

Of All Things, Seen and Unseen: Josef Pieper's Negative Philosophy, Science, and Hope

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Abstract

Looking at the relationship between theological, philosophical, and scientific methods within the thought of twentieth-century philosopher Josef Pieper, the author argues that Pieper's perspective is that theology, philosophy, and science are limited in their ability to obtain knowledge because they are human methods of inquiry. However, theology and philosophy as conceived by Pieper welcome this restriction while modern mechanistic views of science deny it. This article focuses on the distinctive differences that Pieper sees between philosophy as an apophatic discipline and modern scientific methods. It concludes with a discussion on the relationship between philosophy and the virtue of hope.

Keywords

apophatic theology, Thomas Aquinas, hope, negative philosophy, Josef Pieper, science

In his *Passages to Modernity*, Louis Dupré shows that the Christian tradition was always able to maintain the connection between the realm of the divine archetypes and all created reality. It was, however, in late medieval nominalist and voluntarist theology that reality lost its connection with the archetypes. “Modern thought increasingly defined the relation between finite and infinite being in terms of efficient causality.” Nominalism prepared the changes that led to the scientific revolution.¹ The

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1. Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity: An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture* (Woodbridge: Yale University Press, 1993), 40–41, 58, 69.

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modern idea of science that developed out of a Christian theological tradition was built upon a “practical, voluntarist view of nature as well as on a theoretical, mechanistic one that related all parts of nature to each other.”² According to Peter Harrison, the completion of the separation between theology and science did not come until the nineteenth century. The scientific method “entails the view that underlying the various scientific disciplines there is a single unified and generic ‘science,’ and that this science offers us a unique and privileged access to truth.”³ After the nineteenth century, it was no longer the person of virtue and character that made the practice of science what it is, but its distinctive method. Prominent thinkers like William James and Max Weber were able to claim that science is an agnostic and impersonal activity.⁴

This line of argument leads to the possibility and general acceptability of claims from physicists like Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow’s that “philosophy is dead”⁵ or to physicist Steven Weinberg’s comment that philosophy has almost nothing to do with modern science and its methods⁶ and that it has had no influence on the postwar physicists of his acquaintance.⁷ Along with his disapproval of philosophy, Weinberg further admits that when a “final theory” of the laws of nature are found there will be no more mystery. When mystery disappears so will “irrational misconceptions” of the natural world.⁸

What we have seen is that Christian theology was intimately involved in the development of science and scientific methodology as we know it today. It was developments in theology and philosophy that ultimately lead to the possibility of the statements of Hawking, Mlodinow, and Weinberg. As Charles Taylor has argued, it was the demystifying, disenchanting, and mechanizing of the world in the West that led to our current secular age.⁹ In arguing that modern science should draw upon theological warrants in order to be good science, I acknowledge ironic tension.

In light of this background, I explore here Josef Pieper’s argument against scientism, the belief that science and scientific methods are fully able to discover all truth in the world. For Pieper any field of study that claims to have this kind of mastery over

2. Dupré, *Passage to Modernity*, 75, 89.

3. Peter Harrison, *The Territories of Science and Religion* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2015), 170.

4. Harrison, *The Territories of Science and Religion*, 159.

5. Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (New York: Bantam, 2012), 5.

6. Steven Weinberg, *Dreams of a Final Theory: The Scientist's Search for the Ultimate Laws of Nature*, reprint edition (New York: Vintage, 1994), 167ff.

7. Weinberg, *Dreams of a Final Theory*, 168–69.

8. Weinberg, *Dreams of a Final Theory*, 240. This mentality is not only found in physicists. Biologist E. O. Wilson has written, “the time has come for ethics to be removed temporarily from the hands of the philosophers and biologicized.” See E. O. Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (London: Harvard University Press, 1975), 562.

9. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2007), esp. 300ff., also see 37–42.

its object of study cannot be cogent. Science is embedded in a broader metaphysical and theological framework that has at its heart mystery. All knowledge, whether scientific, theological, or philosophical, is partial and essentially only known by God, and any human claims at complete mastery are false. Human knowledge can only flourish when limits are respected.

Josef Pieper (1904–97) was a German Catholic philosopher who has had a significant impact upon contemporary philosophy and theology. He is a relevant and important voice against the claims of contemporary scientism and against the assumptions of non-metaphysically framed knowledge. Pieper is ideally suited for this task because he was a post-Enlightenment thinker familiar with the intellectual trends of his time, but also deeply immersed in ancient and Scholastic thought through Plato and Thomas Aquinas. His thought brings Platonic and Thomist thought to bear on scientific and philosophical movements in his own context. Even with Christianity playing a key role in the secularization of science, something has been lost in the splitting of theology, philosophy, and the sciences that can and should be recovered. My claim is that Josef Pieper's deep engagement with ancient and Scholastic philosophy and contemporary culture enlivens the benefits of bringing these disciplines back into dialogue with each other, for Pieper speaks to the seeming incompatibility between science and philosophy present in both academic circles and contemporary popular culture.

