of the theological threads and themes of the previous four chapters and focus specifically on the question, what might a theological religious studies look like? This was a major concern running through chapter one. I now want to demonstrate what a theological religious studies might look like. If virtue is required for the study of theology, what precisely is the shape of virtue, exemplified in a Christian saint? In the context of a theological religious studies we add another question: how does Christian virtue engage with Hindu "virtue," presuming for a contentious moment that there is some common ground between the two traditions? And if prayer is required for the study of theology, what of those theologians who have devoted themselves to prayer, such as a good Carmelite nun? A further question arises in the context of a theologized religious studies: how does Christian prayerful practice engage with Hindu prayerful practices? I have chosen the subject of this chapter—a Christian saint and Carmelite nun who died for the Jewish people under the Nazis, and a modern Hindu *sati*, who (allegedly) died to atone for the sins of others—to show how a theological reading is often able to understand what modernity cannot: religious self-sacrifice as a means of winning merit through grace. I shall also engage with gender issues, again to call into question many of the assumptions that moderns or positivist historians bring to these issues, while also learning from them. This work is done in the footnotes, so as not to disturb the flow of the narrative. If the theologian working in a Christian university is accused of sectarianism, of being inward turning, unconcerned with non-Christians, this chapter serves to illustrate that the theologian's work is nothing but rigorous openness to the Other, to

critical and sympathetic engagement with every other discipline possible—in this instance, "religious studies."

As this chapter illustrates my criticisms of Ninian Smart's non-theological phenomenology of religious studies, it is worth noting what we have in common, given my previous emphasis on what divides us. I am deeply indebted to aspects of Smart's approach in at least two ways. First, in contrast to Marxist or feminist or psychoanalytical reductionist readings of "religion" (when they are reductionist), I want theologically to presume that in encountering "religion" one may be encountering something that calls into question these various methodological approaches. This is a presumption I have argued for in terms of Christianity, and now I extend this presumption, open-endedly, without any *a priori* judgements, in engaging with Hinduism.[1] In this respect, Smart's type of openness to otherness can stem from theological principles rather than being inimical to such principles, as Smart always assumes. Second, to facilitate this encounter I stand back from judgement in the process of trying to uncover the deep structural religious logic within the Hindu ritual acts that I shall be inspecting. This is not to ignore socio-economic, gender, and other interests that vie together in the production of "religion," but it is a refusal to render that which is examined purely in such terms. Smart and I have something in common. However, the difference between us will be apparent as the chapter develops, for my primary interest in the Hindu events inspected is theological, allowing Christian theology to engage with the materials to transform religious studies into a theological religious studies.

While this chapter serves to develop the argument of the previous chapters as well as draw together some of their themes and concerns, it is the first of two chapters that illustrate the positive engagement of an ecclesial theology with other disciplines within the curriculum, indicating the possible fruitfulness of a Christian university. In the next chapter I will be turning to the question of a theological physics. Here I deal with a theological religious studies. Clearly, a Barthian, a Roman Catholic liberal, or a Southern Baptist might approach these questions differently. I want to illustrate what one Catholic approach actually looks like.

A final word on method. Following the growth of the history of religions one finds numerous books and studies that assume saintliness and holiness are "trans-religious" concepts, or "cross-religious" concepts.[2] By "trans-

[1] I have argued for this approach in *The Meeting of the Religions and the Trinity*, Orbis Books, New York, 2000, pp. 99–142.

[2] See, for example, ed. John Stratton Hawley, *Saints and Virtues*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1987; and from a Hindu perspective, *Women Saints: East and West*, editorial advisors Swami Ghanananda and Sir John Stewart-Wallace, Vedanta Press, California, 1955.

religious," I mean a concept of holiness that the researcher creates, or at least assumes as universal, and then finds among many different religions, thereby often running against the self-interpretation of the said saint and their tradition. This is true of Rudolf Otto and William James, as it is of John Hick, and even postmodernist writers who should know better, such as Edith Wyschogrod.[3] In a previous book I have argued against such an approach.[4] By "cross-religious," I mean a tradition-specific notion of holiness, such as found in neo-Hinduism or liberal Roman Catholicism, which then seeks parallels or reflections within other traditions. Karl Rahner supported such a theological history of religions.[5] While I am far more sympathetic to the "cross-religious" approach, it still faces the problem of running into conflict with the self-description of the valorized saint and his or her community. It is worth recalling the Buddhist scholar Edward Conze's remarks: "I once read through a collection of the lives of Roman Catholic saints, and there was not one of whom a Buddhist could fully approve . . . They were bad Buddhists though good Christians."[6] However, it is sometimes the case that a Catholic saint-*type* might be found within Hinduism, and that person would also be seen as a saintly example of holiness within his or her own tradition. Alternatively, that which Hindus might proclaim saintly may be found to be deeply questionable by some Roman Catholics. It is at this metaphoric conjunction of two different streams of "holiness" that some of the most interesting flotsam appears.

I shall be examining the life of a Hindu *devi* and a Christian *saint*, Roop Kanwar and Saint Edith Stein respectively, remembering that such designations—"*devi*" or "saint"—are contested from within and from outside each particular tradition.[7] Roop Kanwar, a Hindu housewife, is a *devi*, a female goddess, according to many. Nevertheless, the Government of India and the State of Rajasthan have outlawed veneration to Kanwar. Our Roman Catholic "good wife," Edith Stein, is officially a saint. She was beatified on May 1, 1987 in Germany and canonized by Pope John Paul II in Rome on October 11, 1998. Nevertheless, some Jews and various Catholics were outraged by the canonization of Edith Stein. Being "holy" has always been

[3] See Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. John W. Harvey, Oxford University Press, London, 1928; William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1997; John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, Macmillan, London, 1989; Edith Wyschogrod, *Saints and Postmodernism*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1990.

[4] See my *The Meeting of Religions*, pp. 1–15.

[5] Karl Rahner, "Christianity and the non-Christian religions" in *Theological Investigations*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, vol. 5, 1966, pp. 115–34, esp. p. 132.

[6] Edward Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*, Bruno Cassirer, Oxford, 1967, p. 47.

[7] I have omitted diacritics throughout to ease reading for non-specialist readers, and because there is more than one convention regarding transliterated terms.

offensive for it touches our deepest fears, taboos, and fantasies, and calls into question the complex ways in which we construct our world. Let me turn to each woman in sequence.

II Roop Kanwar—A Hindu *Devi*?

Roop Kanwar, an 18-year-old Rajput woman, is venerated by many Hindus as a saint, indeed technically something more: a female goddess (*devi*)[8] capable of showering blessings upon those who visit the site of her "heroic" death which took place in Rajasthan on September 4, 1987. Kanwar was, by the majority of eye-witness accounts, and by those who knew her, a woman who *voluntarily* became a *sati*. *Sati*, starkly defined, is the self-immolation of a woman with her (dead) husband on his funeral pyre. I say starkly, for the exact rules defining *sati* vary enormously. That there should be such controversy over her veneration is hardly surprising. Kanwar, according to the post-Christian feminist, Mary Daly, was burnt and mutilated by patriarchal Hinduism and could only be valorized by a religion exalting cruelty toward women.[9] Daly is not alone in seeing *sati* as the cultural embodiment of terrifying misogyny.[10] First, however, a word on the term *sati*.

[8] *Devi* is the general term for a goddess: the feminine form of *deva*, a god or celestial power. In the earliest texts (*Rig Vedas*) the term is used to refer to the wives of the gods, or to parts of religious worship personified as goddesses (see II, 1; II, 11 for example). Only in the post-Vedic period does the term come to be used for *the* goddess and also for the many local goddesses of the *Śaivite* pantheon. *Satimata* (literally: truth/virtuous mother, or living *sati*) is an alternative appropriate term, although there are gradations even within this state—see ed. John Stratton Hawley, *Sati: The Blessing and the Curse*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994, pp. 81–2.

[9] Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*, The Women's Press, London, 1987, ch. 3.

[10] For a good overview of feminist responses see Veena Tahwar Oldenberg, "The Roop Kanwar Case: Feminist Responses" in ed. Hawley, *Sati*, pp. 101–30. These responses come from secular Indian and European feminists (the majority) as well as Hindu feminists and non-feminist orthodox and liberal Hindus. For those who would contest such readings, ranging from orthodox Hindus (the Shankaracharya of Puri), cosmopolitan Indian Hindus (Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy), non-Hindu Indians (Ashis Nandy), and European indologists (Katherine K. Young and Catherine Weinberger-Thomas) see respectively: Sakuntala Narasimhan, *Sati: Widow Burning in India*, Anchor Books, Doubleday, New York, 1990, pp. 24–7, reporting on the Shankaracharya's comments; Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy (the distinguished art historian), "Sati: A Vindication of the Hindu Woman," *Sociological Review*, 6, 2, 1913, pp. 117–35; and more vigorously, "Status of Indian Woman" in *The Dance of Shiva*, Noonday Press, New York, 1957, 2nd edn., 1957 [1948], pp. 115–39; Ashis Nandy, "Sati. A Nineteenth Century Tale of Women, Violence and Protest" in *The Edge of Psychology: Essays*

The common translation of *sati* as "widow burning" is an incorrect rendition, as the *sati* chooses other than "widowhood," for she is not technically a widow until the funeral pyre is lit. Further, according to some pandits, her husband is not technically dead until his soul (*atman*) leaves the body when his skull is cracked for this purpose at the cremation. In both instances, the *sati* is never a widow. Etymologically, *sati* is the feminization of the Sanskrit word, *sat*, which means "true, real, good" and therefore "virtuous," which is used to characterize the divine reality in the term *sat-cit-ananda* (loosely translated as being/real, consciousness, bliss). *Sati* has numerous semantic contexts. Most commonly in English it has been rendered as a (verbal) noun, something that is done, the act of burning. This colonial sense is nicely captured in the Anglo-Indian dictionary, *Hobson-Jobson*: "the rite of widow-burning; i.e. the burning of the living widow along with the corpse of her husband, as practiced by people of certain castes among the Hindus, and eminently by the Rajputs."[11] In Hindi, Marathi, and Sanskrit sources, and in a minority of colonial accounts, *sati* is applied to the person, not the action.[12] It is the woman who is the truthful, good wife, and her manner of death is then secondarily derived from this primary definition. Some writers insist on this second usage alone, while others do not. I shall use *sati* in both senses, which does justice to the multiple manners of construing it. Third, *sati* is also connected etymologically and emblematically with the goddess *Sati*, wife of *Siva*, who immolates herself to avenge an insult upon her husband. It has been noted that her death precedes her husband's and is undertaken as a result of her father's insult by his occluding *Siva* from an important ritual. David Kinsley concludes, "It is not altogether clear, however, that *Sati*'s suicide provides the mythological paradigm for suttee [i.e. *sati*]."[13] However, Catherine Weinberger-Thomas provides a more

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in Politics and Culture, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1980, pp. 1–31, and the controversial "Sati as Profit Versus Sati as Spectacle: The Public Debate on Roop Kanwar's Death" in ed. Hawley, *Sati*, pp. 131–48 (with responses from Ainslee T. Embree and Veena Tahwar Oldenberg); Katherine K. Young and Alaka Hejib, "Sati, Widowhood and Yoga" in Arvind Sharma with Ajit Ray, Alaka Hejib, and Katherine K. Young, *Sati: Historical and Phenomenological Essays*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1988, pp. 73–85; and Catherine Weinberger-Thomas, *Ashes of Immortality: Widow-Burning in India*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1999, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman and David Gordon White [1996].

[11] Henry Cole and A. C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, [rev. edn.], Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1979, p. 878. Cited in Hawley, *Sati*, p. 12.

[12] See Hawley, *Sati*, pp. 12–13; Weinberger-Thomas, *Ashes*, pp. 11–18.

[13] David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1986, p. 40. For a fuller account of the variant myths, see Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Siva: The Erotic Ascetic*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1973. O'Flaherty properly makes the connection that Kinsley misses: incest.

imaginative reading in this regard, as well as in tracking other *sruti*, *smriti*, legal, and folk sources.[14]

To return to the Kanwar story. Briefly, Kanwar, an educated (up to tenth grade) 18-year-old, was married to a Rajput, Maal Singh, a 23-year-old graduate living in Deorala, Rajasthan. After eight months of their marriage, Singh fell ill and died. That much is clear. According to Singh's parents, Kanwar prepared the body for cremation, refusing any help from relatives, and then insisted she would be a *sati*. Her father-in-law tried to dissuade her, to no avail, as did some of the village elders and local Brahmin priests who were summoned. However, Kanwar would brook no opposition. Her own parents testify to her frequent devotional visits to the *sati* shrines, especially the major *Satimata* Narayani Devi temple at Jhunjhunu, of which there are 110 other shrines and temples in India. Further, and in keeping with tradition, a miracle displaying her power was performed. Mark Tully relates this story:

> Then a senior member of the family held up both her hands and said, "Stop, stop! I'll find out whether she is a sati. I have an illness. I will bathe and put on clean clothes. If the bleeding stops, I will know she is a sati. If it does not, she is not." The singing petered out, the arguments died down and everyone waited for the woman to return. Roop Kanwar sat by her husband's body muttering, "*Om sati, om sati, om sati*." When the relative returned, she walked over to Roop Kanwar, took her chin in her hands and said, "I accept that you are a sati."[15]

Kanwar led the procession through the streets of Deorala to the pyre, where under a nearby sacred pipal tree were three small shrines commemorating three previous *satis* belonging to the village. Between 1943 and 1987 there have been at least thirty *satis* in the Rajput/Shekavati region.[16] Upon the pyre, Kanwar placed her husband's head in her lap and "Villagers maintain that Roop Kanwar continued to pray right up to the moment her body slumped forward and was consumed by the flames."[17] From that moment on, Kanwar as *sati* was to be venerated, deified, protested, pitied, and contested.

[14] See Weinberger-Thomas, *Ashes*, esp. pp. 160–9. A very precise list of sources is to be found in Sharma, *Sati*, pp. 31–9; and for the most careful and comprehensive commentary on the legal texts see P. V. Kane, *History of the Dharmaśastras,* Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1968, vol. 2, pt. 1.

[15] Mark Tully, *No Full Stops in India*, Viking, London, 1991, p. 212.

[16] Catherine Weinberger-Thomas, *Ashes*, pp. 182–5, who points out that the number is probably higher, given that this is the officially recorded number, plus two extra discovered in her field work.

[17] Tully, *No Full Stops*, p. 213.

One way in which her death might be understood would be via the orthodox defense of *sati* in the eighteenth-century text, *Strādharmapaddhati: Guide to the Religious Status and Duties of Women*, written by the Hindu orthodox pandit, Tryambakayajvan, who employs scripture, tradition, and law to show why *sati* makes a woman truly virtuous. Tryambakayajvan's treatise was written for the royal court of Thanjavar (Tanjore), South India.[18] In what follows I present *one* reading of Kanwar's death through the constructs of Tryambakayajvan, recognizing throughout that this is a contested and perilous reading. There are no first-hand accounts from Kanwar. Her relatives, family, and eye-witnesses to her death all testify to Kanwar's voluntary self-immolation. I shall assume this to be so, at least for the purpose of the comparison that I undertake.

Five qualifications are necessary before outlining Tryambakayajvan's arguments. First, the politics of describing this tradition has been rightly criticized: both as potentially defamatory to Hinduism; and in its misogynistic voyeurism. Mary Daly suggests that this type of hagiography is pornography. I cannot claim any detached status in writing this. I have great respect for aspects of Hinduism, as well as many questions. I find *sati* deeply abhorrent and believe that Daly is partly right in her analysis: it reflects Hindu patriarchy's destruction of women; but is there something more to be explored? I do not believe that the practice can be dismantled until the full power of its religious vision is understood. Second, the history of the practice is extremely complex, as is the question of the number of women who have died in this manner.[19] It is a dangerous form of scholarship to pretend that this religious saintly "ideal" for women can be divorced from forced *sati*, for which there is ample horrific evidence, or that it is not sometimes related to dowry murders, female infanticide, child brides, and abortions of female fetuses. Nor can it be divorced from the fact that men have constructed the Hindu legal tradition, as in most religions including Christianity. Third, *sati* is now illegal in India (since the 1829 Suttee Regulation Act), and was strongly opposed by some orthodox Hindus throughout Indian history, as also in the present day. Fourth, in modern India there are many women and men who still regard *sati* as an act of heroic virtue. Julia Leslie writes: "[*S*]*ati* remains as an ideal. While the numbers of women who

[18] See I. Julia Leslie's translation of Tryambakayajvan in: *The Perfect Wife: The Orthodox Hindu Woman According to the Strādharmapaddhati Tryambakayajvan*, Oxford University South Asian Series, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1989. Admittedly, a Rajput text would be more appropriate, but there is none comparable to Tryambakayajvan, except through oral history—see Lindsey Harlan, *Religion and Rajput Women: The Ethic of Protection in Contemporary Narratives*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1992; and Weinberger-Thomas, *Ashes*, pp. 175–96.

[19] The best guides on this are: Weinberger-Thomas, *Ashes*; Sharma, *Sati*; Hawley, *Sati*.

died in this way have always been statistically small, the ideal of such women and such a death is reverenced throughout traditional India today."[20] Roop Kanwar's case is a clear example. Many Hindus from all castes claimed she was a goddess (*devi*). However, soon after her death, 3,000 women marched in Jaipur in protest with banners proclaiming: "A woman's murder is a challenge to the entire sex." Some weeks later at a pro-*sati* rally in Jaipur 70,000 men, women, and children marched together, proclaiming Kanwar a *devi*, and an estimated $3 million were collected at the meeting for a shrine to venerate Kanwar. *The Times of India*[21] estimated that over 200,000 people all over India defied the government ban to honor her death and deification. My exploration is into the logic of the *dharma* (the moral and religious duties of a Hindu) that is behind such veneration, or to put it differently, an attempt to understand *sati* intra-textually. This is not an attempt to justify it. Fifth, I have chosen the most difficult example of "saintliness" within Hinduism that I could think of, because it raises such complex questions and makes for some painful comparisons.

In as brief and non-technical a manner as possible, I will outline the basic argument advanced by Tryambakayajvan, who cites numerous older legal Sanskrit texts and scriptures, and whose methodology is not unlike that of the medieval disputation. The work is extremely orthodox both in the authorities cited and the methodology employed. It is divided into five sections: introduction and parameters to the study; a detailed list of the daily duties of the Hindu wife (the only path of sanctification for women in Tryambakayajvan's view); an outline of the inherent nature of women; the general duties applicable to all women (regarding menstruation, property, and so on)— where the discussion of *sati* takes place; and finally, stories and quotations about women. The basic position is contextualized in terms of cosmic righteousness, the *dharma*, which, if followed by men and women in their different roles, will result in social and cosmic harmony. Things were once in such harmony, and the stories of the virtuous wives of gods are set in this golden epic period, before human history began. The proper role of a woman is being a devoted wife (*pativrata*), and that of the man, a devoted and righteous husband—until his wife dies. Admittedly, he has many other social roles, while his wife does not, and he can include, in these, another marriage. He is then able to pursue his *dharma* as a forest-dwelling ascetic (*vanaprasthya*), prior to the final stage of total renunciation (*sannyasi*). *Sati* comes into play as one of the two paths open to a woman if her husband dies

[20] I. Julia Leslie, "Suttee or Sati: Victim or Victor?" in ed. I. Julia Leslie, *Roles and Rituals for Hindu Women*, Pinter Publishers, London, 1991, pp. 175–93: p. 176.
[21] September 17, 1987.

first. His life can be defined without his wife, if she dies first. Egalitarian symmetry is not relevant.

Hindu *dharma* entails an extremely complicated number of duties set out for every caste group and each sex in all stages of development. Tryambakayajvan outlines two possibilities for the woman whose husband dies before her: *sati*, dying with one's husband, which he sees as the preferable route; or widowhood (*vidhavadharma*), which has numerous duties analogous to the celibate ascetic first stage of the man (*brahmacarya*).[22] In his advocation of *sati* Tryambakayajvan makes some very important points so that *sati* can be understood appropriately. First, *sati* is to be distinguished from suicide, and therefore does not break the legal prohibition against suicide in Hindu law. It is distinguished along the same lines as the warrior who fights in a righteous battle knowing that he will be killed. He is not thereby guilty of suicide, but is virtuously following his proper *dharma*. The warrior, like the widow, must not fear death, for in doing their duty courageously they will be reborn in a higher form, to be eventually released from the *karmic* cycle. At the Roop Kanwar rally, Kalyan Sing Kalvi, a spokesman for the demonstration, criticized those who oppose only *sati*, and not other religious forms of "suicide": "Jains are known to die by fasting. Buddhists are known to immolate themselves. So why apply this law only to us?"[23] He was referring to a byelaw introduced in Rajasthan (1987) after the Kanwar case, to fine and imprison surviving *satis*, and apply the death penalty to those abetting the practice.

