

Book Reviews

Mystical Consciousness: Western Perspectives and Dialogue with Japanese Thinkers by Louis Roy, OP (*Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003*), xxi + 229 pp.

IN *FIDES ET RATIO*, Pope John Paul II calls for an increased study of Asian metaphysics. Fr. Louis Roy's *Mystical Consciousness* might be read fruitfully as a response to this demand. By subjecting a variety of mystical texts to modern epistemological readings, this Dominican scholar has forged a curious—if cautious—alliance between thinkers East and West on the subject of consciousness.

Roy's work aims to explicate the various forms of consciousness and clarify their epistemological importance, especially in regard to the insights of those skilled in meditation. To this end, he identifies three main forms of consciousness. The first, "consciousness C," is the ordinary consciousness we have of things and people. It is often referred to as "consciousness-of," "positional consciousness," or "awareness." The second form of consciousness, "consciousness B," is the non-positional but reflexive consciousness-in that permeates every act of consciousness-of. Finally, Roy considers "consciousness A," the mystical consciousness that obtains beyond ordinary acts and states when consciousness B is appropriated in an extraordinary way, such that one's consciousness-in or non-positional consciousness becomes a permanent state or basic disposition by which the mind is united to God. Such consciousness is, by definition, consciousness without an object: Beyond ordinary consciousness-of and consciousness-in, mystical consciousness is a knowing that transcends thinking-of and a loving that surpasses and unites all of our ordinary intentions.

After establishing this basic framework, Roy goes on to address the insights and oversights of several philosophies of consciousness. The first part of *Mystical Consciousness* explores western philosophies of consciousness and includes discussions of well-known philosophers, such as Franz Brentano, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Karl

Rahner, Bernard Lonergan, and John Searle, as well as lesser-known figures such as John Crosby, Daniel Helminiak, Elizabeth Morelli, Robert K. C. Forman, Sebastian Moore, and David Granfield. The second part of the book contains separate chapters devoted to Plotinus, Meister Eckhart, and Friedrich Schleiermacher, while its third part is an extended dialogue with Zen philosophy, embodied by two luminaries of the Kyoto school, Kenji Nishitani and Shin'ichi Hisamatsu. Roy, it should be said, does not claim originality in his interpretations of these Japanese thinkers (xi). He wishes only to show the similarities, indeed the basic convergence, among several western and Japanese intimations of that which "escapes the purview of ordinary consciousness" (189). In this regard, Roy's choice of the philosophers of the Kyoto school as dialogue partners is ideal because they have already appropriated the more typically European discourses of epistemology and existentialism for their own religious ends. More importantly, this choice allows him to address two problems in most studies of consciousness. In Roy's estimation, most studies restrict consciousness to an individual's consciousness, which either rules out mystical consciousness altogether or misrepresents it in terms of a subject/object duality that is either false or misleading. Roy's inclusion of Japanese thinkers is most helpful here, since both Nishitani and Hisamatsu have detailed accounts of mystical consciousness that stress its freedom from such subject/object duality. Even so, Roy believes that those familiar with meditation often ignore non-positional consciousness-in, which prevents them from understanding the relationship between mystical consciousness and ordinary positional consciousness-of. This ignorance of non-positional consciousness causes scholars to ignore the hermeneutic point he wishes to emphasize: Mystical consciousness, far from being a night in which all cows are black, is indeed able to judge ordinary consciousness in a proper analogical fashion.

The relationship of mystical states of consciousness to more ordinary states is a topic fraught with hermeneutic, metaphysical, and theological implications. While Roy rightly raises the issue—and correctly indicates the way forward—one may legitimately ask whether the language of consciousness is truly the language of interfaith dialogue or whether it is the philosophical language most adequate to addressing questions of judgment and analogy. Consider the following passage from Roy: "The advanced meditator then partakes of the consciousness that permeates all beings, with no definition added to their suchness. Everything is de-reified, de-substantialized, de-dualized, including 'I,' 'God,' 'world,' 'Being,' 'Nihility.' Mystical consciousness then includes all particulars dynamically. The Self refashions the selves, in its own image and likeness

perhaps, instead of abolishing them" (188). The meaning of a statement rife with such metaphysical terms is difficult to understand in terms of the language of consciousness alone. It seems to imply that those skilled in meditation can judge metaphysical realities such as God, Being, the "Self," and "Nihilility" without submitting to the usual rigors of metaphysics. How, though, might a judgment remain analogical if both "Being" and "Nihilility" are "de-dualized?" We risk an almost Heideggerian disregard of the Thomistic tradition here, in which the supposed "de-reification" of being makes it not convertible with truth, goodness, and beauty but rather with the "Nothing" itself, and one is left only with the breeziest of tautologies so favored by Heidegger, in which the "world worlds" or the "nothing nothings."

More to the point, Roy does little to address other scholars who might object to his characterization of mysticism. Indeed, he and his reader seem to share a tacit agreement that all the thinkers under discussion share enough of an epistemological framework to converse about mysticism without much further ado. He simply assumes that mysticism is the cross-cultural phenomenon that is best discussed epistemologically—apart from concerns of language, history, or culture—and sets about his task. This assumption can be seen in Roy's description of Hisamatsu's conception of emptiness, the ultimate reality according to Mahayana Buddhism: "Far from being a mere psychological concentration that would exclude all forms of consciousness-of, this void integrates all components of our finitude. It embraces history as well as the cosmos. It is the Self that takes up all that is valid in the self, purifies it, and energizes it. Despite differences owing to cultural diversity, that absolute reality consists of the mystical consciousness that parts 1 and 2 of this book have characterized" (186). The final caveat "despite differences owing to cultural diversity" might appear a bit too easy for those inclined to believe consciousness, even mystical consciousness, is historically effected, linguistically mediated, and/or metaphysically grounded.

In all fairness, if Roy has not delved into the metaphysical ramifications of his claims, neither has he denied the legitimacy of doing so. The question, which I shall leave to the reader to answer, is whether one can pursue such epistemological reflections coherently without addressing such concerns. One's answer to this final question will largely determine how one responds to Roy's work. I fear that his discussions will convince those who are already predisposed to think that one can address epistemology apart from metaphysics and hermeneutics, but madden those who are not. Either result would be unfortunate. Roy's judgments are often sound, and one need not be advanced in meditation to appreciate

them. He rightly criticizes the false peace and self-serving placidity that endanger mysticism and chastises meditators who are averse to philosophical rigor. Above all, his analyses are clear and straightforward, which is no mean feat in a field where technical jargon often obscures the issues.

Although Roy clearly states that he does not aim to present the complex whole of Christian mysticism (xx), readers of *Nova et Vetera* might have liked to see a greater attention paid to traditional Dominican contributions to mystical prayer. Roy occasionally invokes Thomas Aquinas and devotes an entire chapter to Meister Eckhart, but both seem strangely divorced from their Dominican context. Indeed, Roy's Eckhart is less the Eckhart of Armand Maurer or Bernard McGinn than the Eckhart of D. T. Suzuki and Thomas Merton. Even so, further investigation of traditional sources might very well support many of Roy's findings. The scholastic tradition, for example, explores any number of subjects that might be of interest to theoreticians of mystical consciousness, including frankly exotic topics such as the natural omniscience of Adam, the temporality of angels, and the relationship of Christ to space and time, among others. Much the same might be said for the traditional philosophical texts of both Buddhism and Hinduism, which—it must be said—contain many of the most refined discussions of consciousness in the history of epistemology, East or West.