Divine Ideas and the Truth of All Things

I must first show the relationship between the divine ideas and creation in Pieper's thought. These themes were important to Pieper's work on the relationship between metaphysics and epistemology and will give a sense of his specific brand of Thomism. For Pieper, drawing upon the Western tradition, truth can only be grasped and have its fundamental meaning within the context of creation. "The idea of creation, or more precisely, the notion that nothing exists which is not *creatura*, except the Creator Himself; and in addition, that this createdness determines entirely and all-pervasively the inner structure of the creature."¹⁰ Creation, Pieper argues, characterizes the central structure in the philosophy of ancients like Aristotle as well as all the basic concepts in Thomas's philosophy of being.¹¹ Further, for Thomas at least, "the essence of all things (as creatures) is that they are formed after an archetypal pattern which dwells in the absolutely creative mind of God."¹² Because God has creatively thought things they have a nature.¹³ Everything that exists possesses the truth to the degree that it imitates God's knowledge.¹⁴

10. Josef Pieper, *The Silence of St. Thomas*, trans. John Murry and Daniel O'Connor (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), 47.

11. Pieper, *Silence*, 48; 47.

12. Pieper, *Silence*, 61; Nicholas Lash, *Theology for Pilgrims* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 3–18.

13. Pieper, *Silence*, 52; 51; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1, q. 93, a. 6 (hereafter cited as *ST*).

14. Aquinas, *ST* 1, q. 14, a. 12, ad 3.

Given the relationship between the divine ideas and creation, how are created things in themselves considered “true”? The answer is found in the doctrine of the “truth of all things” found in Thomas and Pieper. Two things are being asserted in the truth of all things. First, things are creatively thought by God in the divine mind; things proceed from the eye of God.¹⁵ Second, that things can be approached and grasped by human knowledge. This also means that it is the “creative fashioning of things by God which makes it possible for them to be known by men.”¹⁶ Both these aspects will be looked at in more detail here.

First, that something is thought by God brings the possibility of that thing being known by us. Things are intelligible because there is an inner lucidity, a lucidity that is only possible because God has created objects in the world. “It is this radiance, and this alone, that makes existing things perceptible to human knowledge.”¹⁷ The truth of all things as Pieper describes it is a description of how things actually exist in the world and the relation between real objects and the mind. This is “commonly understood as ‘ontological truth’ and is distinguished from ‘logical truth,’ the truth of knowledge.” But these concepts should not be distinguished too much: they are intimately linked.¹⁸ That things are creatively thought, Pieper emphasizes, is to be taken “literally and not in a figurative sense.”¹⁹ The idea that things have an essence cannot be separated from the idea that this “essential character is the fruit of the form-giving thought that plans, devises, and creates.”²⁰ As mentioned above we can speak of the nature of created existing things only when they are expressly considered as *creatura*. This is exactly what Thomas means when he states “the truth that dwells in everything is what makes it real.”²¹ Pieper notes, however, it should be evident that the dictum about the truth of all things that is associated with the *philosophia negativa* loses its flavor and “its entire meaning as soon as it is separated from the notion of the universe as creation.”²²

15. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 13, 38; 7, 4; Matthew Cuddeback, “Josef Pieper on the Truth of All Things,” in *A Cosmopolitan Hermit: Modernity and Tradition in the Philosophy of Josef Pieper*, ed. Bernard N. Schumacher (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 228–50 at 229.

16. Pieper, *Silence*, 55–56.

17. Pieper, *Silence*, 55–56; Josef Pieper, *In Defense of Philosophy*, trans. Lothar Krauth (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1992), 74; Aquinas, *ST* 1, q. 21, a. 2; q. 16, a. 2; Cuddeback, “Truth,” 239.

18. Pieper, *Silence*, 50.

19. Pieper, *Silence*, 51.

20. Pieper, *Silence*, 50–51; Aquinas, *ST* 1, q. 93, a. 6.

21. Aquinas, *ST* 1, q. 17, a. 1; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles: Creation*, trans. James F Anderson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 2:24; 2:45–46; Pieper, *Silence*, 52; Josef Pieper, “Reality and the Good,” in *Living the Truth*, trans. Stella Lange (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1963), 109–82 at 121.

22. Pieper, *Defense*, 75; Bernard N. Schumacher, “Faith and Reason,” in Schumacher, *A Cosmopolitan Hermit*, 199–227 at 204.

Second, there is also another angle to the relation between mind and things mentioned above. The reality and truth of things also requires our perceiving minds. Natural things require two knowing subjects, between *intellectus divinus* and *intellectus humanus* (divine and human minds).²³ “In this ‘localization’ of existing things between the absolutely creative knowledge of God and the non-creative, reality-conforming knowledge of man is found the structure of all reality as a system in which the archetypes and the copies are both embraced.”²⁴ Within the *intellectus humanus* there is a sense in which our perceiving and gazing are important for knowledge of things. This can be further clarified by drawing upon Pieper’s use of the word *mensura* (measure), which he gets from Thomas.

