TEILHARD DE CHARDIN: ONTOGENESIS
VS. ONTOLOGY

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A LTHOUGH TEILHARD de Chardin's intention in his scientific works is decidedly not metaphysical, the metaphysical implications of his evolutionary cosmology are numerous. It seems important to extract these elements and render them explicit. Such an explication promises to offer further clarification of the Teilhardian synthesis, to open new areas of exploration for both philosophers and scientists, and to extricate the covert philosophical complexities subtly woven into his phenomenology.

Jean Daniélou pointedly asserts that, while Teilhard remains true to the scholastic philosophy of the Church with which he was thoroughly imbued, he offers a unique perspective in his modernization of anachronistic philosophical categories.[1] Indeed, a close reading of Teilhard's works exposes the perceptive reader to a fresh outlook on old questions. Beneath many of Teilhard's ostensibly scientific arguments and elucidations, the metaphysical struggles to be freed from its prison of overt empiricism.[2]

Cognizant of the law of complexity consciousness, which explains the gradual appearance of self-reflective being in the universe, and of the Teilhardian position on the primacy of psychic energy in the cosmos, which accounts for the phenomenon of consciousness, this article will extract Teilhard's metaphysics from his evolutionary cosmology. It will compare and contrast his "ontogenesis" with the ontology of Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, and Meister Eckhart. Thus the article will demonstrate the manner in which Teilhardian metaphysics both parallels and furthers the classical metaphysical tradition.

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[1] Jean Daniélou, "Signification de Teilhard de Chardin," *Etudes* 312 (February 1962) 145–61, at 148. – Works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin will be cited, whenever possible, according to the volume of the collected *Oeuvres de Teilhard de Chardin* [hereafter: Oeuvres] (13 volumes; Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1955–1976), followed by a reference to the English translation.

[2] N. M. Wildiers, "Avant-Propos," in *L'Energie humaine* [hereafter: *Energie*] (Oeuvres 6; 1962) 11–17, at 14–15; Eng. trans. J. M. Cohen, *Human Energy* [hereafter: *HE*] (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1969) 9–16, at 13, 15–16. See Daniélou, "Signification" 147, 149.

TEILHARDIAN METAPHYSICS: "INTELLIGERE" VS. "IPSUM ESSE"

Teilhard believes that Divine Psychic Energy is primordial in the cosmos and that therefore God is, to use the classical term, *intelligere* or, in Teilhard's words, Divine Thought, Mind, Consciousness, Awareness. This definition of God further refines, clarifies, and focuses the Thomistic definition of God as *ipsum esse*. God—for Teilhard, the Omega Point on which all must converge—is "an ultimate and self-subsistent pole of consciousness."[3] Throughout his writings, Teilhard insists that the more centered an entity proves to be, the more conscious it is. God, the ultimate center and most perfectly centered Being in the universe, is, by virtue of that centeredness, the most conscious of Beings. This God of evolution is an "ultra-pole of personal energy" who actively influences creation through "radiations" which are "psychic in nature."[4] As God who is "head" of creation, Christ is he in whom the "fundamental process of cephalisation culminates and is completed."[5]

In Augustinian fashion, extrapolations from Teilhardian thought indicate that it is in the image of the Divine Mind that humans are made. As God is the supreme center of consciousness, the Absolute Being who exists in trinitarian relationship, so the human is a created center of consciousness, a participated being, who is made to exist in relationship—relationship(s) based upon the interrelated nature of consciousness. Human beings establish relationships through psychic bonding, therefore, by utilizing psychic energy.

It is a principle derived from general experience that every being acts on its environment through the totality of its self. This means, quite simply, that biological lines of force are inevitably established between living elements—intellectual lines of force between thinking elements—and so on.[6]

Because God is the supreme center of consciousness, Teilhard believes that God influences the human elements through "a certain radiation,

[3] Pierre Tielhard de Chardin, "Comment je vois" (1948), in *Les Directions de l'avenir* [hereafter: *Directions*] (Oeuvres 11; 1973) 177–223, at 200; Eng. trans. René Hague, *Toward the Future* [hereafter: *TF*] (New York/London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973) 163–208, at 185. See also his "Super-humanité–Super-Christ–Super-charité" (1943), in *Science et Christ* [hereafter *Science*] (Oeuvres 9; 1965) 193–218, at 208; Eng. trans. René Hague, *Science and Christ* [hereafter: *SC*] (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) 151–173, at 163. And further "La Grande option" (1939), in *L'Avenir de l'homme* [hereafter: *Avenir*] (Oeuvres 5; 1956) 55–81, at 76; Eng. trans. Norman Denny, *The Future of Man* [hereafter: *FM*] (New York: Harper & Row, 1964) 39–63, at 58.

[4] "Comment je vois," in *Directions* 204; *TF* 189.

[5] "Super-humanité," in *Science* 211; *SC* 167.

[6] "Comment je vois," in *Directions* 203–04; *TF* 189.

psychic in nature."[7] God is the "ultra-pole of psychic energy."[8] It is thus the energy of mind, of consciousness, of self-awareness, that opens the lines of communication among men and women and between the individual human person and God.

Teilhard's ontogenesis finds logical expression in his concept of psychogenesis as it becomes observable in the biological law of increasing centro-complexity consciousness. As subatomic particles complexify to become the primary building blocks of life, psychic energy centrifies and leads nonreflective life to thought. Teilhard explains and maintains that the evolutionary story of the cosmos is the unfolding history of the genesis of mind: cosmogenesis becoming anthropogenesis resulting in psychogenesis. His evolutionary phenomenology traces the gradual increase of consciousness as it emerges in proportion to increasing biological and physical complexity.

Incipient consciousness exists from time's beginning and emerges gradually as both the driving force and ultimate goal of evolution.[9] It is the energy of divine consciousness which conceives, impels, and continues the creation of the cosmos. "Universal energy," he insists, "must be a thinking energy."[10] For Teilhard, God is more than *ipsum esse subsistens*. God is supreme, centered intelligence. Divine psychic energy is primordial in the cosmos and human psychic energy is the greatest testimony to this as the primary reality.

Metaphysics of "Unire" vs. Metaphysics of "Esse"

In a 1948 essay, "Comment je vois," Teilhard dares to tender a novel metaphysics of union. The priest/scientist maintains that God exists by uniting himself. Whereas classical metaphysics begins with the primordiality of being, Teilhardian metaphysics rests upon the primordiality of union.[11] Being is a consequence of union; union constitutes being. To be is to be united. Using a concept drawn from physics,

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[7] Ibid. 204; *TF* 189.   [8] Ibid.

[9] Teilhard de Chardin, "Le Centrologie" (1944), in *L'Activation de l'énergie* [hereafter: *Activation*] (Oeuvres 7; 1963) 103–34; Eng. trans. René Hague, *Activation of Energie* [hereafter *AE*] (New York/London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1963) 97–127.

[10] "L'Esprit de la terre" (1931), in *Energie* 23–57, at 54–55; *HE* 19–47, at 45.

[11] "Comment je vois," in *Directions* 207–08; *TF* 193–94. See also his "L'Union créatrice" (1917), in *Ecrits du temps de la guerre (1916–1919)* [hereafter: *Ecrits*] (Oeuvres 12, 1976) 192–224, at 201; Eng. trans. René Hague, *Writings in Time of War* [hereafter: *WTW*] (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) 151–76, at 156. "Union, we must remember, does more than transform things and add to them. It produces. Every new union to be effected increases the absolute quantity of being existing in the universe" (ibid. 209; *WTW* 163).

