

Preface

WHEN MARX AND FREUD developed their social and psychological theories based on the fundamental proposition that religion and human culture were nothing but projections derived from underlying material or psychological causes, they were planting their systems in conceptual ground already well prepared by thinkers in the decades preceding them. One of the clearest expressions of this proposition was presented by Ludwig Feuerbach in 1841:

We have shown that the substance and object of religion is altogether human; we have shown that divine wisdom is human wisdom; that the secret of theology is anthropology; that the absolute mind is the so-called finite subjective mind. . . . The necessary turning-point of history is therefore the open confession, that the consciousness of God is nothing else than the consciousness of the species; . . . that there is no other essence which man can think, dream of, imagine, feel, believe in, wish for, love and adore as the *absolute*, than the essence of human nature itself.¹

When Feuerbach identified the “consciousness of God” with “the consciousness of the species,” he prepared the way for all theories that reduce religious experience to material causes. We can understand the precise thrust of this proposition if we see it as a direct repudiation of the Christian doctrine of the analogy of being (*analogia entis*), a teaching that sees human nature in relationship to divine nature while recognizing the existence and autonomy of God, and

establishes the possibility of limited human knowledge of divine nature based on the resemblance of all created things to God as their creator. It is an important element of Christian doctrine that the extent of this resemblance is limited; the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 asserted that “between creator and creature there can be noted no similarity so great that a greater dissimilarity cannot be seen between them.”² Christian teaching carefully recognizes the limitations within the analogy of being while upholding the relationship between human nature and an autonomous divine nature, but Feuerbach and the thinkers who followed him destroyed the analogy by declaring the resemblance between creatures and the divine Creator to be only an illusion experienced by the human mind. The destruction of the analogy of being was then held by such thinkers and their followers to be a great moment of enlightenment and liberation.

Retrieving and reconceptualizing the analogy of being became an important intellectual task in the Catholic and broader Christian intellectual tradition in the twentieth century, a task made urgent by the widespread cultural and intellectual influence of thinkers such as Marx and Freud. Although tracing this development is beyond what I can attempt in this preface, a particularly rich account of the contemporary theological importance of the analogy of being constitutes one of the many impressive accomplishments achieved by Eastern Orthodox theologian David Bentley Hart in *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth*.³ Two strands of the complex argument in Hart’s book are particularly notable for their power to draw together a contemporary understanding of the analogy of being in a manner that confronts and overcomes the powerful challenges to this tradition that have developed in the time since Feuerbach: his account of the ways in which Trinitarian theology alters our understanding of human nature, and his account of creation (and humanity as a part of creation) as participating in a kind of cosmic music as an expression

of the relationship between the created order and God understood as Trinity.

Drawing upon Church fathers such as Gregory of Nyssa and twentieth-century and contemporary thinkers including Erich Przywara, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and John Milbank, Hart's book sets up a direct encounter with the modern tradition developed by thinkers such as Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche. His account of Trinitarian theology is especially impressive and helpful as a presentation of the profundity of a Christian understanding of the person. He both agrees with certain aspects of the postmodern critique of the concept of the self but also overcomes the limitations of that postmodern critique by restoring a deep understanding of the human person as existing in a set of relationships, including relationship to the divine within the analogy of being.

Not to ignore the difference of God from us, but does not the burden and the promise of trinitarian thought lie now in its incompatibility with modernity's understanding of personality, and its ability, consequently, to expose that understanding as a perverse and sinful fiction? Indeed, do we really possess identity apart from relation: Is not even our "purest" interiority reflexive, knowing and loving itself as expression and recognition, engaged with the world of others through *memoria* and desire, inward discourse and outward intention . . . ? (170–71)

When Hart speaks in this quotation of the human person existing essentially in relation to others, in addition to our relationships to one another, he also has in mind the relationship between human nature and divine nature within the analogy of being as well as the relational aspect of divine nature understood within the Trinity and of which human nature comprises an image within Christian thought. Writing about the three persons of the Trinity, Hart articulates the relational aspect: "Each person is fully gathered and reflected in the mode of the other: as other, as community and unity at once" (174). Turning then to the analogy of being to find the "traces" (*vestigia*) of the Trinity

within the human person, Hart sees the relational understanding of the human person to be an image of the Trinity:

And so it is correct to see trinitarian *vestigia* both in the multiple singularity of the soul, which subsists in memory, understanding, will, and so forth, and also in the communal implications of each of us in one another, in the threefold structure of love, within which circle we together, as the event of shared love, constitute (however poorly or sinfully) the human “essence.” (174).

