THE SUBJECT OF *GAUDIUM ET SPES*
RECLAIMING A CHRISTOCENTRIC ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

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ABSTRACT:

Beneath the surface of many of the disturbing moral, political, cultural problems now looming is the growing incidence of what Henri de Lubac called the diminution of "ontological density," a spiritual distress that Hans Urs von Balthasar characterized as the "loss of ontological moorings." The modern self, fashioned according to Cartesian presuppositions which vastly inflated its capacity for social autonomy, is succumbing to pathologies intrinsic to the anthropological fallacies upon which it was premised. The attenuation of the Christian revelation that gave personal existence its theological underpinnings and cultural sustenance is having a devastating effect, especially on the young. No response to the political, cultural, and moral confusions of our time will succeed if it does not address this underlying problem.

> Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, "that all may be one. . . as we are one" (John 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God's sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself. – *Gaudium et spes*, 24

Even though Vatican II emphasized – in Gaudium et spes and elsewhere – the centrality of the person in Catholic social teaching and in the Church's engagement with contemporary culture, the anthropological preparation for the defense of that position was presupposed rather than actually accomplished.

The word "person" assumed its prominence in the vocabulary of Western culture only after Christian theologians, in speaking of the three Persons of the Trinity, gave the Latin word persona a philosophical profundity never before associated with it. In bringing about this theological revolution, the theologians of the third and fourth centuries laid the groundwork for a revolution in human self-understanding which has languished for lack of adequate anthropological elaboration. It may be the special responsibility and unique privilege of twenty-first century Christianity to undertake this elaboration. Facing this task and fulfilling its promise are essential to the completion of the work of the Second Vatican Council.

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> Like a child
> at a barbaric fairgrounds –
> noise, lights, the violent odors –
> Adam fragments himself. The whirling rides!
> Fragmented Adam stares. ...[1] – Denise Levertov

> The evil of our times consists in the first place in a kind of degradation, indeed in a pulverization, of the fundamental uniqueness of each human person. This evil is even more of the metaphysical order than of the moral order. To this disintegration planned at times by atheistic ideologies we must oppose, rather than sterile polemics, a kind of "recapitulation" of the inviolable mystery of the person.[2]
> – Karol Wojtyla

> The knowledge of what it means to be a person is inextricably bound up with the Faith of Christianity.[3] – Romano Guardini

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council wrote glowingly of "a new age of human history," one which seemed to presage "the perfection and further extension of culture." In retrospect, such enthusiasms can be seen as insufficiently tempered by Christ's forewarnings about the persistent perils the Church would face in history. The authors of *Gaudium et spes* nevertheless looked forward to "a more universal form of human culture, which better promotes and expresses the unity of the human race" and to "a mounting increase in the sense of autonomy as well as of responsibility," insisting on the "paramount importance" of this autonomy for "the spiritual and moral maturity of the human race," not hesitating to see these things as harbingers of "a new humanism." These were, of course, the very tropes most congenial to the spirit of the time, the inadequacy of which contemporary critics allude in their postmortems of modernity. The sobering developments subsequent to Vatican II were unforeseen, but those who inherit the important promise of the last Council can ill afford a naïve appraisal of the distressing events and trends of recent years.

Evidence of an unwarranted optimism on the part of the Council fathers simply underscores the Council's implicit call for what John Paul II has called "an adequate anthropology." The formulation of such an anthropology, in fact, would be the best way for the Church of the twenty-first century to revive the hope for which the optimism of the 1960s was an inadequate expression. However chastened that hope might necessarily be in today's world, it is by no means a wan hope. On the contrary, there is reason for even greater hopes than those the Council

expressed, for the anthropological resources for assessing both the present predicament and its evangelical, apologetic, catechetic and sacramental promise are now available. With these resources at hand, it can be the privilege of the 21st century Church, as it is in any case her responsibility, to awaken hopes more resilient – because more Christologically anchored – than the late 20th century paeans to cultural and spiritual progress.

The dollop of worldly optimism by which the Council's theological hope was both augmented and diluted obscured the fact that beneath the surface of historical and cultural changes that were attracting the council's attention, the moral touchstone for conciliar solicitude – the person – was reeling from the accumulated consequences of a long-standing anthropological miscalculation about the nature of human subjectivity. For the fact is that many of the most disturbing moral, political, cultural problems now looming are traceable to, and exacerbated by, an increasing incidence of what Henri de Lubac called "the waning of ontological density," a spiritual distress that Hans Urs von Balthasar characterized as the "loss of ontological moorings." Even though Vatican II emphasized the centrality of the person in Catholic social teaching and its supreme importance for the Church's engagement with contemporary culture, the Council presupposed that the Church's use of the word *person* was in workable accord with the connotations given it by those outside the Church. Where reference was made to the anthropology of the person, it was to a philosophical anthropology riddled with conceptual imprecision and both ill-suited to the diagnostic task at hand and unlikely to command the attention of those most in need of ecclesial guidance.

Glenn Olsen has observed that "the liberal self, replicating as it does a social order from which the idea of a common good and any hierarchy of public goods has been largely evacuated, is intrinsically disordered and dysfunctional."[4] It is this same symbiosis of self and social order to which the authors of *Gaudium et spes* alluded in insisting that "the progress of the human person and the advance of society itself hinge on one another" (GS, 25). This reciprocal relationship between the human person and human society means that distresses in one of these spheres will be accompanied by distresses in the other, and that, whatever their short-term practical advantages, attempts to remedy distresses in one sphere which unwittingly collude with the distresses in the other will necessarily exacerbate and prolong the crisis common to them both.

Appeal to the Enlightenment era and modernist principle of "individual rights" is a case in point. As morally reprehensible and humanly degrading as are the injustices for which the appeal to individual "rights" seems – and sometimes is – the only available one, the appeal itself rests upon the anthropological misconceptions that are complicit in the larger cultural crisis of which the mistreatment of the powerless is a collateral symptom. "The notion of rights, which was launched into the world in 1789," wrote Simone Weil, "has proved unable, because of its intrinsic inadequacy, to fulfill the role assigned to it."[5] Without specifying in any detail the nature of that inadequacy, John Paul II made reference to the ease with which a rights-based program of political rectification can succumb to the spirit of the age and become complicit in its moral myopia. The very culture that has made "the affirmation and protection of human rights its primary objective and its boast," the Pope points out, has too often found common cause with widespread "attacks on human life."[6]

For many years the Church has been championing the dignity of the human person, most notably in insisting on the moment of conception as the outset of the person's life. What follows presupposes this understanding of the person as worthy of dignity from conception to natural death. There is, however, another debate about the person that deserves our attention, and that is the debate as to what it is about personhood that Christ reveals and that without Christ the world is incapable of recognizing. What is the nature of personhood as uniquely revealed by the person of Christ? That is the question to which this paper is addressed. No one would argue that a four-year-old has taken full possession of the talents which, with time, he or she will develop and express. Similarly, a child one day after conception, though a biological human person of inestimable worth, will only much later have an opportunity to fulfill the promise implicit in his or her personhood. The burden of this paper will be argue for a Christocentric recovery of the mystery of the person. If, in so arguing, attention is focused on the mature expression of this mystery, that is in no way to suggest any affinity with, or sympathy for, those who would attribute human status only to humans who have acquired this or that level of functionality – an unconscionable and ethically monstrous position.

Since the largely social justice *objectives* of this conference are so obviously valid and the need they address so pressing, it may seem fastidious to suggest that categorical corrections might be in order if the spiritual ravages now falling like rain on the just and the unjust – and imperiling "the full spiritual dignity of the person" (GS, 23) – are not to be compounded. It is, however, the *subject* of the Council's concern which in my view deserves more attention, not at the expense of social, political and economic *objectives*, but certainly in addition to them. Whatever efforts must be made in striving for the just treatment of the human person, the efficacy of these efforts will be greatly diminished in the short-term, and possibly nullified in the long-term, if they inadvertently reinforce our dubious inheritance of anthropological presuppositions about the nature of the person. The anthropological clarification of the mystery of the person awaits the attention of Catholic Christianity precisely because the resources for performing this clarification are nowhere else to be found, and circumstances now require that these resources be brought to the fore and put to use. These resources include: the Trinitarian insights of the Nicaean Council, the Christological formulas of Chalcedon, the Second Vatican Council's invitation to harvest at last the anthropological ramifications of the earlier Councils, and the hermeneutical tools for performing this task now available thanks to the lifework of René Girard.

As the Fathers of Vatican II insisted, the mystery of the human person is the bedrock mystery and *Gaudium et Spes* calls for fresh new assimilation of this mystery – one that is anthropologically valid precisely because it is Christologically coherent – in order to show the world that it is "only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear," and that Jesus Christ "reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling" (GS, 22).

If the ultimate object of the concern for justice is the human person, and if the individual as "self," and as currently construed, is anthropologically untenable, then there awaits a preliminary task, namely, in the words of Karl Wojtyla, "a kind of 'recapitulation' of the inviolable mystery of the person." To that end it is appropriate to look to the Christian origins of the concept of the person and to the genealogical declension of the concept that has led by twists and turns to the

crisis of the postmodern self, the self which is reeling from distresses intrinsic to the anthropological fallacies upon which it was premised. No response to the political, cultural, and moral confusions of our time will bear fruit if it ignores this subtle but widening and spiritually devastating crisis.