Second, all ritual actions accrue merit, normally for the one undertaking the action. There are three types of ritual action: obligatory (*nitya*) ones that are performed daily—e.g. praying; occasional ones that must be performed (*naimittika*) such as on the day of one's marriage; and optional (*kamya*) ones that need not be performed, except to gain the merit accorded to that action.[24] For Tryambakayajvan, *sati* is in the last category. Any

[22] Young and Hejib, "Sati, Widowhood and Yoga" in Sharma, *Sati*, pp. 73–85 make out an excellent case for the ends of *sati* as parallel to that of the *yogi* (p. 82), hence relating it to the male *yogi*'s final stage of life, with the crucial difference that the male *yogi*'s final goal is *moksha* (liberation from rebirth), whereas the woman's is an analogical equivalent, given her womanly status, that of union with her husband, her *pati* (god husband) (p. 83). For the asymmetry of male and female in this respect, see Katherine Young, "Why Are Hindu Women Traditionally Oriented to Rebirth Rather Than Liberation (*Moksha*)?," *Third International Symposium on Asian Studies*, Asian Research Service, Hong Kong, 1981. This is contested, based on fieldwork, by Lynn Teskey Denton, "Varieties of Hindu Female Asceticism" in ed. Leslie, *Roles*, pp. 211–31.

[23] I. Badhwar, "Kalyan Sing Kalvi: Beliefs Cannot be Repressed," *India Today*, October 31, 1987, p. 20.

[24] There is a great deal of debate on these classifications and how they should be interpreted. See, for example, Weinberger-Thomas, *Ashes*, pp. 197–214.

forced *sati* would not be *sati* at all. While Tryambakayajvan is pessimistic about the widow's ability to live properly as a widow, due to the supposedly ill-disciplined and licentious nature of women, he is clear that only those who aspire toward the ideal will be capable of *sati*. The alleged voluntarism of the act has been severely criticized: "If a woman does not have the right to choose whether she wants to marry, and when, and whom, how far she wants to study, whether she wants to take a particular job or not, how is it that she suddenly gets the right to take such a major decision as whether she wants to die?"[25] This criticism misses one important point—that a woman's choice is not a right, but a matter of following one of two possible duties. Within the *dharma* there is no place for rights outside of these duties. The important difference between men and women here is that a husband has no such *sati* option (although a very small number of men have immolated themselves on their wives' pyres). This asymmetry works both ways, for the male warrior is also called to accept death, when appropriate, as part of his ritual duty, as Krishna reminds Arjuna.[26] However, one should remember that consistently within the *dharma* there is no attempted "equality" between caste or genders, for righteousness is served in following the duties prescribed to each as members of their group. Equality is an extremely modern ideology. Hence, *intra-systematically*, *sati* is an optional ritual to which is ascribed considerable merit, both for the woman and through her actions, for her husband, and both their families.

Third, it is this unique transferential merit that gets us to the *dharmic* core of *sati* and it is an important exception to the Hindu understanding of *karma* or merit, that normally holds that all actions can reap good or bad merit by one who undertakes the action. Normally, one must undergo the consequences of such action, and only through compensation and reparation for one's wrong actions (through fasting, doing ritually meritorious acts, etc.) can one eventually attain release (*moksha*).[27]

The merit due to the *sati* is three-fold. First, her ritualized act of righteous devotion releases her from all bad merit that she has accrued during her life. Clearly, the good wife who is defined by doing her duties, which include obeying her husband, will have less incentive to atone for her own

[25] Madhu Kishwar and Ruth Vanita, *In Search of Answers: Indian Women's Voices from Manushi*, Zed Books, London, 1984, p. 21.

[26] Nandy, "Sati as Profit" turns the warrior analogy on its head, and asks why journalists who are up in arms about *sati* do not similarly protest about the structural self-destruction tied up with the army (pp. 145–6), and the hypocritical valorization of immolation in the cause of revolution and liberation movements (p. 136).

[27] This should be qualified in two ways. First, knowledge, not action can lead to *moksha* in some strands of the tradition. Second, from Vedic times, priests offered sacrifices on "behalf" of a donor, who might offer these on behalf of another.

wrong-doings. On the other hand, and second, a bad wife has every reason to perform *sati*, for this will be a definitive chance to purify herself. Tryambakayajvan puts it clearly, indicating that intentionality and consequence are not unilaterally identified:

> Women who, due to their wicked minds, have always despised their husbands (while they were alive) and behaved disagreeably towards them, and who none the less perform the ritual act of dying with their husbands when the time comes—whether they do this of their own free will, or out of anger, or even out of fear—all of them are purified of sin.[28]

The latter two causes (anger and fear) can certainly conspire toward forced *sati*, but it is clear that Tryambakayajvan is not intending to support these forms of *sati*, for his argument is precisely to extol the free choice of *sati* because it is *dharmically* coherent and attractive in securing righteousness in the world. For Tryambakayajvan, *sati* has the quality of "sufficient atonement" (*prayascitta*) for the deeds of the bad wife. As one of the epic husbands puts it, in a dialogue cited by Tryambakayajvan: "it is through the merit of being a devoted wife that a woman attains the highest heaven. If she does not do this, even if she has bathed in all the sacred places, she will go to hell."[29] The ritual efficacy of this atoning act is extremely powerful, for it easily outdoes the ritual efficacy of bathing in sacred places, usually enough to cancel many serious shortcomings.

The third and most significant meritorious aspect is the transferential merit gained for the husband and his family as well as the *sati*'s own ancestral family. Merit is usually accrued by the one who undertakes the ritual act, although there is a long tradition going back to the Vedas, whereby merit can be attained for another. The *sati atones* for the sins of her husband and has the power, in her action, to release him from the fires of hell (a provisional, not eternal hell). In some texts, it is clear that this atoning power also applies to the wider families in the marriage and to those who visit the shrines of the *satimata* (lit. truth/virtuous mother). Tryambakayajvan cites many texts. Here is one showing the extent of the *sati*'s atoning power. One begins to

[28] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife*, 43r. 7–9; Leslie, *Roles*, p. 186. In this Tryambakayajvan crosses a line that is contested by other jurists, some of whom argue that *only* the *sativrata*, the good wife, can follow this course as her decision to do so (*samkalpa*) must be immediate and without deliberation, an expression of her virtuous character that has been practiced throughout her married life. A bad wife would not come to such a decision spontaneously and immediately. Admittedly, the weight of the tradition paradoxically imputes the death of a husband prior to his wife as the fault of the wife who should have looked after him better; obviously not applicable to a warrior.

[29] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife*, 44.3–6; Leslie, *Roles*, p. 187.

understand why the Rajput crowd (who support *sati*) want to venerate Kanwar as a *devi*. Her self-sacrificial love of duty breaks the bounds of hell, as through her free act she liberates her husband, even if he committed the most heinous crime, such as murder of a Brahmin:

> Even in the case of a husband who has entered into hell itself and who, seized by the servants of Death and bound with terrible bonds, has arrived at the very place of torment; even if he is already standing there, helpless and wretched, quivering with fear because of his evil deeds; even if he is a brahmin-killer or the murderer of a friend, or if he is ungrateful for some service done for him—even then a woman who refuses to become a widow can purify him: in dying, she takes him with her.[30]

Or with more dramatic and succinct force, Tryambakayajvan cites another verse: "Just as the snake-catcher drags the snake from its hole by force, even so the virtuous wife (*sati*) snatches her husband from the demons of hell and takes him up to heaven."[31] It is this force of virtue that defies the demons of hell that make the *sati* capable of bestowing blessings upon those who visit her shrine. As one Indian woman is reported to have said, when attending the Kanwar pro-*sati* rally: "*Sati* is not possible for all women, only those who are very blessed. I have come here for the blessings of this holy place."[32]

Tryambakayajvan touches on lots of other interrelated matters that I cannot pursue here. What is so startling about the intra-textual logic of his exposition of the *dharma* is the positioning of *sati* as heroic virtue, whereby the freely undertaken self-sacrifice of a woman is able to atone for her sins, for the sins of her husband, and for the sins of others, both her family and relatives who know her, and her devotees, most of whom will never have known her. The good woman has soteriological power. This transferential merit, which breaks most normal *karmic* rules, is what constructs the ideal holy and good woman. In the midst of an apparently horrific misogyny, women suddenly are able to be saviors, victors, saints, and not victims—even if tragically, only in their willingness to die. For one single moment, the woman becomes (in Julia Leslie's words) "victor"; in *sati* "victims find a path through a maze of oppression, a path that to them spells dignity and power."[33] Leslie refuses to glorify this dignity, holiness, and power; but nor does she simply dismiss it, as do Mary Daly and so many others.

[30] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife*, 43r.4–5; Leslie, *Roles*, p. 185.
[31] Leslie, *The Perfect Wife*, 43r.4–5; Leslie, *Roles*, p. 185.
[32] *The New York Times*, September 19, 1987. Harlan's study *Rajput Women* indicates very strong support for attitudes such as these.
[33] Leslie, *Roles*, p. 177.

What is so disturbing, although quite different, is an analogous intratextual logic of transferential merit displayed in the life of some Christian saints. It is not accidental that the Jesuit missionary, Roberto de Nobili, witnessing 404 *sati* at the great funeral of Nayak Muttu Krishnappa in 1606, "rued the fact that they were not his coreligionists, since such would have further heightened the glories of Christian martyrology."[34] Among the canonized we see women within a predominantly male-constructed theological tradition, attaining sainthood, often via death—which is at some level, "freely" chosen, and reflects the soteriological power of the good woman, the faithful bride of Christ.

III Edith Stein—A Catholic Saint

As with *sati*, the veneration of saints is not unanimously accepted by all Christians, and within Roman Catholicism there is much dispute about the manner of canonization, the gender problems within the canon, and the various historical constructions of virtue and sanctity at different times in the Church's history.[35] However, there are four significant formal, not material, overlaps between the *sati* tradition as outlined above and modern notions of sainthood. I introduce these to help focus my argument. First, both celebrate a life lived virtuously, not a single act at the end of a life. Second, such lives are identified in so much as there is conformity to doctrinal orthodoxy. Third, miracles accompany the identification of the candidate, and these are not seen to be anything other than a manifestation of the holiness of the person. Fourth, each is seen as a mediator of divine power, the *sati* in terms of her *sat* quality, and the saint in terms of being an imitation of Christ. None is formally worshipped in themselves. The *sati* cult relies on a prior mythology and cosmology of divine power that the *sati* embodies in her life, and saints are venerated, not worshipped; there is a gulf of difference between *dulia* and *latria*.[36]

One of the most controversial elements of Edith Stein's canonization was the transferential merit she accorded to her death. If Kanwar died for her

[34] Weinberger-Thomas, *Ashes*, pp. 119–20.

[35] Kenneth L. Woodward, *Making Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn't, and Why*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996, is a good guide regarding most of these issues, especially for the modern period. See also Richard Kieckhefer, "Imitators of Christ: Sainthood in the Christian Tradition" in eds. Richard Kieckhefer and George D. Bond, *Sainthood: Its Manifestations in World Religions*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1988, pp. 1–42, for a masterly overview.

[36] *Dulia* is to be distinguished from *hyperdulia* reserved for Mary alone, that is distinguished from worship proper, *latria*, due to God alone.

own sins, her husband's, and their families', the Jewish convert Carmelite nun Edith Stein viewed her death, which she did not desire, but possibly could not avoid, as an atonement for her own sins, the sins of the Church, the German people—and the sins of the Jewish people (of whom she was one). Many Jews objected to Stein's remarks about Jewish sinfulness and their need for atonement, and that the Church seemed to celebrate her "martyrdom" when in fact she died primarily for being Jewish, and only secondarily for being Catholic.[37] But first, let me briefly outline the relevant contours of Edith Stein's life which allow us to see the significant analogies between Stein and Kanwar. Then I will sketch the cosmology out of which she operated. She, like Roop Kanwar, was claimed to exemplify orthodox doctrine and practice to an extraordinary degree, was venerated by some groups, and seen as a shining example of a woman mediating soteriological power. On all these three counts, there was, as with Kanwar, intra-tradition dissent as well as dissent from outside the tradition.

I shall sketch some biographical moments within Stein's life, using Stein's own writings. Edith Stein was the seventh child of a well-to-do practicing Jewish family born in 1891. She was born on Yom Kippur, the Jewish day of atonement, which Stein's mother saw as auspicious, as did Stein. Later, Stein would see her life as an atonement for Jewish disbelief—among other sins of the world. Her father died when she was three. At the age of 15 she declared herself an atheist, without religion. She was intellectually outstanding among her peers. From 1913–15 she studied at the University of Göttingen, under Husserl. Husserl's young colleagues, Adolf Reinach, Roman Ingarden, and Max Scheler, were Jews who became Roman Catholics. (Pope John Paul II, who canonized Stein and declared her a woman doctor of the Church, had discussed Scheler in his doctoral work and was a personal friend of Ingarden.) Stein recalls that what impressed her most about Catholicism was its teachings on marriage. She very much desired to be married, and eventually would be: as a bride of Christ, by taking sacred vows and holy orders in the Carmelite tradition. She, like Roop Kanwar, would find in her husband the image of God, and seek to follow him everywhere, even through death, although unlike Kanwar, Stein's husband was God. Two important events happened during World War I. The first was her doctoral dissertation under Husserl, written on empathy. Writing as an atheist, she was able to empathize with the notion of religious sacrifice: "I myself may be an infidel and yet understand that someone else may sacrifice all his earthly possessions for his faith. Thus I acquire by empathy the concept of *homo religiosus*, and though it

[37] For example, see ed. Harry James Cargas, *The Unnecessary Problem of Edith Stein*, University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1994.

is alien to my thinking, I understand him."[38] The second event was the death of Reinach on the Western Front. His widow Anna Reinach's consolation in the cross shook Stein, who had gone to sort out Reinach's philosophical papers at the request of his widow. Stein notes this as her turning point: "This was my first encounter with the Cross and the divine strength it imparts to those who carry it. It was the moment when my unbelief collapsed. Judaism paled and Christ shone forth; Christ in the mystery of the cross."[39] The transferential merit of the cross, and the participative redemptive suffering undertaken freely by those who follow the bridegroom, would become increasingly central for Stein.

On January 1, 1922, Stein was baptized into the Roman Catholic Church taking the name of Teresa, after Teresa of Avila, for it was the Carmelite life that attracted her greatly. Her mother was devastated, and Stein was advised not to enter the order in deference to her mother's hurt. Stein lived with nuns and continued a formal philosophical education, turning to the study of Aquinas, women's education, and spirituality. In 1933 the Nazis enacted anti-Semitic laws and Stein's teaching position at Münster ended. Seeing the course of anti-Semitic currents, she sought an audience with Pius XII, but failed. Instead she wrote to him urging that he publicly denounce anti-Semitism. He did not directly reply to her questions but, instead, sent her his blessing. In 1933, she writes that during the Holy Hour at the Carmel of Cologne-Lindenthal:

> I spoke to our Saviour and told Him that I knew that it was His Cross that was being laid on the Jewish people. Most did not understand it, but those who did understand must accept it willingly in the name of all. I wanted to do that. Let Him only show me how. When the service was over I had an interior conviction that I had been heard. But in what the bearing of the Cross was to consist I did not yet know. I was almost relieved to find myself now involved in the common fate of my people.[40]

Stein always considered herself Jewish, so it is clear that she felt this cross as hers in a double manner: being Jewish, and being Catholic. This is most important for a proper sense of her understanding of transferential merit. Eventually, the pull of Carmel was too strong, and she applied for admission, was accepted, and returned to tell her family—and mother. This was to prove at least as painful as sharing the news of her conversion to

[38] Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, trans. Waltraut Stein, 3rd ed., Institute of Carmelite Studies Publications, Washington, DC, 1989, p. 114.
[39] *Inside the Vatican*, October 1998, p. iv.
[40] Ibid., p. vii.

Catholicism. After going to the synagogue together on October 12, 1933 (which Stein always did when she visited her mother), she agreed with her mother that the sermon was "beautiful" and that Jews can be pious and devout—if they have not yet learnt about Jesus. Stein wrote that her decision to enter Carmel was incomprehensible to her mother and most of the family, but not to her sister Rosa. Rosa was eventually baptized and became a Third Order Carmelite, to perish together with Edith. In her clothing ceremony on April 15, 1934, Edith took on the name: Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Of this name, she writes retrospectively in 1938:

> By the cross I understood the destiny of God's people which, even at that time, began to announce itself. I thought that those who recognized it as the Cross of Christ had to take it upon themselves in the name of all. Certainly, today I know more of what it means to be wedded to the Lord in the sign of the Cross. Of course, one can never comprehend it, for it is a mystery.[41]

The theme of Stein taking on suffering for the atonement of others, especially the Jews, becomes stronger and stronger as Nazi anti-Semitism grew around her. This understanding is also connected with her marriage to Christ, for the cross was the seal of the marriage. She must follow her groom into death if necessary, and her death will then be atonement for others, especially the Jewish people. In 1938 she uses the image of Queen Esther from the biblical book of Esther to construct her own self-image. Esther pleads for all the Jewish people to her husband, King Ahasuerus—and reveals that she too is Jewish, in an attempt to save them from the pogrom instituted by the king's advisor, Haman. (In the Bible story, Esther does not actually die on behalf of her people, but changes their destiny through her intervention.) Stein writes of the "shadow of the Cross which is falling on" her people. She trusts:

> in the Lord's having accepted my life for all of them. I keep having to think of Queen Esther who was taken from her people precisely that she might represent them before the king. I am a very poor and powerless Esther, but the King who chose me is infinitely great and merciful.[42]

Three years before she was murdered in Auschwitz on Thursday August 9, 1942, she wrote on June 9, 1939 a passage that further elaborates this theme.

[41] Edith Stein, *Self-Portrait: In Letters 1916–1942*, trans. Josephine Koeppel, O.C.D., ICS Publications, Washington, DC, 1993 [1987], letter 287 (subsequent reference: *Letters*, each letter numbered as in book, rather than page numbers).
[42] *Letters* 281.

One should note in this quotation three important points: first, that her marriage to Jesus means her joyful acceptance of her own death as she, like the *sati*, can only find her fulfilment in terms of her relationship to her husband; second, that her own death will be redemptive to others; third, these others will be Christians and Jews. The bride's death ensures transferential merit:

> Even now I joyfully accept the death which God has destined for me, in total submission to His most holy will. I beg the Lord to accept my life and my death for His honour and glorification, for all desires of the most holy hearts of Jesus and Mary and the Holy Church, and especially for the preservation, sanctification and perfection of our Holy Order, particularly the Carmel in Cologne and in Echt, *for the atonement* of the unbelief of the Jewish people and for this: that the Lord may be accepted by his own people and that His Kingdom may come in glory, for the salvation of Germany and for world peace, and finally for my relatives both living and dead, and all those who God has given me: that none of them may perish.[43]

Many critics have (falsely) found in this passage evidence of her alleged anti-Semitic attitude and her replication of the myth of Jewish hard-heartedness. Yet her incomplete autobiography *Life in a Jewish Family* gives an account of her own Jewish family life in an attempt to present the normal human face of ordinary Jews in the light of the "horrendous caricature" that drives Hitler and the Nazi Party.[44] For those who think that Stein was negative about Judaism, her comment on her mother is instructive:

> Her faith and trust in God remained unshaken from her earliest childhood and was her last support in her hard struggle with death. I am confident that she has found a most merciful Judge, and that she is now my most faithful helper on my own journey toward my homeland.[45]

Stein is simply concerned to take upon herself, like her husband, the sins of the world, specified in terms of her own historical context.

By 1936 Stein completed two important works: one on Husserl and Aquinas; and the other on *Life in a Jewish Family*. In 1936 her mother died at the very moment when Stein renewed her vows in the Cologne Carmel;

[43] *Inside the Vatican*, p. x, my emphasis.

[44] Edith Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family: Her Unfinished Autobiographical Account*, trans. Josephine Koeppel, ICS Publications, Washington, DC, 1986, p. 23 She neither romanticizes nor defames the community she knew through her childhood, and her mother's piety is both revered and respected; see also *Letters* 146b, 160.

[45] *Letters* 227.

and after her mother died, Rosa joined Edith and was baptized. In 1938 Stein took her final vows, and in December of that year moved to Holland, concerned for the safety of the other nuns in Cologne because of her Jewish roots. Above, I have cited a vital passage from 1939, where we see Stein connecting her death and atonement. This theme became very central in these last years.

On July 26, 1942, after the Archbishop of Utrecht ordered a denunciation of the Nazi treatment of Jews to be read in all Dutch Roman Catholic churches, the Nazis ordered a round-up of all Jewish converts. Records show that the Nazis promised not to hurt Jewish converts if bishops, from all denominations, did not interfere with their action toward the Jews. Protestant Churches were going to join in the protest but eventually refrained. Consequently, only Catholic Jews were rounded up. It was this aspect that allowed Stein eventually to be accelerated through the procedures of canonization, as the *relator* for her cause was able to argue that she was a "blood martyr" (a person who dies for their faith).[46] Rosa and Edith were arrested on the evening of 2 August. Her last reported words as she left with her sister were: "Come, let us go for our people."[47] On 9 August Edith and Rosa were gassed at Auschwitz. Their bodies, as with so many others, were never recovered.

