Augustinian Trinitarianism and Existential Theology

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I

It is widely assumed among contemporary theologians that the ancient Trinitarian theology is in need of profound revision, or at least reinterpretation, if it will have relation to the religious interest of the present time. Some are of the opinion that an essential core of the ancient theology will remain unaltered in the revision. For others the continuity of the new with the older theology will hardly be more than that of a common religious concern and a method tolerant of divinity. The ancient theologians, it is thought, carried to their work of formulating religious experience a Platonic intellectuality either philosophically mistaken or at least remote from current philosophy. It is assumed also that the empirical and existential attitudes of the present time are closer to the reality of religious experience than the intellectual constructions of the Fathers. However much therefore will be discarded of Patristic doctrine, the revision can be seen as purging the primary and universal religious interest of what belongs particularly to the Hellenic culture of late antiquity.[1]

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1. Maurice Wiles, *The Remaking of Christian Doctrine;* Karl Rahner, *Schriften zur Theologie,* English tr. as *Theological Investigations;* John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology.* These writers all undertake a revision of Christian theology in relation to contemporary thought, but understand differently what is contemporary.

Macquarrie, a translator of *Sein u. Zeit,* finds in Heidegger the logical basis of his theology, but does not attend sufficiently to the implications for his purpose of Heidegger's later position. For this reason it has been convenient in the present argument to refer, not to Macquarrie or other Heideggerian theologians, but to Heidegger's *Nietzsche,* where the relation of his philosophy to Nietzsche and nineteenth century culture is shown very fully.

Theology has a future, writes Rahner, only on condition that it "learns to speak about God in the language of this world"(Vol. XIII, Eng. tr. p. 59). And this is and will remain a "pluralist, secularized, rational and technological world" (n.6, p.37 of the same vol.). While doctrine is not to be known except as in the course of historical change, it is all the same possible to show "how all the manifold individual statements of the Church's faith derive from the simple and pristine kernel of the Christian faith" (Vol. XIII, p. 49). Towards philosophy Rahner is very accommodating, thinking it acceptable and inevitable that there will be a plurality of theologies as one or another philosophical position is assumed. Heidegger's 'end of metaphysics' he regards as nonsense. Unlike many

As contemporary philosophers differ greatly among themselves, so there is not one but a plurality of new theologies. In common, however, they are distinguished from the objective and systematic form of the older theology, which began with God and then treated nature and human history in relation to that principle. Theology is now to remain with human existence and historical experience and to ask about God as in relation to this presupposed finitude. Christian theologians from Patristic times until about a century and a half ago presupposed the triune God as known through scripture definitively interpreted by the orthodox councils. Now instead the presupposition is human existence taken concretely, but with another concreteness than that of the Trinitarian relation. In the one case the natural and particular is comprehended by the intellectual principle and taken as a moment or aspect of it. In the other the natural or particular is taken as primary in the concrete relation.[2]

Catholic theologians he has place for the older modern philosophy (Kant, Hegel, etc.). But this history he sees as having passed into the Hegelianism of the left (Marxism) in some form. There is no secular utopia, such as the Marxists think of, but rather in religion as eternal future. With this difference the work of the theologian is to speak to the on-going historical revolution. (Vol. IX, ch. 3, "Philosophy and Philosophism in Theology"; Vol. XIII, ch. 3, "The Theology of the Future"). Rahner's position might be called a church-centred Marxism.

Wiles regards the remaking of theology more in the individualistic manner of British philosophy than, as Rahner, from the side of a universal ecclesiastical authority. He assumes an "essential religious concern", which is to be preserved in the remaking, and "economy and coherence" as his logical rule (pp. 107-8). Whether the continuing "religious concern" will preserve objectively an essential kernel of doctrine appears doubtful to Wiles: "We cannot lay down any rules about the relation of contemporary doctrine to the affirmation of the past which will not be so general as to offer no practical guidance at all." (p. 14) "Economy and coherence" provide for Wiles the relation of existential concern to a universal. He approaches from below the same formal universality as Rahner from above would lay on the pluralism of contemporary culture.

2. Common to the positions mentioned is that a knowledge of the Trinity, such as presupposed in older theology, if it were possible, would only be an abstraction, that the relation to God proper to religion is of the whole man and must therefore be historical and existential. Wiles' formulation is that after Kant there is for the theologian a choice between a Barthian and an existential position (p. 22 ff.) Rahner attends much more elaborately than Wiles to the logical or transcendental through which human experience can have wholeness and relation to God, but the difference of the two positions is only as stated in n. 1. "And so, even if it were possible to express an abstract assertion about the nature of man devoid of any historical reference, it would be insufficient as a statement of faith, confronting man in the concrete flesh of his history" (Vol. IX, p. 72). What

Because the contemporary theological attitude is thus defined in opposition to Trinitarian Christianity it is to be thought rather Christian than a reversion to some form of paganism. To presuppose the finite and natural, and to think of gods as infected with this finitude or else as abstract and indifferent to a religious relation, is in general the character of pagan religions. But here the reversion to nature and existence is not so intended. The religious interest which the radical theologians perceive is that of a society liberated from nature while yet in nature. It is the religion of a "technological" society, which is without religion so far as it hopes that the interests and desires of the natural individual can be fulfilled by the collective work of science and technique. This society, which in Marxist and liberal forms assumes itself sufficient to human ends without reference to religion, experiences its finitude in several ways. There occur relations to an infinite, and thus a religion — or rather religions — which do not violate the natural presupposition of the society.[3]

The religions which arise from the insufficiency of the liberated society are Christian so far as this society presupposes a concrete individuality as its principle. But the naturalistic concreteness assumed and proposed as the end to be accomplished is rather, as said, opposed to the Christian concreteness. The relation of the religions which recur in the liberated society to Christianity is therefore indirect. They are the religions of a de-Christianized society. There is on this account an affinity to pagan religions, in

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these writers say is true certainly from their standpoint, at the same time as it leaves the older relation incomprehensible. There is no consciousness that logically the one attitude is as well possible as the other, that the existential attitude is derivative from the other, that what is said of the abstractness and insufficiency of the traditional attitude is about its relation to the existential presupposition.

3. There is an ambiguity in these positions whether and in what way they are specifically Christian. Wiles recognizes that his method allows general theistic belief in creation and providence but not an incarnation. Traditional images are not excluded, but neither does the method have any definite relation to them (p. 119 ff.). Because the relation of the particular to an abstract logical form can be known only conceptually as ever incomplete, knowledge of the concrete is sought symbolically. The symbolical has a very different place than in older theology. Here it is contingent and uncontrolled, unless by precedent; there it represents and leads to the intelligible: "*Radius divinae revelationis . . . remanet in sua veritate; ut mentes quibus fit revelatio, non permittat in similitudinibus permanere, sed elevet eas ad cognitionem intelligibilium*". Aquinas, *S.T.*, I. 1, 9. *ad sec.* Wiles' theology, and the same may be said of Rahner and Macquarrie, is Christian through a contingent content and not essentially through its logical method.

that there is in them only a partial resumption of free natural individuality into the divine-human relation. For the division from the Christian principle is primary, and there is place for religion so far as this division is not itself negated.[4]

The radical theologian who begins with contemporary society and takes his logical method from current philosophy can assume one of several relations to the older Christian tradition. Since his intention is to find a relation between the ancient doctrine and a contemporary religious interest, his criticism will vary with his perception of that interest. The religion by which he measures older Christianity will not always be the same. According to the measure some doctrines will be more acceptable than others or with less modification. Thus, for example, the belief in creation and in a providential order is not far from the ordinary ways of thinking in a technical and practical society. If the strict logical form of these beliefs, as in the Thomistic proofs, is not acceptable, still the causal and teleological concepts on which they depend may be admitted and that in exceptional experiences they disclose a relation of the believer to God. But whether one retains these beliefs will depend on the place these categories have in one's thinking. If in the manner of Heidegger one divides Being radically from the universal or metaphysical concepts of beings, one will not properly continue to speak of creation or providence.[5]

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4. The religious relation begins in the uncertainty of the individual in a society which as technology is supremely certain of itself. The individual in the contingency of his historical situation seeks the certainty, that is the knowledge of necessity, which is already assumed in his technology. If with the Marxist one holds to the self-assurance of the technological will, one dismisses religion. The great superiority of contemporary liberal societies over Marxist is that they give room to the experience of contingency. But the concreteness possible in the religion of liberal technology cannot exceed what this relation of contingency and necessity permits. A Christian concreteness, as formerly understood, exceeds these categories, as being those of fate and secondary causes; *e.g.*, Aquinas, *S. T.*, I, 116, 4.

5. There are other theological positions possible in the technological society than those of Wiles, Rahner and Macquarrie. They can be neglected in the present inquiry because the question here is of the relation of these positions to the concreteness of the former Christian belief. In this regard the extreme positions are those which allow the natural to be brought under an abstract reason and that which holds to nature against this reduction. The meaning of Heidegger's 'end of metaphysics' is that in his view the nexus of causes and finite ends through which nature is subjected to an abstract universality can somehow in the future be held subordinate to a nature immediately from Being. This Heideggerian position is a kind of inverted Christianity — a concreteness which has gone over wholly to the natural. The same

Belief in an incarnation or in the triune God is intractable, whatever be the form of religion belonging to the liberated society by which they are measured. No doubt in a sense they are present in the primary assumption of this society, that there is a free natural individuality. But they cannot enter into the religious relations of the society without endangering this presupposition. For these beliefs touch directly the opposition of this society to the older Christian community. The incarnation appears as brute fact and not knowable to subsequent reflection. The Trinity can be allowed only on condition of an inequality of persons, since otherwise the assumed priority of the natural and particular would be undone.[6]

It is an easy matter to criticize the revision or remaking of theology from a traditional standpoint. To the conservative theologian it is a mistaken and unnecessary work. If the ancient doctrine has become inaccessible to a society no longer Christian, then it is for this to change and not the doctrine. But then he has need to ask how this might be possible — what relation, that is, contemporary society has to Christian belief. He then asks abstractly the same question as the radical theologian has actually attempted to answer in his revisions. But if an extraneous criticism of contemporary theology is a useless and easy matter, there is need to examine the procedure of the radical theologians much more closely on their own ground. It is reasonable certainly that they should assume for their logical method some form of contemporary philosophy. Theologians have always done the same. But the theologian in former times was not wholly at the mercy of an assumed philosophy, in that there was question of its adequacy to an objective and presupposed doctrine. Where now the doctrine is to be revised or remade it cannot in the same way supply a measure of philosophical assumptions. It would anyway be unthinkable in contemporary culture that philosophy should be

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'metaphysics' as Heidegger would thus contain is the logical basis of Rahner's and Wiles' theology, though this is concealed from themselves, so far as they attend primarily to the contingent.

6. Wiles on Christology and Trinity, see esp., *op. cit.*, pp. 69-72, 111-23; where it is rightly perceived that the incarnation of the Logos is unintelligible from this standpoint, and that the Trinitarian doctrine of the Cappadocians is humanly meaningless because it is detached from existence. Rahner desires to ground the traditional doctrine in existential experience. But the experience is of total commitment to the common social work and of a concretion of life and death as appearing in this concentration on the universal. The experience he describes does not go beyond a Stoicism, unless so far as it draws on a belief otherwise known; *op. cit.*, vol. XIII, Chapters 13-15.

taken as ancillary to a revealed doctrine. The radical theologian asks in effect what of the former belief is intelligible according to his logical assumptions.[7]

It can indeed appear that there is an independent measure of philosophical assumptions in religious experience. But this independence can easily be seen to be illusory. For the radical theologian assumes in some form the standpoint of a free historical existence and on that assumption asks about the experience of a divine or infinite relation. This experience and the philosophy which commends itself to the society assumed are not different in principle, but differ only as a felt completeness from the explicit structures the philosopher seeks to state. Were this not so, the application of contemporary philosophy to the religious experience would be an arbitrary and unjustified procedure.

Contemporary theology will begin to be critical and to have a control over particular philosophical assumptions when more account is taken of the plurality of existing philosophies and theologies. It can indeed be said that this plurality is simply a fact we have to live with from now on. Or, ignoring the plurality, it might seem possible to prefer and adhere to one form only, as British philosophers, for example, are often content to live in a particular style of philosophizing. But the radical theologian has in fact a measure of this plurality which is intrinsic to his inquiry. The ancient orthodoxy provides him with no measure of authentic Christian belief nor does religious experience. In the Roman Catholic Church there can appear to be a certain regulation of theological diversity in an authoritative *'magisterium'*. This has become, however, a formal and abstract regulation, which can contain the untimely and seek to maintain the peace, but has no criterion of theological pluralism. The theologian has his measure in the general assumption that there is or should be a concrete existential freedom.[8]

7. Wiles (p. 108 ff.) assumes his principle of economy. "But when the principle of economy beckons to me to dispense with the concept of God, I resist. To do so would be to leave a whole dimension of human experience even more opaque and inexplicable than it already is." The consequence then that "if it is true that any faithful account of human experience is bound to lack absolute coherence, an account which incorporates the concept of God is sure to lack it even more blatantly. The infinite God is infinitely resistant to our finite systematizations." There is no question but that these philosophical assumptions should be the measure of what is theologically credible. The ineradicable incoherence of the universal (principle of economy) with the particular was called by the ancients scepticism. That Wiles nonetheless affirms the coherence in admitting the idea of God is what the Stoics were castigated for by the Academics.