The word "person" assumed its prominence in the vocabulary of Western culture only after Christian theologians, in speaking of the three Persons of the Trinity, gave the Latin word *persona* – via the Greek *hupostasis* and its corollary *prosopon* – a philosophical profundity never before associated with it. The mystery of the person as embedded in Trinitarian and Christological thought was regarded as revelatory only of the Persons of the Trinity and of the unique person of Christ. The Church Fathers considered Christ to be, in the words of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, a "simply unique ontological exception, which must be treated as such."[7] The larger anthropological implications of the patristic revolution were therefore not explored. To put this issue in perspective, Cardinal Ratzinger redeploys a metaphor used in another context by Teilhard de Chardin: the discovery of radium. "How could one understand the new element?" Teilhard asks: "As an anomaly, an aberrant form of matter? … As a curiosity or as the beginning for a new physics?" Had radium been thought of as an aberration – as, so to speak, an "ontological exception" – modern physics would not have been discovered, and Cardinal Ratzinger makes an analogous point about the true construal of personhood as revealed by the person of Christ. For the Church Fathers, however, and their theological heirs down into our own time, Jesus was an ontological exception whose uniquely Other-constituted form of personhood had little or no bearing on the ontological predicament of fallen humanity.

The concept of the person, writes Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, "grew in the first place out of the interplay between human thought and the data of Christian faith,"[8] entering thereby into the intellectual history most especially of those cultures that fell under Christian influence. In bringing about this theological revolution, the theologians of the patristic age laid the groundwork for a revolution in human self-understanding which has languished for lack of adequate anthropological elaboration. It is surely the special responsibility and unique privilege of the twenty-first century Church to undertake this elaboration. Facing this task and fulfilling its promise are essential to the completion of the work of the Second Vatican Council.

At the heart of Christianity, writes the theologian J. B. Metz, is a "revolutionary formation process for a new subjectivity," a new subjectivity that it is especially important to understand today as the spiritually bereft post-modern self turns to increasingly desperate and despairing antics of self-redemption.[9]

At the heart of René Girard's intellectual achievement is the anthropology of the Cross – his is a Paschal anthropology – and his legacy in this regard will be indispensable to meeting the apologetic challenge of the twenty-first century. But Girard's insights into the mimetic nature of human subjectivity will be no less crucial in addressing the looming crisis of nihilism within the once-Christian West: the spiritual, moral, psychological, and ontological crisis whose symptoms have been mounting for decades, but whose underlying dynamics have yet to be widely recognized. Girard's achievement makes it possible for us to realize that what Karl Rahner said about non-biblical religions – namely that they are "christologies in search of a subject" – is true

as well of the ontologically attenuated and mimetically hyperactive contemporary self. While it is unquestionably true that the sacramental understanding of the person is born of Christian experience, rooted in Christian scripture, and fostered by the sacramental life of the Church, Girard's insights into the mimetic nature of human subjectivity now make it possible for us to provide anthropologically corroboration for Tertullian's second century intuition that "the soul is naturally Christian." Heaven is an acquired taste, wrote C. S. Lewis. Christianity, as the Body of Christ in history, provides the liturgical, sacramental, catechetical, and hagiographic pedagogy which directs the longing for a mimetic model toward the one model whose imitation sets his imitators free to be themselves.

Christ is indeed in a category of one, but as the Council insisted, he reveals – albeit in a way utterly unique to himself – the "new subjectivity" – the true form of human personhood, precisely the anthropological template for lack of which the specious forms of selfhood were able to flourish in a world where the Gospel had weakened the sacrificial structures on which pre-Christian ontological stability had depended. Romano Guardini's observation is apropos:

> With the coming of Christ man's existence took on an earnestness which classical antiquity never knew simply because it had no way of knowing it. The earnestness did not spring from human maturity; it sprang from the call which each person received from God through Christ. With this call the person opened his eyes, he was awakened for the first time in his life.[10]

As strikingly out of step with hallowed multicultural deferences as Guardini's observation is, its kernel of truth is more important by far, and of more real anthropological pertinence, than the seemingly more inclusive language of contemporary inter-religious discourse. For Christians and non-Christians alike, Guardini's reprise of Catholic Christianity's perennial claim is the beginning of real dialogue between Christians and non-Christians, which, begun in truth and candor, is far more likely to foster a spirit of charity than inter-religious conversations that attenuate differences at the outset.

What is startlingly unique about Christian personhood is summed up in the words of Paul: "I live, now no longer I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). On one hand, the very essence of this new form of subjectivity is its Christological basis. As a cognate of the Christ's own relationship to his heavenly Father, this Pauline subjectivity gives ontological and psychological specificity to the revered scriptural idea that Christians are sons and daughters of God by "adoption" in Christ. On the other hand, the subject represents a graced fulfillment of the mimetic predisposition common to all humans as inherently perichoretic beings, that is: beings ontologically indebted to the models on whose desires their own desires are modeled.

The term *perichoresis* was a late addition to the Trinitarian vocabulary, expressing and emphasizing the relationality of the Trinitarian persons. Inasmuch as we are here concurring in the opinion of *Gaudium et spes* that Christ "reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling" (GS, 22), the anthropological adaptation of *perichoresis* might be justified, or at least an allusion to it for heuristic purposes might be permitted. If the God in whose image and likeness humans are made is the God of Jesus Christ – that is to say, the Trinitarian God – then

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the likeness must surely include that which Christ uniquely revealed, that which makes Christ the one and only path to the Father (John 14:6). It was, of course, precisely the perichoretic conundrum that forced upon bewildered humanity the theological revision the early Councils accomplished, and it is this same perichoretic mystery which now awaits anthropological assimilation, and for which the ontological crisis sweeping the Christianized West – and hitting less prepared cultures like a spiritual and social tsunami – is crying out.

It may well be the case, of course, that the anthropological assimilation of the Trinitarian insight into the paradox of personhood returns us to the thorny problem of the "one iota" separating *homousia* (of the same substance, *consubstantiality*) from *homoiusia* (of similar substance). While the perichoretic relationship of the incarnate Son and the Father is surely the template for the Christian's relationship to Christ, there remains an unbridgeable ontological gap between them. The boldest thing that can be said, and it is what the anthropological verses in Genesis and their correlates in *Gaudium et spes* suggest, is that human personhood is ordained to the replication of the relationship between the persons of the Trinity, and that Christians, as Christ-constituted persons, enter into the school of personal existence more deeply than would otherwise be possible. An identification with Christ is the decisive factor in a Christian's life, but neither Paul nor the later saints claimed a strict identity; rather they insisted that their own identity could no longer be adequately reckoned without reference to the indelible imprint of Christ that was coincident with their conversion and ontological in its effect.

What follows is an abbreviated and highly anecdotal genealogy of the postmodern self and its besetting distresses, including brief allusions to the roles played by Augustine (inadvertently), William of Ockham, Descartes, Rousseau, Freud and Nietzsche, and concluding with a reference or two to the postmodern effort to put the best face on the resulting crisis. The purpose of this exercise is not excoriation but exemplification: to show a persistent antipathy throughout the process toward evidence of the mimetic nature of human subjectivity, evidence which nevertheless grew irrefutable, and on which René Girard finally performed the long-awaited reconnaissance.

Cardinal Ratzinger writes that enormous effort and intellectual energy that went into formulating the Christian concept of the person, a concept which he insists, "was quite foreign in its inner disposition to the Greek and the Latin mind." This intellectual and theological revolution was hampered, Ratzinger writes, by "attempts at locating the concept of person at some place in the psychic inventory." Returning, as the last Council seems to be urging, to the unfinished work of harvesting the anthropological fruits of the patristic achievement will require reckoning with and rectifying these two tendencies: the tendency to look inward for the essence of the person and the tendency to regard the personhood of Christ as too ontologically distinct to be of use in assessing the mystery of the person as lived by fallen man.

After Irenaeus' foundational repudiation of Gnosticism, writes Hans Urs von Balthasar, "the spiritualistic temptation in the purer form of the platonic and neoplatonic myths take control of Christian theology and it will require long and confusing struggles before the position that had crept into Christian thought could be eliminated."[11] One of Neoplatonism's entry points in the post-Irenaean period was in the work of Augustine. Notwithstanding Augustine's immense and

unparalleled contribution to Christian thought, and especially to Christianity's historical self-understanding, the Neoplatonism on which he drew led his intellectual and spiritual heirs into confusions which he himself for the most part avoided. Be that as it may, at the time of his conversion, writes von Balthasar, Augustine "was assiduously practicing Neoplatonic self-absorption."[12] Nor was Augustine's conversion an occasion for the repudiation of the Neoplatonic features of his thought. "The story of Augustine's intellectual development does not begin with Platonism and end with Christianity," writes Philip Cary. On the contrary, Augustine's is "a distinctive brand of Christian Platonism in the making."[13]

Most noteworthy in this respect is Augustine's inward turn, which Cary analyzes at length, and the way it predisposed Augustine to conceive of the subject as containing *within* itself a Trinitarian analogue, consisting – in Augustine's most well-known formulation – of memory, intelligence, and will. By transposing the divine persons into intra-psychic categories, Augustine seriously depreciated what is surely the most essential, radical, and counter-intuitive element in Trinitarian theology, namely, the perichoretic relationality of the God revealed by Christ, the God in whose image and likeness humans are made. Nor was this unfortunate transposition subsequently rectified. Neoplatonic habits of thought, in the words of Karl Rahner, "have held us in bondage for two thousand years."[14]

Just as Augustine's conversion was located at the confluence of two streams – the living example of Ambrose of Milan and Augustine's intellectual fascination with Plotinus, the third century founder of Neoplatonism. These two sources, afer being forged in the Augustinian furnace, became the basis for *both* what Kenneth Schmitz calls "the older theological interiority" – marked by "an open intimacy with God" – *and* "modern psychological subjectivity" which emerges "out of the desperate conviction that the human psyche is a private enclosure."[15] In many ways, Schmitz's categories – the private and the prayerful – are analogues for the secular "self" as popularly conceived and the "person" in the true and genuinely Christian sense of the term. Phillip Cary locates the beginning of the confusion between them in Augustine's appeal to the inner space, arguing that "the sophistication and subtlety of Plotinus's use of the little word 'in' is largely metaphorical – and Augustine seems to have grasped the metaphor without quite grasping its limits."[16] So commonplace did the notion of turning inward become, however, that Augustine's descendants – meaning Western culture in its entirety – would appeal to the metaphor of inwardness without recognizing either its metaphorical limits, its doctrinal eccentricities, or its anthropological dubiousness.