Stein's letters and writing demonstrate the following themes:

(a) In her view she was to carry the cross, destined for the Jewish people, as well as all humanity. In the first sense, she would share the fate of her people.
(b) With respect to the Jewish people, Stein viewed her role as analogous to that of Queen Esther, who undertook to represent her people.
(c) Stein chose her married name at her formal profession, Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, to indicate this vocation.
(d) It was Stein's marriage to her spouse, Christ, that required her to carry this cross.
(e) Stein interpreted her death as expiatory, as voluntarily undertaking the penance due to others for their sinfulness, a penance required for their atonement.

[46] See Woodward, *Saints*, pp. 138–42, especially on the fact that her original process did not involve her being claimed a martyr. It took 21 years to change the claims within the process: from confessor to martyr. Exceptionally, she was proclaimed both.

[47] There is some controversy as to the source and authenticity of this quote. Dutch Carmelites attribute it to Maria Desling, a lay volunteer in the extern quarters of the Carmel in Echt, where Desling worked with Rosa Stein and who witnessed the arrest.

From this, and the knowledge of the Catholic culture out of which Stein grew, we can assemble a cosmological framework within which these themes fall into a coherent pattern. Stein does not present an explicit cosmos in her writings; rather, she assumes it, not unlike Kanwar. Given her close readings of Thomas Aquinas, Teresa of Avila, and John of the Cross we can speculatively construct the following world-view in which the action of the good wife enacts an extraordinary transferential merit, a rent in the fabric of the moral order, allowing a terrifying entry of the divine Word.

Aquinas drew heavily on Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo?*, what Gustav Aulén calls the Latin theory of atonement (expressed in terms of an objective satisfaction or expiation), as well as incorporating certain themes from Abelard's moral theory (which tends to emphasize the subjective change that is facilitated in following the example of Christ).[48] Aquinas agrees with Anselm that we are freed from sin by "Christ's satisfaction," that is, the proper restitution of God's just order, broken by human sin. Of course, God could simply forgive the sin without requiring anything of humankind, which in fact He does in the order of charity. However, God's justice also requires "punitive restitution" that will restore the order of justice.[49] Neither Anselm nor Aquinas envisage a vindictive God desiring punishment, but rather they employ and transform terminology from their social and legal contexts to provide models to elucidate revelation and illuminate the moral order created by God for our good and God's glory. Sin requires satisfaction, enacted in penance, that has two effects: curative or healing grace (*curat*) restoring the person to their proper relationship; and the grace of preservation (*preservat*) that strengthens them from future falling away. Aquinas thus arrives at exactly the same solution as Anselm, best captured in the *Compendium theologiae*:

> Justice demands satisfaction for sin. But God cannot render satisfaction, just as he cannot merit. Such a service pertains to one who is subject to another [which God cannot be to Himself]. Thus God was not in a position to satisfy for the sin of the whole of human nature; and a mere human being was unable to do so . . . Hence divine Wisdom judged it fitting that God should become human, so that thus one and the same person would be able both to restore the human race and to offer satisfaction.[50]

[48] See Gustav Aulén, *Christus Victor*, SPCK, London, 1931, for this typology, which Aulén insists should not be pressed sharply.

[49] *Summa Theologiae* (subsequently: ST) 1a. 2ae. 87. 6.

[50] Ch. 200.

As Christ is without sin, he alone among men and women is able to offer proper satisfaction. Aquinas differs from Anselm in two important respects. First, he does not insist that Christ's death is necessary, a point that need not detain us here.[51] Second, Christ's satisfaction is not only sufficient, but superabundant, by virtue of: the greatness of Christ's love, exemplified in the greatness of his suffering; the worth of his life, as God-man; and the universal significance of the passion. Hence, Aquinas concludes: "And so Christ's passion was not only a sufficient but also a superabundant satisfaction for the sins of mankind."[52] One weakness in Anselm's work was his failure to explain how we might find the resources to follow Christ's obedience. This same problem is found in Abelard's moral theory. Aquinas again develops the tradition to present a solution to this problem, in a manner that particularly helps us understand the case of Stein. It is an ingenious and important move—and is utterly simple: the resources are there, in the body of Christ.

Purely knowing about Christ's death does not bring about our own satisfaction, for a person may well continue a life of sin. Aquinas posits an ordinary mystical union that generates the sinner's transformation. It is "ordinary," in the sense that it is open to all through baptism, their enjoyment of the sacraments, and following the disciplines of the Christian life; it is the inclusion into Christ's body, the Church. This is so that first, we may enjoy the merit attained for us and grow in grace and virtue; and second, that we may continue the actions of Christ:

> Grace was in Christ . . . not simply as in an individual human being, but as in the Head of the whole Church, to whom all are united as members to the head, forming a single mystic person. In consequence, the merit of Christ extends to others in so far as they are his members. In somewhat similar fashion in individual human beings the action of the head belongs in some measure to all their bodily members.[53]

This second point is important and is also acknowledged by Anselm: as one person (like Christ) can undergo the punishment due to another, likewise Christians can undergo for others the penance due to them, such as to effect

[51] Brian Davies carefully qualifies Aquinas's difference from Anselm in *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992, pp. 330–2.

[52] ST 3a. q. 48.4. L. W. Grensted, *A Short History of the Doctrine of the Atonement*, University Press of Manchester, Manchester, 1920, p. 153 is surely wrong to see this as an "inferior commercial conception," for the superabundance indicates, rather, the unqualified gratuity of the gift of grace, it is *sui generis* beyond every merit of human action.

[53] ST 3a. 19.4.

healing grace for the other. This of course requires that the other is well disposed toward this grace. Aquinas was clear that preservative grace could not be applied to another, as it was only effected through and in the actual action undertaken (e.g. fasting):

> Satisfactory punishment has a twofold purpose, viz. to pay the debt, and to serve as a remedy for the avoidance of sin. Accordingly, as a remedy against future sin, the satisfaction of one does not profit another, for the flesh of one person is not tamed by another's fast; nor does one person acquire the habit of well-doing through the actions of another, except accidentally . . . On the other hand, as regards the payment of the debt, someone can satisfy for another, provided that the person in question is in a state of charity.[54]

Scotus and Ockham would contest Aquinas's construction, and later scholastics would refine Aquinas's corpus, but this is basically the cosmological framework that Stein inhabits. It is developed in conjunction with Stein's Carmelite spirituality in two particular ways.[55] First, central to inclusion into the life of Christ is the nuptial metaphor found in Teresa's *The Interior Castle*.[56] Second, the two basic themes of Carmelite life in Stein's Germany were prayer and penance, and these allow us to understand how the virtuous wife of Christ must act. The seven chambers of Teresa's interior castle are progressive stages whereby mystical union is attained, and Teresa employs the image of the bridal chamber for the sixth and seventh chambers whereby this union becomes a spiritual (and erotic) marriage.[57] Eight years after her baptism and three before Stein entered the Carmelites, she lectured to Catholic professional women. In these remarkable lectures Stein elaborates the nuptial link:

> To the nun, in place of the marriage sacrament, the liturgy of *virginal consecration* is granted as a particular means of grace for the strengthening of her vocation; at the least, it is the solemn vow by which she is wedded to the Lord for always . . . If the married woman is obliged to be subject to her husband as to the Lord, so is the nun obligated to honour her legitimate superior as Christ's proxy . . . By partaking in this ceremony [entering the religious life], she receives the blessing by which to live as the *Spouse of Christ* . . . Perhaps,

[54] *Sentences*, 4, 20, d.2.

[55] For a helpful background on Carmelite spirituality after St. Teresa, see W. Nevin, *Heirs of Saint Teresa of Avila*, Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1959.

[56] See *Complete Works of Saint Teresa of Jesus*, 3 vols., trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers, Sheed & Ward, London, 1946.

[57] See the most helpful reading of this book offered by Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1990, pp. 98–122.

> hidden from all human eyes, she intercedes for endangered souls by expiatory prayer and vicarious works of reparation in God.[58]

Here, the two themes of Carmelite life are closely linked to nuptial union, both of which are ways in which the religious life is one form of entry into the "single mystic person" of Christ's mystical body, the Church. Stein, like Kanwar, chooses to follow her husband, and in her virtuous action brings about transferential merit for the sake of others. For Kanwar, it is the ritualized death of *sati*; for Stein, the ritualized death of martyrdom.[59]

Is Kanwar a "saint"; and is Stein a "*satimata*"?

IV Virtuous Women as Emblems of Gratuitous Grace or Victims of Patriarchy?

To recount Edith Stein's life and Roop Kanwar's is grueling in different ways: the odor of patriarchy is never far away, as women's bodies continue to be used by men for their own purposes. The German bishops and the German *Relator* handling Stein's case had much to prove, especially in response to Jewish criticisms of the Catholic Church.[60] The long history of Catholic anti-Semitism also runs close to the surface of the narrative. Both pride and politics were at stake in Stein's beatification, along with the issue of holiness. Kanwar's death was certainly used to bolster the caste interests of Rajputs (once proud warriors, now with crumbling identity), the Brahmin priests (with decreasing religious power), and the Marwaris (powerful businessmen, also called *banias*, who are religiously deeply conservative and patrons of the Jhunjhunu temple).[61] Furthermore, there are counter-stories—of Kanwar being drugged, forced into *sati*, and that her screams

[58] Edith Stein, "Spirituality of the Christian Woman" in *Essays on Woman*, trans. Freda Mary Oben, ICS Publications, Washington, 1987 [1959], pp. 122–3, my addition in brackets. It is sometimes facile to straightforwardly relate this bridal imagery to the continuation of patriarchy—as is done by some writers—for, on the contrary, convents often allowed women varying degrees of escape from patriarchy. See Deirdre Green, *Gold in the Crucible: Teresa of Avila and the Western Mystical Tradition*, Element Books, Dorset, 1989, pp. 156–64.

[59] The martyrdom cause in Stein's case is a complex one, especially in the light of her attempts to move to neutral Switzerland, even during her internment in Drente-Westerbork Barracks on August 4—see *Letters* 340, and earlier 331. Her sharing the fate of her people is qualified. For the best discussion on this point, see Woodward, *Making Saints*, pp. 138–44.

[60] See Woodward, *Making Saints*, pp. 137–44.

[61] As reported in Tully, *No Full Stops*, p. 223; and see Sharada Jain, Nirja Mesra, and Kavita Srivastava, "Deorala Episode: Women's Protest in Rajasthan," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 22, 45, 1987, pp. 1891–4.

from the flames were protest rather than blessings.[62] Nevertheless, I have tried to explore an alternative reading of both lives. Further, in viewing Stein as a saint, I am pressed into re-assessing my repugnance at *sati*, given the startling similarity in the logic of their transferential merit. Indeed, if I must re-assess *sati*, am I called to re-assess Stein? Before proceeding I re-iterate that amidst asking the question of whether analogically there is holiness and sanctity to be found in Kanwar's life, one should recall that, theologically, analogy is always found within a greater and more fundamental dissimilarity when talking about God. This certainly applies to the present case, and should be kept in mind in what follows for I do not wish to detract from the intra-textual logic of either of our two traditions. Let me turn to exploring a theological historical-studies approach by way of analogy.

First, by marrying men, both women apparently understood that the occasion of the death of their husband would seal their own lives. Both, in different ways, saw in their husband "the image of God", *patideva*, so that their own death in following their husband would not now hold any fear. The "image of God" has very different senses. For Tryambakayajvan the husband is "like a god," so that the wife be dutiful and serve him, always putting his will first, given that his will reflects the *dharma*. Tryambakayajvan holds the dubious misogynist view that women were better off trusting in a man than in their own capacities, which would usually lead them astray. For Stein, her spouse "is God," so that dutiful obedience to Him leads to salvation. However, for Stein, His will is mediated by her vow of obedience to her mother superior, "Christ's proxy."[63] The gender fluidity within the marriage arrangements is startling, as actual submission for Stein is to another woman, as well as a man.[64] For both, marriage entailed following a path upon which redemption for themselves and others might mean voluntarily accepting an early death, due to circumstances entirely beyond their control.

Regarding the nuptial imagery, we would do well to recall certain "feminist" and "queer" criticisms of marriage in Christian theology. Elizabeth Stuart writes of nuptial images employed in the celibate religious life, criticizing the valorization of the virgin martyr:

[62] See the harrowing alternative constructions: Tully, *No Full Stops*, pp. 213–15; Oldenburg, "Kanwar Case," pp. 119–26; and Jain et al., "Deorala Episode."

[63] *Woman*, p. 122.

[64] Admittedly, one would then have to face the objection that the mother superior is submissive to a male-dominated Church.

> she rejects marriage to a human husband in order to become the bride of Christ; one form of marriage is exchanged for another. One form of submissiveness to men is exchanged for another which demands renunciation, pain and death. Complete autonomy for women is simply not an option.[65]

Lisa Isherwood also writes of marriage as "institutional torture," a structure that legitimates relentless violence upon women (and children) through an ideology of submissive obedience. She offers considerable empirical evidence.[66] These criticisms, however overstated, cannot be ignored. However, the issues Stuart and Isherwood raise about "submission" require critical inspection.[67] It is always in danger of being framed within an alien choice: submission *or* autonomy, when in fact both Stein and Kanwar construe the world differently other than in these options.

Stein, for example, is very wary about submissiveness to unjust powers, be they in a husband or the Nazis. We have seen her urging Pius XII publicly to denounce Nazi anti-Semitism. Of a bad husband, she says he is an "unworthy spouse" who "makes her [the wife's] life an ordeal . . . in this terrible distortion of the marriage ideal," but the wife must nevertheless "stand firmly before the souls of her children, guarding the life of grace begun in them by holy baptism."[68] Furthermore, Stein also overturns the usual nuptial metaphors of women's submissiveness to man (like St. Paul), arguing that both the man's and woman's nuptial roles are predicated upon a full "surrender to the Lord wherever it is purely and freely observed" by both.[69] In this sense, if both men and women act "properly," submissiveness entails true freedom to follow God—as in marriage, or in the celibate religious life. Of course, there is a constant tension between this "ideal" and social realities and Stein never sanctions social realities that fall short of such ideals. In this sense Stuart's criticism misses its target. It is not that one form

[65] Elizabeth Stuart, *Spitting at Dragons: Towards a Feminist Theology of Sainthood*, Mowbray, London, 1996, p. 16.

[66] Lisa Isherwood, "Marriage: Heaven or Hell? Twin Souls and Broken Bones" in ed. Adrian Thatcher, *Celebrating Christian Marriage*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 2001, pp. 201–17.

[67] Sarah Coakley raises such pertinent questions in her excellent book, *Powers and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy and Gender*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2002.

[68] *Woman*, p. 122.

[69] Ibid., p. 123. In this instance, she is discussing the priest and the nun, and draws from this a rather ingenious conclusion about women's exclusion from the priesthood: pp. 123–4, that they, unlike men, are called into a direct union with Christ, rather than via a "delegated authority." We saw that Teresa of Avila also developed this view implicitly. Stein also considers the valid and "difficult" role of the "unmarried woman" seeking to "fulfill her destiny apart from life in the convent" (p. 124). Stein's answer, original and refreshing, is still thoroughly ecclesial: such a woman still lives her life for Christ, in his Church, for "the Lord's method is to form a person through other persons" (p. 126).

of submissiveness is exchanged for another (marriage for the religious life), nor that "complete autonomy" is removed from the woman's choice, but rather for Stein real autonomy is only attained through her marriage, and submissiveness brings about the real freedom to love. Stein's world, not without recognition of the pain and suffering indicated by Stuart's and Isherwood's critiques, is simply not captured in their critiques. I shall turn to the question of pain and violence later.

Kanwar, if we employ Tryambakayajvan's interpretative grid, also calls Stuart and Isherwood into question, at least at the level of theory. Stuart and Isherwood would point out that in both cases male theological constructs are interpreting women's lives. This is truer of Kanwar than of the intellectually independent Stein, although it is true that in the Hindu tradition, the fiercest public critics of *sati* have included many men. Admittedly, historically, this could not have been otherwise. Nevertheless, we find a similar logic to Stein's in Tryambakayajvan in so much as Tryambakayajvan argues the good husband must carry out all his duties toward his wife and carefully follow the *dharma*. In this sense *only*, the woman must obey her husband, for in obeying her husband she is obeying the *dharma*. In practice, it is difficult to see how the husband is "monitored," although in theory the good husband is required to reflect on his own life and seek constant guidance through prayer, sacrifice, and brahminical advice. However, as with Stein, the intra-textual logic is such that the wife's submissiveness is not *per se* to her husband as husband, but only in so much as he is "like God," or for Stein, "is God."[70] It would be unconvincing to suggest that this logic entirely addresses the matter raised by such critics, but too often such a logic is hardly even acknowledged.

Admittedly, there is an issue that after a husband's death the high-caste orthodox widow who does not die with her husband should undergo a very difficult and austere life. She should fast, abstain from all pleasures, cannot remarry, and is traditionally despised for outliving her husband. However, here too, matters are complex, and from an intra-textual view a rather convincing case has been made by Katherine Young and Aleka Hejib that the life of the widow is akin to the male yogi and therefore structured toward maintaining the *dharma*, even while acknowledging the complex social realities.[71] Hence, the widow is still properly following a prescribed *dharmic* path. And to the rightful question: "but is this only so for women, while men can remarry?" there are two answers. First, there is no logically required

[70] Some Hindus would claim that he "is" God for that woman in this life, but that would not be a claim that he was a *sui generis* incarnation of God, as in traditional Christianity.

[71] Young and Hejib, "Sati, Widowhood and Yoga."

intra-textual gender symmetry, and second, there is the gender-fluid answer that the soul is finally neither male nor female. The good wife will eventually return to the *samsaric* life as a man. Then "s/he" can attain final release, *moksha*, in which there is no gendered identity.[72]

In both traditions, Christian and Hindu, there is little sense of women's or men's "autonomy" *apart from* their vocational callings (for woman as wife, celibate religious, non-religious celibate, professional person—inclusive within the previous three roles) or in their *dharmic* roles (wife, and more controversially, celibate or non-celibate religious), respectively.[73] In both traditions, marriage and procreativity are highly valued, although in Christianity there is a long history of women following the celibate religious life, and a more recent tradition valuing the single woman who chooses neither of the above two paths. Admittedly, in both traditions there is no religious role for same-sex nuptial-like unions. In conclusion, marriage can be hell for women, but equally, it can lead to heaven. In the case of Stein and Kanwar, there are grounds to argue that it led to the latter (even if different "heavens").[74]

But there is another feature in the narratives of Stein and Kanwar that makes their cases so troubling. It is the apparent glorification of sacrifice, even violent sacrifice. Both believed that their violent deaths would have atoning value, to themselves, and more so to others. Death, and the suffering it entailed, were a means by which transferential merit could be enacted. For Kanwar, being the "good wife" (*pativrata*) allowed her to atone for her own sins, for her husband's sins, and their families, and the devotees who would subsequently flock to the site of her death. Tryambakayajvan calls the *sati* sufficient atonement: *prayascitta*. For Stein, being the good wife and accepting death allowed her to atone for her own sins, for her family, for the sins of Jewish disbelief, and for the sins of the German people. Clearly, she does not atone for her husband's sins, as does Kanwar. But for both, their families by blood and by marriage are positively affected by the violent atoning death that both women accepted.

[72] Among the main *acaryas* the exception on this point is Madhva.

[73] On Stein's exploration of these three, see *Woman*, pp. 118–28. On the religious roles in Hinduism, admittedly exceptional and marginal, see the remarkable field work of Lynn Teskey Denton, "Varieties of Hindu Female Asceticism" in Leslie, *Roles*, in which she explores three ascetical types: renouncing asceticism, celibate asceticism, tantric asceticism. The last is important in allowing non-celibate single women *moksha*.

[74] Kanwar's fate as the good wife is to enjoy heaven with her husband for various amounts of time, depending on their *karma*, after which time they both return in different incarnations. There is a tradition that after seven marriages to the same person, incarnated differently of course, the man attains *moksha* and the woman then returns as a man. For Stein, heaven means the beatific vision in eternity.