Teilhard maintains that just as it is impossible to separate a moving body from its act of motion, so in a metaphysics of *unire* the act of union cannot be separated from the fact of being.[12] According to Teilhard, being cannot be defined in isolation, but only in relationship to that which is constitutive to its reality. Being, therefore, can only be understood in conjunction with its act of unification. As motion constitutes the reality of the moving body, union constitutes the reality of being.

The concept of union, the act of unification, immediately implies energy, movement, dynamism, activity. God is an infinite center of dynamic energy. *Ipsum esse,* in Thomistic understanding, is being itself. God is his own act of existence. Simply, God is be-ing—God *is.*[13] What is intrinsic to God's act of existence, to God's be-ing? Teilhard conjectures it is that God unites. First, God unites himself and then God unites the multiple to himself through a gradual incorporation of smaller units of complexity into larger units of increasingly centered complexity which reflect higher and higher degrees of psychic energy or consciousness.

Teilhard suggests that *being* and *union* be considered as "forming a natural pair, the two terms of which, while each equally primordial and fundamentally irreducible, are nevertheless ontologically inseparable (like the two surfaces of one and the same plane) and constrained to vary simultaneously in the same direction."[14] In an example Teilhard draws from physics, it becomes obvious that he considers union or the act of unifying as prior to and requisite for being. "And by analogy with what happens in physics, where, as we now know, acceleration creates mass: which means that the moving object is *posterior* to motion."[15]

Teilhard is not suggesting, then, that being is united from some preexisting "matter." Rather, it seems, in terms of his entire system of thought, that he considers union to be prerequisite to being—just as trinitization precedes the posited existence of a "creatable nil" which exists at the pole opposite from it.[16] His articulation of a metaphysics

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[12] "Contingence de l'univers et goût humain de survivre" (1935), in *Comment je crois* (Oeuvres 10; 1969) 263–72, at 271 n.; Eng. trans. René Hague, *Christianity and Evolution* [hereafter: *CE*] (New York/London: Harper, Brace, Jovanovich, 1969) 221–28, at 227 n.

[13] *Summa theologiae* 1, q. 3, a. 4 and 1, q. 13, a. 11; Frederick Copleston, *Aquinas* (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin, 1955) 140–41.

[14] "Comment je vois," in *Directions* 222; *TF* 207–08.

[15] "Contingence de l'universe," in *Comment je crois* 271 n.; *CE* 227 n.

[16] "Nevertheless, on two later occasions, he attempted to preserve his 'metaphysics of union' by seeking, not to reduce *esse* to *unire* or *uniri,* or to identify the two notions, but

of *unire* seems, in fact, to safeguard the definition of God as "Pure Act," for the pure act, which is unification, precedes and engenders "potency" for being which results, as a consequence of the "Pure Act," in finite being. The multiple, matter (or perhaps more philosophically correct, essence) in a state of total disunity and non-being cannot exist unless the act of unification brings it into being.[17]

It is on this basis that Teilhard suggests a movement away from the metaphysics of *esse* to one of *unire*.[18] *Unire*, to unite, suggests action, work, energy. It fits well with his definition of God as Divine Psychic Energy. If God is Pure Act, then God is always in motion, always engaged in the act of creating. Such activity presupposes thought, and, is therefore, commensurate with the Teilhardian definition of God as a dynamic center of personal, psychic energy. It is this basic understanding of God that the metaphysics of *unire* captures.

The Metaphysics of "Unire" and the Analogy of Being

To understand clearly the dialectic operative in Teilhard's metaphysics, one must be aware of the limitations imposed by the then current interpretation of Thomas Aquinas's teaching on analogy which undergirded Teilhard's critique of the Thomistic doctrine of *esse*. Beginning in 1939, a new understanding of Aquinas's use of the doctrine of participating being began to emerge.[19] Until the 1960s and 1970s, it was generally held that the central analogy used by Thomas to explain and to explore the ontological relationship between God and creatures was the analogy of proper proportionality.[20] George Klubertanz indicates that, in fact, Aquinas only favored this analogy for a brief period in 1256.[21] A clear understanding of Thomas' use of analogy eluded philosophers because, although he employs analogy consistently, there

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rather to see them as 'forming a natural couple'. He could then widen his field of observation again and vindicate the classic teaching on God who, subsisting in himself, is self-sufficing, by a first sense in which the equation affirmed between *esse* and *unire* can be read. To be is in the first place in some way to unite oneself, without there being any question in this case of a reduction of the multiple to unity. Such is the being of God, considered in the unity of the three Persons" (Henri de Lubac, *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin,* trans. René Hague [New York: Desclée, 1967] 199).

[17] "La Lutte contre la multitude" (1917), in *Ecrits* 129–52, at 131–35; *WTW* 94–98.

[18] For a critique of Teilhard's "assimilation of the 'mobile-movement couple' to that of the 'unified-multiple' couple," see de Lubac, *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin* 199–200.

[19] W. Norris Clarke, *Philosophical Approach to God* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Wake Forest Univ., 1979) 45.

[20] Ibid. 50.

[21] George P. Klubertanz, S. J., *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy* (Chicago: Loyola Univ., 1960) 94.

are no "key texts" which explicitly define his use of analogy.[22] In order to extricate the theory, one must extrapolate the meanings which are implied and/or discussed in each of the texts in which analogy is used.[23]

In Teilhard's day such an analysis had not yet been accomplished. Therefore, he understands Aquinas's ontology only in terms of the analogy of proper proportionality, which is the reason he finds the Thomistic analogy of being unsatisfactory. To compensate for the limitations of Thomistic metaphysics, Teilhard chooses those scientific analogies which for him best express the relationship between God and the world.[24] To think in the manner of the physicist is to focus on the similarities, not the differences, between the terms of each pair. Thus scientific analogies become the models which Teilhard uses to define *ens a se* and participated being in terms of their similarities rather than their differences.

AQUINAS: METAPHYSICS OF "ESSE"

The modern understanding of Thomistic metaphysics may help to clarify the questions raised by Teilhard in his attempts to define the relationship between God and the world. In his doctrine of participating being, Thomas draws a distinction between essence and existence. While God is the cause of his own existence, since his essence is his act of existence, in created beings essence and the act of existence are distinct. "That a thing is," its existence, differs from "what a thing is," its essence.[25] Essence is the potentiality to be in act or the potency to receive one's act of existence. Whereas God is pure act, creatures are a mixture of potency and act. Created beings receive their existence from God and are not the source of their own act of being.

Therefore we have to assert that being is predicated essentially only of God, inasmuch as the divine existence (*esse*) is an existence (*esse*) that is subsistent and absolute. But being is predicated of every creature by participation, since no creature is its own existence (*esse*) but is something having existence (*esse*) .... being is participated in as something not belonging to the thing's essence.[26]

George Klubertanz lucidly explains that, in the analogy of proportionality, "there is no direct relationship between the analogates themselves; there is instead a relationship within each of the analogates,

[22] Ibid. 105.   [23] Ibid. 111.
[24] Daniélou, "Signification" 147.
[25] Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* chap. 11.
[26] Thomas Aquinas, *Debated Questions* 2, q. 3, a. 3 (1).

and these relationships are similar, though all the relata, four in number are different." Thus, in the analogy of being, being as it is in God is different from being as it is in creatures. God's essence is his act of being; the creature's essence is different from its act of being. However, both God and the creature possess being in a real way. W. Norris Clarke clearly defines participation:

Participation *means:* when many subjects possess diversely and imperfectly a common perfection received from a single source possessing the perfection by essence in simple unlimited plenitude. [It] does not mean to have a literal part of another, but to have imperfectly on one's own what another has perfectly and from this other.[27]

The doctrine of participating being is best explained by a combination of the analogy of proper proportionality and the analogy of intrinsic attribution. In this latter analogy, "the analogon is principally or perfectly in one analogate, called the *primary analogate,* and only secondarily (by relation) in the other or secondary analogate."[28] Being and the other transcendental perfections are rooted in God's act of existence. They are perfections which God possesses by the very nature of the existence which is his.[29] Creatures share in these perfections proportionally and intrinsically as the effect images its cause.