8. ". . . we have simply to recognize this: the fact that, prior to any

This general assumption in the attempt to realize it has taken a number of forms. This plurality permits and, as will be seen, requires the question how far the assumption is fulfilled in the several forms. To ask this question belongs to the radical theologian just because his interest is in the infinite relation where the completeness and true nature of a particular existential form appears. In relation to the individual the meaning of the assumption is that he has a wholeness of nature and reason — a naturalized concreteness. Where this assumption is made it is not always found to be the true character of the society. It is, for example, generally thought by observers and perhaps by participants that the Marxist society of the Soviet Union is destructive of existential freedom. Marxism however, purposes a natural or existential freedom as its end.[9]

The question is not however, about the failure of an existential freedom in an historical example, but about the form itself. The theologian may appear to have little difficulty appraising Marxism, since the religious experience sought there is to have no religion. Religion for the Marxist is a residue of the old relation to an objective authoritative doctrine. It may thus be said that Marxism

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question of truth properly so called, we have to recognize a pluralism of philosophies too great for us to master or control, compels us today to recognize a pluralism of theologies prior to the question of theological truth, and without prejudice to a general orientation of all such theologies towards the original message of faith and the single teaching authority of the Church" Rahner, XIII, p. 72. For his conception of how the *'magisterium'* works in relation to this pluralism, vol. 9, ch. 4, "The Historicity of Theology."

Rahner sees in Thomism the beginning of a development to the contemporary pluralistic and existential culture. So far as there is in this culture a recognition of man as "one and whole", philosophy and the sciences can be "a partner to theology". There is an open historical process which tends asymptotically to the revealed doctrine (*op. cit.* XIII, c. 4, "On the Current Relationship Between Philosophy and Theology"). This is, as said already, an abstract view of the relation of contemporary culture to Christianity; technology has its consummation in Christianity.

9. On Marxism as the true existential freedom, *e.g.*, the following: *"Dieser Kommunismus ist als vollendeter Naturalismus = Humanismus, als vollendeter Humanismus = Naturalismus, er ist die wahrhafte Auflösung des Widerstreits zwischen dem Menschen mit der Natur und mit dem Menschen, die wahre Auflösung des Streits zwischen Existenz und Wesen, zwischen Vergegenstandlichung und Selbstbetätigung, zwischen Freiheit und Notwendigkeit, zwischen Individuum und Gattung. Er ist das aufgelöste Rätsel der Geschichte und weiss sich als diese Lösung."* Marx, *Werke,* ed. Liber v. Furth, 1962, vol. 1, pp. 593-4). This intended concrete freedom in its realization is the subjection of the natural to an abstract universality or what is experienced as technology.

leaves no place for existential religion. Or rather there would be no place if Marxism realized the concrete freedom it proposes as its principle. If this utopian aspect is neglected there can well be a religion in Marxist societies. In it the existential individual would experience his whole relation to a complex, pluralized, technological society. One could then ask whether in this relation the individual experienced a concreteness, or not rather the reduction of nature to an abstract identity. If the second is true experience of such a technological society, the radical theologian would undoubtedly conclude that this was not the experience by which he meant to measure and reform Christian doctrine.

It can appear a more difficult question whether the free existential individual of the British or another western democracy in his humane social interest — and antipathy likely to technology and bureaucratic uniformity — is a better measure for the reform or remaking of Christian theology. The difficulty lies in the question whether the abstractive and levelling force of technology belongs to his religious experience. If religiously he experiences a universal end and direction in some measure or again a connectedness and dependence — providence and creation — that experience would hardly be from his contingency and particularity. In fact he participates in and is part of the general work of society, and thus the unifying technological and bureaucratic will belong to his experience. The natural concreteness he assumes and begins with appears thus to be refuted by his religious experience.[10]

At another extreme one can ask whether theologians who take this method from Heidegger and consider human finitude as immediately divided from Being, so that there is no mediation of finite and infinite, have there a standpoint for the correction of Christian doctrine. The question might seem to be answered in the asking of it, since Christianity has been the religion of absolute mediation. But that is an extraneous judgement. It is rather of the highest interest that radical theologians should look to Heidegger. For the examples given indicate that the concrete, natural existence which is to be the measure of the ancient doctrine is not attained

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10. The true character of contemporary liberalism is most clearly to be seen in American society, since in British and other European forms there is with it also a surviving attachment to a particular national community. The nature of contemporary American liberalism can be seen very well in Rawls' concept of justice as a perfectly abstract agreement or social contract prior to all particular social relations. Rawls thinks his position to be Kantian, but it would be more accurate to equate it with Marxism, his position being a naturalized or existential individuality. See John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* Cambridge, Mass, 1971.

without a more radical break from finite categories than the Marxist or contemporary liberal has made. Here one takes instead an existence which has separated itself from technology and the plurality of finite ends by which the reduction of the indivdual to an abstract universality is mediated. For the radical theologian this retreat is inevitable, if he would not give up the natural concreteness which is the principle and measure of his reform. But when he has done so, there is the question how far the concreteness he has saved is found to be true in the religious relations. The answer is simply that in relation to Being existence is a nullity.[11]

The great importance of Heidegger's philosophy for the reforming theologian is not simply in his own position. It is principally in the contrasting he has shown between nature and reason in the liberated society that would be their concrete unity. In his exposition of Nietzsche he has shown with great clarity the nature of the pluralistic, technical society, whether in its Marxist or its liberal form, that its principle is an abstract will to which all particular ends are subjected. What is not subjected but repelled by the 'technological' society is the natural will itself before it has been unified and concentrated into an abstract self-identity. In the technological society one lives a pluralized, fragmented life, from which a wholeness of the natural will is only to be found in opposition to its argument beyond the moment of revolt, as a *"Wille zur*

11. Heidegger, *Nietzsche,* esp. vol. II, pp. 31-256, *Der europäische Nihilismus.*

Heidegger shows the reaction of the concrete individual to technology. In technology there is not the concrete liberation of mankind Marx proclaimed, but a stage in a very different history. If Marx promises an historical fulfilment of the world of Christian belief, Nietzsche — and then Heidegger — has a more restricted view. This beginning is from a nineteenth century culture where there is a deep division between an abstract morality and nature. This division belongs to the progressive, scientific-technical society. The question then is of a return from this to a natural concreteness. Since, as observed already, the structure of this society in its logical simplicity is Stoic, the return to nature is logically much as the Roman dream of a renewed 'golden age'. It begins as that unreality. Then Heidegger's argument is that when the technological society passes from the form where the division of abstract universality and nature are for a subject, to subjectivity itself as principle — these forms are associated loosely with Descartes and Hegel — this abstract subjectivity falls to immediate unity with life or nature. In this conclusion the concretion of *'rationalitas'* and *'animalitas'*is attained, which was lost while man knew himself through the logical structure of his world. But in this existent individuality the logic which led to it is present only as in an immediate self-consciousness — a dionysiac becoming. It is not apparant to Heidegger that this natural concreteness is for human rationality the extreme of abstractness.

Macht'', to an existence of the natural will related to Being neither as end nor through another's 'metaphysical' category.

Heidegger's argument destroys the assumptions of the liberated society that there is a natural concreteness. It brings the assumption to the form of a contrariety where at the one extreme abstract reason prevails over nature while at the other nature is saved at the cost of a developed rationality. The terms depend furthermore on each other, so that neither is the true account, but rather their relations. Where the reforming theologian looks for experience of a natural concreteness as the measure of his reform, there is present rather in contemporary society a diremption of nature and reason. In this diremption is rather the absence and negation of the Christian principle than the condition of an existential Christianity.

Technology and a Nietzschean revolt against it are parts of a common attitude which is overlooked in contemporary theological discussion. They are fragments of the nineteenth century national state. Europeans had settled into an independent secular culture, as only partially before this time, which accounted itself the measure of the ancient theology as of its earlier culture in general. In place of the former objective belief the attitude of historical research was assumed to be authoritative. *'Dogmengeschichte'* took the place of dogma. Religion in its practice became a part of culture and not its absolute foundation. The historical and finite had come to be presupposed as first and not the triune God. The condition of this transformation is that the concreteness formerly sought in religion should appear to be attained secularly. For then the religious dependence could pass into an independent and self-sufficient culture which could reduce its former principle to an object of empirical inquiry and contain religion within itself. Science and culture had a natural and particular existence in the national states.

A revision of Christian doctrine, such as theologians now attempt, was not necessary while the national states remained in their integrity. The shift to a finite and historical principle did not bring with it at once the consciousness that the old relation was lost. The universal Christian God might become insensibly a national god, and generally the loss of culture in an older sense might be thought to be its fulfilment. A reconciliation of particular interests in the state was generally assumed, so that the growth of democracy and socialism could occur without destroying the national community. The same forces were present, but contained, as later were released in the opposition of 'fascism' and socialism — of natural sentiment generally and the satisfaction of particular natural interests.

If the national political community as such appropriated the older religion to its finite uses and enjoyment, other relations to religion were also present in its parts. What is now taken for granted, that the state is for the particular intents of its members, was then the doctrine of radical democrats and socialists. Marx gave this doctrine a precise formulation in saying that civil society and the state were to become one. The religion of this society of particular interests, complete in itself, Marx saw to be atheism, where this word was defined as against older Christianity. Marx saw the state as an absolute technological society. It is generally supposed that democracy and socialism of the British type are something other than Marxism. But if one adheres to the principle — that the state should be only the system of means for serving the interests of its individual members — then the differences will appear secondary. The religion of the economic, technical society can be regarded from the standpoint of individuals or, as by Marx, together with the system of means. It is in general the same religion: the belief in a reconciliation of particular, natural interests and technological reason.

If Marx foresaw with exceptional clarity the coming technological society, Nietzsche had experience enough of it in the later century to anticipate the radical revolt against it. In their time the thought of Marx and Nietzsche was not of general interest. Both perceived the national political community in a partial and unbalanced way through one of its elements. With the decline of the national state their thought came into its own, since the decline is nothing else than that elements contained before in the whole came to have rather a life of their own. The assumption on which the independence and completion of the national state rested was that life and nature were capable of containing technology — that the concreteness of the Christian principle existed naturally in the state. The history of these communities has rather been of the disintegration of these elements.

This disintegration has in general a like character to that of the Hellenic state as Plato saw it. The knowledge of a sufficient unifying principle is lost and the ruling part of the state is conscious of some aspect of the state as the whole. In this case the elements are commonly recognized and spoken of in many ways. When Europeans, for example, distinguish their culture from American or Russian technology, this as an alien force, they hold to the natural basis of the state. There is a retreat to this basis against a universal technology. But it is undeniable that technology had its origin in the national states. The difficulty is not in identifying the extreme elements of the dissolution but in grasping their logical form and

their relation to each other. It is here that Marx and Nietzsche have their importance. The one corrects the tendency of Anglo-American thought to perceive only a conflict of individual interests and an abstract universal in the form of bureaucracy, technology or the like. In this thought the relation to nature is not understood radically. There is interest enough in the primitive and aboriginal certainly, but it is another matter to find here the beginning of a rationality prior to and independent of technological reason. What Heidegger, following Nietzsche, brings into view is the form of the natural element of the political community.

The technological element and the natural are each in its way the whole. Marx himself proposed the achievement of a perfect natural concreteness by abolishing the private possession of universalized property or capital. Technology would in that way serve individuals who participated fully in the common life according to their talents. Such continues to be the basic assumption of liberal and socialist societies. If the utopian character of Marxism is generally dismissed, this is more because the principle itself is retracted. The criticism of the principle is therefore mostly trivial. What is necessary if one would be free of it, is first to admit its truth — that it is the whole and concrete. Then it can be learned from Nietzsche and Heidegger that it is the whole in the sense that its tendency is to the suppression of the natural altogether under an abstract, dominant reason.

Technology is the concrete from the side of the rational soul. In its simple logical form the utopian perfection of it is a Stoic concentration on the universal and an indifference to the natural and particular, but that in such a way that the natural is thought to be comprehended by the universal. Nietzsche and Heidegger give a true account of technology but from a standpoint equally one-sided. The natural and particular is taken by Heidegger, extending and purifying Nietzsche's argument, at the point of the first appearance of self-consciousness in the apprehension of a Parmenidian Being. Being in this immediacy and abstractness does not encroach on the finite but lets it be. This principle is again the whole and concrete. But the concreteness is again unbalanced, in that there is no development of the rational principle.

It is of greatest importance that technology and the natural element of the state should be conceived rightly. But when that is done, there remains the question of primary interest to the theologian. Neither of these abstract elements permits a revision of Christian doctrine which will turn out to be Christian. In the one case the theologian finds himself on the ground of abstract, political religion of Roman paganism. The Heideggerian principle is

hospitable to Hinduism or Buddhism, rather than to Christianity. But in the relation of the two elements the theologian has, as said above, a negation of Christianity. They are the contrary elements which, so combined that neither diminishes or absorbs the other, are the Christian principle. The true task of the theologian, therefore, who would revise Christian doctrine from the standpoint of contemporary society is to show that not only the division and contrariety of the elements is present in this society but also in some measure their concreteness.