Apart from these quibbles, the book has minor problems in editing (vii, 58, 184 et al.), and its index is incomplete, lacking full entries for Paul, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas. Nevertheless, Roy's achievements are solid. His work makes an important advance beyond much of the work on cross-cultural comparisons of mysticism by avoiding typologies of mysticism and actually interpreting the writings of different mystics. More importantly, Roy has raised a series of crucial questions about the relationship of mysticism to the analogical judgments of ordinary consciousness. Still, he will need to clarify some of the ramifications of his research in future publications. At its current stage, Roy's work is an excellent primer for those interested in the major participants in this discussion but will be less satisfying for those who have deeper training in the older philosophical traditions of the Church or non-Christian religions. This, however, is all the more reason for those so trained to follow his lead. NEV

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Bioetica: Storia, principi, questioni by Lino Ciccone (*Milano: Edizioni Ares, 2003*), 408 pp.

IF WE HAD to rank the most recent and most successful neologisms of our time, "bioethics" would certainly be in the top five. Since its first appearance in an article by Van Renselaer Potter published in 1970 ("Bioethics: The Science of Survival"), it has given titles everywhere to research centers, university chairs, and national and international committees. The specific literature and the legal documents related to bioethics increase every day. Many people who would carefully avoid getting involved in philosophical questions as such end up today involved in bioethical issues.

In Italy, there are now many textbooks trying to offer a systematic account of bioethics. The best and most eminent one is the *Manuale di Bioetica* by Elio Sgreccia (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1999). The most recent one (and a good one at that) is Lino Ciccone, *Bioetica: Storia, principi, questioni*. Ciccone is not a beginner; he is a well-known Italian moral philosopher who has already published several good and useful books, including *Non uccidere* and *Salute e malattia*. Those who, like me, have already had the chance to appreciate his style, will easily detect in this last book too his ability to approach ethical issues, not only with great clarity, but also highlighting their many aspects related to law, medicine, biology, psychology, and so forth.

The "Second Part" of *Bioetica* deals with many "Questioni particolari" [particular issues] such as the identity and status of human embryo, artificial insemination, cloning, prenatal diagnosis, experiments on human embryos and on animals, transplantation of organs, drug abuse, alcoholism, smoking, and AIDS. The "First Part," on the other hand, is "fundamental and general," and, besides two chapters on the "origins of bioethics" and its "general principles," includes one chapter bearing the title "Verso uno statuto epistemologico" ("Towards an epistemological status")—a title which is "un po' inconsueto" (a little unusual), the author warns us immediately, but which is justified because "the very young age of bioethics makes it problematic and, according to some, premature to draw a precise epistemological status" (21).

Problematic and premature . . . or simply wrong? Ciccone himself has already dealt in other moral books with many particular issues now addressed in the same way in *Bioetica*, but not under the label "bioethics." What changed now? Whatever it is, we should be able to find it in the object and method of bioethics as explained in the chapter on the "epistemological status" and as applied in the "second part" of the book.

The object of bioethics, says the author, relates to the field of “biological and medical sciences” as they have brought about an “enormous increase of man’s possibilities to intervene on life, especially at its origin and at its decline. Old problems have thus acquired a new physiognomy” (22). Fair enough. But human beings’ possibilities of intervention on the world have enormously increased in almost every field—from economics to law, to the weapons industry, to the means of communication, and so forth—and there are plenty of “old problems” that acquired “a new physiognomy” (think, in the economic field, of usury). Should we coin many neologisms, like “warethics,” “internetethics,” “economyethics,” and “lawethics,” and draw a specific epistemological status for each of those fields? This would obviously be mistaken.

Ethics has a peculiar scientific *physiognomy*: It is reflection on human action as good (or evil), not in a particular technical sense, but absolutely speaking, everything considered. Consider the formal difference between the two following judgments on *my good*. Medical judgment: “It is good for me to stay three days in bed in order to heal from fever.” Moral judgment: “It is good for me to get out of my bed straight away even at the cost of making my health condition worse (because, for example, I have to take care of my little baby).” The *physician as physician* does not have a *scientific* competence on moral judgment. More: if he expresses a moral judgment *as physician* he contradicts the very science in which he is expert.

Ethics is a *practical science*: That is to say, it concerns human action. And human action must always be understood in its real context, which involves a multiplicity of aspects often related to highly specialized scientific disciplines. In these cases (which are not only those of medicine and biology), a qualified (scientific) knowledge of reality is a necessary presupposition of moral reflection. This, however, does not reduce the formal difference between moral good and the proper objects of the other disciplines. It is certainly useful to group together some ethical issues as they refer to specific scientific fields. So, we speak of economy ethics, medical ethics, and so forth. However, it is not good to create confusion about the proper object of ethical reflection.

Ciccone himself, I hasten to say, does not run any such risk of confusion. The risk does not usually involve philosophers, who know that ethics belongs to philosophy and that the term “bioethics” is in fashion, generates interest, and is *expedient*. Rather, Ciccone’s use of the term poses a problem because it may encourage other people to think that they can do ethics without knowing philosophy. For instance, I know of university courses on bioethics entrusted to physicians who expressly do not know anything about philosophy. This induces not only confusion but also

unjustified, not grounded, moral judgments. Physicians, biologists, and others, ought to raise moral questions, but they also should know that the answers to these questions require specialized philosophical knowledge that is different from the knowledge specific to their sciences.

In short, the key question has to do with methodology. We might agree that the object of bioethics does not make it different from ethics. But is it not true that the method of bioethics is specifically different in that it requires “a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach” (22)? In this regard, we should say that bioethics (like business ethics) is indeed leading the way, but not in constituting itself as a specific science, but (a) in freeing many philosophers from a kind of academic segregation they had chosen for themselves, and (b) in recalling experts, in fields particularly charged with moral questions, to the importance of facing these questions in a serious and rationally disciplined manner, which includes discussions about them with expert moral philosophers. Again, ethics is a practical science that concerns the moral good to be done in concrete human choices. Thus ethics is interdisciplinary because human life is interdisciplinary. In some cases (law, economics, medicine, biology, and so forth), the need for interdisciplinarity emerges in a more evident and intense way, but never in such a way as to create a different science. 

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The Power of God: *Dynamis* in Gregory of Nyssa’s Trinitarian Theology by Michel Rene Barnes (*Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001*), 333 pp.

THIS FIRST BOOK of Michel Barnes is a revision of his doctoral dissertation at University of St. Michael’s College, Toronto. It provides a helpful window into the formation of early Christian doctrine after the Council of Nicaea by detailing the debate between Gregory of Nyssa and Eunomius of Cyzicum on correct understandings of the term *homoousios*. Barnes explains Nyssa’s orthodox understanding of consubstantiality through an exploration of the term *dynamis*, which for Gregory conveyed the idea that whatever shares the same power must share the same nature.

Barnes says his study will proceed with three tasks in mind: (1) to recover power as a technical term; (2) to look at Gregory’s Trinitarian theology in its historical context; and (3) to understand the role of philosophy in the development of Christian doctrine via Gregory’s thought, taken as a patristic case study. The first two tasks he completes

with thorough and attentive study, but it is the third that deserves more direct attention in this review.

For his first task, Barnes looks at pre-Platonic usages of power, especially the medical writings of the Hippocratic and Empedoclean schools, which are later appropriated by Christians. He focuses on how the term is understood as working oppositionally and also how power can be either constitutive of a thing or derivative of a thing. This latter understanding becomes important in attempts to determine the kind of power the Son has: Is it the same power as the Father, or one delegated and hence derived from the Father, making the Son purely an instrument without his own proper power? The primary description of power by pre-Platonic philosophers is that it is the causal capacity of a material entity.