"On the way from Plato to Descartes," writes Charles Taylor, "stands Augustine." But there were intermediate steps along the way. Reacting to the excesses of scholasticism, a philosophical movement that came to be known as "nominalism" – usually associated with the Franciscan friar William of Ockham – argued for the inscrutability of God. According to Ockham and those who followed his lead, divine freedom was so inaccessible to human reckoning that from a human point of view God's will necessarily appeared indifferent and arbitrary. This attempt to temper the rationalism then in ascendant had the effect of severing faith from reason and imagining the Christian God to be as irrational and morally fickle as any of the gods Christianity had vanquished. Faith became blind faith and reason religiously useless. Ockham and the nominalists undermined confidence in both human reason and natural morality,

setting the individual adrift on an unnavigable sea of uncertainty three hundred years before Descartes sought respite from it in the fortified citadel of his *cognito*.

The eventual Cartesian response to this uncertainty can be seen in embryo in the writings of the early fourteenth century English mystic, Richard Rolle, a contemporary of William of Ockham and the author of *The Mending of Life* and *The Fire of Love*. In his illuminating study of mystical theology, Mark McIntosh summed up Rolle's asceticism, and it is easy to see how it prefigures the philosophical and epistemological parsimony of Cartesian thought while at the same time succumbing to the perennial Gnostic temptation. McIntosh writes:

> It is intriguing that Rolle develops two 'avoidances': the fear of the other person (even to an extent the fear of community) conceived as a threat to the cultivation of the inner world, and the fear of ordinary, 'carnal' affections. Both these are seen as jeopardizing one's spiritual life for they would both, not coincidentally, lead one out of *a private inner world* into the common world of the other. Rolle's reaction to these threats seems to call for … the construction of self in terms of an ever-intensifying inner affectivity rather than relationality.[17]

> The fact that Descartes seems hardly to be placing his trust in such an "ever-intensifying inner affectivity," should not keep us from seeing the seeds of his philosophy in Rolle's mystical program. For the fact that Rolle relies on inner affectivity and Descartes on unassailable reason is less important than the fact the both find in these things a desirable respite from the potentially disorienting (mimetic) influence of others.

For all the confusion to which it inadvertently contributed, the saving feature of Augustine's inward turn was that, like Trinitarian interiority, it was premised on communal, not an entitative or punctiliar, subjectivity. In replicating Augustine's Neoplatonic adaptation, Descartes inward turn managed to forsake the one thing that kept the Augustinian one from becoming fatal to Christian thought. Whereas Augustine turned inward in order to find God, Descartes turned inward in search of a self-sufficient source of knowledge, truth, and – by extension – identity, "cogito ergo *sum*." Not only did the Cartesian turn involve "Neoplatonic self-absorption" of which von Balthasar complained, but the residue of Gnostic thought implicit in Ockham's inscrutable and rationally unpredictable God was in evidence as well; conspicuously so in his *First Meditation*, where Ockham's inscrutable God has "gone native," taking the form, hypothetically at least, of the Gnostic demiurge haunting a material world incurably infected with its malignity:

> I will suppose, then, not that Deity, who is sovereignly good and the fountain of truth, but that some malignant demon, who is at once exceedingly potent and deceitful, has employed all his artifice to deceive me; I will suppose that the sky, the air, the earth, colors, figures, sounds, and all external things, are nothing better than the illusions of dreams, by means of which this being has laid snares for my credulity; I will consider myself as without hands, eyes, flesh, blood, or any of the senses, and as falsely believing that I am possessed of these; I will continue resolutely fixed in this belief, and if indeed by this means it be not in my power to

arrive at the knowledge of truth, I shall at least do what is in my power, [that is, suspend my judgment], and guard with settled purpose against giving my assent to what is false, and being imposed upon by this deceiver, whatever be his power and artifice.[18]

A malignant, seductive deity, conjuring an illusory world of "external things" whose wiles could only be defeated by the (metaphorical) elimination of the body – "hands, eyes, flesh, blood, or any of the senses" – to be replaced by an all-purpose instrument: methodological doubt. Thus did Christianity's oldest adversary array itself in the seventeenth century. The task of fending off potentially crippling mimetic influences from without proved more difficult than at first supposed. At the beginning of the *Third Meditation*, he describes the precautions he had to take in order to avoid the taint of mimetic influence. Living at the time (1628) in Holland, he describes the physical surroundings which most suited his purpose:

The onset of winter held me up in quarters in which, finding no company to distract me, and having, fortunately, no cares or passions to disturb me, I spent the whole day shut up in a room heated by an enclosed stove, where I had complete leisure to meditate on my own thoughts.[19]

This passage may tell us more about the Cartesian revolution than Descartes' elaborate philosophical justifications for it. It indicates where the problem lies for Descartes. It lies with other people. Not only is it others that Descartes fears will distract him, but it is the "cares" and "passions" others arouse in him that he must extinguish in order to think clearly. Sartre's "hell is other people" is still more than three centuries away, but Descartes has taken the first steps in that direction, not because he is a misanthropist, but because he has intuitively sensed how susceptible to mimetic forces the self is and how imperceptibly influential these mimetic stimuli can be.

Just a few years after the publication of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, the first modern novel and a thoroughgoing and entertaining examination of the human propensity for imitation, René Descartes gave Cervantes' civilization a welcomed alternative to the task of psychologically assimilating and Christologically explicating the disconcerting truth Cervantes had exposed to view. To avoid the influence that others might have on him – to prevent himself from involuntarily imitating a model as Quixote had willingly imitated Amadis de Gaul – Descartes turned inward, assuming this to be the true path to uncorrupted knowledge, self-awareness and subjective authenticity. The Cartesian quest for certainty is the quest for *unmediated* knowledge. It is rooted in a deep mistrust of mediation, of the "cloud of witnesses" and the testimony and example of others, and of culture influences generally – the very things Catholic Christianity has always and unapologetically regarded as mediating agencies worthy of Christianization and in need of it. Without such mediation, we fall under Maurice Nédoncelle's valid indictment. "We are taking part in a vast massacre of those natural sacraments which fertilized all earlier civilizations," he wrote, "and we are on the way to de-humanizing ourselves."[20]

Descartes' aspiration was for interior certainty, "the conceptions of a clear and attentive mind, which is so easy and distinct that there can be no room for doubt about what we understand."[21]

Thus, he writes, "everyone can mentally intuit that he exists, that he thinks, that a triangle is bounded by just three lines," and so on.[22] At the heart of this search for *unmediated* knowledge is a wariness about the mimetic influence of others and a fear of the epistemological corruption such an influence might have. It is, of course, a legitimate fear, as the God who created humans that way certainly knew, but for which redemptive provisions had been made.

In the *Third Meditation*, Descartes' vigilance intensifies to the point of sub-clinical hysteria, something we will see again in the case of Rousseau and his contemporary heirs:

> I will now close my eyes, I will plug my ears, I will turn aside all my senses … in this way, concerned only with myself, looking only at what is inside me, I will try, little by little, to know myself, and to become more familiar to myself.[23]

> Here we have the modern self's originating gesture, what Henri de Lubac called "the

mania of introspection or the search for a static sincerity." "The farther it goes," de Lubac insisted, "the more fearful it becomes. It eats into man, disintegrates and destroys him."[24] William Temple expresses an analogous misgiving when he refers to Descartes' withdrawal into himself as "the most disastrous moment in the history of Europe."[25]

The Cartesian contribution to the anthropology of inner selfhood repeated the Augustinian turn inward, but it also involved a further attenuation of the very element in Augustine's theology that saved it from most, if not all, of the dangers of Platonism, namely, what Kenneth Schmitz calls "an open intimacy with God." Augustine's answer to the Cartesian "I think therefore I am" would certainly have been the Psalmist's: "O Lord, you have searched me and *known me*. ... Where can I go from your spirit?" (Ps 139) For Descartes, without solitude thought is contaminated; for Augustine, without prayer solitude fails to fulfill its promise. In biblical anthropology, prayer, not self-possession, is the *sine qua non* of all truly personal existence.

Descartes' anthropological miscalculation worked its way into the cultural presuppositions via philosophical discourse, but Jean Jacques Rousseau's subsequent contribution to it passed much more directly into popular culture. Rousseau was the flamboyant self-declaration of the implausibility of Cartesian anthropology appearing as its quintessential triumph. If Descartes warded off the influence of others in order to purify his thinking, Rousseau did so in order to establish his own psychological authenticity. His most famous book, named after Augustine's most famous one, announces on its opening page the author's immunity to mimetic influence, the chief demonstration of this adamantine imperturbability being Rousseau's celebrated role as mimetic model imitated by others.