The richness of Hart’s account of human nature in the light of trinitarian theology and the analogy of being comes to expression also in his conceptualization of the relationship of all of creation to the Creator as essentially musical in nature. All of creation can be understood as the musical development of themes put into motion in harmony with the dynamism of the three persons of the Trinity. Here Hart retrieves the ancient and traditional concept of the *harmonia mundi* (world harmony) and its development within Christian theology to offer an illuminating way of thinking about the analogy of being: “Here, it seems to me, is the chief appeal of this tradition: the image of cosmic music is an especially happy way of describing the analogy of creation to the trinitarian life. Creation is . . . another expression or inflection of the music that eternally belongs to God, to the dance and difference, address and response, of the Trinity” (276).

This brief discussion of Hart’s book has selected only a few elements from its many well-developed arguments, but even these few elements enable us to glimpse the power and importance of recent efforts to articulate anew the fundamental importance of the philosophical and theological concept of the analogy of being, an importance that springs all the more fully into view as a response to powerful modern efforts to repudiate the concept.

Readers will, I hope, recognize the relevance of these reflections as soon as they turn to the first article in this issue of *Logos*. **Peter A. Kwasniewski** in “**Anton Bruckner, Sacred Tonality, and Parsifal’s Redemption: Spiritual Enfleshment and the Musical *Via Positiva***” offers an opening sentence that carries us immediately into the conceptual territory of the musical nature of the analogy of being: “Music speaks to both parts of man, the bodily and the spiritual; addressed to his sense of hearing, it reaches and fills the ear of the soul.” Kwasniewski develops this line of thought, drawing upon St. Thomas Aquinas and Josef Pieper, and then explores the attempts to repudiate this theologically rich understanding of music by composers such as Schoenberg and Wagner, before turning to a discussion of Bruckner as a composer whose work exemplifies brilliantly the interpenetration of theological truth and music. Describing Bruckner as a “musical theologian,” Kwasniewski explores the richness of Bruckner’s symphonies and provides a convincing account of what it means to find important theological implications in his compositions: “Bruckner conveys in feeling what it means to turn to God in faith, worship Him in fear, embrace Him in love. A Bruckner symphony beckons the listener to self-effacement before the mystery of God; in ‘wordless jubilation,’ it hymns the pleasing sacrifice and surrender to the divine Lover.”

We can also view the article by **R. James Long**, “**Aquinas and Franciscan Nature Mysticism**,” in the context of the analogy of being, because Francis’s nature mysticism involves a “profound penetration of the mystery of the Incarnation” through which Francis is able to discover “God in every corner of creation.” Long frames his article with a consideration of Canto XI of Dante’s *Paradiso*, in which Dante presents St. Thomas Aquinas speaking at length in praise of Francis. Is Dante expressing merely a kind of courtesy that exists between the Dominican and Franciscan orders, or is he suggesting a deep harmony that exists between the thought of Thomas and the mystical vision of Francis? Long demonstrates that the metaphysical views of Thomas provide a strong conceptual

framework for Francis's mystical penetration into incarnational mystery, and correspond more fully to Francis's "incarnational instincts" than does the "exemplarism" of Bonaventure, which "sees in this world so many shadows or vestiges that point to realities beyond themselves" but does not correspond fully to the love for incarnational reality expressed by Francis. Thomas's view of creation recognizes that "the very intelligibility of things is rooted in their resemblances to God" but also recognizes the full reality of created things: "They are real things, not merely images, shadows, simulacra. While intimately dependent upon God for their continuation in being, creatures are fully equipped to function in this sensible world."