Measure is realized in three realms of reality. The first is the relation of God and creature, the second is the relation of the artist to their art, the last relation is between the objective world of being and the knowledge able to be attained by persons. “The creative intellect, of God or of the human artist, forms within itself a pattern of the reality to be created; it ‘pre-forms’ within itself the form or nature of the reality. And because of this pre-forming, creative knowledge, the intellect or, rather, the pattern which has been formed in it becomes the ‘measure’ of reality.”²⁵ Measure should be thought of in terms of form or nature; the measure of reality is its external form and the model of reality. Thomas’s comment that God is the measure of all things means, “through the creative knowledge of God all real things are what they are; the divine knowledge is their exterior formal cause; all created things have their pre-form, their model, in the intellect of God; the interior forms of all reality exist as ‘ideas,’ as ‘preceding images’ in God.”²⁶ Here the idea of an artist is particularly helpful. The artist is the measure of her work.²⁷ This means the work is “pre-formed” in the mind of the artist. It is preformed in her creative knowledge. “In this there exists the model of the work. The idea that has taken form in the creative knowledge of the artist in the ‘exterior’ form of the work, through which it is what it is.”²⁸ The creative knowledge of God gives measure but receives none. “Natural reality is at once measured and itself measuring.” Human knowledge, on the other hand, is measured but does not give measure, at “least it is not what gives measure with respect to natural things.”²⁹ Objective reality, which is the measure of our knowledge, means that “real objects” are pre-forms, they are models of which our mind “cognitively forms and actually is.” The world of knowledge is “pre-formed in the objective world of being; the latter is the original

23. Thomas Aquinas, *Questiones Disputatae de Veritate*, trans. James V. McGlynn, Robert Schmidt, and Robert Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), 1, 2; Pieper, *Silence*, 53–54.

24. Pieper, *Silence*, 54.

25. Pieper, “Reality,” 121–22.

26. Pieper, “Reality,” 122; Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles: Creation*, 2:2:12; also see John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2001), 4–5.

27. Aquinas, *Questiones Disputatae de Veritate* 1, 8.

28. Pieper, “Reality,” 122–23.

29. Pieper, *Silence*, 54; also see Josef Pieper, “The Truth of All Things: An Inquiry into the Anthropology of the Middle Ages,” in Pieper, *Living the Truth*, 13–108 at 38.

image, the former the copy.”³⁰ Reality naturally preceded all human cognition. The intellect is not “of itself” but is secondary and dependent. Our intellects receive their measure from objects, that is, “human concept is not true by reason of itself, but by reason of its being consonant with things.”³¹

To summarize, for Pieper drawing on Thomas, the divine ideas have a double aspect of the “truth of all things.” In the first place it represents the creative fashioning of things in creation by God. “The essence of knowledge is the possession of the forms of objective reality; knowledge as an accomplished fact is not an “activity” of the intellect but a realization. It is the relation of the mind to the reality. It is the identity between the knowing soul and the reality, regarded from the point of view of the knowing soul, which in this identity realizes its own potentiality.”³² It is in this relationship between the intellect and reality that makes the conceptual content “true.” Truth is the “conformity (*conformitas*) and the assimilation (*adaequatio*) of reality and knowledge,” a relation that is realized in the act of knowledge. The truth of all things, understood as the foundation in the “artistry” of God, implies a twofold affirmation, the first being that all things are known by God.³³ This means that there is no existing thing which “is intrinsically ‘irrational,’ unknowable (indeed: unknown) or obscure.” This is not a notion confined to theology, which will be shown below. The second affirmation is that God’s knowledge is creative. Here Augustine’s comment in *Confessions* is relevant: “We see things because they exist, but they only exist because God sees them.”³⁴

Second, as just noted, because of the divine ideas and the “truth of all things” there is an intrinsic knowability of things for the human mind. “That which provides the measure, the *mensura*, and that which receives the measure, the *mensuratum*, are identical in their ‘what.’”³⁵ “The work of art, in so far as it has really ‘emerged’ into visible reality, is essentially identical with its original model in the mind of the artist; and the ‘what’ of our knowledge, insofar as it is true, is identical with the original ‘what’ of real objects, which are the measure of knowledge.”³⁶ That which provides the *mensura* and the *mensuratum* that receives it only differ in their positions in the order of importance and meaning. Our knowledge as *mensuratum*, as image and copy, is still reality in itself.³⁷ Matthew Cuddeback writes that the truth of all things “derives from their being stamped and measured by the divine artisan, who first *beholds them in His inner life*, in His ideas, where the creature is ‘wholly translucent and shadowlessly alive.’”³⁸

30. Pieper, “Reality,” 122–23.

31. Aquinas, *ST* 1–2, q. 93, a. 1, ad 3.

32. Pieper, “Reality,” 134; Aquinas, *Questiones Disputatae de Veritate*, 1, 1.

33. Aquinas, *Questiones Disputatae de Veritate*, 1, 2, ad 4.

34. Augustine, *Confessions*, 12, 38; Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. Edmund Hill, 2nd ed. (Hyde Park: New City, 1963), 6, 10.