Klubertanz indicates that Thomas frequently employs cause and effect in an effort to demonstrate the similarity between God and creatures.[30] Aquinas maintains that the analogy of proportionality must be understood as expressing a "relationship of order" between the two terms discussed:

There is a proportion between the creature and God as an effect to its cause and as a knower to an object known. However, because the Creator infinitely exceeds the creatures, the creature is not so proportioned to its Creator that it receives His causal influence in its perfection, nor that it knows Him perfectly.[31]

From a thorough study of the various texts in which Thomas analyzes the causal relationship between God and creatures, Klubertanz

[27] W. Norris Clarke, "St. Thomas Aquinas: A Survey of His Philosophical World-View," Lectures, Fordham Univ.; John Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay in Overcoming Metaphysics* (New York: Fordham Univ., 1982) 141–42.

[28] Klubertanz, *Aquinas on Analogy* 7.

[29] *Summa theologiae* 1, q. 4, a. 2, c. See also Clarke, *Philosophical Approach to God* 39–40.

[30] Klubertanz, *Aquinas on Analogy* 46–48.

[31] Thomas Aquinas, *Boethii de Trin.* 11.2, quoted in Klubertanz, *Aquinas on Analogy* 47.

reaches the conclusion that Aquinas teaches that "Creatures resemble God *because they are proportioned to Him as effects to their cause.*"[32]

Causal participation coincides with exemplar causality which in turn is linked with efficient and telic causality. The creature is similar to God, an imperfect representation of the perfect image which it reflects and resembles as the effect mirrors cause. Klubertanz explains that "whereas an image is that which imitates an exemplar, an exemplar is that which is imitated. An idea is an exemplar form existing in the intellect of the efficient cause which produces the image."[33]

"It is clear," Aquinas explains, "that an effect preexists in an efficient cause."[34] The effect carries within it a likeness to that which produced it and resembles the end to which it is ordered by its creation.[35] An understanding of Thomas's use of exemplar and efficient causality leads to the assertion that the likeness between the creature and God is intrinsic, not extrinsic. "[E]ach being," according to Aquinas, "is called good because of a likeness of the divine goodness inhering in it, which is formally the goodness by which it is denominated."[36]

Thus an understanding of cause/effect, exemplar, efficient, and telic causality leads to the definition and/or understanding of the doctrine of participating being described earlier in this section.

God, the first efficient and exemplar cause of all creatures and their ultimate goal, possesses being, goodness, and similar perfections by His very essence, in a most perfect manner, as identical with that essence and with each other; creatures, the effects of God's causality, participate or share in an imperfect manner in such analogous perfections, and so that these perfections are distinct from each other, because they are received in the creatures' potencies.[37]

A Contrast: The Metaphysics of Eckhart

Thomas's metaphysics of being differs substantially from that of his Dominican brother, Meister Eckhart. In the tradition of Anselm and Bonaventure, Eckhart holds that God can become known through the

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[32] Klubertanz, *Aquinas on Analogy* 48. W. Norris Clarke indicates that, in order to be intelligible, an effect must in some way resemble its cause. It is the similarity between God and creatures, between God and the world, that establishes the basis for the human/divine relationship. "Cut this bond of causal participation between creature and Creator, and all bonds of ontological similarity vanish into the mists; with it all meaningful analogical language about God vanishes too" (*Philosophical Approach to God* 55; also 54). See also Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas* 142–43.

[33] Ibid. 53; also 48–52. See also Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas* 142.

[34] *ST* 1, q. 4, a. 2, c.

[35] Klubertanz, *Aquinas on Analogy* 54.

[36] *ST* 1 [17.15], quoted in Klubertanz, *Aquinas on Analogy* 55.

[37] Klubertanz, *Aquinas on Analogy* 63.

idea of the Divine which exists in the mind.[38] It is not surprising, therefore, that Eckhart's ontological analyses begin, not with the physical world perceptible to the senses, but with God, as Frank Tobin and Reiner Schürmann aptly note. Furthermore, Eckhart takes one of Aquinas' prime doctrines, God is *ipsum esse,* and reverses the proposition to maintain that *Esse est Deus.* Eckhart uses this inversion to demonstrate that the primary reality about God is that God exists with an existence not owed to any external cause or being. In God, existence is prior to all else and is the necessary element in all being.

It is not the nature of existence itself to be in something or from something or through something; neither is it added or joined to anything. On the contrary, it precedes and comes before everything. So the existence of everything is immediately from the first and universal cause of all things. All things exist from existence itself, and through it and in it, while existence is not in something or from something; for what is different from existence is not or is nothing. Existence itself is related to everything as its actuality and perfection; it is that actuality of all things, even of forms.[39]

Eckhart's understanding of *esse* as it applies to God and creatures departs dramatically from Thomas' perception of that reality. Aquinas maintains, true to the analogy of attribution, that only God is *esse* in its fullest and purest sense; the creature's *esse,* which is created from nothing, is a participated sharing in the perfection of God's being. Although the creature possesses a real existence which is separate from the existence of God and proper to the creature in itself, it nevertheless remains dependent upon God.

Armand Maurer explains that Eckhart apprehends the relationship between "created" and uncreated *esse* in quite a different manner. For Eckhart, "Absolute existence is God as he is in himself, transcending creatures; formally inherent existence is the same existence as it is immanent in creatures, penetrating and touching them, so to speak, in order to make them exist."[40] Following Albert the Great's model, Eckhart understands existence as informing the creature in the same way that the soul informs the body. As the life principle, the soul vitalizes the entire corporeal structure in each of its related parts. The soul and body comprise one whole, such that the latter cannot exist without the former. The supreme and pure Existence who is God penetrates all reality with his presence and, without an intermediary, enlivens and

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[38] Armand Maurer, Introduction to *Parisian Questions and Prologues,* trans. Armand A. Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974) 32.

[39] Meister Eckhart, *Opus tripartitum,* in *Parisian Questions and Prologues* 83.

[40] Armand Maurer, Introduction to *Parisian Questions* 37.

sustains the creature. "[B]ecause God with his whole existence is absolutely one, or one being, he must be immediately present within his whole self to every whole, not to one part after another part, nor to a part through a part."[41]

At the time Eckhart was writing, it was believed that the analogy of proper proportionality was the sole analogy used by Aquinas to explain the relationship between God and creatures. Believing this to be inadequate, as Teilhard would five centuries later, Eckhart moved away from Thomas's analogy of proper proportionality to the analogy of attribution.[42] According to Eckhart, the creature receives its being on loan and, in its own right, possesses nothing at all. "Its act of existence is not its own, but from another and in another to whom is 'all honor and glory' because it is his."[43]

Using an analogy proposed by Dionysius and adopted by Aquinas as well,[44] Eckhart explains that a creature receives its being in a manner analogous to the way in which the air receives light. The sun illumines the air without resting there in a permanent manner. When the sun sets, the light is extinguished. It is in this manner that God diffuses existence to creatures.[45] Or again, creatures receive existence as an image takes its life from the person whose reflection it is. The image vanishes as soon as the person steps away from the medium of reflection.[46] Thus the creature exists more truly in God than in itself and in fact has no existence at all outside of him.