In **"A Share in God's Life: Mystical/Liturgical Foundations for a Catholic Morality,"** James Keating asks, "What would a fundamental moral theology look like if it also made room for worship as one of its resources?" Keating argues that Catholic moral theology must "maintain the unity of faith and moral virtue by drawing more explicitly from the Church's celebration of the Christian mysteries." The article first establishes the significance of mystery within a Christian anthropology that sees our understanding of ourselves emerging most fully by "knowing who Christ is and entering into the life he offers." Mystery must be understood in conjunction with revelation and God's love: "God is mystery, but a mystery that seeks to disclose itself to human beings and take them up into divine love." We participate in God's wisdom, and the task of Catholic moral theology is to engage in critical reflection upon such participation. The Eucharist brings us to the heart of Christian mystery, and from our participation in the paschal mystery the formation of the conscience unfolds: "To have the conscience formed by the mysteries, the sacraments, the truths of Christ's own life is to have a purified conscience emerge." Such a formation of conscience can also be understood more generally as the process of moral conversion through living a eucharistic life:

“As we approach and participate in the paschal mystery, our desires are transformed, as is our intellect, as is our ease in choosing the good and holy.”

The phrase “Catholic imagination” is often used to describe the power of imagination exhibited by artists (in the broadest sense of the word) who view the world from a Christian incarnational perspective and produce works that help us grasp the many ways in which the world we perceive through our senses reflects divine glory—that is, by artists who explore the multifaceted richness of the analogy of being. **Don Briel** and **Paul Murray O.P.** refer to the Catholic imagination of Irish artist Patrick Pye and explore Pye’s Catholic vision in “**A Conversation with Patrick Pye.**” (Readers can enjoy five examples of Pye’s work in our cover image and the paintings reproduced within.) Pye is an Irish artist whose work is permeated by faith and theological insight. In the words of Briel and Murray (including a quotation from Pye’s writings), “It is clear that Patrick Pye’s faith provides an underlying context for all of his work, but he is insistent that his is not the theoretical task of the philosopher or the theologian but that of the Catholic artist. He has argued that ‘Art cannot tell us what to believe, but it can tell us what it feels like to believe.’” The broad-ranging conversation touches upon the influence of poet T. S. Eliot and painter El Greco upon Pye, the relationship between art and the personality of the artist, the role of the Catholic artist in contemporary culture, and Pye’s study of the theological aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar, among other topics.

Contemporary artists and writers are well aware that the cultural atmosphere in which their work will be received has been pervasively influenced by the repudiation of the analogy of being I sketched in the opening paragraphs of this preface. A novel that attempts to convey some of the richness of a vision in which the world we perceive reflects divine glory might usefully recognize the widespread skepticism with which such a vision might be met by

incorporating characters who share that skepticism. **Marion E. Crowe** in “**In the Bleak Midwinter: Advent in Alice Thomas Ellis’s *The Birds of the Air*,”** demonstrates persuasively how such an artistic strategy seems to be at work in the 1983 novel by Alice Thomas Ellis. Ellis, whose work has been well received especially in England, is a Catholic novelist who, Crowe reports, has been compared to the early Evelyn Waugh and to Muriel Spark. Crowe also compares Ellis to Flannery O’Connor in one important respect: “Ellis’s use of Catholicism in her fiction tends to be oblique, utilizing satire, comic motifs, and symbolic patterns to dramatize larger insights of Catholic theology, rather than fine points of doctrine or piety.” The article provides a detailed and well-nuanced reading of Ellis’s novel, demonstrating its status as a Christmas story that gradually cultivates the spirit of advent: “Although most of the novel takes place on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, it is most appropriate to see *The Birds of the Air* as an Advent story. In its poignant presentation of the emptiness at the center of the characters’ lives and the hollowness of their forced festivity, it speaks by implication of the yearning that characterizes the Advent liturgy.” As this issue of *Logos* went to press, we learned of the death of Alice Thomas Ellis at the age of seventy-two in London on March 8, 2005. Marion Crowe’s article serves as a tribute to the work of an important Catholic novelist whose passing we now mourn.