35. Pieper, “Reality,” 124.

36. Pieper, “Reality,” 124.

37. Pieper, “Reality,” 125; also see Pieper, *Defense*, 74–75; Pieper, *Silence*, 54.

38. Cuddeback, “Truth,” 136.

Pieper's Negative Philosophy

This section will describe Pieper's understanding of negative theology and philosophy. The first is with reference to God. Humankind is unable to say anything affirmative, or positive, about God. We can only speak of him in negation. The second way of thinking of the negative identifies how humankind sees or conceives of reality. Here I will further elucidate how Pieper's negative philosophy relies on a negative (apophatic) theology that exists behind it.

Thomas incorporated into his own thinking the recognition of mystery, both in creation and in God, and thus the "unscholastic" element of negative theology and philosophy as a counter to *ratio's* penchant to emphasize the positive.³⁹ "We are not able to know what God is, but only what he is not,"⁴⁰ a statement that is also present in *De Potentia*: "This is the ultimate human knowledge about God—to know that we do not know God (*quod [homo] sciat se Deum nescire*)."⁴¹ Thomas draws upon Pseudo-Dionysius's *The Divine Names* in order to make these apophatic moves. Pseudo-Dionysius maintains that humankind, being finite *creatura*, cannot give God any appropriate name, unless God himself reveals it.⁴² What we say about God must immediately be unsaid,⁴³ an idea that is even present, to a lesser extent, in Aristotle's comment that to know an affirmation is to know its negation.⁴⁴ Dionysius then proceeds to show that even the revealed names just mentioned cannot express the nature of God in so far as these names have to be comprehensible to our finite intellects. Any affirmative statement immediately requires a corrective, a "coordinate negation." Within the apophatic and negative tradition, it is even inappropriate to call God "being" or "real" since we gain these concepts from things to which God has given reality. God, the creator, is not of the same nature as what He has created.⁴⁵ Finally, after the initial negative move is made, "the mystic theology concludes by finally negating the negation on the ground that God infinitely surpasses anything that man may possibly

39. Josef Pieper, *Scholasticism; Personalities and Problems of Medieval Philosophy*, trans. Clara Winston and Richard Winston (South Bend: St. Augustine's, 1960), 53; Pieper, *Silence*, 37.

40. Aquinas, *ST 1*, q. 3, prologue; q. 12, a. 13, ad 1; q. 13, a. 1, ad 2.

41. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Potentia Dei*, trans. English Dominican Fathers (Westminster: Newman, 1952), 7, 5, ad 14; Josef Pieper, *An Anthology* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989), 100; Pieper, *Silence*, 64.

42. See for example Pseudo-Dionysius, "Divine Names," in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, ed. Colm Luibhéid and Paul Rorem (New York: Paulist, 1987), 865C; 1 596A 1–12; also see Pseudo-Dionysius, "Mystical Theology," in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, 1000B.

43. Lash, *Pilgrims*, 19; Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 20.

44. Aristotle, "De Interpretatione," in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. J. L. Ackrill (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1:17a 31–33; Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*, 2, 15.

45. Pseudo-Dionysius, "Divine Names," 585B–588B.

say of him, whether it be affirmative or negative.”⁴⁶ Pieper draws the connection between Dionysius and Plato citing Plato's statement from *The Republic* that the Good, *theion*, is not an entity, but surpasses Being itself in dignity and power.⁴⁷ Thomas is not only influenced by Dionysius with regard to this apophatic theology, it is also present in Augustine's statement, “Whatever you understand cannot be God (*Si comprehendis, non est Deus*)—simply because you understand it.”⁴⁸

We have seen that God is honored by our inability to express what he is fully “not because we cannot say or understand anything about him, but because we know that we are incapable of comprehending him.”⁴⁹ From the context of negative theology we can now look specifically at the philosophical turn found in the tradition as well as in Pieper. For Thomas, Pieper notes, this negative element concerning silence and speech about God is not purely theological. In *De Potentia* there is a move towards negative philosophy. “This is the extreme of human knowledge of God: to know that we do not know God.”⁵⁰ Pieper interprets this statement of Thomas as “human reason's self-judgment and man's relationship to the universe in general.”⁵¹

Just as we cannot comprehend God we can also not fully comprehend creation. Drawing upon John 1:11, Pieper notes that to comprehend means “to know an object as much as it is knowable in itself, to transform all potential knowledge into actual knowledge, to exhaust, every possibility of knowing more.” But the finite minds of humankind are “never capable of grasping all the potential knowledge offered by any existing reality. Rather, whatever is knowable in and of itself, always and necessarily exceeds what can actually be known.”⁵² The essential reality of things is something that we can never penetrate. This is because we can “never fully grasp these likenesses of the Divine Ideas precisely as likeness.”⁵³ This is opposed to the form of rationalism that asserts “there cannot be anything which exceeds the power of human reason to comprehend.” Many great Scholastic thinkers avoided this rationalistic approach.⁵⁴ Negative theology, as a corrective to rationalism, is not “irrational.” To think so “would be to falsify the situation; for the basis of these ‘negative’ statements is not an unsubstantiated vague feeling, but the clear, ‘rational,’ insight that God infinitely exceeds the

46. Pieper, *Scholasticism*, 52.

47. Pieper, *Scholasticism*, 171n26; Plato, *Republic*, 509b8, trans. in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper, trans. G. M. A. Grube and C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 1130.

48. Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, 1, 6, 6, trans. R. P. H. Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 10; Augustine, *The Trinity*, 5, 1; 1; 7, 3; 7.

49. Pieper, *Scholasticism*, 53; Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boethium De Trinitate*, trans. Rose Brennan and Armand Mauer, n.d., q. 2, a. 1, ad 6; q. 1, a. 2, ad 1.

50. Aquinas, *Potentia Dei*, q. 7, a. 5, ad 14.

51. Pieper, *Scholasticism*, 54.

52. Pieper, “Truth,” 58.

53. Pieper, *Silence*, 67.

54. Pieper, *Scholasticism*, 44; Pieper, *Silence*, 48; 51. For a broader discussion of “scholastic rationalism” as Pieper describes it see Richard William Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 1:34.

scope of human understanding.” Thomas speaks of proofs, or demonstrations, but what he is really attempting to develop is a reason of convenience, which Pieper notes is “an entirely different affair from proof in the modern sense of the word. To develop a ‘reason of convenience’ means nothing more than to show how the truth of faith ‘accords’ and ‘suits’ what we know from our own experience or rational argument.”⁵⁵

From here two points should be made. First, Pieper makes a distinction between *res naturalis* and *res artificialis*. The unknowability of created things by the human faculties applies to natural things, *res naturalis*, and not to *res artificialis*, or artificial things.⁵⁶ Second, when it comes to the *res naturalis*, we can never grasp this correspondence between the original pattern in God and the natural created copy, in which the truth of things consists. Created things are more complex than we can perceive. It is impossible for us “as spectators,” to contemplate the emergence of things from “the eye of God.”⁵⁷ C. S. Lewis, who was a significant influence on Pieper, also asserts that things that are *res naturalis* are not simple. “They look simple, but they are not,” Lewis writes.⁵⁸ The essence of things is unknown to us; essential differences in things are not known.⁵⁹

What has been shown thus far is that for Thomas and Pieper humanity cannot know the relationship between natural reality and the archetypal divine ideas.⁶⁰ Perceiving minds can know things, but cannot formally know their truth. Only the copy can be known, that is, what has been designed; archetypal patterns and first designs of things cannot be known. “It is part of the very nature of things that their knowability cannot be wholly exhausted by any finite intellect, *because* these things are creatures, which means that the very element which makes them capable of being known must necessarily be at the same time the reason why things are unfathomable.”⁶¹ This is where humankind can see the fundamental relation between truth and unknowability. What Pieper means by unknowable, firstly, is an indication that something “in itself” is capable of being known, “but which a particular knowing faculty is unable to grasp because it lacks a sufficient power of penetration.” This is

55. Pieper, *Scholasticism*, 44–45. This is suggestive of William Desmond’s “metaxological” understanding of reality. In his book *God and the Between* Desmond argues that human life and reasoning exist “between” pure transcendence and pure immanence. See William Desmond, *God and the Between* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), particularly pages 241–56; also see D. Stephen Long, *Speaking of God: Theology, Language and Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 306.

56. Pieper, *Silence*, 92–93; Pieper, *Defense*, 78; also see Schumacher, “Faith and Reason,” 202–3.

57. Pieper, *Silence*, 63.

58. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1952), 41, 40.

59. Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*, q. 4, a. 1, ad 8; for another reading of the *res naturalis* and *res artificialis* distinction see Bernard N. Schumacher, *A Philosophy of Hope: Josef Pieper and the Contemporary Debate on Hope* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), 12–23.

60. Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*, q. 1, a. 1.

61. Pieper, *Silence*, 60.

referring to objects that cannot be seen by the naked eye, which is associated more with deficiency in the eye rather than with the object itself. "In this context, 'unknowable' denotes that the particular faculty is not powerful enough to realize and make actual the possibility of being known which certainly exists."⁶² In *Defense of Philosophy*, Pieper equates this kind of unknowability with our inability to see the stars during the day.⁶³ Pieper notes a second way in which something is unknowable. Something can be unknowable in that "no such possibility of being known is given, and that there is nothing to be known; that not only on the side of a particular subject is there a defect of apprehension and penetration, but that on the side of the object there is no possibility to be known."⁶⁴