The development of the Platonic use of the term eventually moves away from purely material causality to "teleological causality." Barnes sees Plato as using the term to explain an entity in terms of why it is what it is. Here we see that power has become an ontological term (though Barnes tells us he is unhappy about using words like ontology and metaphysics, he grudgingly acknowledges that this is the sense in which Plato understands it). For Plato, power is said to belong to a thing insofar as it exists; its existence is somehow constituted by its particular powers. Chapter 3 turns to the second- and third-century Trinitarian controversies, focusing upon Tertullien, Hippolytus, and Origen. Here the development of the understanding of the term power has evolved from the medical to the metaphysical to the psychological, and finally to the transcendent or theological. It is precisely this kind of movement that provides the seeds of an answer to the third main task of Barnes's study, but unfortunately receives little commentary beyond the observation that such an evolution has indeed occurred. Such an evolution is that which interests most of those who desire to know how theology, and not just doctrine, develops.

This time period sees the development of two doctrines of power in relation to the Godhead: one which expresses the power of God insofar as his nature is one, the other which applies the term specifically to the Son, who uniquely manifests God's power. All three of the fathers highlighted in this chapter have representations of both of these senses of power. Questions begin to arise, however, about the second sense. Is the Son the very power of God or is he a produced power, a power from a power? In the early Nicæan controversy, there was no problem with the language of "*X from X*" to describe the relation between the second and first Persons of the Trinity. The concern to distinguish the Son as distinct from the Father was the motivation of such language, but their relation-

ship could not be conceived of as an effect generated from a cause that is different from the effect in nature. The result of such confusion saw the expense of the Son's full divinity, leading to a necessity for greater precision with theological language and thought.

This is the subject of the fourth chapter, the Trinitarian debates of the fourth century. All parties in the debate use power language in ways that have historical precedent, as the author has been at pains to detail in the previous chapters. Athanasius, Marcellus of Ancyra, Eusebius of Caesarea, Asterius, the creeds from 340–360, and even the western fathers Phoebeadius of Agen, Hilary, and Ambrose receive attention here in the attempt to show how the concept of *dynamis* is vital and functioning, and which lead to the main chapters of the book where we finally enter the argument between Eunomius and Gregory.

Barnes sees this debate as much more important than the “overstated” battle between Athanasius and Arius (148–49). His reading of the second half of the fourth century is that Arius has receded in importance and the new heretics on the block who receive the brunt of ire and wrath are Eunomius and Aetius. It is certainly true that the years leading up to Constantinople in 381 focused on a new type of Arianism, but that Arius has vanished from the picture seems a hard saying. The main argument of Eunomius, though meant to protect the transcendence of God, is in fact another species of subordinationist Arian theology. Eunomius establishes a theological hierarchy of essence (God)–activity (Son)–product (creation) in which the highest, as utterly transcendent, has no part in the lower. If God is unbegotten and unproduced, then it would compromise his essence to enter into the messy business of production. It is the Son, then, who is produced (first among creation, yet distinct from it), and in turn produces the rest of creation. The only relation between God and the Son is that of a moral or political union in which the Son is obedient to the will of the Father, but there is no unity of essence. This creates obvious subordinationist problems, but behind it is the even greater threat to Christian doctrine and theology: the rejection of any doctrine of participation in God, and hence the rejection of analogy. For Eunomius, the only way in which God can be known is through language that expresses God's unbegotten stature.

Gregory has the burden of proof on him to show how God's transcendence is not threatened by the act of creation. As we have seen, the stakes in the debate are high, since it ultimately becomes a question about the knowability of God. The early Trinitarian debates are wrestling with more than just the doctrine of God; they are establishing the grounds for the possibility of a Christian theology, in which humans attempt to understand

who God is. Scholars have drawn attention to this point in the Gregorian/Eunomian debate, but Barnes points out that it is often from within an unfortunate paradigm. Traditional scholarship tended to artificially divide Gregory's "mystical theology" from his Trinitarian/doctrinal theology, such that he has earned the reputation of being radically apophatic. In fact, the contextual (and polemical) background for his work is the Eunomian theology that privileges univocal language.

Here is where Barnes sees the importance of the power controversy coming to a head, and how Gregory can answer Eunomius: There is no division between the nature and power of God. God's nature is to be creative, to be productive, to be generative. Because Eunomius has divided God's activity from his essence, there can be no "analogical ladder." But because Gregory insists upon the unity of nature and power, there exists the possibility of analogy.

The importance of such a possibility for Christian thought cannot be underemphasized, which again ties into the third main point of Barnes's study. But again, the meaning of analogy and how it is demonstrated or revealed to us by Gregory is given short shrift. Examples of analogies Gregory uses, especially that of fire, are noted but what exactly Gregory thinks he is doing (or not doing) by giving such analogies is never developed. This point is merely hinted at as an implication of the importance of the power debate. One hopes that Barnes's further work on this "father of fathers" will draw out these tantalizing implications in the future.

There are two other important contributions that Barnes makes in his study that should be mentioned. The first is that his rereading of Gregory's Trinitarian theology focuses upon the text *Contra Eunomium*, instead of the two texts to which scholars have traditionally shown preference: *De Sancta Trinitate* (*On the Holy Trinity*) and *Ad Ablabium* (*On Not Three Gods*). The *Contra Eunomium* is Gregory's longest, and arguably, most comprehensive doctrinal work, providing a much more thorough and representative picture of his thought. Secondly, through his study, Barnes has managed to debunk again the faulty scheme still dominant in parts of theological discourse that "Eastern theologians begin Trinitarian discourse with *persons*, Western theologians begin with *nature*." If Barnes's "De Regnon Considered" (*Augustinian Studies* 26 [1995]) did not persuade one, this work certainly provides a more in-depth exposure to the work of one eastern father who had no qualms "beginning with" the nature of God, since his adversary Eunomius had identified divinity with one Person (God) and one Personal relation (Unbegotten).

Overall, Barnes's work contributes positively to the task of "re-examining" Gregory of Nyssa that has rightfully been undertaken by patristic

scholars of late. His willingness to move beyond schemes dominant in previous scholarship has far-reaching implications not only for the understanding of Gregory's thought, but also for ecumenical dialogue and bridging the difference between eastern and western theological methods. **N&V**

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The Resurrection of the Son of God, volume 3 of Christian Origins and the Question of God by N. T. Wright (*Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003*), 817 pp.

SIMPLY PUT, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* is a book that in its breadth, argumentative vigor, and capacity to raise questions about basic aspects of New Testament studies is unlikely to be surpassed by any scholar in Wright's generation. The work engages relevant material from the classical world, the Old Testament, the period known as Second Temple Judaism, the New Testament, the New Testament Apocrypha, the Apostolic Fathers, the early Apologists, early Syriac Christianity, and Nag Hammadi, to name only the general textual "groups," most of which can be subdivided many times over into areas that provide enough space for entire academic careers. Yet, in this vast expanse of material Wright loses neither his focus nor his energy in expression. Indeed, the ability to present a witty and coherent case through multiple, detailed exegetical investigations and wide cultural and chronological gaps is a large part of what makes the book so compelling.

Wright's argument, so he reminds the reader over and again, is a historical one. It has profound theological implications to be sure (see esp. part V, "Belief, Event, and Meaning"), but the argument itself proceeds not at the level of metaphysical reflection but at that of historical, textual investigation. Four of the book's five parts (roughly 680 of the 740 pages of main text) thus deal with resurrection in ancient paganism and in Old Testament and "post-biblical" Judaism, resurrection in Paul, resurrection in early Christianity (apart from Paul), and, finally, the resurrection narratives themselves. The historical insight here, evident in each section and taken cumulatively, is actually most radically—at its roots—linguistic, in the sense that the investigation discloses something about the vocabulary of resurrection upon which the entire argument can later be seen to depend.