John A. Lindblom in “**John C. H. Wu and the Evangelization of China**” provides a fascinating overview of the work of Chinese Catholic writer John C. H. Wu (1899–1986). Lindblom suggests the importance of expanding the usual analysis of China in the twentieth century by considering also the “philosophical and spiritual questions faced by Chinese people in the wake of the complete collapse of Communist ideology and the lack of any single strong moral foundation capable of filling the god-like role that Communism once claimed for itself.” Lindblom demonstrates how Wu’s writings about Christianity address such philosophical and spiritual questions in a manner that is highly attentive to the intel-

lectual and cultural traditions of China: “In his religious work, Wu explores the eternal truths found in the Chinese traditions of Confucianism, Taoism, and Zen Buddhism, often comparing them to the great mystics and other Catholic spiritual writers.” Through his ability to develop comparisons between Chinese humanistic thought and Christianity, Wu makes an important contribution to the evangelization of China by showing how Chinese humanistic thought can be seen as “pointing toward, and being fulfilled in Christianity.” Just as evangelization in the West included important intellectual work establishing a degree of compatibility between Ancient Greek and Roman thought and art with Christianity, Wu’s work makes an indispensable contribution to the inculturation of Christianity in China.

Another aspect of the task of evangelization in the Eastern world is explored by **Walter F. Kedjierski** in “**Evangelizing Buddhists through the Cross.**” Kedjierski focuses on the importance carried by the concept of suffering in the Buddhist view of the world and finds fruitful territory for Christian dialogue with Buddhism through this concept: “No religious faith in the history of humanity has formulated a greater response to the mystery of suffering than the Christian faith. The symbol of the crucifix, with the dogmatic foundations of Christ’s redemptive suffering, is therefore one of the most plausible avenues to explore the evangelization of the Buddhist people.” The article develops a careful understanding of the concept of suffering within Buddhist tradition and then articulates the particular ways in which a Christian account of suffering can be seen as responsive to insights and themes that emerge within the Buddhist perspective, while also including particular recommendations for how the crucifix should be used in the evangelization of Buddhist people. The revelation of divine love in the crucifixion of Christ offers a deep response to the problem of suffering: “The answer to suffering ultimately lies in that self-emptying action of love that Jesus gave to all people as an example of how to live. Such loving is

actually a participation in the inner life of the Triune God, just as the first letter of St. John states, ‘God is love.’”

Our Reconsiderations feature is introduced by **Sarah Borden**, and the text presented to readers for their careful consideration is a selection from **Edith Stein’s** book *Finite and Eternal Being* titled **“The Interiority of the Soul.”** The book (written in German) was completed in 1937 but German anti-Aryan laws prevented it from being published, and it did not appear in print until 1950. We are departing from our usual practice in this feature of presenting texts that are somewhat difficult to find by reprinting a selection from the English translation of Stein’s book published by the Institute of Carmelite Studies in 2002; this opportunity for readers to become more familiar with Stein’s work in philosophy provides the reason for our selecting a portion of this book for our feature. Borden provides an overview of Stein’s philosophical background and offers a helpful commentary on the text by Stein: “Stein believes our senses, reason, heart, and body are all interconnected . . . All work together and function best when each is fully developed. Our faculties, however, are ultimately united and rooted in the interior of the soul, in the center of the person. . . . It is here that we hear the voice of conscience and have our most profound meetings with God.”

Editor’s Note:

With this issue we bid farewell to former Managing Editor Maya Hamilton Etten, who has moved on to a teaching position, and we extend our thanks to Maya once again for all of her excellent work. We warmly welcome new Managing Editor Kathleen M. Keller.

Editor’s Correction:

In the preface to the Winter 2005 issue of *Logos* (8:1), I erroneously stated that Martin Rhonheimer was writing about the reception of Mel Gibson’s “The Passion of the Christ” in Germany. In fact, Rhonheimer viewed the film in Switzerland, and the warning about

the film to which he refers was posted by the Swiss government. The information about Martin Rhonheimer in the Contributor's Notes is correct and I should have referred to him as a Swiss philosopher in my preface. I apologize for my errors.

Michael C. Jordan
Editor

Notes

1. Ludwig Feuerback, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (New York: Harper & Row), chapter 27, 270.
2. Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), second constitution, 232.
3. David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003).