Creatures exist within existence, that is to say within God and through the divine existence. . . . Indeed, apart from God, or outside of him, creatures are absolutely nothing. . . . God, as existence itself, is immediately present to creatures, and they exist through him and in him alone. But this does not imply that they possess an existence of their own, different from that of God; for God

[41] Eckhart, *Opus tripartitum* 98. For a superb discussion on the manner in which Albert's thought influences Eckhart's, see Bernard J. Müller-Thym, *The Establishment of the University of Being in the Doctrine of Meister Eckhart of Hochheim* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1939).

[42] This is well documented by Frank Tobin and Reiner Schürmann. Schürmann also voices reservations about the applicability of the analogy of attribution to Eckhart's understanding of being, (*Meister Eckhart* 185–92).

[43] Meister Eckhart, "The Book of the Parables of Genesis," in *Meister Eckhart*, trans. Edmund Colledge and Bernard McGinn (New York: Paulist, 1981) 103. See also Eckhart, "The Book of the 'Benedictus,'" in *Meister Eckhart* 224.

[44] *ST* 1, q. 104, a. 1. Thomas cites this as deriving from Augustine's *Literal Commentary on Genesis* 8.12.

[45] Eckhart, "Sermon Forty Three," *Meister Eckhart Sermons and Treatises* 2, trans. and ed. M. O'C. Walshe (Worcester, U.K.: Element, 1979) 5.

[46] Eckhart, "Sermon, 'Like a Vase of Gold,'" in *Meister Eckhart: Mystic and Philosopher,* trans. Reiner Schürmann (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana Univ., 1978) 100.

is existence. . . . God, as existence itself, is entirely present to every creature, directly giving it existence, while he himself transcends his creation and suffers no division or change. He is the one being, life, and actuality of things, but in himself he remains aloof from them.[47]

What Eckhart proposes is an analogy of extrinsic attribution. Being is rooted in God alone for Existence is God, according to the Meister. The creature does not properly possess its own being but continuously receives it from another.

Together with Aristotle and Thomas, Eckhart affirms that the first term of the analogy possesses being by priority, *per prius,* the second *per posterius.* Eckhart follows his predecessors insofar as this difference of modes opens the realm to which analogy is applied. But "mode" . . . does not mean the same thing in Eckhart and in his predecessors. Aristotle and Thomas think of a secondary mode of being, that is, one of diminished intensity, whereas Eckhart has in mind subsequent attributions of the sole being which is God.[48]

Schürmann explains well the key difference between Thomas and Eckhart. "In his view attribution no longer falls within the realistic context of an analogy of proportionality. Attribution does not refer to a mode of being, but to a mode or presence of that single being which is God."[49] Apart from God, creatures, according to Eckhart, are nothing. Because creatures and God can share nothing univocally, if God is being, then creatures must be nonbeing. What they receive they have on loan. They have nothing which is properly theirs. The analogy proposed by Eckhart is extrinsic.[50] "Thus *esse* is only properly in the *esse absolutum,* which is God. The *esse formaliter inherens* is not really *esse* and has no real basis within itself for being similar to *esse absolutum*. It is at best a sign of *esse,* as the wreath hung outside the tavern is a sign of the wine within."[51]

The clear difference here between Eckhart and Aquinas is that while Aquinas holds that being actually takes root in creatures and is possessed by them, Eckhart maintains that being is a fleeting gift given to creatures on loan. Aquinas posits a created existence in creatures different from divine existence, while Eckhart grants creatures the loan of God's existence which, in the human being, is characterized by "the

[47] Maurer, Introduction to *Parisian Questions* 34; 35. See also *ST* 1, q. 8, a. 1 c.

[48] Reiner Schürmann, *Meister Eckhart* 178.

[49] Ibid. See also Frank Tobin, *Meister Eckhart: Thought and Language* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1986) 63–64.

[50] Schürmann, *Meister Eckhart* 88.   [51] Tobin, *Meister Eckhart* 59.

fleetingness of borrowed being," which differentiates it from God's being.[52]

By blending the analogies of proportionality and attribution, Aquinas defines a being which is proper to both God and creatures and yet different. The being which is God's is uncreated and identical with God's essence, while the being of creatures is created and is an act which can only be received by a potency; therefore, a creature's essence and existence are different.[53] In the *Opus tripartitum,* Eckhart refuses even an analogical similarity of proportionality between the being of God and that of creatures and emphasizes an analogy of extrinsic attribution which places the creatures in a position of total dependency on God.

It must be reiterated that Eckhart apparently did not grasp the Thomistic blend of the analogies of proportionality and attribution. Nevertheless, even had he understood Aquinas's full intent, it is doubtful he would have accepted a metaphysical explanation that posited an existence proper to creatures. The question then is whether Teilhard is closer to Eckhart or to Thomas.

THE METAPHYSICS OF TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

First, it must be explained that Teilhard refused to explain the relationship between God and creatures according to the classical metaphysics of being. For Teilhard, the act of unification assumes priority over being, and it is in terms of *unire* that his metaphysics takes shape. Second, Teilhard's use of analogy has empirical rather than philosophical roots. Paired scientific terms assume a priority in his efforts to explore the ontological relationship between God and the world. Third, like Eckhart, Teilhard, in his metaphysics of *unire,* begins, not with the world, but with God, and from this perspective explores the relationship between God and the world.

It is necessary to begin, then, by examining what Teilhard under-

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[52] This position of Eckhart's is not to be misconstrued to mean that he identifies creatures with God. God, while immanent to creatures, retains his transcendence. See Tobin, *Meister Eckhart* 64; Bernard McGinn and Edmund Colledge, *Meister Eckhart* 34; Schürmann, *Meister Eckhart* 178–80. According to Eckhart, creatures can only be defined in terms of being if God is other than being—*intelligere,* for example. In the *Opus tripartitum,* Eckhart holds this position whereas in the *Parisian Questions,* he maintains that God is *intelligere,* and therefore creatures may be defined in terms of being. For an excellent discussion of God as *intelligere,* see John Caputo, "The Nothingness of the Intellect in Meister Eckhart's *Parisian Questions,*" *Thomist* 39 (175) 85–115; Vladimir Lossky, *Théologie négative et connaissance de Dieu chez Maître Eckhart* (Etudes de Philosophie Mediéval 48; Paris: J. Vrin, 1960) 215–20.

[53] See Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas* 140–41.

stands by this act of unification as it occurs within the Godhead and in creation. For Teilhard, the act of unification in the immanent Trinity and in creation are different. Whereas God is his own act of unification, an act, by definition, necessary and intrinsic to a being who exists within and of itself, the creature is acted upon in order to be unified. Being and union are ontologically necessary "to being" both in terms of eternal and temporal beings. Although, Teilhard chooses to speak in terms of *unire* rather than *esse,* the explanation parallels classical, traditional, Thomistic metaphysics and is not simply a departure from it. God is his own act of unification, the creature is brought into being by an act of unification of the Creator.