> I have resolved on an enterprise which has *no precedent*, and which, once complete, will have *no imitator*. My purpose is to *display* to my kind a portrait in every way true to nature, and the man I shall portray will be *myself*. Simply myself. I know my own heart and understand my fellow man. But I am made unlike any one I have ever met; I will even venture to say that *I am like no one in the whole world*. I may be no better, but at least I am *different*.[26]

Perhaps the first widely celebrated figure in Europe to discover the social power of self-deprecating self-referentiality, and surely the first to exploit this power so methodically, Rousseau's claim to mimetic independence had a spellbinding effect on his contemporaries. European culture was then well on its way toward the mimetic crisis that is now upon us, and the European elite who fawned over Rousseau were so mesmerized by the spectacle of a man who appeared to be immune to mimetic effects that they rarely meditated on why he might have gone to so much trouble to call attention to his immunity.

Both Descartes's *Third Meditation* and Rousseau's *Confessions* begin with the conspicuous, even comic, effort to rule out mimetic influence and/or dispute its existence. "I could swear indeed that until I was put under a master," wrote Rousseau in *The Confessions*, "I did not so much as know what it was to want my own way."[27] The "self" proposed in each case is rooted in the act of "dis-identification" by which the individual distinguishes himself from others. This conception of selfhood has its etymological roots in the Greek term *autos*. *Autos* and its cognates strongly imply, in the words of Kenneth Schmitz, "an identity that preserves itself against others." As Schmitz explains, "in order to preserve itself and retain that identity, such a self must at some point exclude others, or even repel them."[28]

The cultural environment in the latter half of eighteenth century Europe, when Rousseau was asserting his immunity to the influence of others, was more credulous of this claim than is the world today. He was therefore able to claim autonomy with more authority, less embarrassed by the obvious evidence to the contrary than are those who today try to make such claims. Another way of saying this is to say that Rousseau was able to strike his pose of Olympian nonchalance without fear of a clinical diagnosis of hysteria. In retrospect, however, that is exactly the diagnosis that would have been demanded by the symptoms he himself recounted in his last published work. In his *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, as the title suggests, he continued to insist on his autonomy: "Under pressure from all sides … I remain upright because I cling to nothing and lean only on myself."[29] Belying Rousseau's professions of autonomy, however, was the fact that he was deeply and emotionally affected by what others thought of him, especially by what his detractors thought. His psychophysical reactions to the disdain of others – some of which he merely imagined – could have served as one of Freud's case studies in hysteria. When, for whatever reason, Rousseau was made to feel the sting of social opprobrium, he was, he wrote, resigned to the "impossibility of repressing these first involuntary reactions."

> Whenever I am provoked, I allow my blood to boil and my senses to be possessed by anger and indignation; I give way to this first explosion of nature, which all my efforts could not prevent or impede. I merely try to stop it leading to any undesirable consequences. My eyes flash, my face flares up, my limbs tremble and palpitations choke me; these are all purely physical reactions and reasoning has no effect on them, but once nature has had its initial explosion one can become one's own master again and gradually regain control over one's senses; this is what I have tried to do, for a long time to no avail, but eventually with greater success.[30]

The late 19th century clinicians with whom Freud collaborated, predisposed though they were to look for hysteria only in women, would have had little trouble diagnosing these physical and emotional convulsions as symptoms of hysteria. In fact, Rousseau deserves the distinction of being the first widely emulated hysteric in Western culture. Some years ago, the Freudian analyst Fritz Wittels may have correctly suggested that it is Nietzsche's paean to Dionysus that "removes the reproach which adheres to the word hysterical,"[31] but Nietzsche's influence in this regard has a decidedly postmodern cast to it, whereas it was Rousseau's sub-clinical case of hysteria that became the norm for the modern age, from which the postmodernists are now fleeing in the general direction of Nietzsche.

A line can be drawn, in fact, from Descartes' cramped seventeenth century Dutch garret to the cheap nineteenth century boarding house from which Friedrich Nietzsche issued the inaugural postmodern manifesto. Stafan Zweig described Nietzsche, huddled in his "small, narrow, modest, coldly furnished" room:

> … innumerable notes, pages, writings, and proofs are piled up on the table, but no flower, no decoration, scarcely a book and rarely a letter. … on a tray innumerable bottles and jars and potions … a frightful arsenal of poisons and drugs, yet the only helpers in the empty silence of this strange room in which he never rests except in brief and artificially conquered sleep. Wrapped in his overcoat and a woolen scarf (for the wretched stove smokes only and does not give warmth), his fingers freezing, his double glasses pressed close to the paper, his hurried hand writes for hours – words the dim eyes can hardly decipher. For hours he sits like this and writes until his eyes burn.[32]

From Descartes' quest for unmediated certainty to the solipsistic disintegration of truth in Nietzsche, what's at work is the fear of mediation, with all its messiness and muddle, which is at bottom not only a rejection of Christian truth but, more importantly, a repudiation of the specifically Christian way of experiencing and communicating it. More profoundly, if more subtly, it is a rejection of the Incarnation – the supreme act of mediation – manifesting itself as a rejection of mediation as such. If David B. Hart is correct in charging the Cartesian revolution with "moving truth from the world in its appearing to the subject in its perceiving,"[33] Nietzsche stands accused of bringing the revolution to its logical conclusion, declaring truth to be entirely "perspectival." In any case, the perspectival premise is now very widespread. Not only is it disseminated in large doses on most university campuses, but many – if not most – adolescents now take such an understanding of truth for granted.

. . . . .

If there is anyone in the Christian tradition against whom the Freudian revolution could be said to have been directed, it would be Augustine. Ironically, Freud replicated two of the most questionable elements in Augustine's thinking. Both Augustine and Freud turned inward at a critical juncture – Augustine to the "soul" understood in somewhat Neoplatonic terms, and Freud to the "unconscious," variously depicted. With differing degrees of emphasis, each focused

attention on the sexual features of the problem with which both were concerned, namely, the problem of desire.

We are here concerned with the anthropological mistake that underlies the modern and postmodern notions of selfhood, and, more importantly, with what Freud, his predecessors, collaborators and later explicators refused to fully confront, specifically as they were faced with so conspicuous an instance of it in the psychopathologies they labeled hysteria. Freud's now discredited sexual theories are of interest in this regard, for they served as decoys, diverting attention from the real issue that called out for further investigation. The sexual theories are of interest as well because they played an important role in lending the sexual revolution of the mid- to late-20th century a degree of intellectual respectability, and this revolution is one of the most devastating symptoms of the ontological crisis now ravaging popular culture in the West and beyond. This, surely, is a *plague* for which Freud and his disciples bear at least indirect responsibility. We will look briefly at the so-called sexual revolution, not to indulge in moral harangues, but in order to suggest that the sexual hysteria of our time may be the single most formidable obstacle to a renewed understanding of the meaning of personhood and the mystery of nuptiality that subtends it.

Gazing at the crowds awaiting his arrival at the New York dock in 1909, Sigmund Freud is reported to have turned to Carl Jung and said: "They don't know it, but I'm bringing them the plague." The element of pride in Freud's mordant remark about bringing the plague to America seems to have been miscalculated, and so it was. Freud's star has fallen. There is, however, a lingering legacy of the erstwhile Freudian triumph: it lasted long enough, and enjoyed enough scholarly respectability, to have provided the intellectual platform from which the sexual revolution was launched, and the sexual revolution has had the impact of a plague on European society.[34] While almost every element of Freudian theory has been abandoned or revised virtually out of recognition, the sexual revolution to which Freudian thought lent an aura of intellectual respectability has left no corner of our cultural life untouched. No one seriously concerned with reviving the authentic spirit of the last Council can overlook this most neuralgic symptom of the contemporary cultural crisis, nor fail to recognize John Paul II's theology of the body as an essential codicil to *Gaudium et spes* in this respect.

Freud's attention to sexual symptoms can be defended to a degree, but not for reasons he proposed. As societies slide into a mimetic crisis of the sort that is now engulfing the Western world, sexuality is predictably the first area of social life to become problematic. The power of the sexual drive, the deep longing for true intimacy, and the drama involved in competition for sexual partners combine to make it all but inevitable that in a crisis-ridden society – rife with envy, rivalry, and resentment – these aggravations will be exasperated and exemplified in relationships where sexuality is in play. And so it is that – with the ascendance of the individualistic, secularized and "social contract" sense of self in the West – sexual intimacy has tended to be instrumentalized and robbed of its sacramentality, and thereby deprived of the very source of its deepest emotional and spiritual satisfactions. "Social contract" sexuality – the standard requirement of which is the non-transmission of disease or natality – exchanges a sacramental self-donating intimacy for a sexuality of plumbing, pleasure, performance, and prevention. Far from being a reaction to sexual prudery, therefore, the sexual revolution was an

attempt to compensate for emotional disappointments that accompanied earlier stages of the revolution, as each subsequent generation entertained the chimerical hope that a loosening of moral restraint might unleash enough passion to make up for the loss of intimacy coincident with the moral laxity of the previous generation. The cure was the next stage of the disease. The result of this spiraling process has been a spiritual calamity rooted, not in moral laxity, but in anthropological error, a catastrophe which continues unabated and whose most serious consequences are spiritual, not sexual. For these and other reasons, it is worthwhile to rummage through the dustbin of psychoanalytic history for hints of the failure that Freudian thought represents, for the story of the gradual demise of the secular autonomous self contains important clues as to what went wrong and why, and the Freudian chapter of that story should not be closed without recovering as many of those clues as might be found there. Those who are quick to point out that the Freudian theory is now completely discredited, and therefore unworthy of further attention, fail to recognize its lingering legacy. But there are additional reasons for returning to the unfortunate Freudian chapter in the story of the modern self. There are treasures to be retrieved from the wreckage.