In antiquity, to speak about resurrection was to say something rather definite about postmortem existence. It was to say that the deceased

would be made alive again *bodily*. Leaving aside some of the Nag Hammadi documents (cf. esp. the *Epistle to Rheginos*) and allowing for variation and nuance, in no way was resurrection understood in any other way than as corporeal. Indeed, its somatic nature would hardly have appealed to pagans (“not an option,” despite Alcestis and Nero *redivivus*). Resurrection of the dead, that is, was a distinctively Jewish affirmation, though it became widespread only in the postexilic period and was denied in the days of Jesus and Paul by the “aristocratic” Sadducees.

Jewish belief in the resurrection was not, however, a belief about what happened to individuals immediately after their physiological demise—least of all, the Messiah (see, for example, 205, 700). Instead it was both corporate and two-staged: In the eyes of the Second Temple Jews, resurrection was an affirmation about the restoration of Israel and about “life after life after death.” Immortality of the soul, conceived in strictly Platonic terms, evidently played little to no part in Jewish theology (even in the *Wisdom of Solomon* the notion of immortality is “pressed into [the] service” of resurrection [168]), but neither did resurrection as corporate and future exclude an “intermediate state,” a kind of ongoing existence immediately after bodily death. This intermediate state, the life after death, will be followed by resurrection, in which the deceased will receive bodies and Israel be restored—the “life” after the life after death (sections 3 and 4 of part I).

For the early Christians to speak at all about resurrection was thus for them to speak Jewishly (specifically, for Wright, with Pharisaic intonation). Yet the early Christian claim—across the board, from the earliest Pauline material (part II) through the rest of the New Testament and on to even Origen (part III)—involved two profound and historically unexpected “mutations” within the Jewish affirmation of resurrection: first, that something had already happened that merited resurrection language, and, second, that this something had happened not to all Israel but to a particular individual. Both of these mutations obviously find their locus in the early Christian conviction about Jesus of Nazareth, namely, that after his crucifixion he was raised bodily from the dead.

To observe and document textually these mutations is not, however, to get at their historical cause. That requires a further step, one that Wright takes in the direction of the belief of the early Christians. Perhaps obviously, but no less significantly, the Christian mutation in the Jewish view of resurrection occurred because the early Christians believed these things to be true of Jesus. The language of “resurrection” fit the Christian faith. The Christians spoke what they believed. It is here that many scholars have been content to stop: The faith of the early Christians is alone enough to account for the language of resurrection. Not so N. T. Wright.

Wright avers strongly that to claim “faith” or belief as that which motivated the early Christians to speak about Jesus as they did is already to ask—whether acknowledged or not—what could have caused them to believe in this particular way. Their language betokens their belief, but what is it, historically speaking, that moves them toward belief? Wright’s answer, noetically logical if historically contentious, involves yet another step, this time toward the empty tomb and the resurrection appearances. In contrast to many scholars and theologians who deny the importance of the empty tomb, Wright mounts a case for its unsubstitutable significance. The point is simple, though (for some) shocking, and its bite equals Wright’s bark about resurrection vocabulary: Given the *bodily* meaning of resurrection, it is historically improbable—Wright might say, if he were pressed, inconceivable—that the early Christians would have used resurrection language of Jesus had his body still in fact been in the tomb. In other words, the thesis runs, a body in a tomb could bring forth all manner of language about postmortem life except that of resurrection.

By itself, however, an empty tomb would not lead to talk of resurrection (the body could have been stolen, for example, as one hoary theory would have it). To speak of resurrection requires something further. This something further is found in the appearance narratives. For Wright, the description of Jesus in the resurrection stories of the canonical Gospels confirms the emptiness of the tomb (part IV), for the appearances illustrate and even stress the bodily nature of Jesus’ resurrection. The empty tomb on the one hand and the corporeal nature of Jesus’ appearance on the other thus both require and explain the use of “resurrection” as that language—in fact, the only language—that fits or corresponds to the reality.

For critical New Testament scholars after Bultmann, Wright’s final move is probably the most controversial, not necessarily in its question—What best accounts for the language of resurrection, the empty tomb, and the appearances?—but rather in its answer: the actual, bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Wright is careful here to draw a distinction between the knowledge of a mathematician and a historian (historians should not, because they cannot, offer “mathematical proof”) and also to avoid a kind of crude natural theology that would read God directly off the face of certain events. Yet he is nevertheless resolutely insistent that the historical explanation, both in the sense of what happened and in the sense of being open to investigation, for the phenomenon as a whole is the actual, bodily resurrection of Jesus. No other solution, so Wright argues, can wield the explanatory power needed to coordinate the meaning of “resurrection” in its cultural encyclopedia with the language and belief of the early Christians, the empty tomb, and the resurrection appearances.

N. T. Wright's newest big book is thus in a sense about origins (it is after all part of a series with the words "Christian origins" in the title). It is disarmingly simple in its main contention: that if one moves back through history step by step, the bodily resurrection of Jesus is the best historical explanation for all that followed. The resurrection, that is, is the origin for the experience that was described as resurrection in all its various ways.

Quibblers of all kinds will find plenty here to satisfy them (for example, the understanding of the Imperial cult, the treatment of the resurrected "bodies of the saints" in Matthew 27:52–53, and the implications for resurrection expectations in the first century, etc.). But it is certainly questionable whether even cumulative quibbling could offer anything like a challenge to the book. Strictly theological queries along the lines of human access to the resurrection (for example, the nature and role of faith) will come from across the theological spectrum, though both stanch skeptics and devout pietists, let it be said clearly, will likely misunderstand Wright to say that he has proven scientifically the resurrection of the Son of God and all the subsequent (Christian) meaning engendered by this conviction. Historically, however, the primary threat to Wright's overall interpretation would be the accumulation of evidence—either examples to the contrary or different, equally plausible readings of the same texts—along a linguistic line that would divide the language of resurrection from that of bodies. One might also conceive, at least theoretically, of the possibility of an analysis that would show the bodily language of resurrection to be inextricably bound with ancient cosmology such that we cannot receive its meaning without an essential reinterpretation. But this is probably a much larger question about the nature of time and language, hermeneutics, and theological truth. In any event, producing a serious historical challenge to the book as a whole is a massive undertaking, one which will certainly not be forthcoming any time soon, and one which may not even be forthcoming at all. 

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Thomist Realism and the Linguistic Turn: Toward a More Perfect Form of Existence by John P. O'Callaghan (*Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003*), ix + 358 pp.

ON THE EVIDENCE of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the terms "representationalist" and "representationism" were first used in the 1840s in discussions of Hume's critic Thomas Reid, the "great aim" of whose philos-

ophy, wrote J. D. Morell in 1846, was “to controvert the representationalist hypothesis.” (The form “representationalism” apparently wasn’t used until 1899.) Reid himself had called what he was attacking “the theory of ideas,” and although he was particularly concerned with its development from Descartes to Hume, he seems to have thought that it had infected philosophy from Plato onward. Hilary Putnam, in his anti-representationalist *Representation and Reality* of 1988, suggests that the trouble really got going with a brief passage on meaning and reference in Aristotle’s *De interpretatione* (16a3–9), according to which, in Putnam’s explanation, when we understand a word we associate it with a “concept” or “mental representation” that determines what the word refers to. Putnam insinuates that the subsequent philosophical tradition is, by and large, guilty of a fundamentally Aristotelian representationalism. The present work offers a Thomistic response to the implicit accusation.