As mentioned above, Teilhard contends that being and union should be understood "as forming a natural pair, the two terms of which, while equally primordial and fundamentally irreducible, are nevertheless ontologically inseparable—like the two surfaces of one and the same plane."[54] He indicates that the use of paired entities in physics (such as mass-velocity or electricity-magnetism) or in psychology (such as understanding-love) "could assist the metaphysician in a discussion and understanding of Absolute and participated being."[55]

In physics the first terms of the pairs (velocity, electricity, motion) exist interdependently with the second terms of the pair (mass, magnetism, moving body). The first and second terms do not exist independently from each other, but are, in fact, coterminus. How does one separate motion from the moving body? Clearly, in these carefully chosen examples, the first and second terms of the pairs cannot be discussed or analyzed discretely but must be considered in relationship to one other.

The most recent investigations of the physicists have shown that the "common-sense" evidence which underlies the whole of the *philosophia perennis* is misleading: motion is not independent of the moving body—on the contrary, the moving body is physically engendered [or more precisely, co-engendered (*ou plus exactement co-engendré*)]—by the motion which animates it.[56]

It appears that the interdependent relationship which Teilhard suggests here coincides neither with the Thomistic intrinsic analogy of attribution, nor the Eckhartian extrinsic analogy of attribution.

The context of the above discussion, whose importance cannot be

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[54] "Comment je vois," in *Directions* 222; *TF* 207.
[55] Ibid. 223; *TF* 208.
[56] Ibid. 207–8; *TF* 193. I have added the words in brackets and the phrase from the French text on which they are based. René Hague's English translation omits this very important nuance from the original.

minimized, is the inseparable relationship between being and union. In his proposed metaphysics, Teilhard seeks to demonstrate that God and the world are inseparable, that the world in some mysterious way completes God. The key is the doctrine of *unire* which, in Teilhardian metaphysics, supersedes *esse*. "In a sense that is strictly true," Teilhard insists, "God exists only by *uniting himself.*—Let us see how, in another sense, he fulfills himself only by *uniting.*"[57] Teilhard's preference for *unire* over *esse* arises from the belief that the metaphysics of *esse* defines the creature and creation as somewhat superfluous. His entire system hinges on a doctrine that teaches the opposite. The world is important to God because it fulfills him.

Theogenesis, the Metaphysics of "Unire"

Teilhardian metaphysics involves identifiable and definable moments or phases. Phase 1 necessitates the acknowledgement of the existence of the Omega Point; an "irreversible and self-sufficient . . . First Being,"[58] which, in Phase 2 (the matter of revelation), is understood to be triune, to subsist in its own self-opposition. The first phase does not occur prior to the second; there is not one moment when God is One, another when God is Three; God exists, Three in One, in the very act of unification. The trinitarian structure of the Godhead guarantees God's transcendence and explains the possibility of God's immanence.[59]

Teilhard's understanding of the Trinity, though never developed into a fully systematized theology, reflects or resonates with the mature and sophisticated theological elucidation of Bonaventure. Like Teilhard's, Bonaventure's trinitarian theology safeguards both the immanence and transcendence of God and God's independence from creation. Based on Pseudo-Dionysius's doctrine of God as the self-diffusive Good, Bonaventure defines the Trinity as the fecund Source and End of creation.[60]

Goodness, by definition, is self-diffusive and, God, as the ultimate Being and source of perfection, must be the paramount principle of self-diffusion.[61] By extension, since God has always been the ultimate,

[57] Ibid. 209; *TF* 194.

[58] Ibid. 208; *TF* 193: see "Christianisme et évolution" (1945), in *Comment je crois* 93–113, at 208–9 n.; *CE* 173–86, at 178 n.

[59] "Introduction à la vie chrétienne" (1944), in *Comment je crois* 177–200, at 186; *CE* 151–72, at 157–58.

[60] Efrem Bettoni, *Saint Bonaventure,* trans. Angelus Gambatese (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1964) 52–53.

[61] Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* 6.1, in *The Works of Bonaventure* 2, trans. Philotheus Boehner (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: St. Bonaventure Univ., 1956) 88–89; also in

self-diffusive Good, Divine Plurality in Absolute Unity must have always existed. "For Bonaventure, God's self-sufficiency and self-communication are so intimately united that his principle can be stated as follows: Because God is absolutely self-sufficient, he is absolutely self-communicating."[62] This notion, though it has a decidedly different *point d'appui* than Teilhard's, that of the self-diffusiveness of the good, coincides with the Teilhardian doctrine of creation. Both agree the Divinity must first be self-subsistent if God is to create a world without becoming pantheistically immersed in it.

Bonaventure, like Teilhard, interprets God's fecundity on two levels: first, in the generation of the immanent Trinity, second in the creation of the world. In order to diffuse himself to the highest degree, God must communicate his goodness to one capable of sustaining the full implications of the self-diffusion. The only possible reciprocal relationship must be between himself and another Being equal to him in all respects. "We are to hold that He supremely communicates Himself by eternally possessing One who is beloved and One Who is Mutual Love, so that He is both one and triune."[63] In true Greek fashion, Bonaventure understands the Father as the fountain fullness, *fontalis plenitudo,* the fecund source of the divinity who, without diminishment to his nature, pours forth others consubstantial and equal to himself in all things. The Father is unbegotten and it is precisely his *innascibilitas* which interfaces with his fecundity in the generation of the Trinity.[64]

Crucial to a correct interpretation of Bonaventure's thought is an understanding of the centrality in his system of the coincidence of opposites. According to Ewert Cousins, the poised juxtaposition between innascibility and fecundity provides the foundational basis for Bonaventure's consistent utilization of this dialectic. The dynamic structure of the Trinitarian operations *ad intra* and *ad extra,* the basis for the Bonaventurian doctrine of creation, flow from this primal coincidence.

The constitution of the Trinity illustrates the dynamism of coincidence in the Father's generation of the Son and spiration of the Spirit. The Son is the perfect likeness of the Father, the medium within the

Bonaventure, trans. Ewert Cousins (Classics of Western Spirituality; New York: Paulist, 1978) 53–116, at 102.

[62] Ewert Cousins, *Global Spirituality* (Madras, India: Univ. of Madras, 1985) 86–87.

[63] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium,* in *The Works of Bonaventure* 2, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild, 1963) 1.2.3.

[64] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium,* 1.3.7; Zachary Hayes, introd. to *Disputed Questions on the Trinity,* Works of St. Bonaventure, ed. George Marcil, trans. Zachary Hayes (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure Univ., 1979) 35–36, 38–39.

Trinity and between the Trinity and creation. As begotten, the Son is the polar opposite of the Father who is unbegotten. The Holy Spirit is the Gift who "is given through the will,"[65] the bond of love and the principle of union. The Spirit is neither unbegotten nor begotten but breathed forth in union by the Father and the Son. Therefore the generation of the Trinity establishes yet another coincidence of opposites. As wholly receptive, the Holy Spirit does not produce and so is in direct opposition to the Father who produces. Between these two is the Son, who is both produced and produces and so active and receptive simultaneously.[66] Thus Bonaventure perceives within the Godhead the perfect coincidence of opposites.

God could not share the fullness of his goodness with the world, for created reality must differ in nature, substance, and being from the divine. "For the diffusion in time in creation is no more than a center or point in relation to the immensity of the divine goodness."[67] Equality and mutuality of relationship can only occur among equals each of whom is capable of a participative, reciprocal, dynamic exchange. Such an interchange is shared among the members of the Trinity.