Psychoanalysis began with Freud's question: "What is the meaning of hysterical identification?" It was with the publication of *Studies in Hysteria*, co-authored by Josef Breuer, that Freudian theory began to take shape. As Mark Micale puts it, "psychoanalysis effectively began as a theory of hysteria. Within the history of psychoanalysis, hysteria remains the quintessential neurosis, the primary pathology."[35] The most remarkable and prominent symptom of hysteria was, in Freud's own words, "the capacity of hysterics to imitate any symptom in other people that may have struck their attention – sympathy, as it were, intensified to the point of reproduction."[36] Christian discipleship and, therefore, Christian subjectivity, is quite simply "sympathy intensified to the point of reproduction," and Christian – especially Catholic – spirituality makes sense only in light of the inextinguishability of the human predilection toward such sympathy. The man who thought his sexual theories were bringing the curtain down on religion was in fact cluttering his cutting room floor with penetrating observations that would one day contribute to the revitalization of the kind of Christocentric anthropology we are here trying to limn.

Modern psychology was called into existence by a symptom of distress that amounts to the most explicit declaration of our imitative propensity that one can imagine – sympathy intensified to the point of reproduction – what René Girard calls *mimetic desire*. Girard was the first to give due weight to mimesis, but Freud was not the first to notice its role in hysteria. "At least since the late seventeenth century," writes Mark Micale, "medical observers have noted in hysteria an extraordinary, chameleon-like capacity to reflect the environment in which it develops."[37]

Psychologically speaking, the hysteric is someone especially vulnerable by reason of mimetic predisposition and emotional circumstances to the influence of others, and who, having fallen under such influence, finds it suffocating or intolerable, resorting to a kind of private exorcism ritual – involving, typically, either exaggerated histrionics or autistic dissociation – each an effort to ward off or neutralize a mimetic influence which the subject experiences as ontologically threatening. A person risks being diagnosed as hysterical if his attempts to ward off mimetic influence and retain or assert his self-sufficiency are debilitating enough or flamboyant enough

to attract the attention of clinicians. The oddest thing about the epidemic of hysteria which accompanied and occasioned the birth of psychoanalysis, and which was quickly determined to be the oldest human psychological distress, dating back four thousand years, is that in the latter half of the twentieth century it disappeared altogether, and no one knows why. But did it disappear? Clinical forms of hysteria disappeared into a sea of sub-clinical ones. Freud himself likened "anxiety" – that most familiar of psychological symptoms – "to an individually acquired hysterical attack."[38] And today low-level, chronic versions of the hysteric's rituals of dis-identification with others are virtually the norm in contemporary Western culture, especially among the young.

The real historical significance of the Freudian sexual theory, therefore, was that it managed to ignore precisely these things, turning attention away from discoveries that Freud would otherwise have been obliged to make. So glaring was the clinical evidence pointing in the direction that Freud chose not to follow, and so aware of this evidence was Freud himself, that nothing less than the most glamorous of alternative theories could have deflected attention from the besetting distress. Be that as it may, the theory with which Freud steered clear of the discovery that otherwise awaited him is far less interesting than the neglected discovery itself.

Modern psychology was born at the moment when symptoms of the mimetic crisis in the midst of which we are now living became acute enough and prevalent enough to justify the invention of a new cultural institution for managing the distresses, the presenting symptom of which was labeled *hysteria*. The very antiquity of this term, while lending scientific weight to the fledgling discipline, fostered one of its most crippling misunderstandings. If the hysteria that Freud and his colleagues were treating was, as it seemed, the most ancient of all psychopathologies, then the assumption central to Freud's later Oedipal theories was plausible, namely, that the contemporary distresses were manifestations of *perennial* pathologies, and that there was nothing fundamentally *historical* about them, nothing conspicuously "modern" or "Western." Once one recognizes the historicity of the contemporary cultural and spiritual crisis, however, and its cultural and chronological coordinates, elements of Freudian theory – such as the Oedipus complex – regain a degree of pertinence, inasmuch as they can be seen, not as the continuation of perennial and universal sexual dramas, but as the social and psychological consequences of a widespread application of unsound anthropological assumptions, as the autonomous self's de facto declaration of bankruptcy and despair.

Turning interest away from the obvious mimetic features of these distresses and toward their supposed sexual origin was for Freud no easy task. Re-reading today passages in which he accomplished it, one senses how precarious this crucial Freudian maneuver really was, and how dependent his success was on the eager credulity of those intrigued by the sexual theories and sympathetic to what seemed the scientifically formidable challenge to religion which they seemed to constitute.[39]

Admitting to a "feeling of muffled hostility," to what he called the "tyranny of suggestion," Freud nevertheless had to admit, as he put it, that "suggestion (or more correctly suggestibility) is actually an irreducible, primitive phenomenon, a fundamental fact in the mental life of man."[40] He grudgingly conceded that "the riddle of suggestion" would have to be investigated further. In

doing so, however, he began with an assumption that decided the matter from the outset. "There is no doubt," he wrote, "that something exists *in* us which, when we become aware of signs of an emotion in someone else, tends to make us fall into the same emotion . . ."[41] Another inward turn, this time made in a conspicuous effort to avoid reckoning with mimetic phenomena uncongenial to both received theories and those purporting to replace them.

What Freud called the "riddle of suggestion" is the truth about the mimetic nature of desire breaking through the conceptual barriers built and repaired over centuries to keep it sequestered. But by assuming that symptoms of mimetic hyperactivity were due to something located *inside* the hysteric – in Cardinal Ratzinger's terms, something *in the psychic inventory* – Freud managed to turn away from the very mimetic reality that was declaring itself in his patients' symptoms. As Jean-Michel Oughourlian put it, "by hiding the Other *inside* the subject in the guise of the *unconscious*, Freud preserved and protected its autonomy."[42] Hysteria, hysterical identification, and suggestibility were all found to have fundamentally sexual origins. Childhood sexual trauma was their cause. Psychoanalysis was born, and the anthropological revelation with which we would eventually have to reckon was postponed for another hundred years. Freudian theory triumphed because, as Oughourlian puts it: "culture recognized in that new mythology the least harmful of disguises for the reality it wanted to keep hidden …"[43]

The plot thickens, and the clues proliferate. One reputed expert on hysteria at Salpetrière hospital where Freud and his mentor Jean Martin Charcot collaborated, Henri Legrand du Saulle, argued that Catholic female mystics were hysterics, including Joan of Arc, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, and Marie Alacoque. Freud's closest collaborator, Joseph Breuer, though of Teresa of Avila as the patron saint of hysterics. It is easy to see in this chink in the scientific façade an animus against Christian and especially Catholic sensibilities. But Breuer's hypothesis also calls attention to a convergence of mystical and hysterical phenomenon to which Henri de Lubac alluded when he spoke of how important it is to reach out to the "potential mystics, or *mystics in the primitive state*." For mystics may very well have a gift for mimesis that makes it easier for them, on one hand, to enter into an identification with Christ (the mystic), and, on the other, to be pulled this way and that by the unwelcome mimetic effect of those in their environment (the hysteric). There can be little doubt that those who are the most mimetically "gifted" have both a higher risk of hysteria and a corresponding greater potential for the kind of mimetic identification with Christ typically experienced by mystics and captured in Paul's "I live, now no longer I, but Christ lives in me."

In turning from the evidence of mimetic desire to his sexual theories, Freud failed to recognize both the true nature of desire and the true dynamics of the contemporary cultural and spiritual crisis. Today, René Girard has made it possible for us to recognize these things. Girard's cultural insights begin with an anthropologically convincing explanation of how the mimesis of desire sets in motion ever more vertiginous cycles of envy, jealousy, rivalry and violence. He shows how conventional culture was able to emerge from the ever-recurring crises to which mimetic entanglements lead by virtue of yet another form of mimesis, what we call "the mob phenomenon," which gave rise to the first rudimentary forms of social cohesion at the expense of the one on whom the new-found community's violence was eventually vented – scenes structurally identical to the one on Golgotha. But Girard has also and at the same time given an

anthropologically convincing account of what he calls "interdividuality," a term Paul might have used had it been available as he was composing this Galatian correspondence. Girard has shown that humans are always psychologically and emotionally constituted by the mimetic effects others have on them, as the model's desire awakens a replica of itself in the imitator. Intimations of this are found, not only in literary texts such as those which led Girard to his discoveries, but in the philosophical and theological traditions as well. "It is increasingly more evident," writes Gabriel Marcel, "that intersubjectivity is the cornerstone of a concrete ontology."[44] To which one would have to add that this cornerstone was the stone rejected by the original architects of modern psychological systems. Even where the theorists who came after them have approximated Girard's insights, their work lacks the anthropological rigor, hermeneutical audacity and Christological implications of Girard's thought. With his insight into mimetic desire Girard returns the cornerstone of intersubjectivity to its proper place, allowing us to recognize in the New Testament and in the lives of the saints a form of personhood that is distinctively Christian, supremely pertinent to the spiritual and psychological needs of our time, and all but invisible to those who accept as axiomatic either the myth of psychological autonomy or its postmodern inverse: psychological polyvalence, with its waning ontological density and "unbearable lightness of being."