The criticisms of this sacred violence can be developed in two ways, drawing on the work of René Girard and Luce Irigaray. Girard has relentlessly tried to uncover the allegedly universal religious sanctioning of ritual violence whereby the scapegoat mechanism allows for the periodic and collective murder of a victim, who is both feared, but also then glorified, to cover up the nature of the crime. This is Freud's Oedipal and sexual origins of religion, rewritten in terms of mimetic rivalry. This rivalry is generated by the conditions of learning through mimetic desire, which then produces rivalry for the object of desire, followed by violence against a rival who seeks the same object. Once the rival is defeated and expelled, there is a partial but temporary and fragile peace. The cycle is doomed to turn again. Girard's researches led him to discover that Christianity is the only tradition that unmasks the scapegoat mechanism, for Christ reveals the innocence of the victim and the guilt of the tribe, and in his refusal to enter into violence offers a different order of desire, mimetically practicing peace and reconciliation.[75] While Girard does not inspect Hinduism, his analysis can be fruitfully applied to a *sati*. Her glorification at the time of her destruction conceals the desire for, as well as hatred and fear of, women. She is destroyed as she is the cause of her husband's untimely death, and she is vindicated and venerated, in her willing acceptance of this ritual violence, which once more restores the *dharmic* order.[76] It is slightly more difficult to apply Girard's analysis to the virgin martyr except in so much as such martyrdom is encouraged from within the tradition. However, someone like Stuart would obviously argue for a tight parallel case as she sees virgin martyrs as analogous to wives, who are the sacrifice of such male religions. Gender is obviously vital.

Luce Irigaray challenges Girard precisely on gender grounds. She criticizes Girard's influential thesis in two ways. First, she suggests that the foundational model of religion Girard employs "seems to correspond to the masculine model of sexuality described by Freud: tension, discharge, return to homeostasis."[77] In this sense, Girard never envisages or engages with women's religion(s). Whether the latter indeed exists anywhere in pristine

[75] See René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1977 [1972]; and ed. James G. Williams, *The Girard Reader*, Crossroad Publishing Co., New York, 1996.

[76] See, for example, Nandy, "Sati: A Nineteenth Century Tale," p. 9: "Sati was therefore an enforced penance, a death penalty through which the widow expiated her responsibility for her husband's death. Simultaneously, it reduced the sense of guilt in those confronted with their rage against all women . . . It perpetuated the fantasy of feminine aggression toward the husband, bound anxiety by giving substance to the vague fears of women, and contained the fear of death in a region where death struck suddenly."

[77] Luce Irigaray, "Women, the Sacred and Money" in *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. Gillian C. Clark and Carolyn Burke, Athlone Press, London, 1993 [1987], pp. 77–88: p. 76.

uncontaminated form is a subject for debate, but Irigaray's point is important. Girard masks the fact that he is dealing with "male constituted religion" in defining violence and the sacred. This should not be overlooked. Further, Irigaray is critical of Girard's failure to focus on gendered violence, instead of employing, as he does, "sacred" violence as a universal trans-gendered category. The victims of religious violence are nearly always women. Girard, without mentioning Irigaray, has convincingly defended himself on this latter point.[78]

It seems to me that the strictures of Girard and Irigaray cannot be ignored, but nor do they comprehensively deconstruct the sacred universe that I have sought to illuminate, although they rightly call into question aspects of these universes, in theory and in practice. In the case of Stein, it is important to highlight two points. First, there is an ambiguity in Aquinas's account of redemption that can lead to readings valorizing suffering and pain. Aquinas veers between emphasizing that it was Jesus' loving obedience *even unto death* that makes the passion fruitful, and the view that it was the *extent of his pain and suffering* that demonstrate this loving obedience. This delicate balance is seen in the following: "And this very work, the voluntary endurance of the Passion, was especially acceptable to God, as *springing especially from love; whence it is clear* that Christ's Passion was a true sacrifice."[79] It is possible to argue that since Aquinas was clear that we merit eternal salvation from the moment of Christ's conception, which seems to make the Passion secondary, the only reason why his Passion happens is regarding us: "on our part there were important obstacles which prevented us from enjoying the result of his previously acquired merits. In order to remove these obstacles, then, it was necessary for Christ to suffer."[80] Hence, suffering is not important for its own sake, but necessarily because in the Passion Christ embodies "obedience, humility, constancy, justice, and the other virtues displayed in the passion, which are requisite for human salvation."[81] These virtues are infused into the body of Christ through grace, and therefore available to the baptized. Stein writes on the subject with the same delicate balance:

> And whoever is penetrated by the meaning of the sacrifice of the Mass, it were as if he had grown into Christ's redemptive action. The small and great offerings asked of him daily are no longer compulsory, inflicted, overwhelming

78 Ed. James G. Williams, *The Girard Reader*, pp. 275–7.
79 Grensted, pp. 154ff; ST 3a. q. 48. 4, my emphasis.
80 ST 3a. 48.1.2.
81 ST 3a. 46.3.

> burdens. Rather, they become true sacrifices, *freely and joyfully offered*, through which he wins a share in the work of redemption as a co-suffering member of the Mystical Body of Christ.[82]

Sin, both our own and that of others, causes endless obstacles, thus "Christ's redemptive action" inevitably entails taking on the effects of sin: death, suffering, and pain. The aim of doing this is "true sacrifice, freely and joyfully offered," not the desire for pain and death, although this has too often been present in models of holiness.[83] It is perhaps this same balance that is reflected in Stein's saying to Rosa: "Come, let us go for our people" when arrested by the Nazis at Echt, which seemingly entails a death drive, and her constant attempt to get Rosa and herself into Switzerland, out of Westerbork Camp. Matthew Monk's claim that Stein chose not to hurry her arrangements to escape to Switzerland so that she could face death in solidarity with her people is perhaps indicative of this valorization of suffering. It implies that proof of real love is pain and suffering. Admittedly, this may well be required in the course of real love, but to make it proof and evidence of such love is problematic. Further, Monk makes this claim without offering evidence.[84]

Second, Stein's understanding of sacrifice and transferential merit is not unique to her gender or her religious order. In the history of Roman Catholic spirituality it is to be found in many epochs and transforms the lives of both men and women, although admittedly there is something particularly interesting in the parallels evoked in the marriage imagery that Stein herself employs, and Kanwar's situation as a recent bride. Nevertheless, Stein's martyrdom still stands, even precariously, as a culmination of redemptive love. Does Kanwar's?

In many respects Kanwar's case is metaphysically complex from a gender and sacrificial point of view. While the application of Girard and Irigaray's analysis to *sati* provides dark and disturbing fruit that should not be dismissed, there are still features of the Hindu cosmology that call into question some of the more basic assumptions in such an analysis. To begin with, there is the gender fluidity of the cosmology: *karma* and *samsara*, universal principles of justice and cosmic order, determine that a person is born

[82] *Woman*, p. 121, my emphasis.

[83] Stuart, *Dragons*, pp. 11–49; and see Elizabeth Johnson, *Friends of God and Prophets: A Feminist Theological Reading of the Communion of Saints*, SCM, London, 1998, pp 27–30, 73–6, 151–6.

[84] Matthew Monk, *Edith Stein*, Catholic Truth Society, CTS Twentieth Century Martyrs Series, London, 1997, p. 26. Her correspondence counters this claim: see *Letters* 331, 337, 339, 340.

low caste or a woman as a result of their previous lives. While this may clearly indicate a "low" valuation of women from outside the cosmology, intra-textually, each and every figure has its place in the *dharmic* order. Nevertheless, there is a hierarchy within Hinduism that means it is better to be born a male brahmin than a woman. Furthermore, from within the *dharmic* scheme, justice and order can be used to argue for three points—showing there is no injustice involved in *sati*. Indeed, the contrary is the case. First, there is no essentialism to being a woman, it is only a *samsaric* moment in a long process that will also involve being a man, and finally a genderless released soul (*atman*), which is the real ontological state of the self. This is the real state of the self, both prior to becoming entangled in birth and rebirth, as well as after such entanglement is complete and *moksha* attained.[85] Second, women are not excluded from *moksha* for, in following their temporal role they will eventually be reincarnated as men and can then attain full liberation. Third, there is no "violence" upon the *sati* for she must choose this course (*samkalpa*) freely, whereas Girard's thesis requires violence *upon* the victim by the group. It is worth pausing on this matter, as it is a complex one.

The argument is in danger of being very circular at this point, both for those who oppose and those who support *sati*. At a legal level it brings about a curious contradiction. Those who argue that there is no choice for women for they are forced into *sati* culturally must reconcile the new law against *sati* (The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987, No. 3 of 1988)[86] that makes the woman (and all her accomplices) liable to punishment for *sati*. In this case, she is conceptualized as both free and not-free in one and the same act. It is little wonder that many against *sati* found the law most unsatisfactory in this respect, for the woman, the victim, is doubly punished. On the other hand, for those defending *sati* the Act is a clear case of legal interference with women's religious freedom. The question of women's agency is further complicated as the cosmology requires that the act only be undertaken freely and is optional. Oldenberg also observes a further complexity:

> even when agency can be forensically established, can the woman's act of self-immolation be judged to be a product of her own will, or must it be judged

[85] Ironically, Madhva supports *sati* and believes that souls will not be genderless, but the Madhvacharayas of Pejewar and Admar both opposed *sati*; and Sankara opposes *sati* and believes the self is genderless, but the head of the Sankara Puri order supports *sati*. See Narasimhan, *Sati*, p. 25.

[86] The Act is reproduced in Narisimhan, *Sati*, pp. 175–83, see esp. pt. II, 3, 4.

> as a product of the very studious socialization and indoctrination of women (particularly for the role of wife) that shape her attitudes and actions from girlhood?[87]

But if this argument is employed, and in one limited sense it is a very valid argument, the question of agency itself become increasingly irrelevant. If a person acts freely but is indoctrinated, then it is not important to establish their acting freely, for it proves nothing either way. Stuart's demand for "complete autonomy" for women is almost a non-sequitur and the Indian feminist Lata Mani quite incisively argues:

> The example of women's agency is a particularly good instance of the dilemmas confronted in simultaneously attempting to speak within different historical moments and to discrepant audiences. What might be a valuable pushing of the limits of the current rethinking of agency in Anglo-American feminism, may, if not done with extreme care, be an unhelpful, if not disastrous move in the Indian context.[88]

Such a stalemate on this very traditional avenue for western feminists causes Veena Oldenberg to suggest that it "might be better to settle for a provisional view of woman as victim until some way is found to resolve the question of woman's agency in this particular setting."[89] But Oldenberg's option answers the problem prematurely by settling *a priori* against *sati*. Ironically, it enacts colonial discourse that stands in superior judgement against *sati*, constructing it from outside, an approach that both Oldenberg and Mani oppose.[90] Does theological discourse end up as colonial discourse in opposing *sati* extra-textually, or is it able to reach deep into the Hindu tradition employing an analogical imagination, not affirming or criticizing it (as yet), but seeking an understanding that touches, even obliquely, the divine? To claim a clear answer here would be perilous, for it could so easily be a matter of one patriarchal cosmology giving a nod and wink to another. However, I think that Weinberger-Thomas's conclusion to her study of *sati* is worth quoting in full as a way of closing this particular chapter, but not this question:

[87] Oldenberg, "Kanwar Case" in ed. Hawley, *Sati*, p. 124.
[88] Lati Mani, "Multiple Mediations: Feminist Scholarship in the Age of Multinational Reception," *Feminist Review*, 35, 1990, pp. 24–41: p. 38.
[89] In Hawley, *Sati*, p. 124.
[90] Ibid., p. 124; and Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1998, pp. 158–90, 192–4.

> one sees that men and women wound and sacrifice themselves, individually or together, in isolation or en masse, in accordance with rules of conduct that are constantly being reinvented. In other words, one gauges a phenomenon that, when viewed in its totality, transcends issues of gender and social hierarchy. And so we are led to see that the constant in all of this, which plays the role of catalyst for both individual motivations and social constraints, is the idea that violence consented to and used knowingly—after the model of the primordial act and basis for all acts, sacrifice—that this violence alone releases a charge of energy such that he or she who accepts its *fatum* and knows how to benefit from it may, by shattering the circuits of the phenomenal world, of that ineluctable series of rebirths and redeaths, at last cross over the ford that leads to immortality.[91]

Both Kanwar and Stein apparently followed a path, sanctioned by their religious traditions, whereby their own death brings redemption to others. To gloss it: they die selflessly on behalf of others, in a way that scandalizes many and causes others to proclaim their special value and venerate them. If as a Roman Catholic and despite the numerous objections, I affirm Stein to be a saint (which I do), can I really be so horrified, as I was and still am, that Kanwar was proclaimed a *devi*? I still cannot answer this question, but have tried to show why unambiguously opposing *sati* is problematic from a theological religious studies point of view. Equally, from the same point of view, any uncritical support of *sati* is out of the question. I have tried to make out a case whereby Kanwar's death is seen to have analogical similarities to that of Stein such that Kanwar is rescued from the claims that her death was futile, tragic, and a product of patriarchy. In fact, if one is able to navigate these counter-claims (and I am not sure that I am entirely successful), then one might even glimpse in the midst of such deaths, horrific as they are, an insight into holiness, a glimpse of love that knows no bounds, even unto death. Such holiness is disturbing and troubling for it "shatters the circuits of the phenomenal world," the world of sin, such that divinity enters, disrupting the social and cosmic order. That the spring and well of all holiness is Christ is not at issue, but rather the way in which God's grace works in the religious world outside Christianity.[92]

[91] Weinberger-Thomas, *Ashes*, pp. 218–19.

[92] I attend to this more general question in *The Meeting of Religions*.

Chapter Six

The Marriage of the Disciplines: Explorations on the Frontier

I Walking Down the Aisle?

Given the analysis of the first two chapters, it needs to be said that in exploring the possible marriage of the disciplines within a Christian university, there is a mixture of both realism and idealization in what follows. The realism bears some relation to practices currently found in different Catholic and Protestant universities. The harmony envisaged within a Catholic university is founded on theological arguments present in the documents of Vatican II, and developed in the writings of Pope John Paul II.[1]

In this chapter I have two aims. First, I examine some general propositions regarding the unity of the disciplines deriving from the writings of John Paul II cited in note one. Second, I want to explore some of these general propositions in engagement with a disciplinary area usually thought to be independent and unrelated to the ecclesia, except when moral opinions on the use of technology are sought: the natural sciences, with special attention to physics and cosmology. This second part, which is perhaps the most illuminating, is also the most tendentious for a number of reasons. The most obvious is my ignorance. I have drawn heavily on secondary literature and cannot claim any special expertise in these fields. I would also hope that this work is a discussion platform, for clearly those in the different disciplines are the most able to formulate alternatives and criticize what is

[1] See Vatican II: GS, 36, 59; GE, 10–12; the most important of John Paul II's works: *CU* (1990); Motu Proprio: "Socialium scientiarum investigations," 1994; "Letter to the director of the Vatican Observatory, George V. Coyne SJ, on the 300th anniversary of Newton's *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*," subsequently "Letter," 1989; *Faith and Reason*, subsequently *FR*, 1998; "Address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences," 2000. *FR* can rightly be read as an elaboration of *CU*.

being advanced here. But there is a mitigating circumstance. I shall be arguing that unless those in other disciplines have some degree of training in theology and philosophy, the enterprise of a Catholic university is doomed. In analogous manner, theologians need to have some conversation with disciplines other than theology and philosophy. It is impossible to envisage this taking place except with very careful long-term institutional support. Hence, it may be that economics and political science departments carry out specific programs concerned with the Church's social teaching; physics departments explore the interface of cosmology and religious claims concerning creation; and philosophy departments explore the interface between theology, philosophy, and the natural sciences. Another reason for caution here is the rapid change at the cutting edge of research areas. Most of the literature I am surveying was written in the last decade of the twentieth century, and some of it will already be out of date. Hence, I want to emphasize the tentative nature of any conclusions drawn. However, this second section is the most illuminating because one begins to see the complexity of the general propositions, as they are applied to a single context. I can only intimate, in a brief final section, the way these general propositions do in fact illuminate other disciplinary areas. Here, the tensions and unresolved lacunae come into view, inevitably, and I hope, productively. I cannot hope to resolve any of these issues, but bringing them to light is my main aim, to indicate the rich paths that open once we begin to walk down *this* aisle.

Before proceeding I should note two significant issues that are not addressed in what follows. First, the telling of the story of the history of the different intellectual disciplines is required for the full exposition of any envisaged marriage of the disciplines; a wide-ranging genealogy of knowledge.[2] What is common to these different stories is this. There was once a time when Aristotle's vision of the harmony of the different disciplines allowed for creative relations between them, where the fundamental supposition was that each discipline had its own proper autonomy, related to the object of its enquiry. In relation to this object, appropriate methods and questions were thus generated, and the different disciplines were subse-

[2] For the natural sciences (and other disciplines), see entries in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, both registering significant changes with the various editions. For the natural sciences, see also Ian Barbour, *Issues in Science and Religion*, Prentice Hall, New York, 1966, pp. 15–136; Edward Grant, *The Foundations of Science in the Middle Ages: Their Religious, Institutional and Intellectual Contexts*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996; Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1986; and Stephen Shapin, *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1985. For a history of philosophy, see *FR*, pp. 36–48, and MacIntyre's works cited in note 1, ch. 1 of this book.

quently arranged along a hierarchy related to their status as a "science" (*scientia*: knowledge).[3] Theology was the highest science as it related to the unchangeable, and was thus also the basis of physics. The natural world, concerned with contingency, therefore subsumed what we would today call the humanities and the sciences, those subjects whose object of study lay within the realm of change and mutability. This was the basis of the divisions in the university of Paris, where the Arts (including philosophy, science [*sic*], and literature) were required before one specialized in Theology, Medicine, or Law.

This harmony eventually broke down, initially in the fourteenth century, and then especially with the rise of the empirical sciences in the seventeenth century, the weakening of the Aristotelian world-view, and the various changes charted in chapter one. Three crucial disruptions that characterize this fragmentation relate also to the creation of new disciplinary "sciences." The first relates to the fourteenth century when Ockham and later Biel began to prise apart creation and God for theological motives. However, this inadvertently helped to establish the next nearest most immutable Archimedean point: mathematics. Hence mathematics supplanted the divine overarching principle of unity and harmony. Amos Funkenstein summarizes thus:

> Within the Aristotelian and Scholastic tradition, it was forbidden to transplant methods and models from one area of knowledge to another, because it would lead to a category-mistake. This injunction suited the social reality of medieval universities well, separating theology from philosophy to the benefit of both; but it eroded considerably from the fourteenth century, when mathematical consideration started to be heavily introduced into physics, and even into ethics and theology. What was a methodological sin to Aristotle became a recommended virtue in the seventeenth century . . . The ideal of a system of our entire knowledge founded on one method was born.[4]

Note, Aristotle's unity of the disciplines, and the differing but related Scholastic concept of unity after it, did not lie in the assumption of a single method. It could not, as the objects of study were different. The shift to a single method signified the slow emergence of the Enlightenment. Furthermore, the closed mechanistic universe inaugurated through many of

[3] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1026a, 1064b. See also Giovanni Reale, *The Concept of First Philosophy and the Unity of the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, trans. John R. Catan, State University of New York, Albany, New York Press, 1979.

[4] Funkenstein, *Theology*, p. 6, and see also pp. 31–41, 290–9. See also Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Tavistock, London, 1970 [1966], p. 346.

Newton's followers, not Newton himself, consolidated two processes. The method of experiment, deduction from repeatable phenomena, and knowledge based on testable mathematical probability became increasingly normative. Second, the closed mechanistic universe was seen by many as perfectly explicable without the action of God, either as creator or as actor in terms of secondary causality.[5] This meant that some began to (falsely) typify a continuous battle between religion and science.[6] There is no single position among scientists, but certainly with the rise of quantum physics (of the Copenhagen variety), which called into question the Newtonian mechanistic closed universe as well as the limits of what physics might know, the alleged conflict between science and religion has begun to dissolve. Further, epistemologically, the focus on the knower/knowing community in science, from sociological, historical, and philosophical angles, has called into question the neutral objectivity of science claimed by some earlier traditions.[7] Admittedly, these claims are contested, but I only want to indicate the outlines of a narrative. It suggests that the natural sciences are in part an invention of the seventeenth century, inaugurating a mathematical and experimental positivism that was used to standardize all disciplines according to its methods and presuppositions, and for nearly three hundred years this project was dominant. Today, it is crumbling.

The second shift is located within the first: the emergence of the *social sciences* and their *fundamental positivism*. Significantly, as John Milbank has argued, the social "scientific" attempt to explain humans from various

[5] See I. Bernard Cohen, *The Newtonian Revolution*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980; and the insightful piece by J. W. Garrison, "Newton and the Relation of Mathematics to Natural Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 48, 1987, pp. 609–27. See also Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. Robert M. Wallace, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1986, esp. pp. 77–88.

[6] The historical picture is of course more complicated. See, for instance, John Hedley Brooke, "Science and Theology in the Enlightenment" in eds. W. M. Richardson and W. J. Wildman, *Religion and Science*, Routledge, New York and London, 1966, pp. 7–28; and Claude Welch, "Dispelling Some Myths about the Split between Theology and Science in the Nineteenth Century" (pp. 29–40) in eds. W. Mark Richardson and Wesley J. Wildman, *Religion and Science*. Michael Buckley, *At the Origins of Modern Athesism*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1987 is also clear that it was theologians aping science, in both method and content, that led to atheism.