The national state, as said, stood in a total relation still to the former Christian religion, but that on the presupposition that it was first and the triune God the object of its science and cultural enjoyment. From this standpoint it is incomprehensible how the Trinity ever came to have the relation of an objective presupposition. For to know that is the same as to know that the finite is not first, as presupposed, but dependent and derivative. For a knowledge of the ancient doctrine the presupposed independence and priority of the national community would have to be retracted. But that retraction has in effect taken place through the course of history. Where the presupposed concrete finitude has broken into its elements and their relation is no longer known, the presupposition is as good as undone. But it is not a question of retracting the assumption that there is a finite concreteness in the sense that it did not exist. That would be to suppose in a 'fascistic' manner that the state was a multitude of animals and that technology was an independent force beyond human power to control and direct. In a more objective view one will admit both the fact of a concrete life in the national states and the elements of their dissolution. There is in this history a certain experience of the Christian principle. It is, as time and history have shown, a finite form of the principle which was taken for the original. The problem of the theologian is to collect from this experience a relation to the original.

The first step would be for the theologian to perceive that not the elements but their relation is the true object. Partly he can have this knowledge historically through the fact of the national state. Partly it can be obtained by a reflection on the relation of technology and the natural element of the state. The two are opposed and exclusive, and yet each would take the other to itself and contain it. As conceived by Marx and Heidegger the elements, for one who compares their positions, are pure contradiction. There is need of a principle in which both can subsist, as in a manner in the national state.

The inquiry is about the elements of the Christian principle. It is therefore not a new inquiry but properly that of the genesis of the

Christian religion. In Patristic times it was the question of the original conversion of peoples in the Roman Empire to the Christian religion. The contemporary question and that of the Fathers are also greatly different, as is our society from that of the Empire. The differences do not, however, touch the primary logical form of the problem, how an integrity of the elements is possible in human life. The contemporary theologian has, therefore, essentially the same question as when Augustine, beginning from a like diremption of the natural and the rational, reflected in his *Confessions* on the logic of his conversion — that is, of his knowledge that the concreteness of the elements is the true principle.

II

The experience which led the ancients to the concreteness of Christian belief and doctrine can nowhere be followed more simply and directly than in Augustine's *Confessions.* This work is not autobiographical, as it might seem to a modern interest, unless incidentally, but is about his relation to God and his search for an adequate mediation of it.[12] He asks in the first chapter how there can be such knowledge, since it appears that without the relation there is no mediation and no relation without the mediation. One is taken from the first beyond the standpoint where one says that God is known through his effects as experienced by the finite subject but not in himself. For if the knowledge of the effects falls

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12. The opening words of the *Confessions* state the subject: there is a primary motion and desire of the emboded rational spirit towards God or its principle. This desire does not remain as an inarticulate feeling but seeks mediation or, as the theologians now say, experience of the relation. The argument of the work to the point where Augustine has become a Christian is about diverse forms of mediation or experience and their insufficiency. There is neither experience without the relation nor this without experience: *"da mihi, domine, scire et intellegere, utrum sit prius invocare te an laudare te et scire te prius sit an invocare te, sed quis te invocat nesciens te? Aliud enim pro alio potest invocare nesciens. An potius invocaris, ut sciaris? quomodo autem invocabunt, in quem non crediderunt? aut quomodo credunt sine praedicante?"*

Wiles writes (p. 25): "Perhaps theology must after all abandon its claim to speak about the transcendent God; not in the paradoxical sense of becoming an atheistic theology, but in the sense that it will speak only of the effects of God as experienced and make no attempt to speak of God in himself. It may be that theology is rightly to be defined in Bultmann's words as 'the conceptual account of the existence of man as being determined by God' "In such a statement it is said that the effects are divine effects but also that they are known only as belonging to particular human experience. The mediation is admitted and denied at the same time.

on the one side only, and is not of a mediation, then to speak of effects is improper, and if there is a relation it will be immediate and altogether abstract. In that case one might speak of the effect — or however the mediation was spoken of — as only on the human side. Then the mediation would be through the knowledge that the effects were not divine — through the knowledge of their nonentity in relation to God. It has been indicated already that radical contemporary theologians do in fact admit a mediation. That is conceded when arguments to show the createdness of the finite and an infinite purposiveness are allowed to have a religious force, even if their logic is not that appropriate to finite relations.

(a) *The unconscious mediation of infancy*

The argument begins with the most undeveloped form of human experience — with infancy, where a world of things and persons is not definitely established, through which God might be sought as their principle. Augustine attends thus to a more primitive original form than the finite human existence (*Dasein*) of the existential theologians. For with that form there is already both relation to a unifying principle and a separation of finite existence from it. This beginning is of great importance for the later course of the argument. It permits a more comprehensive view than where the extremes are conceived as an abstract technological reason on the one side and against it, a return to Heideggerian existence. These forms will occur as particular mediations, necessary but neither of them sufficient. One will therefore not speak of a forgetting of being in the movement to abstraction and subjectivity, but rather see in none of these forms a knowledge of being sufficient to the original desire. In the first stirrings of infancy human rationality begins to appear out of the inner and unconscious completeness of life or nature. The desire of the rational animal, as Augustine's argument will show, is to overcome the break between reason and life. The desire is not satisfied while there is an inequality of the terms, and least of all where they have the form of a contrariety, as between technology and existence. This is rather the extreme division and inequality from which is formed the desire of the rational animal to attain concreteness by overcoming it.

In considering this and subsequent stages in Augustine's confession there is need of a certain adjustment, if his argument is to be intelligible to contemporary readers. The argument is embodied in the Biblical myth of the original Paradise, the Fall, and the expulsion from it. In this setting the whole experience by which he comes to a Christian restoration of the Fall is treated as though it

would not have been necessary but for a rebellious and sinful reason. In the mythical form the Fall appears as accidental and pertaining to the first humans only. When it is taken in its proper sense as universal, there remains the defect that the emergence of reason out of unconscious animal life is represented as evil primarily. It is curious that this distortion should survive in the contemporary attitude that technology and reason are the cause of our ills, and the correction a nearer relation to nature. But this formal defect is radically corrected in Augustine's argument, if one attends to its logical structure. The beginning is with the merely implicit, which is the perfection of life, but not of man as rational, living being. Only with the appearance of reason is there, as the myth tells, the knowledge of good and evil — of the good and evil of the rational animal.

The observation of infants does not contribute much to Augustine's purpose of discovering the mediation between God and man. What he learns is essential however to his whole argument.

(b) *The existential mediation*

The experience Augustine confesses from in his childhood and early youth is from his own recollection and no longer from observation in others of an unconscious state which has passed into oblivion. Although he received some knowledge of the Christian religion in his early years, that is only a remote and undeveloped background and no part of his definite relation to the world. His confession is of an education whose tendency is to subject his natural will to the universal and his revolt from this to a natural community. Where in infancy there was only a fitful and transitory separation of the individual from the universal, here the separation is of a community of natural interests from an abstract universal.[13]

The relation of this natural community to the universal is not here a contrariety, as it will come to be later when Augustine becomes a Manichee. Rather the natural community subsists by itself. There is not an abstract division of reason and sensibility, but

13. *Confessions I,* 8 - III,3. It is useful to compare Augustine's experience of a dionysiac, Nietzschean existence with the treatment of the same by Vergil. The fury Allecto, at Juno's instigation, awakens this spirit in Amata and the other Latin women. But in the fatal course of events by which Turnus and the Latins are defeated by Aeneas this is only a subordinate aspect of the resistance, as it is a subordinate and disreputable aspect of Roman religion. Vergil, *Aeneid,* VII, 286 ff.; 341 ff.; XII, 54 ff. Livy, XXXIX, 8 ff., and the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus.*

the natural community is a complete and existential realtion of its members. The religion of this community is partly the worship of demons or natural powers; partly abstraction of self-consciousness from this natural involvement might be called a religion. The full mediation has the form of a negation of this division of the natural from the rational principle.[14]

There is need to attend very closely to the logic of this natural community, and first to how its difference was established from the Roman community into which Augustine was being educated. (As always, the interpreter has to correct an imbalance in his confession, by which his resistance to a harsh discipline by masters themselves instruments of a system whose good they did not know is spoken of as evil only. The separation of his natural individuality from this discipline is an essential stage in his subsequent Christian conversion.) The preparation for this division is not only the external repression by his teachers but the disparity he experiences between the context of the classical writers used in this grammatical and literary discipline and the end it serves. If education is to elevate the whole person to the universal, the universal has to be presented as concrete. Augustine is not educated by the poets but lost in sympathy with the sufferings of Dido or whoever. The indulgence of his parents allowed him to complete this movement of his soul to the natural.[15]

But the logic of the formation of a separate, natural community has not yet been stated. Augustine dwells at length on a petty theft

14. *"In quantas iniquitates distabui et sacrilega curiositate secutus sum, ut deserentem te deduceret me ad ima infida et circumventoria obsequia daemoniorum."* III, 3.

15. *"Non accuso verba quasi vasa lecta atque pretiosa, sed vinum erroris, quod in eis nobis propinabatur ab ebriis doctoribus, et nisi biberemus, caedebamur nec appellare ad aliquem iudicem sobrium licebat."* Augustine's relation to the content of the Roman Classics is sentimental and subjective. In his polemical treatment of Roman culture in *Civitas Dei*, I - V, he describes it, however, very objectively, taking his account mostly from Livy, Sallust, Cicero and Vergil. His dissatisfaction with honour through promoting the Roman *imperium* as the highest human end is the beginning and provocation of his search for an end which accommodates the natural and particular. That aspect of Roman literature attracted him as a child.

The course of thought which led Augustine to Christianity began with this Roman culture. It cannot be said that either he or such successors as Boethius comprehend this culture itself. It continues to be the authoritative reason for theologians, and to be the origin of a difference between Greek and Latin Christianity. An understanding of pagan Roman culture independently of its Christian relation is still to a great extent a *desideratum*.

of fruit which he and his companions perpetrated against a neighbour. His interest is in no way in the content of the misdeed. Its form is of the greatest interest, since there is a direct negation of the universal in an action done for no natural end but as a sheer assertion of arbitrary freedom. Augustine does in this theft what he observed already in the infant. The difference is that here the arbitrary freedom of the rational subject has been explicitly distinguished from natural needs and ends, where before they were in undistinguished unity. The subject of this explicit arbitrary freedom is a rational individuality or self-consciousness freed from all natural limit or restraint. It is the rational individual or person who is in this relation of indifference to the abstract universal, here present as the recognition of law and the rejection of it. The difficulty in this for Augustine is that he knows himself to have been incapable of this freedom at that time. The whole course of his experience is indeed of his incapacity for this concentrated rational subjectivity, until it has become the form of his relation to a believed concretion of the rational and natural. As it enters his experience at this point rational individuality or personality is simply that against which the natural or existential community is formed.

Augustine asks in what way this arbitrary freedom, of which he was incapable, was all the same the form of an action he committed. His answer is that the simple relation of affirmative and negative, being and non-being, which was present in the theft belonged to the natural community as such, that is to its members in the aspect of their identity with one another. In the particular and natural interests through which Augustine is associated with others in a common life he and they have a conditioned freedom, in which rational independence appears only at the point of identity and abstraction from the natural and particular.[16]

Augustine's experience of this community where the natural will is set free and related only abstractly to an inner unifying principle is at first purely affirmative. Differences do not divide but are

16. II, 8: "*Et tamen solus id non fecissem — sic recordor animum tunc meum — solus omnino id non fecissem. Ergo amavi ibi etiam consortium eorum, cum quibus id feci. Non ergo nihil aliud quam furtum amavi; immo vero nihil aliud, quia et illud nihil est. . . Sed quoniam in illis pomis voluptas mihi non erat, ea erat in ipso facinore. . . . Sed tamen quid erat? Risus erat;*" etc. In this laughter or mockery, from which comes the spirit of satire and comedy, Augustine rightly sees the negativity of an independent subject. The radical negativity of this attitude is alien to his temper: because he desires to save his relation to the natural and particular, and not to be free of it, he moves from Roman to more natural ways of thought, and finally to Christianity as sustaining the natural.

dissolved in mutual affection (*amare amari*). Nature and reason are happily combined in common particular interests. The negative or evil does not appear in these particular goods. But the further experience is of an inevitable negativity in the goods enjoyed by this existential community. Partly this appears as the strife and vexation of discovering that the harmony experienced immediately in human relations is just as much division and separateness. Nor is there an intrinsic measure and limit of the good and evil experienced. For the rational principle is only present as an abstract form, as the inner relation and identity of the process and activity of the community.[17]

It can be objected to Augustine's experience that there are, or have been, stable and harmonious societies living in such a direct rapport with nature. But the measure Augustine thinks of, as is plain from the further course of his criticism, is not such as might be imposed from above — by a Chinese emperor or the like — but rather an intrinsic rational measure. If the tendency of the Roman education and discipline is to subdue and dominate the natural, here it is rather the case that reason is submerged in nature. The rational individuality which appeared as the negation of law and as the break from the Roman community into which Augustine was being educated emerges from the natural community as a negative and destructive force.[18]

In far eastern societies the emergence of a rational subjectivity from nature sometimes appears as a process which may continue through an indefinite succession of births and rebirths. For Augustine this liberation is greatly shortened, an advantage he draws from the strong rationality of the Roman culture to which also he belongs. Experiencing the equivocal nature of the existential community, he is able to draw back from it to the attitude of an involved observer, and then to free himself from this involvement.

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17. Esp. III, 1.