The spiritual, psychological, and increasingly ontological predicament in which many – especially the young – are today living has been disturbingly captured by Kenneth Gergen and made all the more distressing by his effort to remain sanguine in the face of it. Like Freud, however, Gergen and a few of his postmodern contemporaries, provide an inestimable service by insightfully surveying social and psychological phenomena they have nevertheless analyzed so inadequately. The lived experience of the postmodern self, Gergen seems happy to announce, is *multiphrenia*. He writes:

> As one casts out to sea in the contemporary world, modernist moorings are slowly left behind. It becomes increasingly difficult to recall precisely to what core essence one must remain true. The ideal of authenticity frays about the edges; the meaning of sincerity slowly lapses into indeterminacy. And with this sea change, the guilt of self-violation also recedes. As the guilt and sense of superficiality recede from view, one is simultaneously readied for the emergence of a pastiche personality. The pastiche personality is a social chameleon, constantly borrowing bits and pieces of identity from whatever sources are available and constructing them as useful or desirable in a given situation.[45]

Like so many postmodern apologists, Mr. Gergen – having diagnosed a self-dissolution that coincides with the loss of Christian sources of hope – must try as best he can to remain cheerful. Now perfectly unencumbered by the modern quest for what de Lubac termed "static sincerity," the postmodern accommodates to his life as a de-centered "social chameleon," taking bits and pieces at random from the incessant parade of mimetic models to which he is exposed. "If one's identity is properly managed, the rewards can be substantial," Gergen strains to assure his readers: "the devotion of one's intimates, happy children, professional success, the achievement of community goals, personal popularity, and so on." All this is possible, he imagines, "if one avoids looking back to locate a true and enduring self, and simply acts to full potential in the

moment at hand." Avoiding this glance backward – the glance that might awaken that blissfully dormant "guilt of self-violation" and its accompanying "sense of superficiality" – is what another postmodern apologist, the indefatigable Norman O. Brown, calls "improvising a raft after shipwreck," the shoring up of fragments against one's ruin.

In his *Apocalypse and/or Metamorphosis* Professor Brown managed to sustain the hyperbolic prose and the erudite impudence for which his books in the 1960s were famous.[46] The result is one of the strangest and most candid paeans to the postmodern spiritual catastrophe extant, but one, like Gergen's, rich in anthropological insight massively misdiagnosed. Brown starts with a definition of psychological identification that might have been written by René Girard and adopted for use by the Church in the now urgent task of recovering a reinvigorated hagiographic catechesis. Psychological identity, Brown writes, is the "process whereby the subject assimilates an aspect, property or attribute of the other and is transformed, wholly or partially, after the model the other provides."[47] It is, in other words, "sympathy intensified to the point of reproduction" but within the permissible spectral range, whereas clinical hysteria is an involuntary and unwelcomed experience of mimetic influenced, warded off by a repertoire of strategies which comprise the disease symptomatology. But all that professor Brown can do with this immensely fruitful insight is to turn it into just another rough beast slouching toward the local mall or web browser to be fed and famished. Brown writes:

> "…It is by means of a series of identifications that the personality is constituted
> and specified." Trying to stay alive: it is always an emergency operation;
> "emergency after emergency of swift transformations."[48]

Those clinically diagnosed as hysterics in the late 19th and early 20th centuries inhabited societies more structured and less fluid than those of today. Individuals were expected to retain a higher degree of psychological continuity, and the failure to do so tended to draw more attention than the corresponding failure today, when identities morph far more routinely and arouse considerably less clinical scrutiny or social concern. The cultural institution that has facilitated this more psychologically fluid situation is the market. Just as there is something to be said for aspiring to a degree of social autonomy – it is necessary in order to resist the gravitational power of *collective* hysteria, the mob phenomenon – so there is something to be said for the collaborative construct of material need and mimetic desire, of social restlessness and psychological tenuousness, for which the market provides a venue and an outlet. The economic value of the market cannot be disputed, and its globalizing tendency, while problematic to some extent, may effect more long-term reconciliation between peoples and cultures than the transnational institutions explicitly dedicated to these things. As *Gaudium et spes* observed, however, "the progress of the human person and the advance of society itself hinge on one another," and in a world where market forces are congenial to the loss of both social and psychological cohesion, material improvements are accompanied by a spiritual pathos far less easy to measure or meliorate. Whereas the modern self was adapted to and fostered by the majoritarian voluntarism of a democratic polity, the disaggregated and atomized postmodern self is adapted to and shaped by the consumptive voluntarism most congenial to the now all-encompassing market, and ever at the mercy of the political and moral edicts that emanate from it. It may well be the case that it is the availability of the market – as the repository of desire and

the ritual arena where disappointed desires can be easily and quickly recycled into new desires –
that has caused clinical cases of hysteria to disappear into a sea of subclinical episodes. Had
those suffering from the ontological deprivations of late modernity and postmodernity not had
the market available to them these deprivations may well have manifested themselves more
explicitly as psychopathology. The market facilitates the routine and incremental forms of self-
transformation for which material acquisitions and their short-lived exhilarations function in
quasi-sacramental ways. The Christocentric anthropology, for which Girard's work provides
substantiation, would see the faux-sacramentality of the market as the spontaneous manifestation
of the human need for ecclesial sacramentality expressing itself impotently and in spiritually and
psychologically dubious ways.

The postmodern self is adrift on a roiling ocean of mimetic stimulation vastly more mesmerizing
than anything humans have ever known in the past, an incessant mimetic bombardment which
fractures the subject's psychological poise and diffuses his "ontological density." This amounts
to a spiritual invasion, against which the individual has little immunity. "From the one who has
not, even what he seems to have will be taken away" (Luke 8:18). To appreciate the scope and
significance of the routine ontological diminution of the Cartesian ego it is sometimes necessary
to see this diminution in high relief. There are abundant instances from which to choose, but for
our purposes here, the "waning of ontological density" suffered by the poet Sylvia Plath is
particularly instructive, for Plath was a gifted woman who – like the model she emulated,
Virginia Woolf – gave an account of her sufferings that belie the cheery optimism of Gergen,
Brown and others. "I am afraid," she wrote, "I am not solid, but hollow."

> I feel behind my eyes a numb, paralyzed cavern, a pit of hell, a mimicking
> nothingness. … There is nowhere to go – not home, where I would blubber and
> cry, a grotesque fool, into my mother's skirts – not to men, where I want more
> than ever now their stern, final, paternal directive – not to church, which is liberal,
> free – no, I turn wearily to the totalitarian dictatorship where I am absolved of all
> personal responsibility and can sacrifice myself in a "splurge of altruism" on the
> altar of the Cause with a capital "C."[49]

Herein lies a clue to an unanalyzed link between the psychological, spiritual, and ontological
distresses of the 19th and 20th centuries and the passionate political ideologies contemporary with
them that laid waste the world in a "splurge of altruism," sacrificing millions "on the altar of the
Cause with a capital 'C'." On the other hand, of course, nothing could be more obviously a
parody of the Christian vocation than such a palpable longing for self-donation – with a capital
"C."

The Christocentric anthropology to which Girard's work lends scholarly credence and analytical
rigor gives fresh meaning and specificity to the biblical notion that we are made in the image and
likeness of our Creator, inasmuch as it accounts for that fact that our one irreducible impulse is to
replicate the desire – the "will" – of an Other, an impulse, however, which is fickle in the
extreme. "Our heart is restless until it rests in Thee." The spiritual and historical turmoil born of
mimetic desire is such that it finally takes nothing less than the Incarnation to save us from it.
But Christ doesn't propose the renunciation of mimetic desire, quite the contrary, he coaxes it

into greater intensity and turns it, via his own historically singular and unforgettable example, toward its true Object. Christ is "the icon of the Living God," through whose mediation we are able imitate the One in whose image and likeness we are fashioned, which is ultimately what we long most to do. "My yoke is easy, my burden light."

Today, psychotherapeutic theories that fail to address the mimetic predicament Girard has explicated continue to grope for some approximation of it in an effort to account for the avalanche of psychological symptoms which they strive to ameliorate. Discussion of the "other" in all areas of the social sciences has become *de rigueur*, but the psychological, cultural and religious ramifications of mimetic desire have yet to be fully recognized by either psychological practitioners or, more importantly, the Church. Recognizing these things can and should be of special concern to those interested in fulfilling the promise of the last Council, for coming to grips with the anthropological fact of mimesis is destined to contribute to a fresh and exciting rediscovery of the fundamental mysteries of our faith, including the Trinitarian truth about God, the ontological meaning of discipleship and the unique intersubjective nature of Christian personhood.

A Christian is someone whose understanding of the mystery of life and the nature of his own existence has been *decisively* reconfigured by the truth which he has found in Christ. "By revealing the Father and by being revealed by him," writes Henri de Lubac, anticipating what was to become the anthropological touchstone of Vatican II, "Christ completes the revelation of man to himself."[50] If it were possible to acquire the truth which Christians have by faith in any other way, then the Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection would be superfluous, or at most reduced to an optional source of a truth which might, in time, have been discovered otherwise. If, as the Second Vatican Council affirmed, however, "only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light,"[51] then it would be odd indeed if those living in the light of that mystery were to understand themselves in terms indistinguishable from how a non-Christian might. And yet, today most Christians use terms such as "self," "individual," "psyche," and "person" interchangeably, assuming that they refer equally well to a Christian's subjective experience as to a non-Christian's. The triumph of the Cartesian *cogito* over the Christian *imitatio* is such, however, that many Christians regard their faith propositionally rather than ontologically. The two are obviously related, but the latter of the two cries out today for further explication and exploration.

It is true, of course, that the moral privilege the "individual" enjoys in Western culture is itself a product of the New Testament influence, inasmuch as it is a secular expression of the Gospel's revelation of the moral superiority of the victim over the victimizing crowd. The Passion story in the Gospel cannot but encourage a dis-identification with violent forms of social contagion, which is to say: episodes of collective hysteria. But the West's canonization of the autonomous self – eclipsing the theologically rich and psychologically sound notion of the "person" – has been a serious anthropological mistake. Just as the false anthropology of conventional culture is rooted in an unrecognized episode of *collective* hysteria, which forges social identities via violence, so the false anthropology of the self is rooted in subtle rituals of dis-identification which, when exaggerated and made explicit, constitute a sub-clinical – and eventually clinical – forms of *individual* hysteria.