Two first-person remarks in the Introduction, “Words, Thoughts, and Things,” establish that the Thomism will be partly exegetical and partly innovative. “In this work I hope to make some progress toward a better understanding of what the Thomistic-Aristotelian tradition does and does not claim about the relations that hold among words, thoughts, and things” (3). “I want to contribute toward moving my tradition forward by a critical engagement with one aspect of the *Linguistic Turn*. In doing so, what I will argue will in some ways be implicitly and at times explicitly critical of aspects of my own tradition. So, for instance, I will make no use of the *verbum mentis*, one of the most venerable interpretations of St. Thomas, because I believe it is not part of his philosophical account of understanding and language” (12). This renunciation is explained by the absence of the theme of *verbum mentis* from Aquinas’s “latest and most extensive philosophical discussions” (300, n. 16); thus it seems to be related to the author’s reluctance to make use of Aquinas’s earlier works because of their “pronounced Augustinian flavor on cognitive issues that is much more strongly mediated by Aristotelian analyses in the later work” (322, n. 40).

The first chapter, “Aristotle’s Semantic Triangle in St. Thomas,” begins by discussing Boethius’s translation of and Aquinas’s commentary on the passage of *De interpretatione* referred to by Putnam, as well as the theme of “absolute consideration” of a nature in Aquinas’s *De ente et essentia*. This sets the scene for two definitions, both offered in the first person. “Let me introduce the term ‘intelligible character’ to designate the determinate form delimiting or structuring the first operation [of the intellect] in act—I am attempting to pick out one of the senses of the multifaceted Latin word *ratio*” (26). (“Intelligible character” is synonymous with Aquinas’s “nature absolutely considered” [31]; as a principle of knowing

it is distinguished from “intelligible species,” which is an accident of intellect [165]). “Let me introduce ‘concept’ as a technical term to designate the first act so informed or intelligibly delimited by the intelligible character, that is, ‘concept’ names the first act of understanding” (31). The reason why the author emphasizes that this sense of the term “concept” is his own would seem to be that it is certainly not the sense Aquinas gives to the cognate terms *conceptus* and *conceptio*, which he rather identifies with the *verbum mentis* that is here left undiscussed; the *conceptus*, *conceptio*, or *verbum* is, for Aquinas, not the first act of the intellect, but something that this act produces. Accordingly, the author’s subsequent attribution of his definition of “concept” to Aquinas (168, 255) is surprising.

He suggests that readers not concerned with close examination of historical issues can pass over the second chapter, “Three Rival Versions of Aristotle,” without much difficulty (12), but its careful discussion of the terms for “sign,” “symbol,” and “first” in the Greek text and Latin translation of, and in some Latin commentaries on, *De interpretatione* 16a3–9, both is interesting in itself and leads to a significant conclusion: “[T]his chapter provides at least an initial historical understanding of the plausibility of the charge of mental representationalism directed at the Aristotelian tradition in its account of language. When contemporary philosophers make this charge, it cannot simply be dismissed as completely unfounded. There is evidence for it in Ammonius and Boethius, even if, as I have just argued, there is no evidence for it in St. Thomas’s commentary on Aristotle” (77). Still, apart from his work as a commentator, what did St. Thomas himself think?

Before coming to this question, the author turns in chapters 3 to 5 from “the Thomistic-Aristotelian tradition” to modern developments favoring and opposing representationalism. Chapter 3, “Language and Mental Representationalism: Historical Considerations,” begins by tracing the intensification of representationalism in Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, with increasing insistence on an internal mental entity as what is directly known and increasing skepticism about the knowability of an external world (99). The chapter then sketches the emergence of anti-representationalisms in Reid, Husserl, Frege, and above all Wittgenstein, and it concludes by identifying the following representationalist themes: the dichotomy between the internal and the external; the structure of mind, concept, and thing; the question of the relation, if any, between representation and thing; and the representation as what the mind knows directly by introspection (111–12).

The next two chapters profile contemporary authors. Chapter 4, “The Language of Thought: A Revival of Mental Representationalism,” samples representationalism in the work of Jerry Fodor, who substitutes a causal

relation for the traditional resemblance relation between representation and object. Although perhaps unnecessary to the argument of the book, the chapter is of interest as an exposition of a self-conscious, contemporary version of representationalism, and as a background for the central and pivotal chapter 5, "Hilary Putnam's Criticism of Aristotelian Accounts of Language and Mental Representationalism." Putnam severely criticizes Aristotelianism for its "cryptographer" model of language use, according to which the mind is supposed to think in mentalese, encode its thoughts in the local language, and transmit them to a hearer, who then decodes them. Putnam objects that "meanings just ain't in the *head*," for "environment rather than mental representation is determining reference" (148–49). From Fodor's defense and Putnam's attack the author extracts three "theses" of representationalism: that "in addition to the mind and external things, there is a third realm of mental things" (the Third Thing Thesis); "that the mind in its activity of thinking directs itself to these internal objects as *what* it primarily knows, or attends to, or is related to" (the Introspectibility Thesis); and "that there is no intrinsic or necessary relation between the so-called 'mental representations' in the mind and the represented things outside it" (the Internalist Thesis) (155–56). At the book's crucial juncture, the philosophical first-person steps forth: "In the next three chapters, I examine the Thomistic–Aristotelian account *I* have been providing against the background of these three theses" (157, emphasis added). But soon it becomes clear that the deeper intention is to test Aquinas himself against the theses.

Addressing the first thesis, chapter 6 asks whether St. Thomas's intelligible species and concepts are a third kind of thing in addition to mind and external things. First of all, when we say that forms are in things (or, more to the point, that we have something in mind), what do we mean by "in"? Locke and Hume seem to take the preposition at face value, at least as a metaphor; Aquinas rather follows Aristotle's metaphysical interpretation of it as meaning "dependence" of whatever is said to be "in" on that in which it is said to be. "The spatial sense of 'in' for 'classical representationalism,' whether taken metaphorically or literally, is simply not at play in St. Thomas's discussion of intellect and world. . . . [I]t is more appropriate to ask which beings actively depend upon me for their existence, and which do not? But this question does not lend itself to imagining two 'spaces,' the inner space of the mind, and the outer space of the world, as well as a gulf between them" (165). A concept is not the product of the intellect's act of grasping something outside the soul, for it is by definition the act itself. (Occasionally, for example on 170–71, the dense style exposes the reader to a hazard of English-speaking Thomism,

that of confusing “act” meaning “actuality” [*actus*] with “act” meaning “action” or “operation.”) To the objection that we speak of “having” concepts, the author allows that “concept” in a secondary sense means a “stable capacity or developed potency” to engage in an act of conceiving or understanding; in this sense, it is a habit, the habitually conserved intelligible species (174–75). To Robert Pasnau’s claim that the intelligible species is a third thing, the author replies that it is rather the form of the act of understanding (176). Then, in a dramatic move, he partly takes back what he has said: There is a sense in which a concept, as an act, may, in keeping with Aquinas’s thought, be called a thing, a *res*, as a comparison of the meanings of *ens* and *res* in Aquinas’s work shows (182–94). As the operation of a substance, a concept is an accident with a quiddity, as well as an act of being, of its own, and in this regard it may be called a thing. “But the result is that it is not a thing or *res* in the sense that pertains to the Third Thing Thesis; it is not a thing distinct from the act of understanding” (194). “Thing” must be understood analogically, which, incidentally, answers Putnam’s call for recognition that terms such as “thing,” “being,” “existence,” and “object” are not univocal (*ibid.*).