18. His separation from a rational limit is experienced as a negativity of the particular: "*defluxi abs te et erravi, deus meus, nimis devius ab stabilitate tua in adulescentia et factus sum mihi regio egestatis.* II, 10. "*Dem Werden den Charakter des Seins aufzupragen — das ist der höchste Wille zur Macht.*" Nietzsche (Heidegger, *op. cit.*, II, 288). The question whether being and becoming are the richest or emptiest concepts Heidegger discusses in *Nietzsche*, II, 246-56. It is true that the concrete may be brought under these concepts, and the logic of the being of beings be regarded as a falling into abstractness. It remains that the concrete itself, as under these concepts, is the abstract form of a becoming, the negation of all the particular. That is Nietzsche's "*ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen.*"

Augustine would both be in the community of loving and being loved and is repelled from it by the knowledge that its goods are deceptive. This two-fold relation to it takes the form of an inordinate love of theatrical representations. There he is both detached observer and in the hopes and fears of the characters in the dramatic action. These are the same natural human interests as he experienced directly in the existential community and retreated from. The theatre is a purgation for him. The purgation is from the division of himself into observer and participant in passions and interests whose divided and untrue nature he knows. The sympathy and other emotions he experiences are seen as spurious from the standpoint of his rational observing self. He desires the process of good and evil for the enjoyment of his emotions. His interest is not that evils be corrected, but that they continue in alternation with goods as matter for his enjoyment.[19]

That is the first part of his liberation from the existential community. The second is that he perceives this existential form to be on its own account not only an unstable succession of goods and evils but a destructive, demonic negativity. This derisive subjectivty appeared earlier in relation to the theft, but only to be lost in the common enjoyment of particular goods. But it is also the nature of this life itself. The force which is mythically represented as Dionysus and comparable gods in other religions Augustine perceives simply as a subjectivity destructive of particular goods. Being himself freed abstractly from the alternation of affirmative and negative in this life, he discerns the moving force and connection of this finitude as an evil subjectivity.[20]

The sense of this whole experience is the following. Against the imposition of an abstract rational culture Augustine sought to save the natural and particular as an existential life only abstractly related to a unifying principle. There is in this concreteness an imbalance, in that the multiple content and diversity of this life does not belong to the rational soul. Augustine's experience is of the incompleteness of this form for the rational animal. The experience is that the natural concreteness and variety of this life is a nullity for thought. It is in consequence of this experience that

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19. *Conf.*, III, 2

20. *Conf.*, III, 3: He has become *"longe sedatior. . . et remotus omnino ab eversionibus, quas faciebant eversores. . . inter quos vivebam pudore impudenti, quia talis non eram."* By *"eversores"* and *"eversiones"* he means the same negative, destructive spirit as he spoke of in relation to the theft. *"Nihil est illo actu similus actibus daemoniorum. Quid itaque verius quam eversores vocarentur, eversi plane prius ipsi atque perversi deridentibus eos et seducentibus fallacibus occulte spiritibus in eo ipso, quod alios inridere amant et fallere?"*

Augustine becomes a Manichee. For what is sought is a relation to things and other persons that belongs to him as a rational being. In Manichaeism there is the beginning of a true concretion of nature and reason.

The argument has shown that the opposition of technology and Heideggerian existence is rather the beginning of a concrete relation of the terms. For the reason given already Augustine cannot state this result in an explicit, logical form. In fact he recognizes it and for this reason can move to a less abstract relation of the rational and natural elements of the rational animal. He is able to do so because his thought is guided remotely by the idea of their equality and perfect concretion, which at each stage of his argument appears to him more likely to be true.[21]

(c) *Manichaeism*

It can appear strange that the reading of Cicero's *Hortensius* and an awakened interest in Hellenic philosophy should have led Augustine to Manichaeism and not rather to Platonism directly. To himself indeed it afterwards appeared remarkable that he should so long have been held by the mass of fables he then saw Manichaeism to be. But Platonism could only become intelligible to him when he had learned to conceive a non-sensible concrete being. Manichaeism he found true because it contained sensibly, as light and darkness, a contrariety of being and negativity and understood the concrete as a mixture of these contraries. It testifies to Augustine's profound philosophical spirit that he moved no farther than the argument required him from his previous position. He gave up the separation of human finitude from Being or the object of the rational soul or, on the human side, of the rational from the natural and particular. In Manichaeism is found the most formal and abstract relation of the two sides: the finite ought to be an individual indentity; it is through an evil principle that it falls into diversity and multiplicity.[22]

As an image of Being light expresses an identity which remains in its diffusion. Darkness is not the negation of a particular being but of light: it is the non-identical. Augustine draws back from a dispersion into plurality without unity; he knows that plurality as a

21. *Conf.*, III, 3: *"Et circumvolabat super me fidelis a longe misericordia tua."*
22. Augustine's Manichaean belief: *Conf.* III, 4 - V, 10; and later incidental comments. His treatises against the Manichees insist on the same conclusion as he reaches in the *Confessions:* that the content of the Manichaean writings is not controlled by their principles, and is such a fanciful concatenation as the vastly popular genre of science fiction at the present time.

nonentity in its independence. He now perceives that plurality as in relation to the stable and identical — as contrary to it.

The difficulty Augustine describes in learning to think an intelligible being is to be taken carefully in its context. It is not that the most universal concepts have not already occurred in his experience and guided his reflection. They were not, however, the form of the finite and particular but immediately present. The difficulty is to know the finite as intelligible. At the time when he read *Hortensius* Augustine tended to the concreteness of the Christian principle, as though this might at once replace his existential position. But the incarnational language of Scripture is wholly impenetrable to him. There he can see only myth, while he finds science in Manichaeism. It is not, as can appear to a modern view, that he confuses science with religion. The defect of Manichaeism in his judgement was not that it was science, but that it did not make good its claim to be so. Because of the abstractness of its principles it failed also to distinguish a total religious interest from the particular intents of the 'liberal arts'. The Manichees were unable to carry beyond the barest beginning the science they promised, but remained with the abstract contrariety of good and evil. To be held by the sensible and unable to think the intelligible means for Augustine that, having made his way in general to what the Greeks understood as science — a knowledge through contraries or complete division — he knew the concrete only as an immediate or sensible composition of the contraries, not as Platonic ideas. The Christian concept of man is unintelligible from this standpoint as is in general the concept of a created being.

Augustine's confession tells us little about Manichaeism. There is no need here to discuss particular positions and to give Christian arguments against them, as in his treatises against the Manichees. His interest is only to show the mediation of divine and human in this form, and the defect in it. Manichaeism is initially attractive to Augustine, in that it does contain a relation of the finite to God, which his earlier position could not provide. The finite is related to God as light so far as it is self-identical; it is then itself light. The Manichees teach that in man the good principle is entrapped by the evil and can be liberated from it by certain external rites and practices. There is in this the thought that the natural and particular has an inner stability or ground against the plurality of its natural existence. But this inner stability is only to be attained by the negation of life in its actuality. The annihilation of the individual is not certainly understood here as, for example, in Buddhism: it is an undoing of natural particularity but, by intention, a stablization and saving of it. But the light is not

understood as principle or cause of the concrete. The individual, as a mixture of good and evil, should not be at all. The Manichaean purification is therefore properly the dissolution of the individual. That into which he is dissolved is the contraries themselves. His inner identity does not have the meaning of a substantial nature, since that would be a limitation of the light by the dark or a composition of the contraries. There is in truth nothing in the Manichaean position but the abstract relation of the contraries. The further content has only a fantastic and subjective being.

Augustine does not quickly come to this conclusion. Towards the Manichees he showed the same duality as he later commended to Christians, that they believe before they attempt to understand. But there is a great difference, as he later discovers: the Manichees promise science from the first, and then one is required to believe on authority a mass of fictitious science; while the Christians offer belief, with the hope that some will afterwards attain to science. Augustine therefore sought reasoned answers to his doubts about Manichaean teachings on natural questions. If the Manichaean doctors in Carthage fail to give him answers, he is ready to believe there are others who can. Then Faustus comes to Carthage, a doctor of the highest authority among the Manichees. If science is not to be found in him, that will be a crisis for Augustine.

Faustus turns out to be a man of rhetorical talent only. His eloquence is natural, not from rehetorical training. Nor has he knowledge of the other liberal arts, save of grammar to an ordinary level. From this experience Augustine reasonably concludes that the science promised by the Manichees is not to be obtained from them. This frustration is not by itself sufficient, however, to free Augustine from his Manichaean attachment. It does not touch the essential religious interest which drew him to the sect, but only his knowledge of what, in a religious relation, is indifferent. He had sought the mediation of God and man in the course of the heavens and found the Manichees inept in these studies. He loses interest in Manichaeism without knowing how to break from it, nor is he moved to do so.[23]

Later, when he has migrated from Carthage to Rome, he is recuperating from a nearly fatal illness with a Manichaean host. There he lives not only with *'auditores'* of the sect but also with *'electi'*. In these circumstances he reflects on the mediation of

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23. *Con.*, V, 7: *"Refracto itaque studio, quod intenderam in Manichaei litteras, magisque desperans de ceteris eorum doctoribus, quando in multis, quae me movebant, ita ille nominatus apparuit. . . Ita ille Faustus, qui multis laqueus mortis extitit meum quo captus eram relaxare iam coeperat, nec volens nec sciens."*

God and man in a strictly religious form, that is of himself wholly and not through natural forces. It has pleased him to think that his evil deeds are no part of him, but from an alien evil principle. But Manichaeans' *'auditores'* have this confidence through the *'electi'*. Their relation to the good principle is mediated by this relation. But of that mediation has he a scientifice knowledge? At that point the failure of the Manichees to fulfill their promise of science destroys his attachment to them.[24]

The thought then comes to him that the Academics were wiser than the other schools in recommending universal doubt and deciding that truth was inaccessible to men. Mani professed to speak with the full authority of the holy spirit alike on religious questions and on what belonged to the liberal arts to know of. The Manichaean principles were however incapable of any scientific development, since they were assumed to be separate. What was uttered in their book, was indeed only capable of a rhetorical exposition. To come to the insight that this was the case Augustine had to measure the supposed mediation of the *'auditores'* through the elect by his conviction that there was both an inner identity and the embodiment of it. That he is this concrete being he does not know, but is moved to this assumption by respect for his mother's piety and by his illness and fear of death. In these circumstances it becomes clear to him that Manichaeism is properly a 'sophistic' which can show anything as well true as false. He knows why neither Faustus nor another could speak scientifically on Manichaean assumptions.[25]

(d) *Evil and the discovery of intelligible being*

The sense of Augustine's scepticism is easily seen from the form of life he now adopts. Partly he approaches the Church far enough to become a Christian catechumen. In this it may be said that he moves tentatively to the concrete concept of human nature which assisted his escape from Manichaeism. At the same time he

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24. *Conf.*, V, 10: *"Adhuc enim mihi videbatur non esse nos, qui peccamus, sed nescio quam aliam in nobis peccare naturam, et delectabat superbiam meam extra culpam esse, et cum aliquid mali fecissem, non confiteri me fecisse. . . sed excusare me amabam et accusare nescio quid aliud, quod mecum esset et ego non essem verum autem totum ego eram et adversus me inpietas mea me diviserat. . . "*

25. *Ibid: ". . . sed iam desperans in ea falsa doctrina me posse proficere, eaque ipsa, quibus, si nihil melius reperirem, contentus esse decreveram, iam remissius neglegentiusque retinebam. Etenim suborta est etiam mihi cogitatio, prudentiores illos ceteris fuisse philosophos, quos academicos appeallant, quod de omnibus dubitandum esse censuerant nec aliquid veri ab homine conprehendi posse decreverant."*

assumes another relation to the natural and particular than either Manichaeism or the ensuing scepticism could logically permit. The more common opinion of the philosophers that there were concrete finite beings appeared true to him, and in a way he returned to the pluralistic world which he had abandoned for Manichaeism. His thought tended away from the world and at the same time he settled more firmly into wordly interests. This next stage is about the conflict of these opposite tendencies. His scepticism is thus no more than a scepticism about the sensible taken as an immediate relation of good and evil, being and non-being, — that is, about the Manichaean concept of the concrete.[26]

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26. Augustine was not impeded from forming a new position by the knowledge that Academic scepticism had been directed against the attempt of the Stoics to find a synthesis between the universal and imagination. Augustine's new position is not Stoicism, but much more that attiude which Plato called "true opinion." There is this difference, that Augustine's interest is religious primarily, that is about his total relation to the universal from this standpoint. It may therefore be compared usefully with that form of the soul as practical which is called in the *Republic* τὸ θυμοειδὲς or the spirited part. Plato in that dialogue treats the question whether this form, when educated and disciplined, is sufficient for the stability and preservation of the political community. He finds that it does not suffice: his φύλακες or soldier-rulers are not free from the possible occurence of an irreconcileable conflict between the private interests of property and family and that of the political community. His celebrated abolition of family and property for this class is an hypothetical argument by which he brings into view that the spirited soul — and institutionally the warrior-rulers — have their ground in a universal capable of containing the particular, that is the ideas. If one substituted the Christian *ecclesia* for the πόλις , Augustine's logic in this part would be found basically the same as Plato's.

Augustine observes that about scepticism he had no more than the popular opinion that it was a universal doubt: *"Ita enim et mihi liquido sensisse videbantur (sc. Academici), ut vulgo habentur, etiam illorum intentionem nondum intelligenti"* (V, 10).