This same self-diffusive goodness is the raison d'être for creation. Because God's goodness first expresses itself in the constitution of the inner trinitarian life, creation is neither the primary manifestation of his goodness, nor the sole manner through which his goodness diffuses itself.[68] The self-diffusion of the good in the Trinity guarantees the independence of God from his creation, hence his undiminished transcendence, and allows him to be immanent in creation.

According to Bonaventure, God is dipolar independently of the world; for in the innascibility of the Father there is both a self-sufficient and a self-communicating pole. It is true that the self-communicating pole is the ground of his communication in the world; but even with the world, God's self-communicating pole is actualized in an absolute way in the Father's generation of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit.[69]

Thus the self-diffusion wears two faces, one of singularity in plurality (One God in Three Person), the other of plurality in singularity (Three Persons who are One God).

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[65] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* 1.3.9.

[66] Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1978) 112.

[67] Bonaventure, *Itinerarium* 6.2.

[68] John Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought* (New York: Fordham Univ., 1986) 109.

[69] Cousins, *Global Spirituality* 92. See Zachary Hayes, introd. to *Disputed Questions on the Trinity*, concerning the unique position which the Father holds with regard to the *exitus* and *reditus* of creation.

While Teilhard believes with Bonaventure that it is the trinitarian structure of the Godhead which allows God to remain transcendent to creation, he also maintains that trinitization produces a diametrical opposition *ad extra*. This opposition is the antithesis of unity; it is the pure multiple, absolute nothingness, complete disunity. Relying upon the concept of the coincidence of opposites evidenced in Bonaventurian trinitarian theology, it becomes possible to explain from a classical vantage point this seemingly novel hypothesis of Teilhard's.

According to both Bonaventure and Teilhard, in the Godhead is a fullness which expresses itself in a perfect opposition among persons which results in absolute, independent, and self-sufficient unity. Immanent trinitarian self-expression is thus perfectly realized in the mutual and maximum opposition among the three Persons. The only opposition remaining is extrinsic to the triunity; it is that which, in itself, unlike the divinity, is incapable of coming to unity. That which is every thing (God) contrasts starkly with that which is no thing (pure multiple); that which is perfectly united points to that which is absolutely diffuse.[70] The "creatable nil" which Teilhard posits, is at the "very opposite pole from [God] (phase three)."[71] The only opposition remaining after trinitization is that which is not God, that which is outside of God, a concept not only intelligible, but logical, in light of the coincidence of opposites. Thus there is the juxtaposition of the uncreated and the creatable—a coincidence of opposites which will be realized perfectly in the person of Christ in whom the uncreated and the created coincide.[72]

Juxtaposed to God's trinitarian fullness is a nothingness which is the "passive potentiality of arrangement (that is to say, of union)."[73] Here, the second of Teilhard's two equations finds application. "To be = to be united and unified by another (the passive form)."[74] When God exerts his power of unification upon the multiple, there emerges "being" which is different from the Being who is God. To paraphrase Karl

[70] "Note sur les modes de l'action divine dans l'univers" (1920), in *Comment je crois* 33–45 at 42 n.; *CE* 25–35, at 32 n.

[71] "Comment je vois," in *Directions* 209; *TF* 194. Also "Action et activation" (1945), in *Science* 219–33, at 233 n.; *SC* 174–86, at 186 n. Further, "Christologie et évolution" (1933), in *Comment je crois* 93–113, at 102; *CE* 76–95, at 84.

[72] " Contingence de l'univers," in *Comment je crois* 271–72; *CE* 227.

[73] "Comment je vois," in *Directions* 209; *TF* 194.

[74] Ibid. 208; *TF* 193. Teilhard's use of the term "passive potentiality" in this context is confusing. A "radical possibility" of arrangement would better define the reality. Nothingness does not possess potentiality in itself. The Divine Ideas, as the seeds of creation, are identical to active possibilities within the mind of God. They do not have potency in themselves. See Donald Gray, *The One and the Many* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969) 22–24; de Lubac, *The Religion of Teilhard* 197.

Rahner, "When God wants to be what is not God, the world [man] comes to be."[75]

Critique of Classical Metaphysics

Phase 4 concerns itself with Creation. In this regard, classical metaphysics is critiqued by Teilhard, first, because it attributes creation to God through an act of efficient causality;[76] second, because it compromises the relationship between creature and Creator;[77] third, because it offers no adequate explanation of evil. The first two objections are related.

In a world of participated being produced by an act of efficient causality, classical ontology is logically obliged to define the created world as completely contingent, the object of pure mercy: as such, whether we look at it from the point of view of modern man, or from the Christian point of view, the world is in both cases found to be *unsatisfying*. . . . What does "being beatified" matter if, when all is said and done, our lives make no "absolute" contribution to the totality of being.[78]

To insure the transcendent, self-sufficiency of God, Teilhard believes classical metaphysics invented the notion of a participated or secondary being, created *ex nihilo*. "In the metaphysics of *Esse*, pure act, once posited, monopolizes all that is absolute and necessary in being; and, no matter what one does, nothing can then justify the existence of participated being."[79] Creatures are "an entirely gratuitous supplement or addition: the guests at the divine banquet."[80]

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[75] Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, trans. William V. Dych (New York: Crossroad, 1978) 225.

[76] Both Bonaventure and Thomas teach creation as a result of efficient causality: Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* 2.1.4; *ST* 1. q. 44, a. 1.

[77] "Le Dieu de l'évolution" (1953), in *Comment je Crois* 239; *CE* 239–40. See Emile Rideau, *Teilhard de Chardin* 498. For Teilhard's creative nuance to the Scholastic doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, see "Sur la notion de transformation creatrice" (1919 or 1920), in *Comment je crois* 27–33, at 29–32; *CE* 21–24. See Robert North, *Teilhard and the Creation of the Soul* 84–90, who lists the points on which Teilhard seems to depart from traditional teaching, and North's orthodox interpretation of the accusations; also de Lubac, *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin* 199–200.

[78] "Christianisme et évolution," in *Comment je crois* 209; *CE* 177.

[79] Ibid. 208; *CE* 178; "Contingence de l'univers," in *Comment je crois* 268–69; *CE* 225–26; "Esquisse d'une dialectique de l'esprit" (1946), in *Activation* 147–58, at 158; *AE* 150–51; "Action et activation," in *Science* 227–28; *SC* 180–81. See Robert Faricy, *Theology of the Christian in the World* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967) 105–6; Rideau, *Teilhard de Chardin* 240. See Christopher Mooney, *Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964) 175.

[80] "Contingence de l'univers," in *Comment je crois* 268; *CE* 224.

Classical metaphysics and the thought of Thomas Aquinas as it was taught to Teilhard deny the presence of any need in God.[81] The Absolute Being is complete and self-sufficient and neither creation nor the creature, even the finite rational being, can add to the fullness and totality of the Divinity. Aquinas lucidly explains that the "divine goodness neither depends on the perfection of the universe nor is anything added to it from this perfection."[82] In addition, Bonaventure asserts unequivocally, "It (Being) is unchangeable precisely because it is most actual. For because it is most actual, it is pure act; and what is pure act can acquire nothing new, can lose nothing it already has; hence it cannot be changed."[83] To maintain in any way that creatures complete or fulfill God implies change, and to impute change is, in turn, to postulate a real relation between God and creatures, which is a position unacceptable to both Aquinas and Bonaventure.[84]

Third, the universe of classical metaphysics offers no satisfactory solution to the problem of evil. In the old worldview, it is impossible to give an adequate, logical explanation for a good, omnipotent, loving God's creation of a world full of evil.[85] In the metaphysics of union, although God remains self-sufficient, independent, free, and still on an ontologically different plane from the created, the human being as well as all creation enters into a qualitatively different form of relationship to God.[86] The shift is from an ontological emphasis on the primacy of being to an ontogenic focus on the primacy of becoming which renders both process and product coherent.