[7] Philosophically, see Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd. edn., reprinted with postscript, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1970; and most influentially, Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, Harper & Row, New York, 1962. Sociologically, see Barry Barnes, *Scientific Knowledge and Sociological Theory*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1974 and *Interests and the Growth of Knowledge*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1977; and the very helpful collection, eds. Barry Barnes and Stephen Shapin, *Natural Order: Historical Studies of Scientific Culture*, Sage, London, 1979.

reductive angles refused, methodologically, to take seriously the reality of a trinitarian, let alone transcendent, creator. This leads Milbank to unmask the anti-theology of sociology, from Malebranche through Durkheim to Weber, even if he misses the traditions within contemporary sociology that aid theology rather than strangle it, precisely in their reflexivity and their concerns for the site of the production of knowledge(s).[8] This positivism characterized the development of psychology, political science, and other branches of social sciences, which have often been methodologically dominated by the exclusion of the divine. Hence, Freud turns the divine into wish-fulfilment and infantile regression, and Marx likewise into the instrument of bourgeois control of the proletariat. These disciplines have of course developed and precisely these assumptions have been challenged from within, but it is the nature of these challenges and their logic that is the concern of this chapter.[9]

The third shift relates to the Humanities as *Arts*. Nicholas Boyle argues that the notion of literature and arts in Germany during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was crucial for it was exported throughout Europe and to the United States through the mimicking of Berlin as the exemplary research university.[10] Boyle's thesis, concurring with my arguments in chapter one, shows how initially philosophy supplanted theology, followed by the Romantic notion of Art also supplanting theology, so that Art became the medium of universal access to truth, beauty, and the divine. Schiller, Novalis, and Schlegel were at the forefront of this movement and developed the "Great Books" tradition, such that "the universality of literature transcends the particularities of religion" and "has become received

[8] See Kieran Flanagan, *The Enchantment of Sociology*, Macmillan, London, 1996. Flanagan's use of Bourdieu is exemplary in calling into question Milbank's wholesale critique of sociology, see especially pp. 59–60. Similarly, Richard Roberts, *Religion, Theology and the Human Sciences*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, pp. 190–266, although his attempt to define sociology (p. 206) grants it a questionable neutrality. Both Flanagan and Roberts minimize the role of philosophy. See also the complex debate in eds. David Martin, John Orme Mills, and W. F. S. Pickering, *Sociology and Theology: Alliance and Conflict*, Harvest Press, London, 1980. In this, Antoine Lion's essay (pp. 163–82) interestingly and problematically calls into question the continuing distinction between these two disciplines.

[9] One such challenge to Marx, while learning greatly from him is Nicholas Lash, *A Matter of Hope? A Theologian's Reflections on the Thought of Karl Marx*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1981; and my engagement with psychoanalysis, *Sexing the Trinity*, SCM, London, 2000; also Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay in Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1970. This is to mention only a tip of a huge and complex set of icebergs.

[10] Nicholas Boyle, "'Art,' Literature, Theology: Learning from Germany" in ed. Robert E. Sullivan, *Higher Learning and Catholic Traditions*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2001, pp. 87–111.

wisdom in universities throughout the English-speaking world."[11] The construction of a pagan Greek utopia was also central to the emphasis on the Arts in German Romanticism. All this was premised on the displacement of theology as queen of the sciences. These changes, as we shall see, were also central in forcing wider the split between the arts and sciences. Foucault likewise traces these same themes.[12] Of course, Foucault privileges psychoanalysis and ethnology, for in his view they keep open a constant suspicion, but in so doing, they also become the nihilist platform of his project. Plantinga rightly traces a movement in method in the Arts from realism supplanted by "structuralism to poststructuralism and deconstruction" that "nicely recapitulates the move from Kantian anti-realism to relativism."[13]

The point of these comments is to note that the "methods" and "assumptions" guiding the various disciplines operating in the modern university must be theologically scrutinized, not taken for granted, regardless of their prestige with academic elites. This, *per se*, does not call into question the particular autonomy that these disciplines rightly possess, but does raise the question whether the assumptions and methods operating in such disciplines as currently practiced are inimical to Christian belief, and whether they need be that way. And one must insist at the same time, this engagement cannot be one-way traffic. The formulations of Christian theology are also a cultural process. Thus theology will be challenged in all sorts of unpredictable ways, as we shall see below, as it is (hopefully) self-critically enculturated. The case of Galileo should be kept in mind, reminding the Church of its possibility of *erring* in non-doctrinal matters. While the Galileo story is not a straightforward case of backward and superstitious theologians, for there were indeed theologians who sided with Galileo (Foscarini being the most important, and Castelli, Ciampoli, and Dini were others), his case may well concern issues of methods in biblical exegesis and the established place of Aristotelian philosophy (see further below).[14] Nevertheless, it was only in 1983 that Church officials acknowledged that Galileo's condemnation in 1616 may have been problematic. In 1984 they

[11] Boyle, "'Art,' Literature, Theology," p. 96.

[12] See one important conclusion: Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 345.

[13] Alvin Plantinga, "On Christian Scholarship" in ed. Theodore M. Hesburg, *The Challenge and Promise of a Catholic University*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1994, pp. 267–96: p. 282. George Steiner's examination of the contents of literature, as opposed to critical hermeneutics, mirrors this point. See George Steiner, *The Death of Tragedy*, Faber & Faber, London, 1995, and *Real Presences: Is There Anything in What We Say?*, Faber, London, 1989.

[14] Ernan McMullin, *Galileo: Man of Science*, Basic Books, New York, 1967; and "The Conception of Science in Galileo's Work" in ed. Robert E. Butts and Joseph Pitt, *New Perspectives on Galileo*, Dordrat, Boston, Massachusetts, 1978, pp. 209–57; and Richard J. Blackwell, *Galileo, Bellarmine and the Bible*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1991.

conceded that "Church officials had erred in condemning Galileo."[15] In 1992, as we shall see shortly, John Paul II made very favorable statements about Galileo.

In conclusion, the first area requiring extensive investigation that I cannot pursue here is the task of tracing the genealogy of the intellectual disciplines that presently constitute the modern university. This would properly contextualize the envisaged marriage of the disciplines within a Christian university. This task would also call for a second genealogical investigation, my second area requiring further attention. This needs the writing of the story of the Church's relation to these disciplines as they have developed. Such a narration would allow Christians to understand their own responsibility for the current crisis and to appreciate the many and complex causal factors that have configured the modern university. For instance, returning to Galileo, his condemnation basically concerned a question of hermeneutics and philosophy. In the first case, Galileo's claims about the movement of the earth contradicted various biblical passages, calling into question their literal meaning. The reluctance of the Church to employ its own complex modes of exegesis so that Christians might discriminate between literal, allegorical, symbolic, moral, and eschatological statements in the Bible was a reluctance bred from its struggle with the Reformers. This reluctance was not found four centuries earlier in its attempt to come to terms with Aristotelian physics and psychology. Regarding philosophy, Galileo's findings called into question Aristotle's physics, and it was Aristotelians who denounced Galileo to the Holy Office, claiming he was "treading under foot the entire philosophy of Aristotle, which had been of such service to scholastic theology."[16] From this example, we can see that the two issues generate different questions. The first might have been avoided were it not for the defensiveness of the Church regarding the Reformation. The second was far more substantial, as Galileo's theory seemed to undermine long-held convictions regarding Aristotle. Nevertheless, history shows how the Church is able to discriminate regarding the various elements of its Aristotelian heritage. More pertinently, it must constantly be vigilant so that theology does not make judgements in fields where it has no proper competence or where it violates the rightful autonomy of the field's methods. For example, in the

[15] *Origins*, Documentary Service, 16, 1986, p. 122.

[16] Cited from the complaint to the Holy Office lodged by the Dominican, Niccolò Lorini, in Maurice Finocchiaro, *The Galileo Affair: A Documentary History*, 1989, p. 135 in Ernan McMullin, "Science and the Catholic Tradition" in ed. Ian G. Barbour, *Science and Religion: New Perspectives on the Dialogue*, SCM, London, 1968, pp. 30–42: p. 31. I am grateful to McMullin for providing the source of his quote.

science–religion debate, John Paul II writes that the "hylomorphism of Aristotelian natural philosophy, for example, was adapted by the medieval theologians to help them explore the nature of the sacraments and the hypostatic union. This did not mean that the Church adjudicated the truth or falsity of the Aristotelian insight, since that is not her concern" (M10–11). The principle stated by John Paul II is important: theology cannot adjudicate on truth in matters proper to another discipline, but it can certainly adapt and employ such findings to explore further God's salvation in the world. Applying this principle is always going to be fraught.

II A Banquet in Sight: The Possibilities of a New Harmony

There are three general statements that can be distilled from the various documents cited in note one that help establish an orientation to the question of the relationship between theology, philosophy, and the intellectual disciplines, and more importantly, how they might be re-visioned within a Catholic university. In what follows I necessarily presume a relation between theology and philosophy whereby each cannot proceed without the other, while each is independent of the other, as outlined in the encyclical *Faith and Reason*. There are many questions regarding the portrayal of philosophy in the encyclical and its precise relation to theology, but I abstain from these questions so as to focus on the issue of the wider relationship between the disciplines, a question rarely addressed. I shall state the propositions, offer a brief commentary regarding their implications, and then develop them in the next section in the light of an engagement with the specific discipline of physics and cosmology. The first proposition is as follows:

> *All creation is God's creation, so that, in principle, no form of authentic knowledge properly gained from any discipline will contradict the truth of Christianity. Indeed, all such knowledge will in fact illuminate, deepen, and develop our understanding of both the created world and the Creator.*

CU succinctly expresses the dialectical tension within this claim:

> A Catholic University's privileged task is to unite existentially by intellectual effort two orders of reality that too frequently tend to be placed in opposition as though they were antithetical: the search for truth, and the certainty of already knowing the fount of truth.[17]

[17] *CU*, p. 1, citing a papal discourse from 1980.

Clearly, while the truths of the disciplines are not revealed truth, their fount is. Put like this, the distinction between theology and the other disciplines is properly highlighted, but not in terms of affording theology special knowledge properly due to biologists, physicists, and economists. Hence the dialogue between the disciplines takes place with a proper confidence of their respective integrities and fields:

> While each academic discipline retains its own integrity and has its own methods, this dialogue demonstrates that methodological research within every branch of learning, when carried out in a truly scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, can never truly conflict with faith. For the things of the earth and the concerns of faith derive from the same God.[18]

It is in the relationship between theology and such disciplines that many interesting questions arise, rather than whether there is any such relationship. There are thus a number of important points that result from this proposition.

First, it allows for a confidence that the intellectual search for truth, properly undertaken, in whatever discipline, should not and need not be feared by the Church. The Church's own mission is advanced through the university's learning, and without such learning the Church's incarnation in all aspects of human life, analogically following the full incarnation of the Word in flesh and social reality, is compromised. In this respect, the intellectual defense and elaboration of Christianity and its relation to all human culture is entrusted to intellectuals within Christianity, and there is no better structural gathering for such a task than a Christian university. Clearly, those who are not Christian are often as "good" if not better economists, biologists, and so on—technically and in terms of research productivity. And in so much as they properly pursue their disciplines, there should be no conflicts between their work and the truth of Christianity. This leads to a second point.

Whenever there are conflicts between theology and other disciplines, and proper legitimate conflicts, one critical issue is this: should either pole of the tension have priority in determining the outcome? Put differently, is there any priority or normativity given to truth, theologically understood, when it comes into conflict with the findings of any discipline? Or does each discipline, including theology, have equal standing, given that each discipline is acting properly within its remit? At this level of generality, it

[18] *CU*, p. 18, citing *Church in the Modern World*, 61; and two addresses by John Paul II, interestingly including reference to his 1983 address on Galileo.

might be said that properly speaking, no such conflict is possible if each discipline is legitimately pursued, for it would not make claims outside its proper limitations and contexts. Those within the discipline are usually best at spotting tendentious claims. However, this dramatically highlights the question as to who defines the legitimate object of study, the appropriate methods of enquiry, and the research questions within that field. This question is sharply raised by our brief genealogical forays, and part of a Christian university's task is to pay attention to these issues in a systematic manner. Alvin Plantinga puts the matter well when he argues that in any discipline:

> [S]hould we not take for granted the Christian answer to the large questions about God and creation and then go on from that perspective to address the narrower questions of that discipline? . . . To what sort of premises can we properly appeal in working out the answers to the questions raised in a given area of scholarly or scientific inquiry? Can we properly appeal to what we know as Christians? . . . Must the Christian community accept the basic structure and presuppositions of the contemporary practice of that discipline in trying to come to an understanding of its subject matter? Must Christian psychologists appeal only to premises accepted by all parties to the discussion, whether Christian or not? I should think not. Why should we limit and handicap ourselves in this way?[19]

Theology has a priority or normativity when it comes to a legitimate clash between itself and other disciplines. But this normativity is not one that can question the competence and findings of a scientist or sociologist within the parameters of their legitimate discipline. This point requires elaboration if such researchers are not to complain against inappropriate interference. Hence, it is necessary to clarify the possible contexts of these clashes and the very limited cases where normativity can obviously be affirmed. J. G. Hagen makes three important distinctions:

> When a religious view is contradicted by a well-established scientific fact, then the sources of revelation have to be re-examined, and they will be found to leave the question open. When a clearly-defined dogma contradicts a scientific assertion, the latter has to be revised, and it will be found premature. When both contradicting assertions, the religious and scientific, are nothing

[19] Plantinga, "On Christian Scholarship," in ed. Hesburg, *The Challenge and Promise of a Catholic University*, p. 292. Similarly, Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Scholarship Grounded in Religion" in ed. A. Sterk, *Religion, Scholarship and Higher Education*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2002, pp. 3–15.

> more than prevailing theories, research will be stimulated in both directions, until one of the theories appears unfounded.[20]

Hagen's model has porous lines, but one might still cite the current understanding of the Galileo case to be an example of the first category. The second might instance a scientist claiming on scientific grounds [*sic*] that there was no creator of the world. Admittedly, but not in this case, the understanding of a dogma may develop so as to later allow for a scientific view that was earlier excluded. The third category might relate to a very wide field indeed, and here matters are left rightly open. Hagen, writing in 1912, cites Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo as examples of conflict in this category. Hence, a scientist, sociologist, or psychologist who is a Christian should, in principle, find these distinctions reassuring as they indicate no abuse of academic freedom and a position to which they probably implicitly subscribe. These same principles are rather bluntly stated in Vatican I's canons.[21]

The third and final point is to note that the first principle assumes a metaphysics, epistemology, and historical character that all require further elaboration. *Faith and Reason* begins this task. If I were asked to outline in more detail my own presuppositions here, they can best be described as Thomistic "integral humanism."[22] Some of the assumptions embedded in this approach (which are clearly not exclusive to Thomism) are that God's creation is intelligible, rational, and indirectly reflects God. Properly investigating this creation can therefore indirectly lead to God, can never exclude God, and within a Christian context, the existence of God harmonizes all forms of knowledge, for *a priori*, there is a unity to creation for it was created for a single purpose: to give glory to God. Further, this means that belief in God is an appropriate context for the proper and fullest understanding of the various objects of study not always necessarily in terms of the objects themselves (as this would compromise the genuine autonomy of each discipline), but certainly in relation to discerning when a discipline has illegitimately made claims, and also in relating the discoveries of each discipline to moral, epistemological, and ontological issues. This is precisely what

[20] J. G. Hagen, *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1912, entry: "Science and the Church," p. 21 of 27 (www.newadvent.org/cathen/13598b.htm).

[21] See canons 4.2, 4.3 promulgated by the third session, in eds. J. F. Clarkson et al., *The Church Teaches*, Herder, St. Louis, Missouri, 1955, 82–3.

[22] See Jacques Maritain, *Integral Humanism: Temporal and Spiritual Problems of a New Christendom*, trans. Joseph W. Evans, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1973 [1936], and Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. L. K. Shook, Victor Gollancz, London, 1957. See further note 29 below.

Plantinga's comment above proposes. Wolfhart Pannenberg in the context of a specific science–religion debate puts this strongly, nicely drawing out these implications:

> If the God of the Bible is creator of the universe, then it is not possible to understand fully or even appropriately the processes of nature without any reference to that God. If, on the contrary, nature can be appropriately understood without reference to the God of the Bible, then that God cannot be the creator of the universe, and consequently he could not be truly God and could not be trusted as a source of moral teaching either. To be sure, the reality of God is not incompatible with all forms of abstract knowledge concerning the regularities of natural processes, a knowledge that abstracts from the concreteness of physical reality and therefore may also abstract from the presence of God in his creation. But neither should such abstract knowledge of regularities claim full and exclusive competence regarding the explanation of nature, and if it does so, the reality of God is thereby denied by implication. The so-called methodological atheism of modern science is far from pure innocence.[23]

The *second* general proposition that follows on from the first and its various implications is this:

> *All knowledge should be pursued primarily out of love for the world as an object of God's creation, and only secondarily for instrumental or functional ends. Only through the primary can the secondary be best determined. In this sense, the primary end of all forms of knowledge is contemplation of and glory to God, and love of God. Likewise, the means of pursuing these different sciences, while determined by the object of enquiry, should never be in conflict with the ends of all enquiry.*

This proposition might initially sound both pious and useless, but its operation can be impressively discerned in Oliver O'Donovan's profound theological critique of modernity's technological instrumentalism leading to constructivism and atheism.[24] This proposition offers a platform from which to criticize the trend to harness universities to industrial and economic ends, thereby judging all disciplines in terms of economic productivity. It also is

[23] W. Pannenberg, "Theological Questions to Scientists" in ed. A. R. Peacocke, *The Sciences and Theology in the Twentieth Century*, Oriel Press, Henley and London, 1981, pp. 3–16: p. 4. Torrance, in the same collection, makes clear that "modern science" cannot be so homogeneously characterized viz. methodological atheism. Indeed, Torrance, like John Paul II, envisages a new tide in the scientific world: see Torrance, "Divine and Contingent Order," pp. 81–97; John Paul II, "Letter."

[24] Oliver O'Donovan, *Begotten or Made?*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1984; and see also Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, trans. J. Wilkinson, Jonathan Cape, London, 1965.

able to question the liberal's defense of the university as preserving knowledge for knowledge's sake, which in the end fails hopelessly to identify what that "sake" is, given that the conceptions of knowledge are so diverse in the modern arena. Such liberalism eventually relates (and often leads to) postmodernism's love of endless play and plurality which is late capitalism's hidden exaltation of knowledge for *its* own sake, the production of culture for the enjoyment of the bourgeoisie.[25] Of course, the liberal and the utilitarian both hold important elements of what is being asserted here. The utilitarian is right in seeing that knowledge is power to be harnessed, but the *telos* of the good and the *means* of securing that *telos* are "questions" always requiring the help of the social sciences and natural sciences. This is precisely why *CU* specifies as one of the essential characteristics of a Catholic university, the ethical dimensions to all knowledge.

> Because knowledge is meant to serve the human person, research in a Catholic University is always carried out with a concern for the *ethical* and *moral implications* both of its method and of its discoveries. This concern, while it must be present in all research, is particularly important in the areas of science and technology.[26]

Note that the ethical concerns are not simply about the use of discoveries and the fruits of knowledge, but also the means and methods employed. The former is too often emphasized at the cost of the latter, which is intellectually as important in the envisaged marriage. Also to be noted is the cyclical nature of the purpose of knowledge: its serves the human family and the natural and cultural world within which it subsists, but it *only* does so because God's redemption is concerned with the human person, and also therefore, the natural and cultural world. Rather than human ends at the center, we have God's glory, and from that follows the purpose of humankind. In *Faith and Reason* (subsequently *FR*, with page references in the text) this is given specification when Pope John Paul II writes: "In the field of scientific research a positivistic mentality took hold which not only abandoned the Christian vision of the world, but more especially rejected every appeal to a metaphysical or moral vision." This led, in some scientists, to the exaltation of "market-based logic" and also "the temptation of a quasi-divine power over nature and even over the human being" (*FR*, p. 46). The need is for scientists to work again within "the *sapiential* horizon" (*FR*, p. 106).

[25] See Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Verso, London, 1990.

[26] *CU*, p. 18.