His relation to the Church, V, 14: *"Itaque Academicorum more, sicut existimantur, dubitans de omnibus atque inter omnia fluctuans Manichaeos quidem relinquendos esse decrevi, non arbitrans eo ipso tempore dubitationis meae in illa secta mihi permanendum esse, cui iam nonnullos philosophos praeponebam: quibus tamen philosophis, quod sine salutari nomine Christi essent, curationem languoris animae meae committere omnio recusabam. Statui ergo tamdiu esse catechumenus in catholica ecclesia mihi a parentibus conmendata, donec aliquid certi eluceret, quo cursum dirigerem."*

Though he cannot yet refute the Manichaean separation of good and evil, he adopts another logic than theirs about the finite: *"Tum vero fortiter intendi animum, si quo modo possem certis aliquibus documentis Manichaeos convincere falsitatis. Quod si possem spiritalem substantiam cogitare, statim machinamenta illa omnia solverentur et abicerentur ex animo meo: sed non*

This new attitude and his experience of it are not easy to understand in their simple logical form. As before, the question is about the form of his relation to God, how far he is concretely in that relation. And, again, the question can as well be asked about the soul, how far nature and reason are united and equalized at this standpoint. It is necessary first to observe that Augustine has not forgotten what he learned from Manichaeism. The course of the argument will show that the contrariety of good and evil remains the underlying problem of this attitude. It is indeed only now that the nature of evil becomes the object of his investigation. For to ask about evil and attempt to grasp its nature supposes that one is not obliged to remain with its abstract separation from good. Augustine's search is for a principle comprehensive of the negative or evil.[27]

It follows that Augustine is not in his particular interests and the society mutually occupied with them in the same manner as in his existential days. His need is to save his self-identity in this plurality. The natural and particular are not now taken as an evil from which his principle end is to free himself. There is a plurality of goods, but the pursuit of them is also a distraction from himself and an involvement in an alien externality. There is about the particular goods, a negativity or evil, which appears if he would realize them. In accounting them goods in the first place, contrary to the Manichaean position, he makes the assumption that there is a synthesis of good and evil — that there is a finite and particular identity. But his identity or goodness is found to be entrapped still by the negative, although in another manner than conceived by the Manichees.

The problem is one familiar to students of the Socratic and Platonic philosophy. It is about the relation of goods to the good itself or primary good. Augustine has a certain relation to that highest good through his Christian instruction. At the same time he is drawn to a plurality of goods whose relation to the good itself is hidden from him.

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poteram. Verum tamen de ipso mundi huius corpore omnique natura, quam sensus carnis attingeret, multo probabiliora plerosque sensisse philosophos magis magisque considerans atque comparans iudicabam" (V, 14). This attitude to the finite permits him to think about Scripture and Christian doctrine and to dissipate prejudices about them acquired from the Manichees, at the same time as he knows himself unable to judge whether what he is taught is true. (VI, 3-5).

27. VI, 6: "*Inhiabam honoribus, lucris, coniugio, et tu inridegas. Patiebar in eis cupiditatibus amarissimas difficultates te propitio tanto magis, quanto minus sinebas mihi dulcescere quod non eras tu,*" and the rest of the chapter.

Augustine's experience of this form passes through several stages. The first is that in giving himself over to his rhetorical profession, his amibitions, marriage plans he finds no satisfaction but rather the deepest distraction and wretchedness of spirit. Partly in consequence he proposes with his friends to withdraw from wordly affairs to a common life of contemplation. But with that the division begins to show its true nature. It is not simply between an abstract identity and a plurality of goods, but there emerges again a total division of nature and reason. For in the particular goods this opposition was only superficially overcome: various natural interests were given the form of identity, but not the whole natural will. The more Augustine drew back from the plurality of goods to an inner unity with himself, the more the whole division of nature and reason appeared. His desire for freedom and self-possession appears rather as the subjection of the living being to natural desires and needs. Held in this division he is almost ready to give the palm to Epicurus among the philosophical sects. But with this return to sensuous immediacy there is equally a fear of death and desire of the immutable.[28]

The first part of the argument then is an experience of the conflict between the many goods and one good such that this becomes a total division of nature and life from the one identity or good, and then in this division of knowledge of the natural as a groundless becoming. The natural was first related to the identical, in that it was known as a plurality of goods. Then out of this unity of the contraries their division again recurred. Because there is thus before him a mediated relation of the contraries, the conclusion of his experience is not to lapse into Manichaean dualism but to perceive the ground of the division. The identity present in the many goods he now sees universally. He has discovered a relation between the one good and the natural and particular.

His knowledge of this relation is however altogether abstract. The next part of the argument is simply his recognition of the difference between this formal identity and connection of the terms and the

28. *"et erant ora trium egentium et inopiam suam sibimet invicem anhelantium et ad te expectantium, ut dares eis escam in tempore opportuno. Et in omni amaritudine, quae nostros saeculares actus de misericordia tua sequebatur, intuentibus nobis finem, cur ea pateremur, occurrebant tenebrae, et aversabamur gementes et dicebamus: 'quamdiu haec'? Et hoc crebro dicebamus et dicentes non relinquebamus ea, quia non elucebat certum aliquid, quod illis relictis adprenderemus"* (VI, 10).

"Et disputabam cum amicis meis Alypio et Nebridio de finibus bonorum et malorum Epicurum accepturum fuisse palmam in animo meo, nisi crediderim post mortem restare animae vitam et tractus meritorum, quod Epicurus credere noluit" (VI, 16).

multiple content out of which it has emerged. He draws back out of the multiplicity of images which are now his world, since in the renewed division of the contraries the particular is for him as an immediate relation of the contraries, and thus as images. (The whole argument is Augustine's discovery of the Platonic ideas, not as something he read of in books, but as they appear to the mind out of consolidation of images with the universal. Considered in this process of discovery, the ideas, as Plato tells, are constituted out of the image, the name, and λόγος or stabilized relation of the two in their difference. In this simple and universal reflection by the name is meant the identical relation of the images, that in which a formal identity has been imposed on them, and they have been brought to rest, and the λόγος is the development of this formal relation to the point where the content is perceived to be comprehended by the logical form. The natural and particular thus become the possession of the rational soul, and one has the beginning of a human concreteness.)[29] Augustine gathers the mass of images into a simple identity. But no sooner has he thus brought them to rest than they escape and are before him in their multiplicty. His object is not now only the images however, but an endless matter or spatiality. This as the showing of the inner identity is his knowledge of God. Or God is matter or space penetrating and present in all things and extending indefinitely beyond the world. What Augustine has first to discuss is the difference between this space and the bodies in it. He had supposed that if a body were to be deprived of its spatiality, nothing would remain — not even place and void.[30]

But if God is space and matter and this is undistinguished from body, there will be more of him in an elephant than in a sparrow. God will thus be subject to finite differences. Body is therefore to be thought of as in space, and space to be unaffected by what is in it.

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29. Ἔστιν τῶν ὄντων ἑκάστῳ, δι' ὧν τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἀνάγκη παραγίγνεσθαι, τρία, τέταρτον δ' αὐτή — πέμπτον δ' αὐτὸ τιθέναι δεῖ ὃ δὴ γνωστόν τε καὶ ἀληθῶς ἐστιν ὄν — ἓν μὲν ὄνομα, δεύτερον δὲ λόγος, τὸ δὲ τρίτον εἴδωλον, τέταρτον δὲ ἐπιστήμη. Plato, *Ep. VII*, 342 a-b.

30. ". . . *plane tamen videbam et certus eram id, quod corrumpi potest, deterius esse quam id quod non potest. . . Clamabat violenter cor meum adversus omnia phantasmata mea et hoc uno ictu conabar abigere circumvolantem turbam inmunditiae ab acie mentis meae: et vix dimota in ictu oculi ecce conglobata rursus aderat et inruebat in aspectum meum et obnubilabat eum, ut quamvis non forma humani corporis, corporeum tamen aliquid cogitare cogerer per spatia locorum sive infusum mundo sive etiam extra mundum per infinita diffusum. etiam ipsum incorruptible et inviolabile at inconmutabile. . . quoniam quidquid privabam spatiis talibus, nihil mihi esse videbatur, sed prorsus nihil, ne inane quidem, tamquam si corpus auferatur loco et maneat locus omni corpore vacuatus et terreno et humido et aerio et caelesti, sed tamen sit locus inanis tamquam spatiosum nihil*" (VII, 1).

With this Augustine recovers a relation of this external identity to the inner identity. Their relation is a λόγος, but the abstractest possible. With this knowledge Augustine recalls an objection which his friend Alypius had already made to Manichaeism when they were in Carthage: What would become of the war between light and darkness the Manichaeans speak of if God or light simply remained in separation and independence from the particular?[31]

It is not sufficient to have separated God from the particular. In this separation, however, when it is considered in relation to the human soul, Augustine rightly sees the beginning of human freedom. For if an action is to have its beginning in free choice, then the particular must belong to the rational principle and not be primarily an independent plurality. But the argument is still too abstract and undeveloped to clarify human freedom except in the most general way. Augustine returns to his reflection on the relation of God to matter. It is necessary for the reader to have in mind, what Augustine himself insists on, that he has no other concept of God. What he learns from his Christian teachers has only the status of words and opinions, and how such knowledge can be true is the object of his present inquiry.[32]

If the universal or good is with itself in its externalization and presence in bodies, it is not yet apparent how this particularly belongs to the λόγος. Augustine's further reflection is guided by what he is certain he has discovered, the immutability or self-identity of God in his relation to the mutable. On this assumption he asks whether this relation is mediated by particular material conditions or presuppositions. In that case the evil which attaches to the finite can be ascribed to this matter. With that the Manichaean duality reappears. But why then did God create anything and not rather nothing? Or, if one suppose that it is somehow better that there be finite existence as well as God, why ascribe the impotence of conditioned technical productions to a principle which has been found to be universal and immutable in its relation to the particular? The division between the parts and various external dependence of the finite is rather to be thought a nullity in relation to the λόγος or universal form.

The argument destroys the hypothesis, as Plato would call it, of a multiple particularity beside and with the formal λόγος that has appeared. This result is not, however, to be taken one-sidedly, as though only the formal λόγος remained. Rather the multiple and particular is itself another form of the λόγος, as the mediation of

31. *Conf.*, VII, 1.
32. *Conf.*, VII, 3.

the self-identical with the many as concrete and individual. By itself the formal was only the self-relation of the identical in space, in that this is other than body, having on its own account an absolute negativity or individuality. The result is the insight that the finite belongs to the λόγος. With that reduction of the sensible to the logical form, Augustine's mind is opened to an intelligible light and he is converted to Platonism.[33]

It remains however, before that illumination, that he refer what he has discovered to his own freedom. Until this point he has been unable to dispel a belief in astrological determinism. This belief is not a superstition he happens to fall prey to, but has its origin in division between reason and nature, such that the connectedness or universal course of nature — the reason of nature — is other than his rational freedom and determinative of it. His liberation from astrology is the same as where Socrates in the *Phaedo* asks whether it is because of his bones and sinews that he has remained in prison or because he decided to do so from respect for the law or universal. The object of the intelligence that can make that decision, and is not rather subject to natural necessity, Augustine perceives, as Socrates in the dialogue, to be the Platonic ideas.[34]

(e) *Platonism and the Trinity*

In Platonism Augustine finds the fulfilment of what he had sought in the earlier forms of his experience and an approximation to the Christianity he has in the language and imagery of Scripture. The further course of his experience until his Christian coversion has two parts. First, by a reflection on Platonism he is able to conclude that the Christian idea of God and his relation to nature is true. Secondly, by examining the nature of the will in relation to himself he gives to the idea of God the form of actuality and end. The Christianity he discovered in the first reflection was by his statement a kind of Arianism. The second brings him to the point where the Trinity, as understood by orthodox Catholics, is seen as the infinite actuality which is the end of the free will. Philosophically, the second part of his reflection, though he does not know it as such, is a correction of Plato by Aristotle's doctrine of the soul.[35]

The occasion with which this final reduction of his self-knowledge and relation to God to Christian and Trinitarian form began was the reading of certain *"libri Platonici"* in the Latin

33. *Conf.*, VII, 4-5.
34. *Conf.*, VII, 6.
35. *Conf.*, VII, 8-21 for the first part; book VIII for the second.

version of Marius Victorinus. What these books may have been is not worth conjecturing, since Augustine took from them only what assisted the explication of his thought from the point he had now reached. Certainly he did not imbibe the doctrine of Plotinus, whose One is already infinite act and not an abstract unity along with which are also the ideas and the understanding or again a finite will. (What invites a comparison with the Platonism of Plotinus and Porphyry is not that which is for Augustine a stepping-stone to Christianity, but rather the position he thus attains.) His criticism is a reduction of the finite distinction remaining in the original Platonism of Plato himself to the One. It is the completeness of their reduction that permits a knowledge of the Trinity, that is the knowledge that the finite is the finitude of the One and therefore equal to it. It would agree fully with Augustine's criticism if one assumed that he read, with whatever else, Plato's *Timaeus*, a dialogue certainly known to him later.[36]

In emerging from the materialism of his previous position Augustine had known the divine as the immutable, that is the universal generally. The immutable he now understands as the ground and cause of the sensible being he had formerly taken as the primary reality. But this immutable being is both the ideas — the generic and specific foundation of individuals that become and perish — and the One or Good. In theological language there is here both a monotheism and room for a polytheism of secondary or angelic causes. Elsewhere Augustine ascribes to Porphyry this cult of finite principles. Here his response to this division of the finite immutable from the infinite is altogether that of Plato himself, namely, to look to the One or Good as the principle of the ideas. In *Timaeus* the evils of life and becoming are ascribed to the impotence of the finite gods, who are the immediate causes of the corruptible. For Augustine there is in this a certain recurrence of the Manichaean dualism he had thought to have left behind him. From this finitude he turns to the Platonic principle proper — the

36. Augustine knew writings of Plotinus and Porphyry as well as a number of Platonic dialogues. He finds a common Platonic doctrine which is consonant with Scripture in what is said of the Father, but does not know the Logos as altogether concreted (*Civ. Dei*, VIII, II, I, X, 2 and elsewhere). The Neoplatonic philosophers thought themselves in agreement with Plato while they transformed his philosophy; Augustine easily admitted this agreement because Neoplatonic innovations did not come within his view. Even on such a question as whether the ideas are in the divine intellect, Augustine is satisfied to think them derivative from the Good and to speak of the Good as intellectual in the manner of Plato's *Timaeus*. Of a Plotinian division between the One and Intelligence he knows nothing. The chapter on the ideas in *De Diversis Quaestionibus LXXXIII* (c. XLVI) gives simply the older Platonism.