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[81] *ST* 1, q. 44, a. 4 ad 1. "Teilhard deplored the manner in which classic philosophy and theology regards creation as 'an arbitrary gesture of a first cause.' He hints that there would be no God without creation; that there is a blank which somehow has to be filled. Creation is thus not absolutely gratuitous but instead represents a work of almost absolute self-interest on God's part" (North, *Teilhard and The Creation of the Soul* 87); see Smulders, *Design of Teilhard* 79–81 for a critique of Teilhard's position.

[82] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.86.6.

[83] Bonaventure, *Itinerarium* 5.7.

[84] For a thorough discussion of the relationship between God and the world the following works are suggested: Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Row, 1936); Ewert Cousins, "Fecundity and the Trinity: An Appendix to Chapter 3 of *The Great Chain of Being*," *Studies in Medieval Culture* 11 (1977) 103–8; W. Norris Clarke, *Philosophical Approach to God* 89–97; W. Norris Clarke, "A New Look at the Immutability of God," in *God Knowable and Unknowable,* ed. Robert Roth (New York: Fordham Univ., 1973) 43–72.

[85] "Comment je vois," in *Directions* 211; *TF* 196; "Christianisme et évolution," in *Comment je crois* 207; *CE* 177.

[86] For some, Teilhard's suggested metaphysics of *unire* presents a difficulty because it fails to prove congruent to existing systems. Robert North maintains that the solution is not to fit this new vision to an extant system, but to shape a new system expressive of reality as it now makes itself known (*Teilhard and the Creation of the Soul* 166).

Being, in some way, the fruit of a reflection of God, no longer in God but outside him, the pleromization (as St. Paul would have called it)—that is to say, the realization of participated being through arrangement and totalization—emerges as a sort of echo or symmetrical response to Trinitization. It somehow fills a gap, it fits in.[87]

Although trinitization is the full realization of immanent divine unification, Teilhard hypothesizes that further unification remains possible. The Divine Unification becomes the prototype for creation, which, according to the Teilhardian theory of creative union, comes into existence and complexifies through a process of unification. The created becomes an essential part of the ongoing, creative dynamic unification of the many into the One. Teilhard thus proposes for clarification a two-phase process of Theogenesis.

In the first, God posits himself in his trinitarian structure ('fontal' being reflecting itself, self-sufficient, upon itself): 'Trinitization'. In the second phase, he envelops himself in participated being, by evolutive unification of pure multiple ('positive non-being') born (in a state of absolute potency) by antithesis to pre-posited trinitarian unity: Creation.[88]

Teilhard deduces from this hypothesis that God, in some way, fulfills or adds to himself through the process of creation by further acts of unification through which the "creatable nil" is drawn into increasingly more complex forms of being which result in higher forms of consciousness. "God fulfills himself, he in some way completes himself, in the pleroma."[89] Teilhard insists that there exists a genuine "complementarity" between God and the world, a "complementarity" which Aristotelian and classical metaphysics fail to grasp.[90]

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[87] "Comment je vois," in *Directions* 210; *TF* 195.

[88] "Christianisme et évolution," in *Comment je crois* 208–09; *CE* 178 n.

[89] Ibid. 209; *CE* 178. In even more insistent and radical language, Teilhard asserts elsewhere: "and the third is that the more these same elements find themselves dependent on God, the more at the same time shall they have the consciousness that, in certain regards, God could not (or at least can no longer), dispense with them." Such language, as the editor notes, is nontraditional and indicates a dependence of God upon the world ("Action et activation," in *Science* 232; *SC* 185). See Donald Gray's critique of Teilhard's idea that creation somehow completes God (*One and Many* 125–28); also Mooney, *Mystery of Christ* 171–75.

[90] Teilhard's belief that creation somehow completes, fulfills, or adds to God drew the criticism of his censors who took exception to the idea as it was expressed in "Le coeur de la matière" (1950): "I see in the World a mysterious product of completion and fulfillment for the Absolute Being himself" (in *Le Coeur de la matière* [Oeuvres 13; 1976] 19–91, at 65–66; Eng. trans. René Hague, *The Heart of Matter* [New York/London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978] 15–79, at 54). Teilhard obediently diluted the concept in order to conform to orthodoxy and substituted the word "satisfaction" for com-

With the Scholastics, Teilhard teaches that God creates the world out of love, but he questions the nature of a love which has no need of the beloved. He contends that neither John the Evangelist nor Paul understands this to be the kind of relationship which exists between God and world.

[W]e shall find that for them the existence of the world is accepted from the outset . . . as an inevitable fact, or in any case as an accomplished fact. In both of them, on the other hand, what a sense we find of the absolute value of a cosmic drama in which God would indeed appear to have been ontologically involved even before his incarnation.[91]

What Teilhard finds each to emphasize, and his own words carry the uncompromised meaning he wishes to convey, is the "sense of mutual completion of the world and God which gives life to Christianity."[92] It is not the complete dependence of the world upon God as held by John and Paul, but the "complementarity" the one assumes in the face of the other. Such a focus neither minimizes nor diminishes the transcendence and self-sufficiency of God, but does place a necessary value on creation which invites the human being to enter into a consequential relationship with the world and with God. Human effort contributes to the divine work; the divine work is enhanced by human effort. Teilhard presents a God who, because of his self-sufficiency and love, understands that to love is to be enriched by or to need the beloved.[93]

The dichotomy between the world of classical metaphysics and that of Teilhard de Chardin arises because of the widespread acceptance of evolution in the 19th century. A static, immobile world, a world in which Genesis is translated and interpreted literally, is one in which efficient causality, with all of the ramifications contingent to it, works and serves well. On the other hand, in a world in process, a world in evolution, a world in motion, in which Genesis is interpreted in terms of an ongoing, dynamic, continuously unfolding process, efficient causality, with all of its attendant consequences, is no longer adequate. The model no longer works well. In a multitude of ways, Teilhard repeatedly endeavors to speak this unheard message.

It is this same worldview which Teilhard affirms when he states, "If participated being is to act effectively, it must (though we still have to

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pletion and fulfillment. Nevertheless, as the editor indicates, Teilhard did not alter his thinking and continued to hold that the cosmos is "much more than a satisfying product" (ibid. 65 n; *HM* 78–79 n.). See the earlier essay, "L'Energie humaine" (1927), in *Energie* 141–200, at 192; *HE* 113–62, at 155.