Hence, only when we affirm the glory of God in prayer and praise can the purpose of the human family be fully discerned, and thus the ethical criteria by which to judge the methods and contents of the various disciplines. In this respect, the liberal is right to value knowledge for its own sake, for the truth discovered in genuine intellectual enquiry is to be honored as truth; but finally it is truth about the world God has created, loves, and draws toward himself. The valuing of knowledge for its own sake requires further grounding, and a developed justification, and this is where Nietzsche's critique unmasks the encyclopaedic project which exalted knowledge for its own sake, yet constructed knowledge in an entirely ideological manner as MacIntyre and others have shown. It is precisely when power is replaced by love, understood as service to the powerless, that the Church's sense that all knowledge is at the service of the kingdom of God enters the contemporary debate about the university. Put bluntly, the purpose of the university is to find love at the heart of all things, for love is the cause of the world. There is a strong Christian tradition in the Bible, later developed by Augustine, Aquinas, and others, that the Creator's image is analogically reflected in creation. This does not mean that the study of atoms is going to show that love rather than neutrons and protons are to be found, or that the meaning of *pi* is love rather than approximately 3.14159. Rather, once the atomic structure has been explicated, or the structure of mathematical formulae, the question of how such ordering analogically facilitates the possibilities of love, harmony, beauty, and truth is vital, and is another way of recognizing the ethical and methodological dimensions of the disciplines.

Historically, Christian universities have often fallen short of this task and even perverted it, but that would be no argument against the basic vision being advanced here. David Schindler makes the point very incisively when he writes that the task of the Catholic university is twofold:

> (1) to show, from within each discipline and in the terms proper to each discipline, how that discipline is being guided by a worldview—in the case of liberalism, by mechanism and subjectivism; and (2) to show how a Catholic worldview (of the cosmos as created in the image of Christ's [eucharistic] love, hence of a cosmos wherein order and love are mutually inclusive) leads to a more ample understanding of evidence and argument, already within the terms proper to each discipline.[27]

Hence, to summarize this second general proposition, within the context of a Christian university, knowledge is first about contemplation, wonder, and

[27] Schindler, *Heart of the World*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1996, p. 171.

awe, and only then, because its proper context is situated within God's creation and creative purposes, can its instrumental value be judged. In both method and conclusions, all disciplines must value and protect the dignity of the human person. The ethical context of the intellectual enterprise is properly regarded only within the overall religious framework of the university.

The *third* proposition is already in part implied in the first and related to the manner of the second's operation:

> *Theology has a central role to play in the Christian university and must function as a servant "queen of the sciences."*

Rather than feathering my own discipline's nest, I hope the argument of the book contextualizes this claim, and further distinguishes it in three ways. First, the integration of knowledge central to the Catholic university, in contrast to the modern research university, requires the Catholic intellectual vision to be articulated in some detail by theologians in harmony with natural scientists, social scientists, and the human sciences. This is clearly a collaborative and long-term task. Since the truth of God is the center of this unification, theology with philosophy is central to this attainment. *CU* puts it succinctly, and is worth quoting in detail:

> Integration of knowledge is a process, one which will always remain incomplete; moreover, the explosion of knowledge in recent decades, together with the rigid compartmentalization of knowledge within individual academic disciplines, makes the task increasingly difficult. But a University, and especially a Catholic University, '*has to be a "living union" of individual organisms* dedicated to the search for truth . . . It is necessary to *work towards a higher synthesis* of knowledge, in which alone lies the possibility of satisfying that thirst for truth which is profoundly inscribed on the heart of the human person.' [note 19] Aided by the specific contribution of philosophy and theology, university scholars will be engaged in a constant effort to determine the relative place and meaning of each of the various disciplines within the context of a vision of the human person and the world that is enlightened by the Gospel, and therefore by a faith in Christ, the *Logos*, as the centre of creation and of human history.[28]

Here, a considerably complex issue arises. Philosophy, and not only theology, is privileged as essential to attain this unity. At this point we enter a very specific understanding of philosophy. In *Faith and Reason*, John Paul II

[28] *CU*, p. 16. Note 19 in the document cites John Paul II in 1989, *Church in the Modern World*, 61; and Newman's *The Idea of a University*, p. 457: the University "professes to assign to each study which it receives, its proper place and its just boundaries; to define the rights, to establish the mutual relations and to effect the intercommunion of one and all."

outlines what has been argued to be a form of Thomism, and specifically, "Existential Thomism" associated with Maritain and Gilson.[29] However, it is important to note that he underlines that the Church is not committed to any one philosophy (*FR*, p. 49) and only intervenes when certain philosophies come to illegitimate conclusions due to their employing premises or methods that disfigure the rightful autonomy of their own discipline (*FR*, pp. 49–56). The issue is this: the object of theology is God, and in this sense, theology requires a mediating discipline to engage with other disciplines, for their objects of proper knowledge are other than God. The function of philosophy is multi-directional. Theology cannot proceed without philosophy (*FR*, p. 65) and neither can philosophy operate properly without an openness to the truths known by revelation (those that are exclusively known in revelation and those that might be arrived at through right reason). But philosophy is also able to form the bridge between theology and the disciplines. This mediating function is found in philosophy, not in any specific school of philosophy, such as existentialism, phenomenology, analytic, or postmodern, but in philosophy's rightful concern with epistemological, ontological, metaphysical, and ethical questions as with "the structures of knowledge and personal communication, especially the various forms and functions of language" (*FR*, p. 65).

This concept of reason in philosophical thinking must be distanced from two particular models that are not being envisaged. First, the Enlightenment model of the power of reason alone to arrive at truth is not commended.[30]

[29] See John F. X. Knasas, "*Fides et Ratio* and the Twentieth Century Thomistic Revival," *New Blackfriars*, 81, 955, 2000, pp. 400–8, who argues that of the three forms of twentieth-century Thomism (Aristotelian—the River Forest School; Existential—Gilson and Maritain; and Transcendental—Rahner, de Lubac [*sic*], Lonergan), only one conforms to the encyclical, the Existential. Admittedly, he draws from non-encyclical materials to fully establish his point (pp. 407–8). Steven Baldner, "Christian Philosophy, Gilson, and *Fides et Ratio*" in ed. Timothy L. Smith, *Faith and Reason*, St. Augustine's Press, Chicago, 2001, pp. 153–66 also comes to the same conclusion but with less tendentious arguments than Knasas. However, in the same book, the River Forest theologian, Benedict M. Ashley, "The Validity of Metaphysics: The Need for a Solidly Grounded Metaphysics," pp. 67–89, suggests otherwise. Avery Dulles suggests de Lubac is the key influence; see his "Can Philosophy be Christian? The New State of the Question" in eds. D. R. Foster and J. W. Koterski, *Two Wings*, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, DC, 2003, pp. 3–21, p. 18. It is not essential to settle this argument here, and it would have been odd for John Paul II to publicly favor one particular school in such a debate, even if in private he did. While he might publicly criticize one, if in grave error, I think these arguments, at best, suggest a compatibility with a particular type of Thomism and John Paul II's position.

[30] See Joseph W. Koterski, "The Challenge to Metaphysics in *Fides et Ratio*," pp. 22–5; and Timothy Sean Quinn, "Infides et Unratio: Modern Philosophy and the Papal Encyclical," pp. 177–92—both in eds. Foster and Koterski, *Two Wings*.

Reason, in Pope John Paul II's model, operates within the context of faith, within a tradition-specific set of assumptions and concepts, even though the latter are highly pluriform. Second, reason reflects the mind's inherent power to transcend the particular, to conceptualize, to universalize from the particular, and to relate the many particulars into a synthetic whole, constantly being open to a development of this synthesis in the light of new particulars. Hence, Pope John Paul II's critique of eclecticism, relativism, and nihilism (*FR*, pp. 82, 85, 90). This critical realism has to be defended philosophically. It is also defended from the perspective of Christianity, based on the claims of revelation. *FR* is finally a plea for philosophy's proper autonomy and recovery after its deformation, its "fateful separation" from the "late Medieval period onward" (*FR*, p. 45).[31] The Encyclical is a recognition of the way that the whole enterprise of knowledge (the university) has been divorced from its proper roots in wisdom and God.[32] It is the fundamental power of speculative reason that is open to God, able to reflect on all particulars and their differing structures, and move toward the universal that is being extolled. Hence, this contentious second point is that theology, with the aid of philosophy (so understood), has a privileged place within a Catholic university. *CU* thus sees theology as an essential dimension to any Catholic university:

> *Theology* plays a particularly important role in the search for a synthesis of knowledge as well as in the dialogue between faith and reason. It serves all other disciplines in their search for meaning, not only by helping them to investigate how their discoveries will affect individuals and society but also by bringing a perspective and an orientation not contained within their own methodologies. In turn, interaction with these other disciplines and their discoveries enriches theology, offering it a better understanding of the world today, and making theological research more relevant to current needs. Because of its specific importance among the academic disciplines, every Catholic University should have a faculty, or at least a chair, of theology.[33]

Admittedly, the quotation does not adequately bring out the role of philosophy, but should be read with *Faith and Reason* for a more balanced picture. It would logically also require a faculty, or at least a chair, in philosophy in every Catholic university. However, the quotation does show that

[31] See also *FR*, pp. 45–8, covering this period until postmodernity. See eds. Laurence Paul Hemming and Susan Frank Parsons, *Restoring Faith in Reason*, SCM, London, 2002, esp. the commentary by James McEvoy, pp. 175–98.

[32] *FR*, p. 9, and also pp. 16–20.

[33] *CU*, p. 22.

a Catholic university is impossible without theology, for it facilitates the intellectual co-ordination (and sometimes questioning) of the methods and findings of the disciplines, while never questioning the legitimate autonomy of any. This "servant" status is an important qualifier to the title "queen of the sciences" which might at other times imply theology as a petulant interventionist. This intervention should logically never happen if disciplines are true to their subject. Hence, the quotation underscores theology's servant role in terms of bringing to a discipline a perspective and orientation "not contained within their own methodologies." And this servant status is further highlighted by such dialogue allowing theology to be more alert to "current needs."

The third implication, not explicitly stated or developed in any of the Church documents inspected, is that all students *and* teachers in *every* discipline should at least have some training in theology and philosophy. This is important for a number of reasons. Theologians are simply not competent to develop this integration from their side alone, and while there are some very able intellectuals who were or are trained to a high degree in both theology and another discipline (Teilhard de Chardin, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Thomas F. Torrance, Arthur Peacocke, and John Polkinghorne are examples regarding the natural sciences), one cannot rely on such individuals alone. Whole research communities need to be working within such a paradigm, where highly trained physicists, economists, and psychologists are already thinking about these issues themselves, rather than theologians in any way policing matters, be they servants or queens. Alasdair MacIntyre emphasizes that all students in a Catholic university need more (and at the very least, some) training in theology and philosophy, or else the curriculum will simply replicate the best secular research universities.[34] He oddly fails to extend this to all academic staff.

There is a correlative requirement upon theologians. All theologians should gain some grounding in the social, human, and natural sciences, as well as philosophy at least to an elementary level if they are able to contribute to the task of a Catholic university. If these difficult demands are not structurally implemented, Catholic universities will revert to what many of them are at present: places where liturgies and social service characterize the campus, but the intellectual scene is no different from its secular counterparts.

Having briefly outlined these three general propositions regarding a Catholic university, it is now time to explore how they might be developed in regard to a specific disciplinary practice: physics and cosmology. This will

[34] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Catholic Universities: Dangers, Hopes, Choices" in ed. R. E. Sullivan, *Higher Learning and Catholic Traditions*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2001, pp. 1–22: pp. 6–10.

allow us to identify what is unrealistic or misinformed about these three propositions as well as identify various tensions in them in relation to this specific discipline.

III Sharing the Feast? Theology, Physics, and Cosmology

In what follows I concentrate on three issues raised by John Paul II in a "Letter to the director of the Vatican observatory, George V. Coyne SJ, on the 300th anniversary of Newton's *Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica*" (subsequently called "Letter," page numbering in text, preceded by M).[35] The "Letter" was so remarkable in the eyes of three scientists, that together they published a book collecting reflections on it from top-ranking scientists, theologians, and philosophers, not all explicitly Christian, nor Catholic. First, let me summarize the "Letter" which obviously has no authoritative ecclesial status regarding any matters of science.

John Paul II cites the recent "movement for union" with Christian Churches, and then the wider move toward unity of cultures and religions (M4). Hence, the Church's relationship with science is seen as a natural development: the Church reaching out to the world. He also situates this within the "historic animosities" that exist in cultures and especially within the academic community where "the separation between truth and values persists, and the isolation of their several cultures—scientific, humanistic and religious" (M2). Knowledge harnessed to power requires to be used in the context of a vision of all things united in Christ (M5). John Paul II then notes how forces within each of the disciplines propel this closer relationship. He suggests that contemporary science seems to reflect this "correlative unity" that relates all things, which is found in Jesus Christ (M6). Contemporary physics exemplifies this in its quest for the unification of all four fundamental physical forces: gravitation, electro-magnetism, and strong and weak nuclear interactions. This convergence in physics is hopeful in a world of such detailed specialization and fragmentation. Here we have a movement toward convergence (M6).[36] Second, there is a philosophical and

[35] In eds. Robert John Russell, William R. Stoeger SJ, and George V. Coyne SJ, *John Paul II on Science and Religion: Reflections on the New View from Rome*, Vatican Observatory Publications, Rome, 1990, numbered M1–M14.

[36] This convergence is noted by many scientists. See, for example, Barbour, *Issues*, pp. 283–98. The bibliography and issues are updated in the following: Torrance, "Divine and Contingent," pp. 82–91, and "Comments," pp. 106–8; Pannenberg, "Theological Questions," pp. 3–16; Polkinghorne, "Christian Faith," in ed. Sullivan, *Higher Learning*, p. 46.

theological dimension to convergence. "Unity involves the drive of the human mind toward understanding and the desire of the human spirit for love." The theme of knowledge and love is central here, and he applies this analogy on both the personal level and the level of the sciences: "If love is genuine, it moves not towards the assimilation of the other but towards union with the other" (M9). With this double convergence in mind, he then turns to the question of the relationship between theology and the natural sciences, especially physics.

First, the relationship is not to be regarded as a "disciplinary unity," for the "Church does not propose that science should become religion or religion science" (M7). Hence, this is not a relationship of "regressive . . . unilateral reductionism." Oneness in theology is relationship between three, the trinity, preserving distinctness and unity at the same time. This model of loving relationship and unity is analogically applied to the disciplines. "We are asked to become one. We are not asked to become each other" (M8). Each discipline, positively, can "enrich, nourish and challenge the other to be more fully what it can be and to contribute to our vision of who we are and who we are becoming" (M7). Both "must preserve their autonomy and their distinctiveness . . . Each should posses its own principles, its patterns of procedures, its diversities of interpretation and its own conclusions . . . neither ought to assume that it forms a necessary premise for the other" (M9). Admittedly here, and throughout the letter, John Paul II seems to give all disciplines, including theology, an equal status in the mutual dialogue. However, read in the context of other papal documents, this balance requires more nuanced specification.

Finally, John Paul II outlines two areas of importance in this dialogue. First, in the light of the mutual antagonisms present in the history of these two disciplines he attempts to highlight the foundations for a different future. Theology, after all, also concerns the human world, the object of study for the sciences, and thus will learn in a whole arena concerning "the intelligibility of nature and history" and the "human person" (M10). This new learning cuts deeply:

> If the cosmologies of the ancient Near Eastern world could be purified and assimilated into the first chapters of Genesis, might contemporary cosmology have something to offer to our reflections upon creation? Does an evolutionary perspective bring any light to bear upon theological anthropology, the meaning of the human person as the *imago Dei*, the problem of Christology—and even upon the development of doctrine itself? What, if any, are the eschatological implications of contemporary cosmology, especially in the light of the vast future of our universe? Can theological method fruitfully

> appropriate insights from scientific methodology and the philosophy of science? (M11)

These questions open a quite radical agenda for theology, and with it the memory of Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) who did employ an evolutionary perspective to reflect on theological anthropology, Christology, and eschatology. Rome's criticism of him is worth recalling, but it is also clear that one theologian's contribution is not to the point. The point is that the contents of science (evolution) and the methods and philosophy of science may have much to teach theology, even though this process of learning from science can be very problematic if science attempts to shape and determine theology. Andrew Moore has shown very thoroughly the problems involved in the latter process.[37] Moore argues that too many theologians (Braithwaite originally, then Soskice, Peacocke, Murphy, and Barbour) have defended theological realism on the basis of scientific realism. Moore criticizes their assumptions of a positive analogical relationship between the two disciplines on methodological, epistemological, and ontological grounds. In highlighting significant differences he shows how theology becomes alien to itself in conforming itself to science, rather than revelation.[38] He is not arguing *per se* that conceptual models from the sciences and other disciplines have nothing to teach theology. Indeed, he is indebted to a number of philosophers in developing his theological position.

To return to the "Letter." We see theology's learning from physics. It is significant that the question of what physics has to learn from theology is kept to the end, and this order is indicative of the real attempt at re-building trust between theologians and scientists, stressing what theology has to learn, and the autonomy of the natural sciences. However, this learning can only be based on tried and tested findings. Theology should only take seriously those findings that eventually "become part of the intellectual culture of the time," and theologians must "test their value in bringing out from Christian belief some of the possibilities which have not yet been realised" (M10). In this instance, John Paul II is not as suspicious of contemporary intellectual culture as in *FR* or earlier in *The Splendour of Truth Shines* (*Veritatis Splendor*), 1993, but the point is that only well-established scientific

[37] Andrew Moore, *Realism and Christian Faith: God, Grammar, and Meaning*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, pp. 40–72.

[38] Moore's arguments are persuasive in principle, but I would question his analysis of Soskice and her use of Aquinas (and Moore's reading of Aquinas) in suggesting they both are guilty of using causal analogies of being such that "God is regarded as a member of the same ontological kind as his creation" (p. 141). This is true of neither. See my discussion of Clouser below.

findings are significant in this engagement. Otherwise, enculturation can become whimsical and shallow. To illustrate this process he cites as an example, the "hylomorphism of Aristotelian natural philosophy" that was "adopted by the medieval theologians to help them explore the nature of the sacraments and the hypostatic union" (M10–11). This did not mean that the "Church adjudicated the truth or falsity of Aristotelian insight" (M11). Of course, it did in the Galileo trial, and in other instances. Nevertheless, he challenges contemporary theologians to integrate their work "with respect to contemporary science, philosophy and the other areas of human knowing" asking "if they have accomplished this extraordinarily difficult process as well as did these medieval masters"? (M11). We find here an acceptance of the possibility of a radical change of world-view, whereby the Aristotelian paradigm might be replaced by new scientific paradigms that could transform the face of theology. Note, there is no judgement on this matter, just an openness.

Second, while theologians clearly have their agenda full, what of scientists? Interestingly, in the "Letter" their learning from theology concerns the recognition of the limits of their discipline. That is, theology can help different sciences recognize their limitations and rightful parameters so that they do not make false claims about absolutes, the meaning of life, and ethics, determined purely from within the context of these limited disciplines. In this sense Pannenberg's comment cited earlier is germane: "The so-called methodological atheism of modern science is far from pure innocence." While this theme of critical engagement is pursued rigorously in *FR*, it is not in the "Letter." However, the "Letter" is an invitation to scientists to reflect on their methodologies, assumptions, and contexts to purify their own practice. This mutual process is nicely summarized. "Science can purify religion from error and superstition; religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes" (M13). Or put another way, theology does "not profess a pseudo-science and science does not become an unconscious theology" (M14).

The "Letter" closes with comments on the necessary training of theologians and scientists for this task, and the citation of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences as a structural example of this bridge building. Given the many papal documents on the university, we might take it for granted that the university is indeed the main structural force for implementing this program. It is also important to note that John Paul II did not dwell on the usual issue of ethics in the uses of science, and that he also stresses the gains for theology in this dialogue far more than for science. Hence, the scientist editors are surely correct in saying "This message is unique in that it is the first major papal statement in almost four decades

specifically focused on the substantive and constructive relation of theology and science."[39]

Arising from the subsequent discussion around this document, and in relation to the wider field of science and religion, I would now like to pursue four questions simultaneously. First, in the literature concerning the relation of science to religion, where might we locate John Paul II's comments? Second, what are some of the critical issues raised for theology in this document, and are any in dissonance with the document or the three general propositions I have articulated? Third, what are some of the critical issues raised for the sciences from this document, and are any in dissonance with the document or the general statements I have articulated? Fourth, drawing two and three together, what light does this discussion throw on the general statements developed above, either in confirming, disconfirming, or problematizing them. These questions of course represent the tip of more than one iceberg, and possibly an entire continent!

The literature on the relationship between science and theology is replete with differing models.[40] I choose the typology of Ted Peters in what follows for it is helpful in locating John Paul II's position as well as indicating problems in Peters's typology, which allows the process of location to be both creative and critical. Furthermore, Peters's typology is constructed on developing and refining earlier typological offerings and he offers eight positions regarding the differing relationship between the two disciplines, some being mutually incompatible and others not.

First comes scientism that seeks war, with victory for the scientist alone. Examples are Richard Dawkins, Stephen Hawking, Carl Sagan, Fred Hoyle, and Bertrand Russell (who while not a scientist, was a mathematical and logical reductionist). In terms of John Paul II's analysis, scientism is clearly a pseudo-or unconscious theology dealing with false absolutes. Whether the atheism of these thinkers determines their scientific positions is a moot point. However, it is worth noting that this factor cannot be discounted on either logical or contingent grounds. Logically, the critique mounted by Reformed Calvinists such as Alvin Plantinga following the works of Abraham Kuyper, and Roy A. Clouser influenced by Herman Dooyeweerd, are most impressive. They take an aspect of the Catholic insight and develop

[39] Eds. Russell et al., *John Paul II on Science and Religion*, p. vi.