Like "the truth of the victim," the truth of the person is one on which the Gospel throws an utterly unique light. This latter Gospel truth overtakes recalcitrant humanity with the same historical persistence as does the former one. As evidence of the intersubjective nature and self-donating meaning of personal existence mounts, efforts to ignore it grow progressively more difficult and necessarily more ingenious. So obvious had this unwanted truth become by the late 19th century that perhaps nothing less than a sexually titillating psychological theory could have deflected attention from it, and even this maneuver served only to postpone the day of reckoning, which is now upon us.

The notion of the person, as it took shape in European cultures, involved the convergence of a number of influences, Christian efforts to understand the Second "Person" of the Trinity among them. But its etymological history begins earlier. Its most remote appearance occurs in connection with ancient Etruscan ritual, as that religious ritual was beginning to evolve into performance drama. The ritual veneration of the goddess Persephone required a liturgical performer to *speak through a mask* of the goddess – masks originally serving to amplify the actor's voice. The term used for the mask of Persephone was derived from the goddess's name: *phersu*. The Etruscans influenced Roman theater, and the Romans, in adopting the Etruscan term, fused it with the Latin verb for "speaking through" – the verb: *personare*, the noun form of which is *persona*. So the term for mask came into Roman usage as *persona*, which at first indicated the actor's mask, but eventually came to be used to refer to any *personage* playing a role, whether on stage or in cultural life.

The Greeks, for their part, used the word *prosopon* for the mask the actor wore on stage, and it was also via this reference to the actor wearing a mask that the Greek idea of the person first appears, suggesting, some have thought, an intriguing affinity between these two concepts: mask and person, and inspiring John Zizioulas to wonder:

> . . . it is here that (by coincidence?) the term "person" (*prosopon*) appears in ancient Greek usage. . . . But how and why did this meaning come to be identified so quickly with the mask (*prosopeion*) which was used in the theater? What connection does the actor's mask have with the human person?[52]

"It is precisely in the theater that man strives to become a 'person'", writes Zizioulas.[53] In "speaking through" the mask of another, the actor dispossesses himself of his "own self" in order to be possessed by the other. "I live, now no longer I, but … Persephone or Creon or Iphigenia lives (temporarily) in me." As a result of his mask, says Zizioulas:

> . . . the actor, but properly also the spectator – has acquired a certain taste of freedom, a certain specific 'hypostasis,' a certain identity, which the rational and moral harmony of the world in which he lives denies him. . . . as a result of the mask he has become a person, albeit for a brief period, and has learned what it is to exist as a free, unique and unrepeatable entity.[54]

Of course, the *hypostasis* the actor is able to briefly experience figured decisively in the development of both the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. The

fourth century controversies which led to these doctrines were finally resolved by what Zizioulas calls "a philosophical landmark, a revolution in Greek philosophy,"[55] a revolution which consisted of recognizing the *hypostatic* underpinnings of the *persona*. In pondering the mystery of the Christ, the early Council fathers – anticipating a 20th century Council's insistence that "only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light" – were compelled by the mystery of the incarnate Word to discover the *hypostatic* mystery of personhood itself, a discovery which, in the words of Dennis Edwards, "gave a radically new weight to the idea of person."[56] "The revolution of the person," writes Paul Evdokimov, "is *the* event of Christianity," and human desire is simply "the inborn nostalgia to become a 'person'."[57]

The *person*, in the original Christian sense of the term, is always sacramental, while the *self*, the secular simulation of the person, is inevitably "sacrificial" – in the crude anthropological sense. For the defining claim of a self is self-sufficiency – that one is a self-constituting agent – a claim which always requires that the truth about mimetic influence – if not the mimetic model himself – be "sacrificed." While a self claims to have a will of its own, the "person" in the full Christian sense submits his own will to the will of Another. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." "Not my will, but Thine be done." The person, as Christianity understands the term, is never the one who comes in his own name, even though "this world" would be far more predisposed to accept him if he did.

Christian conversion is indistinguishable from the mission to which the Christian is called by his conversion. The mission to which Christians are called, as von Balthasar reminds us, is "exactly congruent with their intelligible I."[58] Christian personhood is inseparable from the "role" a Christian is assigned in the drama of salvation history, a drama of which no Christian is permitted to become a mere spectator, lest he be robbed of his true Christian identity and vocation. Whatever the role in the drama might be, if it is authentic, it will be fundamentally paschal and eucharistic, that is to say, its sustaining imperative isn't self-realization but self-donation. "Vicariousness is not something esoteric," writes Lucien Richard, "rather, it is the fundamental principle of all personal life."[59]

Nor is the uniquely Christian form of personhood to be regarded as a concession to a regrettable mimetic propensity in fallen creatures, for Jesus' own personhood was as defined by his Trinitarian consubstantiality as Christian personhood is defined by the *Imitatio Christi*. In John's Gospel, Jesus says: "The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me." (John 14:10-11) This is God's Incarnate Word, in whose image and likeness humans are made, revealing the intersubjective mystery of personhood – the Personhood of God no less than the personhood to which humanity has access in Christ. Unique as it is, Christ's intimacy with the Father was "not something to be grasped at," rather it is something he offers freely to others, so that, as Paul says "we might receive adoption as children," an adoption that comes about when God sends "the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (Gal 4:6) And so each of the "Persons" of the Trinity plays a "role" in the gift of personhood to humanity. The Gospel evokes at the most profound level precisely the Trinitarian "interdividuality" whose anthropological validity Girard has explicated and whose theological and hagiographic implications we now have the tools to explicate. Once again, what is unique about Christian

personhood has been supremely summed up by Saint Paul: "I live, now no longer I, but Christ lives in me." (Gal 2:20). The practical psychological implications of these scriptural passages, and many others like them, have not been adequately mined for the light they shed on the human dilemma generally and our contemporary psychological distress specifically, and it is now time to do so.

The personal encounter with Christ, writes John Paul II in his recent encyclical *The Rapid Development*, "does not leave one indifferent, but stimulates imitation." Becoming docile – as little children – to the divine form is the ongoing task of Christian conversion. It costs not less than everything and takes not less that a lifetime. As Kevin Mongrain succinctly noted in his review of von Balthasar's reprise of Irenaeus. Humans, he wrote, "need time to become accustomed to being indwelt by God."[60] Which leads, finally, the following concluding reflection:

In light of the etymological and historical affinity between the *actor* and the *person*, perhaps it is worth remembering that the man who was to become an icon of Christian faith, morally dominating the "world stage" at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, even while succumbing to age and infirmity – and whose first important book was entitled *The Acting Person* – was an actor, playwright, and director as a young man. To echo Zizioulas, is this mere coincidence? There is, Gabriel Marcel reminds us, a passage in scripture which can apply to the actor on the stage, namely, "Ye are not your own." The actor, Marcel says, "can only find himself if he is prepared to lose himself. Thus, pursuing his vocation, he can provide us, through his unusual life, with a metaphor of human life as it aims toward its supernatural goal."[61]

Even more to the point of the present reflection is Hermann Bahr's suggestion that the actor "presents us directly with the ultimate mystery of human nature," but that what the actor represents "is the absolute opposite of all hysteria."[62] In contrast to the "individual" and the hysteric (who is an individual whose private rituals of dis-identification remain within permissible subclinical spectral limits), the actor willingly (if temporarily) identifies with the other and subordinates himself in accord with his professional responsibilities – becoming in this regard like the "little child" in the Gospel, who, by humbling himself, becomes a dramatis persona in a kingdom not entirely of this world.   To subordinate oneself with the same attentiveness and self-abandonment to the One who is referred to in the Letter to the Hebrews as the "icon of the living God" – is to enter the company of the Christian mystics. One's *Imitatio Christi* would in this case consist of imitating the *single* defining desire of Jesus, which was simply to do the will of his heavenly Father. Inasmuch as the Father calls us each by name, the Father's will for each of us is utterly unique. So, in sharp contrast to all other forms of mimetic subordination, the *Imitatio Christi* leads, not to hackneyed sameness, but to utter uniqueness.

As the truth about the mimetic nature of human subjectivity continues to undergo its gradual paracletic self-disclosure, claims of autonomy will confront mounting evidence of their implausibility. We will gradually come to realize that, as Paul Evdokimov put it, "man can make of himself an 'icon of God,' or he can become a demonical grimace, an ape of God."[63] Or, as René Girard has put it:

Both Jesus and Satan are teachers of imitation and imitators themselves, imitators of God the Father. This means that human beings always imitate God, either through Jesus or through Satan. They seek God indirectly through the human models they imitate.[64]

To be made in the image and likeness of God is to be a creature innately predisposed to imitate the God in whose image and likeness one has been formed, and to do so through the *immediate* mediation of Christ – "the icon of God's very being" (Heb. 1:3) – or the proximate mediation of the saints, Christ, as it were, in silhouette. Kenneth Schmitz reminds us that our task as Christians is "to transmute the metal of self by a kind of spiritual alchemy into the gold of personhood …." But then he wonders, wistfully perhaps, "Can such a call to spiritual personhood be made today in such a way that it might be heard?"[65] If Evdokimov is right about the revolution of the person being *the* event of Christianity, and about desire being an inborn longing to become a person, then there is no more urgent question than the one Schmitz asks. Can the call to personhood be made today so as to be heard? The answer is yes, and in my view the way to make it and to make it intelligible is to show how anthropologically sound – and how spiritually and psychologically gratifying – is the uniquely Christian understanding of the person, the person as seen in the light of a Christocentric anthropology. In recovering the mystery of the person thus understood, the anthropological insights of René Girard are simply indispensable.