It is the latter understanding of unknowable that Pieper, through Thomas, finds impossible in relation to the truth of all things. This is because being is created, and because it is creatively thought by God it therefore carries in it its own "light." It is self-radiant "because it is." "Accordingly, for St. Thomas, the unknowable can never denote something in itself dark and impenetrable, but only something that has so much light that a particular finite faculty of knowledge cannot absorb it all."⁶⁵ When we examine the relationship between truth with mystery and unknowability, "we discover that this interrelation does not become manifest except through the fundamental thought that everything which can be made the object of human knowledge is either *creatura* or Creator."⁶⁶ Present in Thomas's negative philosophy is the idea that the quest for knowledge cannot succeed in discovering the essence of a single fly,⁶⁷ but Thomas also notes, "the mind makes its way to the essence of things."⁶⁸ These two propositions belong together for Thomas. "That the mind does attain to things is proven precisely in the fact that it enters into the unfathomable light; because and to the extent that it does attain to the reality of things, it discovers that they cannot be fathomed."⁶⁹ "The object of philosophy is given to the philosopher on the basis of a hope,"⁷⁰ an idea that will be discussed later in this article. This "Knowing non-knowing" is directly connected to Dionysius's conviction that all created reality is unfathomable and is a mystery in the strictest sense of the word.⁷¹

Pieper looks to Thomas's discussion of language to help him make this point.⁷² The etymology of the Latin word for stone, *lapis*, literally means *laedere pedem*, to

62. Pieper, *Silence*, 59.

63. Pieper, *Defense*, 72–73.

64. Pieper, *Silence*, 60.

65. Pieper, *Silence*, 60.

66. Pieper, *Silence*, 49.

67. Pieper, *Anthology*, 100; Pieper, *Silence*, 64.

68. Aquinas, *ST*, 1–2, q. 31, a. 5.

69. Pieper, *Silence*, 68.

70. Josef Pieper, "The Philosophical Act," in *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (South Bend: St. Augustine's, 1952), 125–26.

71. Pieper, *Scholasticism*, 54.

72. It is an issue of language that is at the heart of apophatic and negative theology given that *apophasis* "is a Greek neologism for the breakdown of speech." See Turner, *Darkness*, 20.

“hurt one’s foot.”⁷³ There is a sense here that things have a mystical and “eternal name” that humankind is unable to utter. We are ignorant about the “fundamental forms, their essential differentiations. We are unable to identify a thing by its essential name and that we are constrained to name things for some superficial and accidental trait.” Both God as well as things “have an ‘eternal name’ that cannot be pronounced by any human being.” This is meant to be literally and not figuratively or poetically.⁷⁴ “Our cognitive difficulties do not result from some objective darkness in an object but rather from ‘our inadequate perceptive powers.’”⁷⁵ It is with this in mind that we will begin to look specifically at what the difference is between philosophy and science for Pieper.

Mystery and Science

Pieper sees distinctive differences between negative philosophy and modern science. Here I will look at the limits of science with regard to Pieper’s conviction that to do philosophy is to be concerned with what he called the totality of reality. This calls attention to the interrelationship between philosophy and science concerning each discipline’s respective method. I will then look at the more explicit negative and apophatic aspect of the relationship between modern science and philosophy.

The philosopher “must never formally exclude from his consideration any possible information on the realm of reality. The very moment he would do this he would cease to fulfill his proper task, which consists in the reflection on the totality of all that is real, and this from every possible angle.” Further, for Pieper, whoever claims to use the approach appropriate for modern science by saying, “I disregard, not as philosopher, anything that cannot be demonstrated cogently and proved critically, I am interested only in things ‘clear and distinct’—such a one would already have distorted the genesis of the philosophical quest.” At this point one has already excluded the openness that is the mark of philosophy “*per definitionem*.”⁷⁶ The other side of the coin is the idea that as soon as someone, a scientist for example, sets out to pursue perfect knowledge or to understand completely, they wander into the interconnected totality of things and the entirety of reality: They have become a philosopher, and are then “essentially different” whether they are aware of it or not. It can be seen here that the relationship between philosophy and modern science is fluid. This will be shown in more detail below. Juan Frank remarks, “to see philosophy in this way results in an attitude of contemplative silence, in which the mind is open to

73. Aquinas, *Ver*, q. 4, a. 1, ad 8.

74. Pieper, *Anthology*, 101.

75. Pieper, “Truth,” 58; Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s “Metaphysics”*, new ed. of rev. ed. (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox, 1997), 2, 1, 282; see also 2, 1, 281.

76. Pieper, *Defense*, 51, 105; Josef Pieper, *The End of Time: A Meditation on the Philosophy of History*, trans. Michael Bullock (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1954), 14.

reality and gives up the pretension of having found a definite 'scientific' answer."⁷⁷ The kind of philosophy that Pieper is arguing for is what Christopher Insole has called "philosophy as theology."⁷⁸ Philosophy as theology is interested in what natural reason can affirm and reflect by utilizing all parts of reality, including God. As Insole points out, a subtle and generous interpreter of Thomas would find this nuance in the first question of the *Summa Theologiae* as well as in Immanuel Kant, who was also influential on Pieper, especially with regard to the topic of hope. The way that philosophy is being thought of here is different than the discipline of modern analytic philosophy, for example.