One or Good — the light or self-conscious unity which, as he says, is beyond not only the external light, but the understanding itself by which the finite principles are known. The one or Good is seen as the primary and immutable in the whole relation of the intelligible — the finite ideas — to becoming or the sensible. Humanly, this is a turning of the rational soul upon itself, to a self-knowledge from the knowledge of the finite as the ideas in their relation to becoming.[37]

Augustine distinguishes this position from all the earlier stages of his experience. Previously his concept of God had been abstractly affirmative. That which displeased him in the world he separated from God. Reciprocally, he equated with God the affirmative and identical in himself. The position now attained sets his relation to God beyond finite truth and falsity or good and evil in an absolute relation to the universal. This position he expresses largely through Biblical texts and is understood by him as a stricter Platonism that that of some Platonists. There is indeed for Augustine no difference between Moses and the true intention of Plato. The common position is that of the Pauline text, that through the understanding of nature can be known the God in relation to whom humans are radically free and responsible.[38]

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37. Plato, *Timaeus*, 40 d, ft. It is Apuleius and Porphyry in whom Augustine finds a falling away from knowledge of the true God, which they had in their philosophy, to demon worship and theurgy. For him this is the idolatry St. Paul spoke of: "*Quia cum cognovissent Deum, non sicut Deum glorificaverunt, aut gratias egerunt: sed evanuerunt in cogitationibus suis, et obscuratum est insipiens cor eorum;*" etc. By the true knowledge of God which the Platonists had, Augustine means exactly that which is found in the Old Testament: "*et maxime illud, quod et me plurimum adducit ut paene assentiar Platonem illorum librorum expertem non fuisse, quod cum ad sanctum Moysen ita verba Dei per angelum perferantur, ut quaerenti quod sit nomen eius, qui eum pergere praecipiebat ad populum Hebraeum ex Aegypto liberandum, respondeatur, Ego sum qui sum; et dices filiis Isreal, Qui est, misit me ad vos* (Exod. III, 14); *tamquam in eius comparatione qui vere est quia incommutabilis est, ea quae mutabilia facta sunt non sint: vehementer hoc Plato tenuit, et diligentissime commendavit. Et nescio utrum hoc uspiam reperiatur in libris eorum qui ante Platonem fuerunt, nisi ubi dictum est, Ego sum qui sum; et dices eis, Qui est, misit me ad vos*" (*Civ. Dei*, VIII, II).

38. *Conf.*, VII, 10: "*Et inde admonitus redire ad memet ipsum intravi in intima mea duce te. . . et vidi qualicumque oculo animae mea supra eundem oculum animae mea, supra mentem meam lucem incommutabilem, non hanc vulgarem et conspicuam omni carni nec quasi ex eodem genere grandior erat. . . nec ita erat supra mentem meam sicut oleum supra aquam nec sicut caelum super terram, sed superior, quia ipsa fecit me, et ego inferior, quia factus ab ea. Qui novit veritatem, novit eam, et qui novit eam, novit aeternitatem,*" etc. This same illumination he ascribes elsewhere (*Civ. Dei*, X, 2) to Plotinus, but there is in it nothing which does not belong to the original Platonism. It is again the purest Platonism when he goes to write: "*Non est sanitas eis, quibus displicet aliquid creaturae tuae*"; and to find the cause of all his errors in an adherence to subjective attitudes without knowledge of the Good as their

In relation to the Trinitarian doctrine this is still an abstract position. The relation of God and man is mediated by a thinking relation of man to nature. But this mediation contains a division between thought and sensibility — the necessary and the contingent — whose unity is beyond the mediation itself. If by the human is understood the being who is at once mutable and knows the immutability of the ideas — or, stated in relation to the practical, knows a binding and rational law and is moved by desires and their concentration in the spirited part (τὸ θυμοειδὲς) — then the human falls outside the divine-human relation taken strictly. What belongs to this relation is life as such, which is presupposed by the human so defined, and pure intuitive reason. For this reason Augustine says of himself that,thinking himself now to have an understanding of the Christian doctrine, he held rather the Arian position, just as his friend Alypius held that of Apollinaris (which is complementary to Arianism or the same position considered in relation to God).[39]

The second part of his experience is a reduction to equality of the remaining difference between the terms of the divine-human

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principle: *"et quia non audebat anima mea, ut ei displiceret deus meus, nolebat esse tuum quidquid ei displicebat. Et inde ierat in opinionem duarum substantiarum. . . Et inde rediens facerat sibi deum per infinita spatia locorum omnium. Sed posteaquam fovisti caput nescientis et clausisti oculos meos, ne viderent vanitatem, cessavi de me paululum, et consopita est insania mea; et evigilavi in te et vidi te infinitum aliter, et visus iste non a carne trahebatur"* (*Conf.*, VII, 14).

39. *Conf.*, VII, 19: *"Ego vero aliud putabam tantumque sentiebam de dominio Christo meo, quantum de excellentis sapientiae viro, cui nullus posset aequari. . . Quid autem sacramenti haberet verbum caro factum, ne suspicari quidem poteram. Tantum cognoveram ex his, quae de illo scripta traderentur, quia manducavit et bibit, dormivit, ambulavit, exhiliratus est, contristatus est, sermocinatus est, non haesisse carnem illam verbo tuo nisi cum anima et mente humana. Novit hoc omnis, qui novit inconmutabilitatem verbi tui, quam ego noveram, quantum poteram. . . Etenim nunc movere membra corporis per voluntatem, nunc non movere, nunc aliquo affectu affici nunc non affici, nunc proferre per signa sapientes sententias, nunc esse in silentio propria sunt mutabilitatis animae et mentis. . . Quia itaque vera scripta sunt, totum hominem in Christo agnoscebam, non corpus tantum hominis aut cum corpore sine mente animum, sed ipsum hominem, non persona veritatis, sed magna quadam naturae humanae excellentia et perfectiore participatione sapientiae praeferri ceteris arbitrabar. Alypius autem deum carne indutum ita putabat a Catholicis, ut praeter deum et carnem non esset in Christo. . ."* He ascribes the opposed positions to Apollinaris and Photinus. That Augustine mentions Photinus and not Arius is worthy of attention. Elsewhere he characterizes Photinus as having denied that there was a Holy Spirit at all (*Sermo LXXI*, 3); and as having like teachings to Paul of Samosata (*De Haerisibus*, I, 44-45). One may take from this that Augustine understood his Platonism to teach a modalistic relation of life and the rational soul to God. What he reproves in certain Platonists is that they give an excessive independence to subordinate gods or angels (*Civ. Dei*, XII, 26).

relation and the mediation. This reduction takes place through a reflection on the will and the nature of its finitude. The will is taken as partly the simple relation of man to the Good, the relation of man to God as absolute end. Augustine accepts as established by his reflection on Platonism that God as the Good is the true end for man. He can therefore say that the Platonists knew the end but not the way to it. The way to the Good is through a profounder unification of the natural and rational in man. The problem to be solved is set precisely by the difference of the human from the knowledge of the Good in the Arian and Apollinarian position Augustine has reached. On the human side the requirement is that man be defined through life and intuitive intelligence and not through relations of the soul to things and other humans which are derivative and dependent from this most radical division. That this is the case is the answer to a question, what moves the will. The Good itself is the primary end and should therefore move primarily. But it appears that humans are moved rather by desire and passion or else, as the Manichaeans taught, by an abstract rational end which is opposed to nature and particular interests.[40]

Against that measure Augustine reflects on the nature of particular ends. This universal question about the integrity and dividedness of the will is for Augustine also the particular question of his Christian conversion. It will not be answered wholly as a philosophical question, in that the unification of the universal will and the will as particular or as desire will be found accomplished in Christ, while for himself and others the unification will be unstable in itself and in a dependency of grace on that accomplished unity. Logically the unification of the will, as Augustine here treats it, is similar to that earlier stage of his experience where he freed himself from astrological determinism and the supposition of an endlessly extended principle. Through Platonic idealism Augustine completed his liberation from that externality. But that liberation was complete only in his relation to the Good itself. His finitude now appears both as other than the ideas and the Good and as

40. Augustine declared the relation of body and soul to be unintelligible to him: *"Nam quod attinet ad eius (sc. animae) originem, qua fit ut sit in corpore, utrum de illo uno sit, qui primum creatus est, quando factus est homo in animam vivam; an similiter ita fiant singulis singuli, nec tunc sciebam, nec adhuc scio"* (*Retractationes* I, 1). At the same time he discusses the question very extensively against heretical positions. (*De Anima et eius Origine*, and in many other writings). The concrete unity which he believes man to be lies beyond the limit of his philosophical experience, as what this leads to and terminates in. He opposes positions which have carried the argument less far, but in the interpretation of his own he falls into images and abstractions, which harden into teaching the damnation of unbaptised infants and many such monstrous fancies.

remaining in that relation. It is the actuality of his abstract relation to the universal and the process by which that relation to the universal becomes partly the grounding of his particular will in the ideas and partly the appearance of the Good as infinite actuality in Christ.

Since this inquiry is about himself particularly it becomes universal not directly but through examples. The celebrated Victorinus, whose translation of *"libri Platonici"* he had read, made public profession of Christianity in his last years. In this he had subordinated all distinctions of intelligence, culture and social rank to the eternal good sought in the Christian community not only in thought but through a practical subordination of particular goods to that end. The comparison of himself with this well-chosen example awakened in Augustine the strongest division between his attachment to the universal good and all his particular interests. He asks about the nature of these interests, how it is that they bind, at the same time as, according to the example, the will is not absolutely bound by them. He gives the Aristotelian answer that these ends are acquired, that their stability is that of habit. There is not in them a natural necessity, but a necessity which has its origin in the will itself.[41]

A second example carries the argument farther: for the first time he learns of Anthony, the great Egyptian monk, and that there are many who, like him, have separated themselves from the world to be free for the intelligible good. Augustine with his friends had long desired to be free for a contemplative life. That was an idle desire so long as he did not know that his various worldly attachments and the attraction to contemplative leisure were forms of the same rational will. The earlier example contained only a formal subordination of particular interests to the authority and discipline of the Church. The second shows the inner attainment of this subordination as a form of life existing and adopted by many.[42]

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41. Simplicianus on the conversion of Victorinus, *Conf.*, VII, 2-5. Augustine's response: *"cui rei ego suspirabam ligatus non ferro alieno, sed mea ferrea voluntate. Velle meum tenebat inimicus et inde mihi catenam fecerat et constrinxerat me. Quippe ex voluntate perversa facta est libido, et dum consuetudini non resistitur, facta est necessitas,. . . Voluntas autem nova, quae mihi esse coeperat, ut te gratis colerem fruique te vellem. . . nondum erat idonea ad superandam priorem vetustate roboratam."* At first this conflict of habits with the rational will breaks down into a general opposition of two wills: *"Ita duae voluntates meae, una vetus, alia nova, illa carnalis, illa spiritalis, confligebant inter se atque discordando dissipabant animam meam."*

42. Ponticianus' narration about Anthony and the conversion of two imperial civil servants, *Conf.*, VIII, 6. Augustine's response in C. 8: *"Imperat animus corpori, et paretur statim: imperat animus sibi, et resistitur, . . .*

Augustine is moved in this way to a philosophical reflection on the nature of the will. Partly what is willed is effected at once without impediment, unless through bodily defect. This whole and unimpeded operation of the will may be seen in the local motion of the body. One moves at will without deliberating how to do so or how to resolve a conflict between this and other simultaneous ends, and indeed commonly bodily movement is quite unconscious. The will thus appears to be most free when it is most external and least in possession of itself. As against this form, the conscious will is with itself in a multiplicity of possible ends, deliberates about them and freely chooses one before the rest. It has power over its various ends, and might therefore be expected to effect them with less difficulty than the unconscious will. The opposite is found to be the case, since desires may here oppose what has been decided as best to do. The unconscious will, as moving, may be resisted by physical exhaustion or other organic states, but not because the body has an explicit desire.