One of the greatest and least explicated insights of the *Gaudium et spes* was that the justice for which the biblical tradition longs and labors, and which the Council fathers invoked so fervently, has an anthropological dimension. It is neither a solely political nor primarily economic matter; rather, it is a matter of the intrinsic dignity and perduring meaning of the life of every human being from the moment of conception to natural death. A robust understanding of the irreducible value of the human person will always be the secret source of any sustainable improvements in political liberty and economic justice. Today the Catholic Church is the only spiritual force in the world with the theological and anthropological resources to plead coherently for the restoration of personal dignity, and the moral authority to commend its vision of the meaning of human personhood to a world reeling from the disintegration of its modern and postmodern facsimiles.

The Church – the Body of Christ – exists to be the sacramental-doxological extension of the Incarnation of Christ in history. As such, she must strive to make manifest the attractiveness of Christ – "the glory of the Lord" – felt so palpably by those who encountered Christ in his lifetime.

> The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. (John 1:35-37)

> Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have

> found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). Then he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Kephas" (which is translated Peter). (John 1:40-42)

> Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me everything I have done." (John 4:39)

John the Baptist, Andrew, and the Samaritan woman at the well served as mediators of Christ in the world in which they lived. This is the essence of the Christian vocation. The task of awakening the world to the attractiveness of Christ is most authentically carried out by those who live lives of holiness, by saints. The health of the Church and the degree she is fulfilling her missionary and evangelical commission will always best be determined by how many saints she has raised up like beacons in an otherwise lost and floundering world. As John Paul II has never tired of reminding us, there is nothing more important than our universal call to holiness, not only for the individuals who approximate it but for the Church at large and the world itself. Christ's own attractiveness – the mimetic power he had on those open to it – exists in those who, however inadequately, can say, with Paul, "I live, now no longer I, but Christ lives in me." Thus the contagiousness of Christ-in-person continues in the persons in whom Christ lives. René Girard's work provides the anthropologically cogent tools for understanding the importance of hagiography in the Church's mission to the world. For we are called to approximate as best we can the Christocentric attractiveness of Christ so that we might mediate to others the faith and grace that has come to us from the apostles and that has been passed along primarily by the catechesis of holiness. The role of the saint in the life of the Church is to awaken in others the desire to live the Christ-like life that is the ultimate fulfillment of the human vocation as such. Thus the saint is the only brush with which the Church paints in lasting colors; all else fades, it mercies meliorating at best. It is not to argue against meliorating to urge that in its interest the Church's chief task not be neglected.

While she shares with other cultural institutions her commitment to political and economic justice, the Church's sacramental obligations are uniquely her own. These obligations must never be subordinated, therefore, to more worldly responsibilities, however legitimate these may be. As urgent as it is to provide political protection and economic security to those suffering from injustice, and as practicable to this purpose as the vocabulary of autonomy and individual rights might be, the justice the Church seeks begins with the person rightly understood. The new humanity the Church has been commissioned to foster involves a new form of subjectivity, that which was fully enfleshed in Christ and limned in the lives of the saints which the Church raises up as models of the Christ-likeness that fulfills the deepest longing of every human heart. The Church alone has the tools – ancient and recently acquired – for the recapitulation of the human person for which John Paul II called in his early writings. With these tools at her disposal, the Church can offer an account of the mystery of the person that is both anthropologically sound and Christologically grounded. There is hardly a more urgent task, nor one more faithful to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, nor more worthy of the joy and hope with which *Gaudium et spes* is suffused.

[1] Denise Levertov, "On a Theme by Thomas Merton," *The Stream & the Saphire*, (New York: New Directions Books, 1997), 17.

[2] Letter to Henri de Lubac; quoted: Matthew Rose, "Things Fall Apart: John Lukacs reads the signs of the times," *The Weekly Standard*, June 17, 2002.

[3] Romano Guardini, *The End of the Modern World*, translated by Joseph Theman and Herbert Burke, (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956), 122.

[4] Glenn W. Olsen, "The Role of Religion in the Twenty-first Century," *Communio: International Catholic Review*, Vol. XXXI, Number 2, Summer 2004, 303.

[5] Simone Weil, *Two Moral Essays*, Ed. Ronald Hathaway, (Wallingford, PA, Pendle Hill Publications, Pamphlet 240), 16.

[6] Evangelium Vitae, 18.

[7] Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "Concerning the notion of person in theology," *Communio* 17 (Fall, 1990), 449.

[8] Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "Concerning the notion of person in theology," *Communio* 17 (Fall, 1990), 439.

[9] Johann Baptist Metz, *The Emergent Church*, (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 42.

[10] Romano Guardini, *The End of the Modern World*, 125.

[11] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The von Balthasar Reader*, Ed. Medard Kehland, Werner Löser, (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1997), 383.

[12] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Prayer*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 261.

[13] Phillip Cary: Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 35.

[14] Karl Rahner, *On the Theology of Death*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962), 28.

[15] Kenneth L. Schmitz, 'The geography of the human person,' *Communio 13* (Spring, 1986), 39.

[16] Phillip Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 103.

[17] Mark A. McIntosh, *Mystical Theology*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 74-75, my emphasis.

[18] René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy: Meditation I*, 12, The Classical Library, HTML edition, 2001: http://www.classicallibrary.org/descartes/meditations/4.htm

[19] René Descartes, *Discourse on Method and The Meditations*, trans. F. E. Sutcliffe (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), 35.

[20] Maurice Nédoncelle, *The Nature and Use of Prayer*, 181,

[21] *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdock, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1:14; quoted: Michael Allen Gillespie, *Nihilism before Nietzsche*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 35.

[22] *Ibid.*, 36.

[23] Quoted: Paul Zweig, *The Heresy of Self-Love: A Study in Subversive Individualism*, (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 121.

[24] Henri de Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 119-120.

[25] William Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, (London: Macmillan, 1940), 57.

[26] Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions*, trans. J. M. Cohen, (London, Penguin, 1953), 17.

[27] Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *The Confessions*, Translated by J. M. Cohen, (London, Penguin, 1953), p. 22.

[28] Kenneth L. Schmitz, "Selves and persons: A Difference in loves?," *Communio 18* (Summer, 1991), p. 185.

[29] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Translated by Peter France, (London, Penguin, 1979), 100.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[31] Wittels, Fritz, *Freud and His Times*, (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1931), 238.

[32] Quoted: *The Portable Nietzsche*, edited and translated by Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Viking Press, 1979), 104.

[33] David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 134.

[34] Sexual liberationists may have played fast and loose with the orthodox Freudian thought, but it was that thought that inspired such things. Whatever their intellectual betrayals, they remained faithful to the Freudian spirit. The betrayal in any case was comparable to German National Socialism's misconstruals of Nietzsche, and in neither case can the original thinker be entirely exonerated.

[35] Mark S. Micale, *Approaching Hysteria: Disease and Its Interpretations*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 56-7.

[36] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Quoted: Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject*, (Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 50.

[37] *Ibid.*, 113.

[38] Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, translated by James Strachey, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964), p. 81.

[39] "It is on the subject of religion," writes Philip Rieff, "that the judicious clinician grows vehement and disputatious. … Freud's customary detachment fails him here. Confronting religion, psychoanalysis shows itself for what it is: the last great formulation of nineteenth century secularism." *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist*, (Garden City, New Jersey: Doubleday, 1961), 281. Mark Micale makes the same point when he writes: "nineteenth-century commentators most often conceptualized [the diagnosis of hysteria] as a battle between science and religion." *Approaching Hysteria*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 34.

[40] Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, translated and edited by James Strachey, (New York, W. W. Norton, 1989), p. 27.

[41] *Ibid*., p. 27, my emphasis.

[42] Jean-Michel Oughourlian, *The Puppet of Desire*, Translated by Eugene Webb, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 151.

[43] *Ibid*. p. 159.

[44] Gabriel Marcel, *The Mystery of Being II*, p. 170.

[45] Kenneth J. Gergen, *The Saturated Self*, (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 150.

[46] It is striking to notice how often the tropes and metaphors Brown employs converge with those of Kenneth Gergen, their images of turbulent seas, shipwrecks and survival strategies most conspicuously.

[47] Norman O. Brown, *Apocalypse and/or Metamorphosis*, (Berkeley, University of California, 1991), 159.

[48] *Ibid*.

[49] *The Journals of Sylvia Plath*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), 59-60.

[50] Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, trans. Lancelot Sheppard and Sister Elizabeth Englund, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), p. 339.

[51] *Gaudium et Spes*, #22.

[52] John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, (Crestwood, N.J.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 31.

[53] *Ibid*., 32.

[54] *Ibid*., 33.

[55] *Ibid*., 36.

[56] Denis Edwards, "Personal Symbol of Communion," from *The Spirituality of the Diocesan Priest*, Donald B. Cozzens, Editor, (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997): p. 77.

[57] Paul Evdokimov, *The Sacrament of Love*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 53.

[58] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The von Balthasar Reader*, (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1997), 343.

[59] Lucien Richard, *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 176.

[60] Kevin Mongrain, *The Systematic Thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, (New York: Herder & Herder, 2002), 41.

[61] Gabriel Marcel, 'Reflexions sur les exigencs d'un theatre chrétien', in *La vie intellectuelle* (March 25, 1937); quoted: Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory, I: Prologomena*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 10n.

[62] Quoted: Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory, I: Prologomena*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 10-11n.

[63] Paul Evdokimov, *The Sacrament of Love*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 57.

[64] René Girard, 'The Question of Anti-semitism in the Gospels,' *The Girard Reader*, ed. James Williams, (New York:; Crossroad Publishing, 1996), 215.

[65] Kenneth L. Schmitz, 'The geography of the human person,' *Communio 13* (Spring, 1986), 203, 204.