Chapter 7 begins by clarifying that the term “object” in Aquinas’s vocabulary means “formal aspect,” not “thing” or “being.” It then measures the Thomistic intelligible species against the introspectibility thesis by means of a close analysis of *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 85, a. 2, the classic text for proving that the intelligible species is the “by which” (*quo*) of knowledge, and not, primarily, the “what” (*quod*) or object, but that it nevertheless can be an object secondarily. St. Thomas regularly calls the form in the intellect a “likeness” of what is known, but “there are two characteristics of *likeness* in the Introspectibility Thesis missing from St. Thomas’s Aristotelian account. First, *likeness* is not specific to his account of knowledge the way it is in the Introspectibility Thesis.” Rather, it is simply an instance of the general Aristotelian principle that any effect somehow resembles its cause: The intelligible species is a likeness because it is an effect of a causal engagement with the object. “Second, *likeness* does not provide the mechanism by which a known internal representation becomes knowledge of something else.” Instead, it is the form of the act of understanding, which is an identification of the mind with its object (228–31). The chapter goes on to address Pasnau’s un-Thomistic hypothesis of a psychological, noncognitive apprehension of intelligible species, then concludes by appropriating a phrase of John McDowell’s. “McDowell is correct when he writes that ‘the possibility that goes missing in Putnam’s argument could be described as the possibility of mental representing without representations.’ St. Thomas provides just such an

account" (236). The intended contrast, it seems, is between, on one hand, a lively action of representing, and, on the other, a collection of inert items designated for representational purposes, although "representation," like *repraesentatio*, is ambiguous as between an action and a product.

Chapter 8 responds to the internalist thesis by considering in turn two Thomistic themes. First it attempts to explain the admittedly difficult Thomistic notion of a formal identity of concept and *res*: "Absolutely considered *what it is* for an act of understanding to be of an X, the act's *essence* or *quod quid est esse*, does not differ from *what it is* for the X to be, the X's *quod quid est esse*" (240). If there were a Thomistic skepticism, it would concern not things, but concepts, and not the existence of concepts—which are, after all, operations of intellect—but the difficulty of characterizing them beyond their existence, except in terms of the things with which they are formally identical; but a better term than skepticism might be "negative psychology" (242–43). The second theme is that of the intellect's "reception" of forms, which should not be thought of as some kind of transfer or "exchange," but as the active response of intellect in its encounter with an object: "The form of understanding, the intelligible species, is the formal principle of the active response of the human person to the *res* that it engages in its experience" (249). St. Thomas's account of knowledge is a form of what Colin McGinn calls "externalism," that is, a theory that individuates mental states by reference to something other than the states (238), although it is difficult to situate St. Thomas in McGinn's taxonomy of "strong" and "weak" externalists: With respect to simple concepts, he is a "strong externalist," requiring that the non-mental item corresponding to a simple concept be in some sense in the environment of the one who knows; with respect to fictions and nominal definitions founded on simple concepts, his position might be called a "fundamental strong externalism" (255–56). The chapter closes with some metaphysical contrasts: For Putnam essence is at most part of a classificatory scheme, but for St. Thomas it is an intrinsic principle of a being (271); for Putnam metaphysics begins with the latest results of contemporary science, against which common sense must be defended, but for St. Thomas metaphysics provides a context and a support for the world of common sense (274).

The concluding chapter, "Toward a More Perfect Form of Existence," takes a Thomistic linguistic turn, reflecting on Aquinas's remarks on language in relation to the various Aristotelian sciences that study human nature. Consideration is given to John Haldane's criticism that the Thomistic account of mind is overindividualistic, insufficiently recognizing of the public and linguistic aspects of concept acquisition, to which

the author responds with measured Thomistic counter-considerations: "human language is rooted in understanding, which is an act of a person, that is, an act of a *subsistent individual of a rational nature*" (291); "to insist upon the priority of understanding over linguistic expression is not to retreat into" the "modern privacy" that seals thought off from the bodily, the social, and the political (296). "Thought is not by nature private, but rather public. But the public is not just the educated or even uneducated speaking public. A better, and non-reductive, understanding of the sciences under which human beings fall presents an opportunity for developing an authentic philosophical anthropology. Here, perhaps, one can see a deep affinity between *Thomist Realism* and a certain understanding of Wittgenstein and the *Linguistic Turn*" with respect to the ordering of conceptual functioning to linguistic and non-linguistic acts (298).

The foregoing summary hardly does justice to the details of the author's argument, but perhaps it suffices to indicate how his bridge-building between Thomism and analytic thought will be instructive and thought-provoking to both parties and to others. He shows an admirable willingness, even a sense of obligation, to perpetuate the Thomistic tradition of engaging contemporary modes of thought (12), which, as he is aware, involves assuming all the difficulties of being simultaneously an expositor, a defender, and a renovator of the Thomistic position, of alternating between the first and the third persons, and of learning the ways of thinkers very different from Aquinas. Of course it also involves the prospect of criticism from both sides, and in this regard one can perhaps identify some basic points of possible contention. Thomistic scholars will be inclined to regret the omission of any treatment of the *verbum mentis*, and to object to the use of "concept" to name the first act of the intellect; anti-representationalists will not fail to be struck by the eventual admission that Thomistic concepts are in some Thomistic sense things, and even, as habitually conserved species, enduring possessions. But all will agree that the author has succeeded in condensing and articulating a large and interesting philosophical problem.

His defense of St. Thomas on the charge of representationalism depends in part on setting fairly strict requirements for the latter. A more relaxed understanding of the term—say, as meaning "any theory of cognition which attributes a crucial and indispensable role to some sort of mental representation"—might seem to lead rather quickly and definitively to a verdict of "guilty" (see Claude Panaccio, "Aquinas on Intellectual Representation," in *Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality*, D. Perler, ed. [Brill: Leiden, 2001], 185 ff.). But perhaps Thomists should embrace the charge, recalling that "represent" and "representation" entered modern

languages from scholastic Latin, where they may have had overtones that have been lost in translation or eroded over time. Do we know exactly what Aquinas, who had a keen ear for etymologies, had in mind when he said that intelligible species represent things? Did he think that “represent” just means “stand for”? The word is built on a root that means “being” (*esse*); the *prae-* makes it mean “be before” or, as we say, “be present to”; the *re-*, which means “again,” indicates that what is represented is made present by being made to be in a second way, which nicely harmonizes with the Thomistic theme of a second, intentional being that things acquire in being known. As for intelligible species, it seems relevant to note that Jacob Klein tried to suggest the paradox of the Platonic term *eidos* by translating it as “invisible looks,” an expression that might also serve to convey something of the oxymoronic flavor of “*species intelligibilis*.” In knowledge, then, the “invisible looks” of a visible thing’s nature would be said to come to be in a second way, “before” and “in” the mind, in a “likeness” that is both a transparent medium and a qualification of the knower. This kind of rumination, which would try to preserve the residue of opacity and metaphor in Aquinas’s language, might lead Thomists to capitulate in the face of accusations of representationalism, but then to reconsider the whole question on their own terms. N&V

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Traité des sacrements. I. Baptême et Sacramentalité. 1. Origine et signification du baptême by Jean-Philippe Revel (*Paris: Cerf, 2004*), 688 pp.