The resistance of the conscious will to itself Augustine observes to be because the will is not whole in its operation. It is not that the will does not remain undivided in giving itself to a multiplicity of interests. The intuitive unity with which it moves the body without discourse and decision is there when from a multiplicity of good or evil courses one is chosen and the will is wholly in that. But the end chosen is also not one with the rational will but is a particular habit, in which it is subject to external

Imperat animus, ut velit animus, nec alter est nec facit tamen. Unde hoc monstrum?. . . Imperat, inquam, ut velit, qui non imperaret, nisi vellet, et non facit quod imperat. Sed non ex toto vult: non ergo ex toto imperat,. . . ideo non est, quod imperat. Nam si plena esset, nec imperaret, ut esset, quia iam esset. Non igitur monstrum partim velle, partim nolle, sed aegritudo animi est, quia non totus assurgit veritate sublevatus, consuetudine praegravatus. Et ideo sunt duae voluntates, quia una earum tota non est et hoc adest alteri, quod deest alteri." This is a final resurgence of Augustine's old dualism. The resolution of it is now conspicuous to Augustine: in relation to the total will the contraries are not natures but aspects of the will.

In deliberation there need not be two contraries only but a decision is often made from many good and evil ends. As in his earlier argument with the Manichees Augustine recognizes that there are finite goods. How they are good is now clearer: the rational will is wholly present in the decision which terminates its discource and deliberation. The content of these goods is however inadequate to the free will. There thus arises a need and desire for a unity of end with deliberation where the content will have the form of thought — that is, for a relation of the will to the ideal and universal ends as primary and authoritative. *"Si ergo pariter delectent omnia simulque uno tempore, nonne diversae voluntates distendunt cor hominis, dum deliberatur, quid potissimum arripiamus? Et omnes bonae sunt et certant secum, donec eligatur unum, quo feratur tota voluntas una, quae in plures dividebatur. Ita etiam, cum aeternitas delectat superius et temporalis boni voluptas retentat inferius, eadem anima non est tota voluntate illud aut hoc volens et ideo discerpitur gravi molestia, dum illud veritate praeponit, hoc familiaritate non ponit."*

conditions as well as free. If the will will attain to such an integrity as the understanding found in the knowledge of the Platonic ideas, the question is therefore whether the freedom the will possesses in its choice of particular, mutable goods extends also to a choice of true and universal ends over those which are a mixed object of reason and irrational desire.

The nature of the will is a very difficult question, as Augustine often acknowledges. But his reflection gives the essential elements of the solution to which he comes in his Christian conversion. In bodily motions the will is one with habits acquired, *e.g.*, when a child learned to walk. He does not carry the argument farther back, with Aristotle, to the soul simply as unconscious life. He began his search for a true concept of man in relation to God at that point, and to it he will return in his conclusion. Here the question is about the relation of habit to the self-conscious soul, from where a division of the two has begun to appear. There is in the various forms of the will an unthinking acquisition of habits. There may be a rational and reflective aspect as well. Where the habitual and unconscious and rational reflection are both present a conflict ensues, to which there is no more than a partial resolution so long as the unity of these aspects is undiscovered. As with his discovery of the Platonic ideas, Augustine's knowledge of the integrity of the will is that aspects, divided and obscurely related in the sensible and corruptible, appear as united in the objects of a universal thought.

There is here for Augustine a difficulty less felt in relation to his knowledge of the Platonic ideas. The stability of a true rational will, it will be his constant teaching, is humanly unattainable without grace. The argument shows indeed the concept of a free will as distinctly as before it disclosed the ideas. The difference is in the relation of his particularity to the concept. The will will have its integrity if the division is overcome between intuitive unity and the dividedness and discourse that appear alike in the formation and exercise of habits and in deliberation and choice. Augustine, without knowledge of Aristotle, has perceived that neither thought nor desire is primary and moving in the will but the end as immediately present. The integral will is thus either before all division and discourse, in which case it is the unconscious perfection of Adam in the original Paradise, or else it is the will which comprehends and contains knowledge and consciousness of itself. That will be the integrity of Christ who unites human and divine.[43]

43. Aristotle on the nature of the will, *De Anima*, III, 9-10, where it is shown that neither διάνοια nor ὄρεξις moves independently, but the end.

With this conclusion Augustine's experience is brought back to its beginning. The separation of man from nature, which is evident already in infants, has its full course in the restoration of a unity in which the division is not presupposed. If one understands by metaphysics a knowledge of the being of beings, then it can be said that this Augustinian position is an end of metaphysics. It is this, however, in an opposite sense to Heidegger's. In the one case human individuality retreats from division and alienation from nature to an anterior unity, sensually rich and intellectually impoverished. In the other case human finitude of which metaphysics in Heidegger's sense gives the primary logical structure is allowed its full development and taken into the concrete.

Marxist and neo-empirical positions remain with the division of the universal from human individuality and have not taken the first step towards their concretion. It is of the greatest importance that Heidegger makes that beginning. The Augustinian argument shows why it is not possible humanly to remain with Heidegger's principle, and leads beyond it to a principle comprehensive of the division between abstract reason and natural indivduality. This principle is, however, the object of religious belief only and of a philosophical contemplation of that belief. The beginning of Augustine's inquiry was from Roman culture, from an historical and worldly form. His conclusion is without historical existence, except as the Church which has historical ends only incidentally. From an unhistorical and contemplative Christianity contemporary theology and religious interest are far removed. And yet contemporary theology has been found in the argument to lead back to the ancient standpoint, if one considers its whole tendency and does not remain arbitrarily with some particular contemporary attitude. There remains a difference between modern and ancient culture which a reflection on existential positions is not sufficient to disclose.

III

The Augustinian argument shows that existential theology, should it attend to the whole structure of the de-Christianized secular culture and not fragments of it, would in the end only return to the ancient Trinitarian doctrine. This result might indifferently be called a remaking and a restoration of Christian theology. The assumption of contemporary society that government and practical reason are for the protection and advancement of human rights has its origin in the Chrisitian principle. The de-Christianized society in losing relation to its principle, lost its

own stability. But so far as it adheres to its assumptions that the individual in his natural interests is his own and the common end, there is need to rediscover the principle without which this assumption is illusory. It can appear that there is more humanity in primitive societies or generally in those which have broken less radically from nature than the Christian. It has become almost a dogma that the cause of our ills is distance from nature and an excess of reason. This belief is not unfounded, but the limits of its truth may be seen in Augustine's experience. There may be in various ways greater humanity in more natural societies, but this humanity is itself natural and contingent, and in no way conceived to be a right. There is not the concretion of nature and reason without which humanity cannot be a right and the natural interest of each comprised in the common rational good. So far as a de-Christianized European tradition remains European it has need of the principle of its concreteness.

It is said by contemporary theologians that the Trinitarian doctrine is of no more than a secondary religious interest. Being an intellectual construction by theologians in their controversy with Arians and other heretics, it presupposes a religious experience proper, which existed and can exist without such dubious speculations. It is clear from the logic of Augustine's conversion that this is a mistaken interpretation. It is not of course that Christians in general acquired their belief at the end of a philosophical reflection and therefore in an explicit relation to the Trinitarian principle. The argument shows that ordinary belief and cultic practice presuppose this principle and are upon reflection incredible and impossible without it.[44]

Nor is it true that the Trinity, considered explicitly and philosophically, is beyond human experience simply — an inept formula in which all finite distinctions are lost. To Augustine the principle is known primarily through the experience which led him to it. The adequation of the persons in the Trinitarian relation is not immediately presupposed, but is the result of a reflection which found need to correct curious forms of the contrary assumption that the terms of the relation are unequal. There is a difficulty however of the theologian about this mediation: knowledge of the principle of his religion is mediated either by pagan religions or by heretical deviations from his own orthodoxy. That Hellenic and Roman paganism was a preparation for Christian belief could be admitted well enough. But if there was a genesis of Christianity from pre-existent conditions, knowledge of this belonged to the

44. Wiles, *Remaking*, esp. ch. 4, Rahner, *e.g.*, *op. cit.*, 9, ch. 7.

course of conversion and was lost in the result. Thus Augustine's general historical scheme of a *'civitas Dei'* and a *'civitas terrena'* tends to obliterate all relations of Christianity to older religions and cultures in an abstract opposition.

It was not a difficulty fully appreciated by Augustine that his experience terminated in a principle no longer philosophically accessible to him.[45] The difficulty was present however, from the moment he became a Christian theologian and reasoned not from his experience principally but from Scriptural revelation and authoritative dogma. His thinking ceased to be a discovery of himself and his relation to God and was about a presupposed truth. There is a very important logical difference between his method of discovery and that of his subsequent contemplation. The latter, as it is found especially in the *De Trinitate,* is not without constant reference to human experience. There are found to be certain imperfect anticipations of the Trinity in the diverse relations of the soul to its objects and already in the being and movement of inanimate things. The Trinity is not thought to be discovered through these anticipations. By their analogy an insight into the Trinitarian relation is prepared but not given. What divides this procedure from Augustine's earlier reasoning is that before there were total mediations of his relation to God, while by themselves these analogical trinities are not mediations at all. Certainly there was before an imperfection and finitude in the mediation, but the finitude appeared in a total or religious relation. Here there is a fragmented particularity beyond which there is the revealed adequation of the particular to the universal.[46]

45. Wiles, *Remaking,* pp. 108-9: "The infinite God is infinitely resistant to our finite systematizations. The prophet who declares the word of the Lord and the saint who lives in an immediate awareness of God's presence are not worried by such things. Their language abounds in paradox which the reflective religious mind finds strangely puzzling and convincing at the same time. Good theology does not try to eliminate this element of paradox or incoherence altogether. It could not do so, I have been arguing, without ceasing to be theology, without ceasing to talk about God altogether — and even then it could not succeed in doing so without remainder. It tends, rather, to impose some sort of shape or order on the unsystematic utterance of saint or prophet by fixing the point at which the element of absurdity or incoherence is most appropriately to be located. If this is in danger of taming them, of evacuating them of their religious power, it is nonetheless a necessary part, the rational part, of a fully human response to them." There is according to Wiles an inevitable incoherence: in western theology it is between an infinite divine actuality and a finite human nature and created Grace (Thomism); in eastern theology between the divine essence and the divine energies. Wiles' book has the great merit of being true to its assumptions.

46. *De Trin.,* XV, 24: *"qui ergo vident suam mentem, quomodo videri potest, et*

In the *De Trinitate* Augustine combines this subjective reflection with an objective method which begins from the revealed doctrine. As Greek theologians had done before him, he brings into view the concept of the Trinity by a criticism of the logic appropriate to discourse about finite objects. In the whole argument of the treatise the two methods are regarded as complementary. The Trinity, set beyond the ordinary categorical divisions, is the object to which the subjective method tends. The limit to their coincidence is the same, only now seen from the side of the objective revelation, as in his conversion: even in the rational will and in a contemplative knowledge of the unchanging the concreteness of the Trinitarian object is not attained, just as the human image of the Trinity itself falls short of concrete unity. Augustine holds to this procedure because he has not altogether perceived the consequences of his new objective and presupposed beginning. Philosophically he both remains with an older Platonism and has moved to a standpoint which is rather Neoplatonic.[47]

There is for this reason a great distance between Augustinian and Scholastic theology. If Augustine retains a certain relation between the genesis of his Christian belief and the belief attained and presupposed, that is a transitional attitude. For the Christian community within itself the Trinity has the status of a revealed objective principle with which theological reflection should begin. The Augustinian contemplation of finite trinities may indeed remain, but needs to be taken into a comprehensive objective

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in ea trinitatem istam de qua multis modis ut potui disputavi, nec tamen eam credunt vel intelligunt esse imaginem Dei; speculum quidem vident, sed usque adeo non vident per speculum qui est per speculum nunc videndus, ut nec ipsum speculum quod vident sciant esse speculum, id est, imaginem. Quod si scirent, fortassis et eum cuius est hoc speculum, per hoc quaerendum et per hoc utcumque interim videndum esse sentirent, fide non ficta. . .Qua fide cordium mundatrice contempta, quid agunt intelligendo quae de natura mentis subtilissime disputantur, nisi ut ipsa quoque intelligentia sua teste damnentur?" In relation to the presupposed Trinity Augustine cannot take these forms as expressing both his relation to God and his separation — good and evil — for in that there would be a falling away from the principle. But with this restriction there would have been no ascent through them. The images are fragments separated from the concrete individual and with an imperfect unity of these elements. In the ascent they gave an imperfect mediation of his whole self. *"Sed haec tria (sapientia, scilicet, et notitia sui, et dilectio sui) ita sunt in homine, ut non ipsa sint homo."* (XV, 7)

47. The coincidence of the revealed truth and of the human approach to it is nearest in a *'sapientia'* which is defined in distinction from the *'sapientia'* which is a person of the Trinity and the 'scientia' which is a knowledge in the interest of temporal goods. It is the same Platonic and Aristotelian concept as he attained last in his movement towards the Christian principle: *De Trin.*, XIV, 1.

method. Partly this is only the formal correction of the finite categories, by which an object absolutely unitive of universal and particular is made conceivable. For that the theological treatises of Boethius were invaluable to the Latin theologian. But to know the abstract principle thus discovered as principle of all the finite, theology had to be given a Neoplatonic structure. That was provided by Dionysius latinized by Scotus Eriugena and by his own systematic work.[48]