Modern scientists by definition approach their object of study under "a clearly specified and particular aspect, and who therefore has no business talking about 'God and the world.' To talk this way would be as scientific as it would be unphilosophical *not* to do so."⁷⁹ Further, what makes the scientist "so sure that there are no possible insights into reality, which are in fact true and yet can neither be verified nor defined 'clearly and distinctively'?"⁸⁰ This is a sentiment shared by cosmologist Martin Rees who states that there are questions beyond science and that they are the "province of philosophers and theologians."⁸¹

What is peculiar for Pieper, in both philosophy and theology, is that by the very nature of these disciplines they "have to do with the whole of reality—and it alone."⁸² When a person orients her thinking in accordance with the ideals of science, this is to adopt a critical posture, which means "to refuse to accept anything as valid, true, and real unless it can be proved by the methods of exact science."⁸³ She must deny the validity of anything which cannot be substantiated by the methods of exact science. Pieper further writes,

Indispensable as the scientific attitude may be, it does not represent the totality of man's intellectual and spiritual existence. For man endowed with full intellectual and spiritual vitality is insatiable in asking questions about the reality *as a whole*, about the totality of the world. Even if, to begin with, he concentrates his attention on a highly specific and concrete phenomenon and event, he still wants to know the ultimate nature of this phenomenon or event viewed from every conceivable aspect.⁸⁴

77. Juan F. Franck, "The Platonic Inspiration of Josef Pieper's Philosophy," in Schumacher, *A Cosmopolitan Hermit*, 251–78.

78. Christopher J. Insole, *The Intolerable God: Kant's Theological Journey* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 152–54.

79. Pieper, *Defense*, 68.

80. Pieper, *Defense*, 51; Pieper, "Act," 123; also see Lash, *Pilgrims*, 6, 12.

81. Martin J. Rees, *Our Cosmic Habitat* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), xi.

82. Josef Pieper, "Openness for the Totality of Things," in *What Does "Academic" Mean? Two Essays on the Chances of the University Today*, trans. Dan Farrelly (South Bend: St. Augustine's, 2015), 55–80 at 75.

83. Josef Pieper, "The Problem of Faith Today," in *Problems of Modern Faith: Essays and Addresses*, trans. Jan Van Heurch (Chicago: Franciscan, 1986), 3.

84. Pieper, "The Problem of Faith Today," 4.

It is, however, part of the tragedy of the scientific method that the hierarchy that was central to sciences before the Enlightenment has been flattened. In the old view, held by thinkers like Aristotle, philosophy and theology were the noblest of the sciences because they were the sciences of the highest reality of eternal being.⁸⁵ The hierarchy of being has been flattened to the degree to which the scientific method is strictly applicable.⁸⁶ “The principle of scientific exactness, in turn, by itself does not enable us to distinguish between things on an ontologically ‘higher’ or ‘lower’ level, not even between knowledge more beneficial for us or less. It does not allow such distinction; it rather prevents it.” Being “critical” for the philosopher means not ignoring anything. “The ordered structure of the world, containing in hierarchy, greater and lesser actualizations of *being*, and above all a highest reality that at the same time is the most profound foundation and origin of everything, of every single thing and of the whole as well.”⁸⁷

For Thomas it was the case that the smallest amount of “knowledge about the most sublime realities is more desirable than the most perfect knowledge about the lowest things.”⁸⁸ What is being expressed here with regard to modern science and negative philosophy is that the methods of the former attempt to truncate the object of study to the degree that multiple aspects of reality are not taken into account. Pieper writes that “the demands on the philosopher can never be fulfilled.”⁸⁹ The demand on the philosopher cannot be mollified in any positive sense because the attempt to establish the boundaries of the question become too extensive. Nothing is off limits when asking the question.

It is still, however, Pieper’s conviction, based on the tradition on which he draws, that it is responsible philosophy that draws upon the empirical discoveries of the sciences. For this reason he notes that “Scientific research and philosophy in themselves have never been one another’s real enemies.”⁹⁰ The philosopher “remains dependent on the information continuously being revealed by the sciences. He is not permitted to say: since I am inquiring about the ‘metaphysical nature’ of man I am not interested in what psychology, the physiology of the brain, behavioral research have to say about man.” In fact, if the philosopher were to say this she “would immediately have ceased any serious philosophizing, no longer considering every conceivable aspect of reality.”⁹¹ Philosophy needs the discoveries of quantum mechanics, for example, in order to do its work. It is still the case, on the other hand, that philosophy’s method, because of its emphasis on the totality of things and its acknowledgement of mystery, is offensive and impossible by scientific standards. Andrew Louth highlights one example of this bifurcation in pointing out that for modern science “a problem is a

85. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1026a, 1064b.

86. Andrew Louth, *Discerning the Mystery: An Essay on the Nature of Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 46.

87. Pieper, *Defense*, 88–89.

88. Aquinas, *ST*, 1, a.1, q. 5, ad 1.

89. Pieper, *Defense*, 105.

90. Pieper, *Defense*, 83–84; Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (South Bend: St. Augustine’s, 1952), 42–43; Louth, *Discerning*, 54.