[40] See, for example, the typologies of ed. A. R. Peacocke, *The Sciences and Theology in the Twentieth Century*, Oriel Press, Henley and London, 1981; Ted Peters, "Science and Theology" in ed. David F. Ford, *The Modern Theologians*, 2nd edn., Blackwell, Oxford, 1997, pp. 649–68, and ed. T. Peters, *Cosmos as Creation: Science and Theology in Consonance*, Abingdon, Nashville, Tennessee, 1989; Barbour, *Science and Religion*, pp. 3–29, and *Religion in an Age of Science*, HarperSanFrancisco, San Francisco, 1990.

it to its logical conclusion.[41] Both argue that every world-view has an implicit "metaphysics," formally identified by Clouser as that which is regarded as "self-existent and unconditionally trustworthy" (p. 194).[42] Clouser then argues that all theories are open to being judged as pagan in so much as their self-existent element is part of creation. He then ranges over the fields of maths, physics, and psychology, showing this to be the case with various theories. For example, in maths he argues that Plato's and Leibniz's number-world theory, whereby the laws dictating the ways numbers behave are eternal and invisible, making all observable things possible, leads to a false divine. "The truths we obtain are supposed to be eternal, and not affected by the experienced universe. But by regarding this hypothetical realm as having independent existence they [Plato and Leibniz] accord it the status of divinity!" (pp. 122–3). That is:

> It is only when someone regards the hypothetical entities and laws as existing independently of *all* other reality, so that mathematical truths would be the same whether *anything* else existed or not, that the person has ascribed utterly non-dependent self-existence to the hypothetical realm, and has thereby regarded them as divine. (p. 123)

Clouser also outlines John Stuart Mill's theory, controlled by the assumption that "reality is exclusively sensory" (p. 115), a kind of absolute subjectivism in contrast to Plato's objectivism. He shows that Bertrand Russell's theory of logical classes, of which maths is one instance, and that logic is the ultimate nature of things upon which all other aspects depend, is also thereby pagan (pp. 114–16). Finally, Dewey's instrumentalism is analyzed. Clouser shows there is no ultimate reality being described, just pragmatic success or lack of it (pp. 116–19). This Clouser calls a "biological perspective," which is also deemed pagan (p. 118).

[41] See Alvin Plantinga, "On Christian Scholarship"; "Advice to Christian Philosophers (With Special Preface for Christian Thinkers from Different Disciplines)," www.leaderu.com/truth/1truth10html, pp. 1–19; *The Twin Pillars of Christian Scholarship*, The Stob Lectures of Calvin College and Seminary, 1989–90, Calvin College and Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1990; and his inspiration Abraham Kuyper, *Calvinism: Six Stone Foundation Lectures*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1932, and more concisely, *Encyclopaedia of Sacred Theology*, Charles Scribner, New York, 1898, esp. pp. 59–181. See also Roy A. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories*, University of Notre Dame Press, London, 1991, whose inspiration is Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 4 vols., Peideia Press, Ontario, 1983. Unsurprisingly Plantinga is at home in a Catholic university. Clouser, on the other hand, totally misunderstands Catholic analogy—see below in main text.

[42] Page references to Clouser, *The Myth*.

In physics Clouser notes that Ernst Mach's sensory hypothesis regarding atoms (i.e. they do not exist, but are postulated to explain what can be experienced), requires that it is a theory that there are physical objects at all (p. 131). Einstein went a step further, holding that sensory perception was in fact dependent upon logical/mathematical properties and laws (p. 133), and these laws were therefore more fundamental. Hence, despite others finding in Einstein a religious spirit, Clouser argues that in his theory he is not. Heisenberg navigates between the two, arguing that they are "mathematical possibilities" (p. 135) and that all things real are mathematically calculable. As above, Clouser sees these fundamental rules determining each world-view as the elevation of a created quality to that of the divine in so much as they are deemed "self-existent" (p. 139). Hence, Clouser wants to argue that certain forms of theoretical physics are founded on atheist presuppositions.

Clouser's analysis is forceful and insightful, although it has two major shortcomings. First, he fails to distinguish between relative absolutes that legitimately exist in relation to a specified limited field and metaphysical absolutes, discernible through theology and philosophy. For instance, it may be held within a discipline that the fundamental truth of sense perception is that it is dependent upon logical and mathematical properties and laws. It is only when this fundamental truth is applied beyond its competent sphere and taken as the single normative absolute that it is erroneous. Hence, for Einstein, his law regarding sense perception technically has no necessary bearing upon the fact that our sense perception is ultimately dependent on a Creator (who may well reflect logical and mathematical properties). This lack of contextualization drives Clouser to condemn as pagan many theories that *can* be pagan if held in an absolutist manner, but can also operate within a broader theistic context, or indeed an agnostic context. In short, Clouser fails to make the distinction between faith's and reason's proper arenas.

Second, Clouser also offers a critique of Roman Catholicism based on an erroneous understanding of analogy. At first, he rightly notes that when "religious language speaks of God, therefore, it must do so by *analogy* so that the meaning of our terms is partly the same but also partly different from when they are used of creatures" (p. 175). However, the difference is then ignored when a few lines later he writes of Aquinas: "Traditional theology's account of both God's nature and the possibility of religious language require that there are qualities possessed by creatures which are uncreated" (p. 175). But this is never claimed by Aquinas, and the quotes given from *Summa* 1a. q.13, a.2–3, fail to appreciate that Aquinas is clear in the overall context, rather than from these two quotes alone, that God's *dissimilarity* is

greater than the similarity.[43] Hence, Clouser misunderstands Aquinas and subsequently also develops his otherwise very illuminating theory on the basis that the attributes of God are not divine, not uncreated, and God's own uncreated being is never known to us. This totally severs the relation between God as He is in Himself and in relation to us. It leaves Clouser ironically unable to ground any statement on revelation as the real analogical disclosure of God. However, Clouser's attempts to subject all theories to such analysis, deriving from Dooyeweerd's work, is to be applauded, even if flawed in certain respects.

Plantinga offers a more sophisticated and less systematic set of examples than Clouser, ranging from the sociobiology of E. O. Wilson to Dawkins's defense of evolution, and the dominance of creative anti-realism in the humanities (in MacIntyre's terms, modernism and postmodernism). He also insightfully notes how the religious beliefs of a scientist can affect their openness to contrary positions. He cites Francisco Ayala, Richard Dawkins, Stephen Jay Gould, William Provine, and Philip Spieth as all declaring the truth of evolution as a fact, as much a fact as that the earth is round and revolves around the sun. He cites Dawkins's telling comment that if someone contested evolution they would be either "ignorant, stupid or insane (or wicked, but I'd rather not consider that)."[44] The only way to explain Dawkins's and others' attitude, as it is patently not the case that the scientific evidence is absolutely certain, is to see that

> If you reject theism in favour of naturalism, this evolutionary story is the only visible answer to the question Where did all this enormous variety of flora and fauna come from? Even if the fossil record is at best spotty and at worst disconfirming, even if there are anomalies of other sorts, this story is the only answer on offer (from a naturalistic perspective) to these questions; so objections will not be brooked . . . From a naturalistic perspective evolution is the only game in town.[45]

[43] The two quotations are "'God is good' . . . means that what we call goodness in creatures exists in God in a higher way. Thus God is not good (merely) because he causes a goodness, but rather goodness flows from him because he is good." And second: "God is known from the perfections that flow from him and are to be found in creatures yet which exist in him in a transcendent way." See David Burrell on Aquinas and analogy: *Aquinas: God and Action*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1979. This misreading of Aquinas was initiated by Barth, and repeated by Moore and Clouser.

[44] Plantinga, "On Christian Scholarship," p. 283, with no reference for the Dawkins quote. For references to all the scientists cited, see p. 294, n. 11. One could also add Fred Hoyle—see McMullin, "How Should Cosmology Relate to Theology?" in ed. Peacocke, *The Sciences and Theology*, p. 33.

[45] Plantinga, "On Christian Scholarship," pp. 284–5.

Plantinga slightly overstates his case as there are non-theistic scientists who raise problems with orthodox Darwinism.[46] Nevertheless, what both Clouser and Plantinga demonstrate is that there are logical and contingent grounds to challenge scientific atheism, and this takes two directions. Negatively, in terms of a critique of atheist science based on metaphysical methodological naturalism, and constructively, in terms of working within scientific paradigms that keep the religious question properly open, such as the scientific "view of the universe as a unitary open system."[47]

Peters's *second* position seeks to make scientific language the normative language for belief, such that all theological statements should be understood purely and exclusively in scientific terms. Peters calls this scientific imperialism. He cites Paul Davies and Frank Tipler as examples. Tipler claims that the Big Bang and thermodynamics can provide a better explanation of the resurrection and defense of Christianity, and that theology should become a branch of physics.[48] In John Paul II's analysis, this is also an instance where science fails to respect the limited autonomy of theology, in excluding the validity of theological discourse, as well as overstepping science's own proper boundaries. As it stands, it is an unacceptable position. However, in a very limited sense it pursues what John Paul II urges, a rethinking of theology in terms of scientific conceptuality, akin to the use of Aristotelian physics. But Tipler would be criticized for failing to contextualize his own project, *absolutizing* and *prioritizing* scientific discourse in an analogous manner to scientism, but not for pursuing an understanding of resurrection in terms of the Big Bang and thermodynamics. The latter type of exploration is certainly encouraged by John Paul II, even if there are issues that require further clarification in this type of approach.[49]

The *third* position depicted by Peters is called ecclesiastical authoritarianism and is exemplified in Pius IX's *Syllabus of Errors* where item 57 stated that it is an error that science and philosophy can withdraw from ecclesial control. Peters argues that Vatican II and post-Conciliar Catholic thought reverses this, allowing instead for "autonomous disciplines" (citing *Pastoral*

[46] According to McMullin, Plantinga also fails to distinguish between what McMullin calls this historical fact of evolution (descent with modification) and the theory of evolution explaining why evolution occurred. See Ernan McMullin, "Evolution and Special Creation," *Zygon*, 28, 1993, pp. 229–335.

[47] Torrance, "Divine and Contingent," p. 91, where Torrance argues that the post-Newtonian paradigm has created a new hospitality toward religion. This kind of position is also held by various "new age" scientists such as Fritjof Capra (and David Bohm—see below).

[48] Frank J. Tipler, *The Physics of Immortality. Modern Cosmology, God and the Resurrection of the Dead*, Pan, London, 1996.

[49] See my comments on Moore above.

Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*), 59, and "Letter"). It is clear that Pope John Paul II is able to recognize the Church erring, as it did with Galileo and in other instances, but can Peters be correct in placing Pope John Paul II in opposition to Pius IX and earlier authoritative tradition? I think not, for four reasons. First, condemnation 57 is in keeping with Vatican I's position on faith and reason. In fact it is cited in paragraph 59 of Vatican II's *Church in the Modern World* quoted by Peters to show a difference between Pius and Vatican II! Vatican I's position on faith and reason is also central to *FR*, p. 13, and therefore hardly in tension with John Paul II's position. Vatican I held the "two orders of knowledge" which are distinct, namely faith and reason, and from this derived the teaching of the proper autonomy of the sciences.[50] Pius IX simply reiterated that in principle when science or philosophy overstepped its legitimate autonomy and made claims regarding matters of dogma or morals, the Church had a duty and authority to point this out. In practice, this may sometimes lend itself to "ecclesiastical authoritarianism," but in principle, the issue of the Church's final and circumscribed authority is not contested by either Vatican II or John Paul II.

Second, the context of the legitimate autonomy of the intellectual disciplines, and especially the sciences, in Vatican II, in *Church in the Modern World* (p. 59) (and also in the *Declaration on Christian Education* (*Gravissimum Educationis*) (pp. 10–12), and *Declaration on Religious Freedom* (*Dignatatis Humanae*) (p. 1), regarding other religions and non-religious civil freedoms) is always in the context of "the rights of the individual and of the community, whether particular or universal" and that of the "common good." Hence, there is no absolute sense of "autonomy," but only a legitimate and contextual autonomy *within* the wider narrative of truth, which is of Christ, and therefore truth entrusted to the Church. Hence, in a proper sense, despite abuse and misuse, the Church does have an intellectual duty to speak authoritatively in regard to philosophy and the sciences when they conflict with revelation.

Third, in *FR* there is an explicit defense of the magisterium's authority over philosophy, in one limited sense: "It is the task of the Magisterium in the first place to indicate which philosophical presuppositions and conclusions are incompatible with revealed truth, thus articulating the demands which faith's point of view makes of philosophy" (*FR*, p. 50). That this is not ecclesiastical authoritarianism is evident in the fact that the magisterium's competence is not extended into the field of philosophy *per se*,

[50] See canons 4.2 and 4.3, cited above.

which rightly has its own autonomy, but only in so much as that discipline has lost "*recta ratio*" (*FR*, p. 50), teaching that which is contrary to revelation. This point specifically made about philosophy, is legitimately extended to any other discipline in so much as it makes claims beyond its methods, limits, and competencies.

Fourth, and finally, Peters reads the words "autonomous disciplines" uncontextually, importing a liberal political notion of the term, rather than recognizing that his own favoured position, hypothetical consonance, also calls into question some notions of "autonomy" (see below). In sum, Peters seems falsely to construct ecclesiastical authoritarianism as a binary opposite in principle to the legitimate autonomy of the sciences.[51] I have questioned this primarily in principle. The practice supplies examples of illegitimate authoritarianism as well as legitimate authority. Hence, if we remove the derogatory note to "authority," John Paul II's position does fit this category along with that of Reformed Calvinist philosophers like Clouser and Plantinga. This position may well be negatively exemplified by the opposite to scientism, or various Protestant groups that simply claim the literal truth of the Bible as determinative over all scientific claims, but not by Peters's illustration and type.

The *fourth* position is that of scientific creationists. Although these writers' grandparents were biblical fundamentalists, today's scientific creationists "are willing to argue their case in the arena of science . . . They assume that biblical truth and scientific truth belong to the same domain."[52] Roger E. Timm is one of this new breed, that Peters characterizes as "soldiers within the science army."[53] The war analogy only operates when there is "a battle between atheistic science and theistic science."[54] John Paul II's "Letter" would also allow him to occupy this type, for there is no question about the proper autonomy of science in this position, and also no question that properly conducted science never contradicts Christian truth, but always rather supports it, directly or indirectly.

However, this position raises one question regarding the priority of truth in theology that it is important to clarify. Roger E. Timm, for instance, makes it clear that if there is a clash between a biblical truth and a scientific truth, the latter should be called into question, given that the former has

[51] Peters is not a Catholic, but Karl Schmitz-Moorman is, and assumes this same erroneous understanding of autonomy as well as John Paul's distance from earlier teachings in "Science and Theology," in eds. Russell et al., *John Paul II on Science and Religion*, pp. 99–106.

[52] Peters, "Science," p. 651.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid., p. 665, note 11.

prior authority. In this instance, because Genesis is true, then it must be the case that: God fixed the distinct kinds of organisms and species at the original point of creation and they did not evolve; there is a separate ancestry for apes and humans; creation is out of nothing; mutation and natural selection cannot explain the process of evolution, and so on.[55] Two very specific issues are raised at this point. First, priority is given to the authority of revelation in the Catholic position so far outlined, and this makes it fit, in principle, with this fourth model. Second, the Catholic position does not have any uniform or accepted methodological way of working out which propositions of biblical revelation and doctrine translate themselves into specific scientific claims, such that counter-claims made by scientists might be called into question by the magisterium. This area is left open, and the magisterium's intervention is only called upon when there is a question of false doctrines or morals being propounded by *any* discipline, including theology.

Duane T. Gish, in contrast, at least presents a position of biblical literalism analogous to the persecutors of Galileo, while Timm's position is more flexible. Hence, it is important to say that Catholic scientific and theological opinions may vary enormously on the issue, even within the parameters so specified. For example, there is no reason why Timm's and Gish's position could not be held (at least in principle) by a Catholic exegete or scientist (although I know of none), while at the same time, some of the implications of either biblical or doctrinal statements are more complexly related to scientific statements. For instance, Gish and Timm hold that creation out of nothing and the Genesis story mean that the world has a "beginning in time." Once it was not, then it was.

However, the Roman Catholic Ernan McMullin, past director of the Program in History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Notre Dame, and a philosopher, notes that the issue of whether or not the universe can be said to have had a beginning in time depends on the choice of time-scale in cosmology. This may well respond to John Paul II's question as to whether contemporary cosmology has "something to offer to our reflections on creation." Besides, an implicit assumption is being made that the Big Bang was not preceded by a "Big Squeeze."[56] Thus, McMullin questioned one feature of Pius XII's allocution in 1951 to the Pontifical Academy

[55] Roger E. Timm, "Scientific Creationism and Biblical Theology" in ed. Peters, *Cosmos as Creation*, pp. 247–64. See also Duane T. Gish, *Evolution: The Challenge of the Fossil Records*, Creation Life Publishers, California, 1985; and *Evolution: The Fossils Still Say NO!*, Institute for Creation Research, California, 1999.

[56] See McMullin, "How Should?," pp. 28–40.

of Sciences, namely that the Big Bang theory should lead the unprejudiced scientific mind to acknowledge the enigma of a cosmic beginning and could thus bring the scientist to see "the work of creative omnipotence, whose power set in motion by the mighty *Fiat* pronounced billions of years ago by the Creating Spirit, spread out over the universe." Pius continued, carefully:

> It is quite true that the facts established up to the present time are not an absolute proof of creation in time, as are the proofs drawn from metaphysics and Revelation in what concerns simple creation, or those founded on Revelation if there be a question of creation in time.[57]

McMullin also notes that although Sir Edmund Whittaker, a member of the Pontifical Academy, agreed with Pius's assumption that the theory had, in effect, validated belief in the beginning of time, this assumption was strongly opposed by another member of the Academy, the Belgian priest-cosmologist Georges Lemaître, as well as by George Gamow, a leading physicist of the day. Furthermore, there is the much discussed exegetical issue of how literally the Genesis story should be taken. McMullin recalls here Augustine's assurance that the story of the "six days" were not to be taken literally. Does the Genesis text require us to suppose that the universe began in time or only that it depends for its existence on a Creator, whether it began in time or not? The text does imply that God has had a special care for mankind whose temporal history assuredly did have a beginning. But our universe? Is that part of the point the author of Genesis was making?[58] There is clearly a variety of strategies open to theologians and scientists who are intent on finding the appropriate ways to relate Scripture or more broadly, theology, to the sciences. Clearly, this type of discussion is encouraged by John Paul II's question as to whether "contemporary cosmology" has "something to offer to our reflections upon creation" (M11).

One further question here relates to "realism." There is an assumption in the position I'm defending that both science and theology are ontologically "realist," that is they describe the way things are—in the actual structures of nature, or in God's relation to the world. But in practice, in both disciplines we have non-realists, and complex debates on defining "realism." Nevertheless, while theological realism is presupposed in John Paul II's theological position, is it theologically required in the scientific approach? *FR* would

[57] Cited by McMullin, "How Should?," p. 53, from *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 8, 1952, pp. 143–65: pp. 145–6.
[58] McMullin, "How Should?," p. 36.

imply yes, in so much as it criticizes modernity's loss of confidence in reason's ability to grasp truth in all fields, including science, but of course it does not develop this discussion in any detail. Hence, it is still debatable between theologians, philosophers, and scientists as to what precisely constitutes "realism," and what degrees and differing types of "realism" might operate. It is not possible to develop this further here, except to state summarily that I would side with McMullin's moderate realism and his critique of the Catholic philosopher of science, Bas van Fraassen's non-realistic "empiricism," all argued by McMullin on scientific grounds.[59] Further, there is also scope to develop theological arguments against non-realism in science, although those who do, such as Pannenberg, Torrance, and Swinburne, all argue their case on both fronts: scientific and theological-philosophical.[60]

The *fifth* position is the two-language theory that accepts the sovereign and incommensurable territories of both science and theology. This has been recently defended by Langdon Gilkey and Stephen Jay Gould (who, however, denies any ontological referent to theological language), and it results in a truce between the two disciplines. This approach, which can be located in the seventeenth-century divide between scientific and theological method, is in part a theological response to the attempts by science to control and even eradicate theology. In Torrance's words:

> Some theologians, in accepting the Kantian and Laplacian rationalization of Newton's system of the world into a self-containing and self-explaining deterministic framework, have gone to great lengths in seeking to detach understanding of the Bible and Christian theology from any world-view and indeed to cut off faith from any empirical correlates in physical space-time reality. Thereby, however, they have replaced a God-centred and objective outlook with a radically man-centred and subjective outlook.[61]

[59] See their essays in ed. Jan Hilgevoord, *Physics and Our View of the World*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994: McMullin (pp. 79–114), van Fraassen (pp. 114–34), and their discussion, pp. 255–94; and subsequent debate: McMullin, "Van Fraassen's Unappreciated Realism," *Philosophy of Science*, 70, 3, 2003, pp. 455–78; and Van Fraassen's reply: "On McMullin's Appreciation of Realism Concerning the Sciences," *Philosophy of Science*, 70, 3, 2003, pp. 479–92.