FATHER JEAN-PHILIPPE REVEL has undertaken, as a crowning achievement of almost fifty years of teaching, the publication of a treatise of sacraments, which will include five volumes that cover the whole of sacramental theology. The present volume is the first of the forthcoming series (5). The general introduction defines the method and situates sacramentology in the realm of theology as a whole, especially in regard to ecclesiology and liturgy. The fundamental choice of Revel is to tackle the classical questions of a treatise *De sacramentis in genere* from and within the study of baptism. By doing so, he wants to avoid treating first the sacraments in general, and then applying deductively this “prefabricated form” (26) to the seven particular sacraments, which risks—as often experienced in the past—missing the originality of each of the sacraments. Revel prefers rather an inductive approach, which allows drawing

the issues addressed by theology from the sources, especially from baptism (27). This does not mean that the Medieval elaboration of the treatise of the sacraments in general loses all of its interest. On the contrary, Revel presents carefully the general framework of this treatise as it appears in the *Summa theologiae*, suggests some corrections (28–32), and presents his own proposal (32–34). The latter is ordered by four questions: origin (institution, efficient cause); nature (formal causality in particular); destination (final causality, both efficacy and fruit); and subject (extrinsic material causality). The present volume treats the first two questions.

The second important point of this long and rich general introduction concerns manifesting the intrinsic link between sacramental theology and the theology of the Church. Revel takes one step at a time. He presents first the connection between the sacraments and the liturgy (42–46). We have here a small treatise of fundamental liturgy that starts with the principal aspects of the virtue of religion to present Christian worship in the general framework of sanctification. He then addresses the mystery of the Church. Revel shows that the Church itself is a sacrament, by placing the sacraments in the Christian community both as lifegivers and as its most significant acts (67–89). The general introduction ends with a long reflection on ecclesial time (92–121), ordered according to the different stages of salvation. This perspective is very illuminating for the rest of the treatise.

The first part, the institution of baptism (125–245), poses right away the so-called question of Christ's divine institution of the sacraments. The presentation is widely based—and rightly so—on the historical dimension, which dismisses the “naïve” thesis, according to which all the sacraments were entirely, completely, instituted by Christ. However, the testimonies of the magisterial tradition in this regard are not to be overlooked. Rather, they have to be deepened. The author undertakes this task in a very convincing way, to my mind (150 ff.), in two ways. First, he mentions the important role of Christ's miracles that, by their repetition and chosen symbolism, *design . . . a proper meaning of sanctification*. Revel underlines then (153 ff.) the anthropology first assumed by the Word through the Incarnation and then honored in those that he saves. Revel amply develops this “incarnation law,” which structures in some way salvation, and which is manifested first in Christ, the primordial sacrament (162). These Christological developments are truly the foundation for any sacramental theology, since they show themselves to be fitting and coherent throughout the history of salvation (177). Revel then tackles explicitly the issue of the institution of baptism (181 ff.). A long study of the prehistory of this rite—both in ancient religions and in Judaism—allows us to grasp the fundamental symbolism assumed by

Christ taking its origin from John's baptism. This long review of the progressive institution of baptism results in the promulgation by the risen Christ of baptism in the Spirit and to the practice of the Church since Pentecost, as described in Acts. These developments highlight the appropriateness of the establishment of the institution from the repetition of Christ's deeds. This thesis is indeed the most illuminating.

The second and last part of the volume is dedicated to the nature of baptism (249–end). It is ordered in three steps: the description of baptism (rite), the nominal definition (the verb *baptizein*, the word *sacrament*, and the word *mystery*), and the essential definition (starting from the notion of *sign*). We will reflect upon this third consideration, not without remarking that the first two give a very accurate classical presentation.

The essential definition (431–622) starts with a long presentation of the Latin tradition, which is rooted in St. Augustine (431–460). From then on, it is the logic of the *sign* on which the whole tradition has been based. This tradition, however, is not strictly homogeneous in the sense that the weakening of symbolic meaning toward the end of the high Middle Ages (eighth to tenth centuries) introduced the scholastic debate between *sign* and *cause*. This allows Revel to enhance the effort accomplished by St. Thomas Aquinas, who, at the end of a long evolution, will put the sign back into its central place (477–92). The speculative analysis of the concept of sign (493–518) is very well developed. It is followed by the study of symbol (520–81)—the most significant contemporary contribution—allowing, in particular, to show both the depth of the meaning and its historical enrichment. Finally, Revel offers an analysis of what has been conventionally called, not without risk of misunderstanding, *sacramental hylemorphism*. Starting from a precise analysis of Aquinas's major text on this matter (*ST* III, q. 60, a. 4–8), he shows the profound unity, which is a sacrament as a compound of gestures and words. From this doctrine, classical after all, but purified from the logical rigidity added by a certain scholastic tradition (597), Revel offers a deepening based on E. Schillebeeckx's observations. The fundamental intuition is kept with very meaningful comments, but carefully corrected in order to better distinguish the Christian sacraments from both "natural" and Old Testament rituality. This is also an occasion for Revel to enhance the stimulating aspects of Dom O. Casel's work for the sacramental renewal of the twentieth century (611–15).

Given the abundance of materials treated by Revel, it is impossible to comment on each of his developments individually. We will rather attempt to give a global impression in the most precise way possible.

As for the form, first of all, the book is very well-written. It reads easily and uses precise and accessible language. This easily understood treatise is

written both for an academic audience and more widely for a cultivated public. The book reveals the talent of a teacher gifted for pedagogy, as is apparent on every page. The mass of documents is treated with great ease; the reader is never overwhelmed with an avalanche of facts, footnotes, and developments that could make the text heavy, even though the inquiries of the sources are well-documented and critical. This expose is the work of a master, who goes to the positive sources, shows the continuity as well as the shifts, proposes solutions, invites us to enter into the meaning of the evolution, and incessantly ties the parts together in one coherent whole.

As a matter of fact, we note that the theological method, clearly manifest and justified from the beginning (9–13), demonstrates its aptness and fruitfulness throughout the book. It is a properly scientific theology. It constantly gathers its revealed data with the resources of disciplines including history, exegesis, and patristic studies (positive theology or theology of sources). It then penetrates them with a profound intelligibility, thanks to properly speculative reflection, that has found, manifested, and exploited all the resources offered by the tradition that follows St. Thomas. Revel demonstrates the faith's profound intelligibility in its actual state, while suggesting often very pertinent developments yet to come. The last word is not pronounced, of course, on a subject as vast as the sacraments, that is not the intention of Revel. But he does present the matter in its fundamental architecture, and studies each of its parts as well as the relation that unites them. In this way, all the specialized inquiries that are evoked by such a perspective can receive their own place and the necessary clarification. From their side, they can contribute to the enrichment of all matter. This method allows a permanent development of the theological effort. This is the first important quality of the book to have recalled in mind and to have illustrated this very way of doing theology.

Revel's major methodological option is to present the sacramentality of salvific acts starting with baptism. This is a justified choice (25–33) that we would like to discuss. We in no way contest the fact that the general treatise of St. Thomas needs to be continually thought out with personal investment. On the one hand, the deductive method proper to the *Summa theologiae* bears a risk—from which we think that St. Thomas knew how to protect himself—of an excessive logical constriction of theology. The danger is—as Revel rightly underlines—to lose sight of the very analogical character of the sacraments by restrictively arranging them in a genus of which they would be too closely related species. It is necessary then, not to replace the deductive approach, but to unite it with the more inductive approach that offers its own resources. This being the case, the

debate exists concerning the starting point. Revel has chosen baptism, as we already mentioned. This permits him to follow the order—which is not fortuitous—of the sacraments of initiation in order to show what is essential to sacramentality, and to be able then to understand better the other sacraments. This approach is legitimate and fruitful. But is it the only one? Moreover, is it the best one? Let us discuss this point.