[91] "Contingence de l'univers," in *Comment je crois* 271; *CE* 227.
[92] Ibid.   [93] Ibid. 270–71; *CE* 226–27.

find a formula to express this) possess, *in its own way,* something that is absolute and non-contingent in its formation."[94] The editor notes that such noncontingency might be defined as each person's final incorporation into the mystical body of Christ, into a shared participation in Christ's divinity. Seen in this way, the concept takes on a much more traditional character.[95] Elsewhere, Teilhard understands this element of noncontingency or completion of the Divinity as a contribution to increased unity within the Godhead in the pleroma, which is simply another way of expressing in a more oblique manner the truth indicated earlier in this paragraph. As humankind coalesces in a state of coreflective unity, as the whole of the human race undergoes incorporation into Christ, that which was once separate from God in a condition of unresolved disunity becomes one with God in the unified mystical body of Christ.[96]

Teilhard decries a metaphysics which continues to separate that which belongs together as an indissoluble pair: God and the world. Taking his cue from new models in physics, Teilhard points out that distinctions previously held sacrosanct are being negated. Current scientific models indicate that apparent antimonies are linked and not as radically different and independent from one another as once thought. Teilhard conjectures that modern physicists, who understand freshly the relationships between such things as mass and velocity, electricity and magnetism, are leading humankind to a new assessment of the relationship between Absolute and participated being.

What I have in mind here is a synthetic re-definition of being, which, taken in its most general form, would include, *both simultaneously,* an absolute term and a participated term. What makes the God–world antimony insoluble is that we first split up a natural pair and then persist in considering the two terms in *succession.*[97]

This idea of God and the world being a "natural pair" seems to flow from the Teilhardian hypothesis that trinitization establishes a "creatable nil" in opposition to the Uncreated Unity, hence, the potential (better considered as an active possibility) for the world exists in the very act of God's own immanent unification. According to Teilhard, the optimal way to understand God and the world is to perceive God as different from the world in nature but personally linked to it in a relationship of mutual complementarity.

This shift in focus becomes evident in Teilhard's redefinition of par-

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[94] "Action et activation," in *Science* 232–33; *SC* 185.
[95] Ibid. 233 n.; *SC* 185 n.   [96] Ibid. 228; *SC* 181.
[97] Ibid. 229 n.; *SC* 182 n.

ticipated being. Instead of explaining participated being in terms of its differentiation from nonbeing, he defines it by its ability to be in "positive relation to God," by "its power of entering into communion" with God.[98] This is quite unlike Meister Eckhart, who refuses to see any positive relationship between the Being of God and human being and maintains that if God is Being the creature is non-being.

Both the created and the uncreated, writes Teilhard, need to be defined first as existing in themselves and then as existing in relationship to each other. In classical terminology, one finds the analogy of proportionality combined with the intrinsic analogy of attribution; the first safeguards God's transcendence, the second God's immanence. Both created and uncreated Reality experience internal or immanent union (the created in coming to both self-reflective and coreflexive consciousness, the uncreated in trinitization) and both experience union with the absolutely other (the creature with the Creator and vice versa).[99]

Only in a fixed and static concept of the world does God create "isolated beings" "instantaneously," thus establishing the myth that creation and creatures emerged intact from the hand of God. In a world in evolution the reality presents quite a different face. Teilhard explains that the purpose of creation is to generate a universe. When one investigates the process from within, it becomes apparent that "creation can be effected only by an *evolutive process* (of personalizing synthesis); and that it can come into action *only once:* when 'absolute' multiple (which is produced in antithesis to trinitarian unity) is reduced, nothing is left to be united either in God or 'outside' God."[100]

According to Teilhard, in an evolutionary universe the insoluble problem of evil finds a solution. A world in process is necessarily incomplete. It is logical that in the ongoing work of unification there will inevitably be waste. Teilhard understands evil as a by-product of evolutive maturation. "So we find physical discords or decompositions in the pre-living; suffering in the living; sin in the domain of freedom. There can be no *order in process of formation* which does not at every stage imply some disorder."[101]

If, as Teilhard conjectures, creation is the unification of the multiple, then three consequences emerge. First, creation can be accomplished only once when the absolute multiple has the potential to be drawn to unity. Once the multiple has been "reduced" to the one, no further

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[98] "Contingence de l'univers," in *Comment je crois* 272 n.; *CE* 227 n.
[99] Ibid. 271–72; *CE* 227.
[100] "Christianisme et evolution," in *Comment je crois* 209; *CE* 179.
[101] "Comment je vois," in *Directions* 212; *TF* 197.

union is possible. Second, if God is to create, then God must somehow become immanent to the multiple.[102] Third, in the process of unification, God must engage, "war," with evil.[103] This three-pronged consequential paradigm substantiates one further synthesis.

Teilhard's metaphysics of *unire* results in an integrated representation of the three great mysteries of the Christian faith: creation, incarnation, and redemption, now understood as "three aspects of one and the same mystery of mysteries, that of pleromization (or unifying reduction of the multiple)."[104] In addition, in the ontogenic system, Christology becomes the "structural axis" upon which the entire system pivots. Creation, as Christopher Mooney's commentary explains, is never understood apart from Christ. The world exists because God willed Christ. Teilhardian Christology is grounded in the mystery of the Incarnation as it reaches back into eternity and forward into the Pleroma. Christ is the ultimate psychic center in whom all creation will be unified.[105]

CONCLUSION

For a few months in 1256, Thomas Aquinas used the analogy of proper proportionality to explain the ontological relationship between God and creatures. He later moved away from this analogy to the richer analogy of intrinsic attribution. However, due to the influence of Cardinal Cajetan's commentaries on Thomas, the texts dealing with proper proportionality became synonymous with the Thomistic position. It was not until 1939 that scholars began to realize the inadequacy of this interpretation. The seminary manuals from which Teilhard learned conveyed the older definitions of Thomistic metaphysics. This explanation, which implies a form of "agnosticism about one of the analogates involved," is not able to explain the resemblance between God and creatures. It was this defect which forced Teilhard to search for analogies capable of explaining the close relationship between the world and God.[106]

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[102] Teilhard stresses the necessity of God immanent in a world which comes into existence through evolution; if God is not part of the process, then humankind will not recognize him at the end or goal of the becoming ("Le Dieu de l'evolution," in *Comment je crois* 288; *CE* 239). See "Un Seuil mental sous nos pas: Du cosmos à la cosmogenèse" (1951), in *Activation* 259–77, at 271; *AE* 251–68, at 262–63; "Esquisse d'une dialectique," in *Activation* 157–58; *AE* 150–51.

[103] "Comment je vois," in *Directions* 211; *TF* 196; "Note sur les modes," in *Comment je crois* 43–44; *CE* 33.

[104] Ibid. 213; *CE* 198.   [105] Ibid. 214; *CE 199.*

[106] Klubertanz, *Aquinas on Analogy* 109–10; Clarke, *Philosophical Approach to God* 54–56.

The consequence is that Teilhard, through his use of these analogies, explored an area of Thomism which Thomists did not fully redefine until five or more years after Teilhard's death. It appears that Teilhard found the weakness in Thomistic metaphysics as taught to him and sought to remedy it, not by a new investigation of St. Thomas' works, but by proposing a solution of his own.

Classical Thomism seemingly created a hiatus between God and the world which was unacceptable to Teilhard. Therefore, he endeavored to introduce new analogies which more closely link Creator and creature in an interdependent and reciprocally real relationship. It seems that in advancing towards this goal, he used the analogies of proper proportionality and intrinsic attribution, but stretched them to propose a more intimate relationship between the Uncreated and the created than these analogies allow. He balked at the traditional categories of cause and effect and efficient causality. He refused to isolate or to name one member of the pair as taking precedence over the other. His focus was on God and the world as a naturally interrelated pair, and it is this emphasis which led him to reject the metaphysics of *esse* and to propose an alternative metaphysics of *unire*.