[60] See Pannenberg, Torrance, and Swinburne in ed. Peacocke, *The Sciences and Theology*, pp. 297–304. However, this view is contested by the nuanced argument advanced by Moore, who suggests that scientific realism is not logically or theologically required by Christianity, for non-realists like van Fraassen are *not* pure constructivists, acknowledging a "reality" that is creation. However, they are legitimately agnostic as to whether scientific theories are capable of ontological realism. See Moore, *Realism*, pp. 183–95.

[61] Torrance, "Divine and Contingent," p. 82.

The two-language position is not in keeping with John Paul II's orientation, which assumes the unity of all reality. Yet the proper limits of the disciplines thus require a patient dialogue to discover the interrelationship and connections between them. It is true, as Torrance argues, that the recognition of this proper autonomy can also promote "a methodological secularism in natural science which through an orientation in inquiry away from God runs the risk of over-reaching itself in dogmatic secularism or atheism."[62] Peters is critical of the two-language model, for it gains "peace through separation, by establishing a demilitarized zone that prevents communication." He also asks, why not start with the assumption that "there is but one reality and sooner or later scientists and theologians should be able to find some areas of shared understanding?"[63] However, there is a truth in this two-language approach that needs to be retained. It is the recognition that not all theological or scientific statements necessarily bear upon each other. Which do and which do not can only be determined *a posteriori* through the dialogue of theologians and scientists.

The *sixth* model, the one favored by Peters, is named hypothetical consonance. Peters attributes it to Ernan McMullin and defines it as the exploring of "those areas where there is a correspondence between what can be said scientifically about the natural world and what the theologian understands to be God's creation."[64] Consonance indicates that "Accord or harmony might be a treasure we hope to find, but we have not found it yet."[65] Stated thus, this is certainly in keeping with John Paul II's position, although it is important to recognize strong and weak forms of consonance, neither of which he comments on. The difference is exemplified in the clash between McMullin (weak consonance) and Pannenberg (strong, and better called "direct implication"). McMullin suggests that Pannenberg's position can be read in two ways. The first, that he criticizes, would take Pannenberg "as saying that Christian faith is specific enough in its affirmations in these areas to lead to a critique of the scientific theories involved."[66] This is also the position of Clouser and Plantinga, and my own. McMullin criticizes it as "rash" because all scientific theories are so fragile, contested, and provisional as well as there being "no agreement as to what truth-status *ought* to be assigned to well-supported scientific theory and most especially to the speculative theories of the cosmologists" (p. 49). While both points are true, in

[62] Ibid., p. 87.
[63] Peters, "Science," p. 652.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] McMullin, "How Should?," p. 51.

my opinion, they need not call into question the *principle* upheld by Pannenberg, which does not absolutely fix where these possible overlaps and indirect implications lie. However, when they are identified, they must be taken seriously, even if three hundred years later the theologian's or scientist's assumptions might be entirely discredited, or be differently understood. McMullin's own weak version calls us:

> [to] look harder at the theories of physics and biology, not to alter them, but to find interpretations that will be maximally acceptable from the Christian standpoint. This would be to take theology not as an autonomous source of logical implication capable of affecting scientific theory-appraisal, but as one element in the construction of a broader view. The aim would be consonance rather than direct implication. (p. 51)

I think McMullin is entirely correct in saying that theology cannot *per se* alter theories of physics and biology, just as it cannot change empirical evidence, and should seek to find scientific theories which are "maximally acceptable" to faith.[67] Nevertheless, there is no historical or philosophical justification to exclude examples where there are "logical implications" arising from theology that do affect "scientific theory-appraisal." Torrance, Pannenberg, Plantinga, and others give many examples where scientific views have direct implications upon theology and vice versa. Thus, Torrance writes in his survey of cosmologies:

> Undoubtedly faith in God finds itself restricted, if not altogether suffocated, in some cosmologies rather than in others, which implies that it cannot disregard views of the universe within the society or culture in which faith arises and seeks to take root. Likewise, theology functions more freely in some cosmologies than in others, and the fact that it may find itself in conflict—as has often happened in the past—with conceptions governing a particular outlook upon the universe, reveals that theology operates with basic cosmological conceptions of its own which it cannot give up.[68]

Insomuch as John Paul II's position implies that both science and theology are embedded within a critical realism, the view clearly defended in *FR*, it is reasonable to suppose that hard consonance, or direct implication, is to be preferred to Peters's or McMullin's soft consonance. However, such a point does not affect placing John Paul II squarely within this sixth position.

[67] Admittedly evidence as "fact" is problematic, as "facts" are constructed within some paradigms of knowledge. Even Pannenberg, who asserts that theology cannot change facts, later admits this claim is problematic—see Pannenberg, "Comments," p. 78.

[68] Torrance, "Divine and Contingent," p. 82.

However, Peters draws various inferences from this position regarding theology, only some of which John Paul II would share. For Peters this model means a new method in theology whereby theological statements are not inviolable, but are deemed hypothetical (here he draws on Pannenberg and Popper), and so subject to confirmation or disconfirmation.[69] Drawing on Wentzel van Huyssteen, he argues that theology would "progress" through continuous "illumination," not by appeal to ecclesia or some other indisputable authority.[70] Theology, on a Roman Catholic model, can make no "progress" without reference to scripture, tradition, and ecclesial authority, even if in practice "progress" may sometimes be hampered by the latter authority, or probably more often, wisely guided.[71] But the notion of theology simply sailing past such a port replicates liberal theology's lack of ecclesia that I have been questioning. Further, the view that theology can learn from scientific method, its contents, and the philosophy of science opens up the question of precisely how this learning may take place. Discerning those methods and their findings that are compatible with Christian faith is a matter for the ongoing community of theologians and scientists and the magisterium. At face value, there need be no *a priori* restrictions, except to recognize that the principle of analogy will be central to this process, for theology's subject matter is quite other than that of science's subject matter, and thus its methods and presuppositions, while possibly having some analogical parallels, will always be principally determined by the object of study. Polkinghorne and Barbour each make some pertinent points about the differences and why they require caution in any attempt to assimilate methods.[72]

One further clarification in contrast to Peters's position is required. In his portrayal he puts theological statements on a par with scientific, and this admittedly is even found in John Paul II's "Letter." However, given that the basic viewpoint of the researcher is founded on a religious optimism regarding science (see general principle one above), then it must also be granted that while each discipline makes its distinct contribution to the unity, there will necessarily be a priority given to theology because its "data" are revealed. Schindler puts it thus:

> the contributions, respectively, of theology and science intrinsically affect each other. The distinctness of the respective contributions is not merely a

[69] Peters, "Science," p. 652.
[70] Ibid., p. 656.
[71] See Moore, *Realism*, pp. 50–2, who argues convincingly that "progress" is not an appropriate term for theology.
[72] Barbour, *Issues*, pp. 137–71, 207–37; Polkinghorne, "Christian Faith," pp. 49–55.

> matter of addition (e.g., "harmonizing"), which would presuppose exactly the sort of primitive autonomy (or extrinsicism) of the disciplines that must be rejected. At the same time, theology, in the construction of the broader worldview to which both theology and science must contribute, nonetheless maintains a (logically) prior and normative status within this mutuality of distinct contributions.[73]

Thus modified and challenged, John Paul II's position can be understood as operating in what Peters calls the hypothetical consonance model, even if it is more accurately called the harmonious direct implication model.

Peters's *seventh* model is unproblematic, and he notes how it can be allied with most of the other models. This is the ethical overlap position, which requires that theology address the questions of the common good and the purpose of creation, within which technology can then be appropriately utilized. Peters does not touch on the way in which science has so deeply transformed culture, not only desacralizing it, but also as John Paul II puts it, introducing "the temptation of a quasi-divine power over nature and even over the human being" (*FR*, p. 46). Man is God, no longer made in God's image.[74] O'Donovan pertinently notes:

> The technological transformation of the modern age has gone hand in hand with the social and political quest of Western man to free himself from the necessities imposed upon him by religion, society, and nature. Without this social quest the development of technology would have been unthinkable; without technology the liberal society as we know it would be unworkable.[75]

For John Paul II, technology is only there to serve God's kingdom and can help transform humankind's existence for the better, if properly employed.

Peters's *eighth* model is that of New Age spirituality, characterized by holism, integration, and a unifying of the disciplines. He distinguishes two strands. The first is exemplified by Fritjof Capra and David Bohm. Bohm argues for an explicate order in the natural world, behind which and

[73] Schindler, *Heart of the World*, p. 172, note 48. He also sides with Pannenberg against McMullin.

[74] In this instance, I use "man" as differentiated from women, in the light of the significant reflections of Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Women: Women in Social and Political Thought*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1993; and in the specific field of science: Jean Barr, *Common Science? Women, Science, and Knowledge*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 1998, and T. O. Gornez and G. B. Conde, *Women in Science: Women, Feminism and Natural, Experimental and Technological Science*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998.

[75] O'Donovan, *Begotten*, p. 6.

presupposing it, is an implicate order, a realm of "undivided wholeness in flowing movement."[76] If we focus on either the subjective or objective poles within this knowing process, reality is incomplete and abstracted. Bohm does not explicitly identify his position with any one religious world-view, and Peters dismisses him (along with the second group composed of Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, who attribute to the earth itself the characteristics of deity: morality, the ability to teach, govern, heal, and sanctify) as endorsing a "metareligious naturalism."[77] I agree that Swimme and Berry be thus characterized, even though there is immense wisdom and insight in their positions. However, Bohm's position is open to alternative reading, and has in fact been creatively employed by Schindler to challenge the dominant Cartesian dualism and reductionism in so much science and to provide a framework for what I have called harmonious direct implication.[78] Schindler is not uncritical of Bohm, but whether he can be simply dismissed as endorsing "metareligious naturalism" is perhaps premature and unappreciative of his significance. Nevertheless, Peters's rejection of this position, thus characterized, is shared by John Paul II, in so much as any form of pantheism or naturalism is inadequate.[79]

The reason I have tried to locate John Paul II's orientation toward science within Peters's typology is primarily to show that a Catholic engagement with physics and cosmology leaves many avenues *radically open*, while signaling, in very general terms, many dead-end routes, or scientific paradigms incompatible with Christian faith. Rather than imagine the caricatured old warfare between the two disciplines, one might instead see a rich and creative mixture, each benefiting the other. Furthermore, John Paul II's theological orientation has also called into question Peters's exact typology: seeing a positive note in scientific imperialism; transforming ecclesiastical authoritarianism into legitimate ecclesial direction and intervention; recognizing important truths in scientific creationism, two-language theory, and

[76] David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1980, p. 11. See also (with B. J. Hiley) *The Undivided Universe: An Ontological Interpretation of Quantum Theory*, Routledge, London, 1993.

[77] Peters, "Science," p. 654.

[78] David Schindler, "David Bohm on Contemporary Physics and the Overcoming of Fragmentation," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Fall, 1982, pp. 315–27, and Bohm's very positive response in the subsequent pages: "Response to Schindler's Critique of my *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*," pp. 329–39. See also their further collaboration in ed. Schindler, *Beyond Mechanism: The Universe in Recent Physics and Catholic Thought*, University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1986.

[79] Whether Teilhard de Chardin is guilty of pantheism is a moot point. See R. B. Smith, "God and Evolutive Creation" in ed. Hanson, *Symposium on Teilhard de Chardin*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1970, pp. 41–58.

new age science-spirituality; and challenging features of Peters's major position, hypothetical consonance. Hence, John Paul II's extrapolated position is broad and Catholic in a double sense, allowing for legitimate plurality in both sciences and theology, yet seeking their unity, with full respect for their legitimate autonomy, not understood as utterly unrelated or unrestrictedly free in method or presuppositions.[80]

There was a fourth question. Do any of the micro findings call into question the general propositions guiding the investigation? In principle, I would not expect this, in part owing to their level of generality, and in part, due to my conviction of their truthfulness. There have been tensions and unresolved lacunae, such as the *a priori* or *a posteriori* assumption of biblical statements bearing literal import, the debate between hypothetical consonance and direct implication, the extent of the priority given to truth derived from faith when there are conflicts of truth, the extent and limits of the analogical (or otherwise) transferability of methodology from science to theology, and so on. However, none of these have invalidated the three general statements. In this respect the three general statements are indeed helpful in orienting us to see how the complex area of inter-relation between the disciplines can prove fruitful, both methodologically and regarding conclusions. The sustained programmatic attention to these issues can be nourished only within a Christian university.

What we have seen so far regarding physics might analogically be applied to other disciplines such as history, sociology, law, medicine, and so on. Of course, each particular discipline presents very specific issues and problems and different histories in relation to theology. But there is an important commonality: they are all disciplines bounded within creation, whose proper object of study is part of God's good creation, and whose proper object of study is finally and only fully understood within the light of God's overall purpose for all creation, the coming of God's kingdom. Knowledge is in this important sense both worship and praise, as well as profoundly pragmatic, vital to social action.

[80] The actual questions raised in eds. Russell et al., *John Paul II on Science and Religion* by Elizabeth Johnson (no history of allowing such theological plurality), Rosemary Ruether (a patriarchal power critique of both theology and science is required), Wolfhart Pannenberg (the downplaying of philosophy and of Aristotelianism philosophical categories that are still valid) are important, but do not affect my main argument here.

Epilogue

Theology: The Church at the Heart of the Christian University Proclaiming the Word to the World

It is not unusual for authors to make exaggerated claims in a rousing conclusion. I claim that Christian culture and civilization are at stake if we do not attend to the nature of the university, a major institution that fosters the cultural and intellectual life of nations and trains the intelligentsia of the ecclesia. No doubt, governments and big business are important as are civic societies (like churches, mosques, temples, baseball clubs, music societies, and so on), but all these groups get their intelligentsia from the universities and in this sense the intellectual life of nations finds its primary nourishment in its universities. That is why the university must lie in the "heart of the church." Not all universities, and clearly, not all churches—but my argument has been tradition-specific: the Catholic university must serve the Church, so that it can serve society. This is found in microcosm in the discipline of theology but is true, in differing ways, for all the disciplines. Let me briefly rehearse the plot of the book to draw together the various stands of the argument that have led to this conclusion.

I began by showing how theology is held captive within the Berlin-Babylonian university. In the modern research Enlightenment university, the ecclesial nature of theology is suppressed and policed as a crumbling liberalism lisps its concerns for pluralism in all fields of life, while denying the genuine methodological pluralism that might call its own existence into question (chapter one). As a matter of fact, the ideological control is never quite so tight, indicative of my writing this book while being granted study leave from my own secular Bristol University—and being able to teach my students why they (and I) are prisoners to mammon. Nevertheless, I wanted to focus on important intellectual currents that could alert us to the dark future for theology as it is slowly transformed into religious studies, a discipline that serves positivist historians, sociologists, literary scholars, feminists, psychoanalysts, almost anyone and everyone apart from ecclesial Christians.

If theology is to be theology, it must be ecclesial, and this involves prayer and careful attention to various polyphonic sources of authority, along with the highest intellectual standards (chapter four). If the university cannot recognize and facilitate the unique character of this intellectual discipline, indeed the queen of the sciences, then the university must be called into question, not the discipline. Hence, my argument for a Christian university, and in this case, a Roman Catholic university. In such a university, not only can theology be theology, but also the transformation of all the disciplines can begin. In the latter part of the book I show how this might look in the case of a theological religious studies keeping the theme of the scandal of holy lives within Christianity and Hinduism in focus (chapter five), and also in relation to theology, philosophy, and cosmology (chapter six). Both these chapters open up numerous avenues for further research and both, I believe, exemplify the enormous richness of this alternative construal of traditional terrains. In these chapters I show that contrary to being inward-turning, a Christian university such as I envisage would be engaged with *every* aspect of created reality. If the Christian university is worth its salt, it requires a transformation of the curriculum so that the Christian vision can illumine every aspect of created reality, both natural and cultural. The Christian university requires campus social action, liturgies, upright lives and committed staff, but without curriculum changes, Christian intellectual culture will continue to be impoverished.

I try and answer two types of critics: the ones who argue that we already have religious universities as in the United States—so what's all the fuss? (chapter two); and those who have serious objections against aspects of a Christian university (chapter three). To the first I suggest that there is a "dying of the light" to use Burtchaell's imagery of the health of church colleges in the United States, with almost no sustained attention to the intellectual curriculum as central to what constitutes Catholic identity. In England, my own country, I chart the secularization of the universities and the Herculean pressures against two remaining Christian universities, showing how the light is almost extinguished—but not quite. Roman Catholics need to revisit their universities in the United States, promoting a genuine difference in scholarship and curriculum so that in five generations a Catholic intellectual culture might possibly be present and transformative of society. The Christian Church at the heart of the university will facilitate such genuine developments that can only enrich intellectual and cultural life, facilitate real pluralism and dialogue, and serve the common good. Liberal society owes itself religious universities. American Catholics owe it to their Church and their nation. There are already beacons burning on this front in old-established universities and in some newly founded ones—may

these fires continue to blaze. In England the possibilities are more fragile, but nonetheless present. It would be impossible demographically and geographically to have denominational universities, but an ecumenical university is very possible (and opaquely present in two institutions). It requires the churches, educational administrators, academic staff, and students to work together over a sustained period to develop such institutions. In the meantime, Christians can be missionaries within the secular universities. The image of Troy can be exchanged for Babylon.

The other group of critics, those against "sectarian" projects such as mine, and those against outside interference (the Church) in the university, are to be found in strength—within the churches, as well as from non-religious camps. I argue that such criticisms are misplaced and even self-deluding. Since all enquiry and methods of enquiry are tradition-specific, all forms of education are sectarian in certain ways. There is no high ground in this debate, only differing forms of sectarianism, be they liberal, religious, feminist, psychoanalyst, and so on. But there is an advantage to Catholic sectarianism: its conviction, founded in revelation and beautifully expounded by Thomas Aquinas, that reason has a rightful autonomy. MacIntyre has shown why Thomism is superior to modernity and postmodernity. What is at stake is either the fostering of a homogenous voice (when the liberal and totalitarian sing from the same hymnal) or the nourishing of genuinely plural voices within the public square, so that real debate and exchange might take place. The Christian university, such as I defend, is deeply concerned with the common good because it is concerned with truth—in the academic disciplines and most importantly, in their interrelationships and in their practices. Hence, its commitment to the public square is obvious for all to see. Further, the Roman Catholic Church is theoretically committed to intellectual freedom (within legitimate parameters) and cannot logically be seen as "outside" interference in the university, given reason's graced autonomy. That the same church has sometimes abused its position is not at stake or in question; but what I do contest is the claim that intellectual freedom in theology or any of the disciplines is incompatible with an ecclesial university. Funding should not therefore be a matter of dispute for institutions of intellectual excellence committed to the common good, keeping within the law and inculcating true academic freedom, even when pluralistically conceived and practiced.

The reader who has got this far might well ask the question: does the argument in this book serve as an ideal type, simply stirring debate? Surely it is an impractical and impossible ideal? I think my argument can serve this "ideal-type" function and that is for the good. However, whether it is an impossible ideal remains to be seen and one can see all levels of the

theoretical argument fragmentarily embedded in actual institutions. Hence, I do not think it either impractical or impossible. It may appear utopian, but so does the gospel. Mine is an argument offered to the Church, the university, and to the world (or less grandly, to a handful of readers) with the knowledge that education is central to the development of civilization and if the Church fails to transform education at every level, then the future of the Church and the world are in deep trouble. If the North American and English public cannot see this, then they should drop all the rhetoric about fostering genuine pluralism and admit the ideological nature of their secularism. This would involve suppressing history—as the recent contested European constitution exemplifies, where the Christian heritage of Europe is passed over in silence. It is up to the churches in North America and England to take up this challenge, to bring the light of God to shine through the portals of the university, to allow for a revitalization of Christian culture so that God may be given glory and the common good thereby served.

To conclude, we would do well to recall Saint Bonaventure's wise and challenging words (introducing his *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* in *Prologus*, 4, cited in *FR*, p. 105), inviting the reader to recognize:

> [the inadequacy of] reading without repentance, knowledge without devotion, research without the impulse of wonder, prudence without the ability to surrender to joy, action divorced from religion, learning sundered from love, intelligence without humility, study unsustained by divine grace, thought without the wisdom inspired by God.

We can but weep by the rivers of Babylon, but we cannot despair, for there is much to be done, not least our prayers.

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