We consider that it would have been fruitful to ask these questions first and then to make a proposition. However, one choice seems obvious for Revel. The treatise of sacraments belongs “*inside the treatise on baptism from which it has been taken*” (26). We readily accept a historical basis for this claim. But as we will now demonstrate, we think that another approach is possible and perhaps even better.

If we perceive sacramentality as the “structuring law” of the economy of salvation, we should start from the mystery of Christ, the fundamental sacrament, and continue with the ecclesial sacrament. These two sacramental realities are united like the head to the body or the spouse to the bride. They accomplish the salvation of humankind through the particular sacraments. Revel does not ignore this (cf. 78 ff. for the Church, 162 f. for Christ), even though he presents this matter in a more scattered way and the recent developments on the sacramentality of the Church are not sufficiently taken in account. The order preferred by Revel for the particular sacraments starts with the sacraments of initiation: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, and, then in this perspective, the other sacraments. It is an order of generation that shows the progressive generation of Christian qualities. But this generation presupposes the generative sacramental realities, namely Christ and the Church.

There is, however, another order, an order of perfection, which mentions first the most complete element according to which the other elements are arranged. This order puts forward the Eucharist, the most perfect sacrament, the *Holy Sacrament*. What is the nature of this Eucharistic perfection? First of all, the Eucharist is the major place where we find the combined presence of the two primordial sacraments—Christ, the founding sacrament, and the Church, the founded sacrament. The Eucharist is the fruit of their common action, as the source and the end of the other sacraments. It is the Eucharist that, out of its own perfection, nourishes the other six sacred acts and finalizes them. The sacramental “structure” is accomplished perfectly and therefore interpreted the more precisely in the *Holy Sacrament*. It is only through the Eucharist that we can grasp the other sacraments that do not reach the same perfection. To our mind, we cannot move, according to an order of intelligibility (from the more perfect to the less perfect), when we move from baptism toward

the Eucharist, but rather the other way round. The perspective chosen by Revel puts the receiving subject first, who will determine the theological significance of the other sacraments, through his birth to grace and the progressive accomplishment of his vocation. The other perspective, starting from the Eucharist, privileges the study of sacraments starting from their fundamental actors, namely Christ and the Church. It then demonstrates how sacramental beings enact salvation in a sacramental way and how they model the receiving subject on themselves.

The sacramental “structure” of the Eucharist is the most completely formed in its three instances (sign only, sign and reality, reality only). On this account, the Eucharist serves to explain very clearly the sacramentality of the particular sacraments. This ternary structure is central and has to be applied, analogically of course, in every sacrament. This task will not always be easy, especially regarding the intermediate reality. But this is a task to accomplish. Even in the Eucharist’s specificity in this regard (the intermediary reality is in the signs before being in the receiving subject in order that it can be received), this sacrament is most illuminating: The “real presence” is the highest expression of salvation in its continuous self offering (this presence lasts as long as the sign that expresses it lasts) and in its power to attract us. In some way, we find in any particular sacrament this intermediate instance, which is the continuous offering of salvation. This offer is permanent, inherent to the subject, a real sign of paschal mystery accomplished by Christ, the true assistance promised by the Spirit, an ultimate disposition to receive the grace given for Easter and to be accomplished by the subject. This intermediate instance can be clearly found in the sacrament of the Church (it connects unfailingly the social reality of the mystery and the theological final reality). Starting with baptism, in this point of view, runs the risk of delaying too long, until the end, the consideration of this intermediary reality (the character in this case), and for an aspect that, although historically grasped first, is not the most determinant (the case of baptism received in unfavorable conditions, cf. 34). The baptismal character is just as important and necessary in the sacrament when received with the best possible dispositions.

On the other hand, the Eucharist shows very well the temporality of the whole life of grace. It focuses on typically Christian time (good remarks on 93 f.), which is the time of the acquired perfection in its source and its communication. Man cannot add anything to the accomplished Christological perfection, if not to add himself as a member of the Body of Christ that is the Church. This idea of an acquired perfection at its source, which communicates itself, makes man, as the subject of sacraments, particularly receptive to this sacramentality that sacramen-

talizes him. What we mean is that baptism, if it comes from paschal mystery, gives the quality of being a member of the Church, and it lets the baptized person enter into this paschal logic of the intimate eucharistic life of the Bridegroom and the Bride that precedes him and attracts him to itself.

The fact that the usual liturgical place for the celebration of sacraments is the celebration of the Eucharist confirms what has already been said. This shows that the paschal mystery of the union between Christ and the Church is the “context” of Christian life. We distinguish between the sacraments as being (Christ and the Church) and the sacraments as actions (baptism, confirmation, etc.). The Eucharist is at the junction of the two: It is the presence of Christ and the Church according to a unique realism (being) in view of the unique source of action (Christ’s sacrifice) and end (the sacrifice of Christians in Christ’s sacrifice), which accomplishes our salvation. The other six sacraments exist in order to enter into this redemptive “logic,” to come back to it after being drawn away by sin, to provide ministers for it, and to model one’s whole life on it. Moreover, the Eucharistic mystery allows us to grasp the distinction between objective redemption (Christ’s deeds) and subjective redemption (the act through which grace is given to each person). Though illuminating from the standpoint of the dispositions of the receiving subject, the Eucharistic mystery (from Revel’s approach) risks being seen as a repetition of Christ’s very action. This is wrong, since it is always the act of objective redemption that reaches us today—Christ’s paschal mystery in the Eucharist—which is “spread” through the other sacraments according to their specific meaning.

These remarks are present in the volume, but they may not be sufficiently brought forward. When he presents the unfolding of Incarnation (165–69), Revel shows very well that all the actions in Christ’s life are oriented toward Easter. When the mystery of Easter has been accomplished, it is Christ who communicates himself in and through the Eucharist. Therefore, the Eucharist represents Christ’s Easter in men’s lives in order to model them on this mystery. Here is the meaning and the purpose of all the other sacraments. Thus, like Christ’s life, the lives of Christians—and even more so the life of the Christian community, the Body of Christ, who forms with his a single mystical Person—can be modeled on the Eucharist. In short, the fact of considering the Eucharist first because of its excellence reveals maybe better the mystery of salvation; it also allows us to consider according to this center the individual appropriation perspective that is served by the other sacraments, but always in the perspective of the accomplishment of the Christ–Church mystery in the receiving subject.

If he would have chosen this perspective, according to which the Eucharist is the real and explanatory center of the sacraments as a whole, would the treatise on sacraments have been deeply changed? We do not think so. Indeed, the Christological and eccesiological developments would have been more ample and better connected, but the order chosen by Revel to examine the issues could have remained the same. The first chapter would still have treated the question of the origin, since the institution of the sacraments is the extension of the developments on the mystery of Christ and the Church. The second step, treating the nature of the sacraments, would have tackled the question of sign concerning the Eucharist and would have allowed us to grasp in its perfect realization the realism expressed by the sacrament, and so forth for the finality (the instrumental causality would have linked together the Christological and the sacramental issues), and for the subject of the sacraments (communion as integral part of the sacrament).

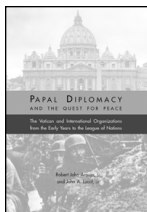
Apart from these observations, it has to be said that this *Treatise of Sacraments* is a very remarkable work that fills a long and deplorable gap. The courteous but clear discussion of other less satisfying proposals (518–19, 531–32, 637) shows even better the relevance of this beautiful and fruitful theology of salvation. We wait impatiently for the next volumes. 

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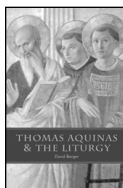


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