It is about early medieval theology rather than about Augustine that the question needs to be asked whether the Trinitarian doctrine has anything to do with human life. The genesis of Christian belief has there passed wholly into the contemplation of an unknowable objective principle, whether that is done more intellectually or through sensible images. Augustine's way to Christian belief was mediated by Roman culture and institutions and by oriental and Hellenic forms of thought. This mediation is dissolved in the ideal of a monastic life which should attain an immediate knowledge of an infinite principle without historical existence. Or if the Church be the historical existence of the principle, it neither has finite ends unless incidentally nor does it engender a secular life through which a knowledge of the religious principle might be prepared and mediated. This direct concentra-

48. For Augustine in the course of his conversion the *'artes liberales'* were of no aid in theology. He studied the Aristotelian categories and found them useless in divinity: *"Quid hoc mihi proderat, quando et oberat, cum etiam te, deus meus, mirabiliter simplicem atque incommutabilem, illis decem praedicamentis putans quidquid esset omnino comprehensum, sic intellegere conarer, quasi et tu subiectus esses magnitudini tuae. . ."* (*Conf.*, IV, 16). Boethius can begin with the categories in abstraction from every content and through them determine how the Trinity may be spoken about. Eriugena begins likewise by assuming the categories, and through them, as giving the universal form of the finite, can bring before him objectively the relation of all the finite to the presupposed principle as a procession and return. In this the division in Augustine's *De Trinitate* between the objective treatment of the revealed doctrine and the subjective approach to it vanishes in one objective and systematic view. There is nothing arbitrary in this transition nor is it in any way peculiar to the systematic mind of Eriugena. It is only a consequent consideration of the relation of the finite, therein the human *'imago'*, to the presupposed principle — where this is treated as a principle and abstracted from Biblical language by means of the categories. If Eriugena was regarded with disfavour, he was no doubt also read, because he expressed what was generally sought, namely to know the presupposed principle as principle. There is in this the completest abstraction from the natural. Those who say that for the future we shall remain with the natural and particular, have need to reflect that the opposite principle prevailed for some centuries, and that the poles, as two abstractions, have not much to keep them apart.

tion on the infinite principle is the opposite pole to the existential naturalism with which Augustine's conversion began. There is now sought a negation of the natural so far as it is divided from the principle. But this religion is not so negative and destructive of secular life as appears. Where it exists on its own in Western Europe, unencumbered by Roman government and Hellenic culture, it begins a secular development.

The contemplation of an unknowable principle was less negative than might be expected because the principle was itself altogether concrete. The concrete principle had historical existence in the alliance of barbarian kings with the Church and a government of worldly affairs by abbots and bishops. That was possible so far as the barbarians themselves sought to combine in their political communities individual freedom with devotion to the universal. The religious principle was reflected in this secular concreteness and had an incipient historical existence. If in religion all particularity was absorbed into a relation to the absolute principle, a like inarticulate unity was the character of secular life. The Trinitarian principle had its existence in the intuitive freedom of barbarous peoples. The Roman empire was restored as an alliance of emperor and pope. But this immediate relation of religion and secular life was the worst and most undeveloped. Since there was no room for a rational mediation of particular interests with the universal on the secular side, the empire quickly disintegrated. And because there was no secular correction of arbitrary barbarous freedom by strong institutions the government of abbots and bishops sank into dismal corruption.

For a century Thomistic theology has been recommended in the Roman Catholic Church as peculiarly adequate to the expression of Christian doctrine and order. In this it was not clearly observed how remote a modern existential independence of the particular is from the human finitude or human nature defined by Aquinas. The same may be said of other medieval concepts of human nature (Scotist, Ockamist). In the one case the particular takes itself to be the whole and has no need to presuppose the Christian principle any longer. In the other there is the beginning of a secular reason which would bring order out of arbitrary violence, which would faithfully assume the truth of the Christian doctrine and then set about to understand it. If Neo-Thomism might serve to restrain the inevitable tendency of Catholic socieities to contemporary freedom, plainly its power to do so must depend more on ecclesiastical authority than on any inner coherence with existential modes of thought. A renewed knowledge of Thomism and rival medieval theologies has a greater importance than in any

facile application in profoundly altered conditions, namely towards gaining an understanding of contemporary assumptions and an independence from their authority.

The inarticulate existence of the Trinitarian belief in early medieval society assumes here a far more definite form. A human nature is defined in distinction from the absolute religious relation. Grace and the theological virtues are thought to be imparted to that nature, whereby it is related to the principle without loss of its difference and finitude. There may be no great novelty in the concept of human nature, which is taken from Aristotle and the ancients. The novelty lies in the formation of a more developed Christian secularity. The intent here is radically altered from that of Augustinian theology, where what was sought was not to distinguish a human finitude from the Trinitarian relation but to overcome a given difference in order to discover the triune principle. Augustine withdrew so far as possible from secular interests, which had no independent interest for him. It happens now rather that the secular interest is so strong that it would bring the sacred doctrine as far as possible within its understanding. In the same spirit the Church is given the form of legal and political institution.

Because this secular reason or human nature is not far developed it assumes a number of complementary forms. It is just as well possible to take the understanding as the primary power of the soul to which the other powers should be ordered as to give the primacy to the will. Or against these abstractions one might propose the individuality which contains them. A distance was obtained from which to approach the religious doctrine and to know it humanly and finitely. At the same time political communities sought an intrinsic principle and an independence from a politicized Church. But because this secular thought was abstract the difference of state from Church was not fully grasped and the two fought for secular supremacy.

It can appear remarkable that theologians assiduous in the study of Aristotle and Augustine should be divided over the question which is the primary and determinative power in the soul. The thought of their greatest authorities did not remain with these abstractions. But there is not a coherent concept of human nature present in this first beginning of an ordered secular life in Western Europe. The theologians belong to their time, and have hold of the same reason as appears in medieval feudalism. In this the violent and arbitrary freedom of an earlier time is brought into a complex net of legal obligations. But by a later standard the regulation of particular interests is abstract and ineffectual. There is also no

coherent relation between a feudal aristocracy and the economic life of the towns; except as estates both in disputable subordination to a monarchy. The peasantry remain near to servitude. Neither in the political body nor in the soul is such a unity of the particular and natural found as is desired in the religious relation.

For this reason there is both an independent secular reason and a dependence on the presupposed principle which is unfree because there is not first in the secular realization a free relation of particular interests to the universal. There sometimes appears to be an advantage to the Church in the Thomistic and Scotistic theologies over those of a later time in that they treat the secular spirit as only partially independent of ecclesiastical authority. But in this preference there is a misunderstanding of what had already occurred when a new secular beginning was made. After turning to the Trinitarian principle and abandoning secular life as without rational interest, a secular relation was resumed in which the principle was presupposed. The immediate form of this secular realization was an intuitive barbarism where individual and universal were united or opposed without rational mediation. Even in this there was a relation of the *'civitas terrena'* to the *'civitas Dei'* such as Augustine never thought of. The defect of this beginning is its immediacy, and as against that a mediation through the understanding or through the rational will is a most important development. But what already appeared in the abstract beginning was that knowledge and experience of the Trinitarian principle, once it was presupposed, was through a Christian history. The further the relation of individuals to the universal was concretely mediated in secular institutions, the more the unknowable Trinitarian principle would enter human experience and be known.

To interpret the presupposed doctrine through one or other form of Scholastic reason — one or other definition of human nature — and not just as well through later concepts is an arbitrary choice. The standpoint of a Luther or a Calvin, which is defined in opposition especially to late medieval nominalism, is equally arbitrary if it be thought to have any unique authority.In that case it would be supposed that in place of medieval feudalism either an absolute state or an absolute theocracy was the ideal order of secular life.

If the Trinitarian principle, when presupposed and not knowable through its genesis, is known as reflected in a Christian secularity, then a growing independence of the secular from ecclesiastical direction has not the sense of a de-Christianization but rather the opposite. The more it was possible not only to bring

the violence of a feudal aristocracy within the power of the state but to permit and sustain a free growth of economic, scientific, artistic interests, the more clearly the concrete Christian principle was expressed secularly. It was where the particular had been in a way equalized with the universal that Marx could propose the abolition of the state. He supposed that the particular could stand on its own and that the universal should have no independence from the natural will. That was not the peculiar fancy of Marx, but is the common assumption in recent times whether of liberals or Marxists or in the collective naturalism of the Nazis and similar movements. This was spoken of above as the corruption of the European state. It would be altogether unintelligible unless the particular had first been so strengthened and liberated that it could appear to be the whole.

The independent secular culture of the nineteenth century freed itself from the presupposed Trinitarian belief. At the same time there was a certain restoration of older theologies. Between the new existential freedom and the unsubdued barbarism of an earlier time there might appear to be a certain affinity. But in the renovation of Thomism and other older theologies this was an ambiguity which has become more obvious in recent times. If a beginning is in truth made from contemporary experience, there is no direct return from there to Trinitarian orthodoxy, whether in Thomistic or in any other form. The argument has shown that existential experience, being a Christian secularity without its principle, tends to a rediscovery of it. But in Thomism and other medieval theologies or in older Protestant theology the Trinitarian principle is already presupposed. A direct transition to these earlier forms of belief is therefore excluded. Their revival will mean something other than is intended.

Thus, for example, restoration of ecclesiastical authority, should one think it possible, would have in it all the dangers of authority in existential conditions. Authority in human affairs is always dangerous so far as it is the imposition of a particular and natural will on others the same. But where the particular will has become an end to itself in contemporary societies, authority is always more or less of this character. The peculiarly oppressive quality of contemporary government is not because it is remote from the people but because it is too near the mass of shifting, unsubstantial interests. For this reason also, the more it is demanded that government be open, the more it must become secret, because the authority of a particular will and interest is frustrated by other particularities if it be open. There is also for the same reason an inherent need of dictatorial authority where what is to be governed

is an indefinite plurality of existential interests, since government may become otherwise impossible. The extremes are an anarchic liberalism and the police state where an abstract uniformity is imposed in the interest of a party.

Thomism and the other medieval theologies came into being when particular interests had a certain independence of the universal. But the universal was also recognized and had a sacred authority. The independence of the particular was not because it had taken the universal to itself but because it was itself incomplete, being a plurality and hierachy of powers and not concrete. For this reason the incoherence of medieval society and the authority of an abstract reason in divine and human questions were far more corrigible than the unlimited particularity of contemporary societies. Ecclesiastical authority was not essentially an imposition of one particularity on others. It became that because a finite reason was thought competent both to know and to impose the presupposed belief.

If contemporary societies are in no way directly receptive of traditional theologies, it does not follow that these are of historical interest only. It is commonly supposed that contemporary philosophy has made an end of earlier thought, as also more generally that there can be no turning back from existential liberation. The same conviction that it has made a radical beginning from which there is no return is common to philosophies exclusive of one another. What is in this confidence the earlier argument has indicated: contemporary thought and liberation are the contradiction of a particularity both free and subject to external and irrational forces — not least to its own uncontrollable creations. It is also, as the argument shows, the search for its proper principle. But even should the genesis of the principle be well understood, there would be in that no knowledge of its historical reality. The European past before the new philosophies would remain a museum where some out of traditional piety or for aesthetic enjoyment collected and cared for the treasures. In practical terms a rediscovery of the principle of existential freedom would rather be destructive of institutions already in ruin and of a cultivated life than any saving of them. It would rather only complete the flight from technology, on which contemporary society at the same time inescapably depends, than correct at all the monstrous situation where the human race survives by the uncertain balance of nuclear terror. In short the existential culture for which older European history is a museum would show itself to be an abstraction.

The problem for contemporary theology is therefore not only a

remaking — that is a rediscovery — of Christian doctrine but also of attaining a free relation to medieval and subsequent theologies. For contemporary culture is not simply a liberation from these older forms but lives with their works in the arts and sciences and what is left of a coherent social and institutional structure. To restore the direct authority of older forms in contemporary life is not to be thought of. It is another matter to say that they are dead. In a European context that is indeed a natural assumption, since the older culture is easily equated with the life of the national states. Just as Hellenism, for example, long survived the ruin of the independent Greek states, so European culture has a more general existence. Nor need one suppose that it survives only in its existential aspect.

If one says that the contemporary theological problem is about the relation of the genesis of the Christian principle to its being as presupposed, then the abstracted form of this relation would be that which was found in early medieval theology. If that theology is considered in its relation to the Patristic development, then at least one is free of the abstract thought which divides the existential aspect from the presupposed doctrine. But there is also an imbalance and instability there in the relation of the genesis to the being of the doctrine. The genesis is lost in the result. This relation is exclusive furthermore of later European culture. Since the existential aspect has its origin not there but where the historical participation in the presupposed principle had reached a certain completeness, what is sought is a relation not to the beginning only of a Christian secularity but also to its further development.

European culture exists now in the most various and complex relations to non-European cultures. There is such a mixing and confusion of cultures as once in the Roman Empire. Everywhere European technology is borrowed and imposed on alien beliefs. The products of a concrete spirit are received in a debased form into traditions powerless against them for the same reason as Europeans in their existential phase are powerless over their own works. When a relation of the existential to the established aspect of the Christian tradition is sought, that need not be thought a return simply to European beginnings but rather the formation of a stable attitude to contemporary history. For if the Promethean works of the European tradition are ever to be limited and controlled, that will not be by returning to nature principally but through the concrete principle in which they originated. A certain stabilization of the two aspects would at the same time permit a mutual recognition of Christian and other religions which was not

a reduction and obliteration of essential differences in an abstract common religiosity. Such is the fuller context of a revision or rethinking of Christian doctrine which should be in relation to contemporary experience.

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