91. Pieper, “Openness,” 72, 73.

temporary hindrance, and a proper response to it is to attempt to remove it. The mysterious is quite different: it does not so much confront me, as envelop me, draw me into itself; it is not a temporary barrier, but a permanent focus of my attention.”⁹² Empirical science, “on the point of taking possession of their realms, would have to reject the leadership claims of philosophy as grotesquely exaggerated and unreasonable—that is, if they ever became aware of such claims.”⁹³ Those who reflect on reality as such, namely the philosopher and the theologian, “will necessarily have a concept of ‘perfect knowledge’ different from that held by the individual sciences, and also that for him knowledge is perfect inasmuch as reality is contemplated in its totality and in its foremost manifestations.”⁹⁴ This is because, as mentioned above, philosophy has at its heart a sense of apophatic mystery.

Pieper is saying that these two disciplines have different goals. Science can meet its end because of the kinds of answerable questions that are appropriate to the practice. It is the philosophical end that is not obtainable.⁹⁵ Philosophical questions cannot be answered because they take into account the whole of reality and depend on the achievement of ends of other sciences.⁹⁶ These two methods have different ends. This is also an acknowledgement, though, that modern science is not concerned with the essence of things and is not concerned with the whole of truth. Pieper says as much when he writes, “the method of each science is the correct one when that science allows itself to be determined and molded by the object. History and psychology are exact in a manner different from the exactness of physics and biology.”⁹⁷

I have been looking at the difference between the methods of philosophy and science from the perspective of the totality of things; I will now look at the issue of nature’s mysterious depth and the limits of science in perceiving these depths. As we have seen, because things are creatively thought by an infinite God, we are not able to comprehend the full essence of things. To do the theorizing that is appropriate to philosophy is to be open to the mysterious and unknowable character of being itself, the investigative penetrating of “unfathomable depths of the world.”⁹⁸ These depths are not able to be perceived by modern scientific method. We can never get to the essence of the object of study. Pieper writes, “for even in the realm of the natural sciences, it is not the case that one simply needs to apply his brain with more or less energy in order to arrive at a certain truth; and this is true above all, if the truth in question concerns the meaning of the universe and life itself.”⁹⁹ It is not enough to merely be “intelligent” or “bright.” This is the pre-Socratic and Platonic interpretation of the word

92. Louth, *Discerning*, 68.

93. Pieper, “Openness,” 71.

94. Pieper, *Defense*, 88; see also 86–87.

95. Pieper, *Defense*, 14, 71.

96. Pieper, “Openness,” 67.

97. Pieper, *Anthology*, ix.

98. Josef Pieper, “What Does ‘Academic’ Mean?” in *What Does “Academic” Mean? Two Essays on the Chances of the University Today*, 3–54 at 14.

99. Pieper, “Act,” 147.

philosophia that is taken up and refined in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and adopted by the thinkers of the Middle Ages. Pieper points to Thomas's commentary on the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle where there are some interesting variations of the above themes.

Wisdom, because it is sought for its own sake, cannot become the full possession of any man. The results of the special sciences we can completely "have" and "possess"; but it belongs to the nature of these results that they are "means": they can never be so satisfying to us that we would seek them out fully for their own sakes. But what can satisfy us can also be sought for its own sake, and even that is only given on the basis of a hope: "Only that wisdom is sought for its own sake (says Thomas) which does not come to man as a possession; much more so, would this lovingly sought-for wisdom be such as to be granted to man as a loan (*aliquid mutuatum*)."¹⁰⁰

For Thomas all ways of creaturely knowing, whether doing theology or philosophy, have been followed to the very end and boundary of mystery. "The more intensely we pursue these ways of knowledge, the more is revealed to us—of the darkness, but also of the reality of mystery."¹⁰¹ That is to say, the philosophical act occurs where "the knowable and the inexhaustible aspects touch." Philosophy is "triggered by the awareness that world and existence are indeed beyond our full comprehension. This dividing line, incidentally, is not defined once and for all. It cannot be determined, *in concreto*, where exactly it is situated."¹⁰² There are no limits to the philosophical object; the journey is never done for the philosopher.¹⁰³ For Pieper philosophy

does not work in a way that the more a subject matter is explored, the more those "white areas on the map" would diminish and disappear. On the contrary, this image, entirely appropriate for the scientific exploration of the world, applies in almost the opposite sense: the more overwhelming becomes the awareness of the vast field of what remains unknown. This, of course, is so because of the infinite dimension of the blueprint that the philosopher, through his philosophy, sets out to decipher.¹⁰⁴

There is progress in philosophy. This is undeniable for Pieper, "yet not so much in the succession of generations as rather in the personal and dynamic existence of the philosopher himself, indeed to the extent to which he is able to behold, in silence and openness, the full depth and extension of his proper object, which is ever new and at the same time so very ancient."¹⁰⁵

Why then, if the scientist is incapable of knowing the essence of things, should they continue doing science? "The dictum, *omne ens est verum*, even its rather optimistic rendering almost in the form of a slogan belonging to the politics of science ('it makes

100. Pieper, "Act," 128, 130–31; Aquinas, *Metaphysics*, 1, 3.

101. Pieper, *Silence*, 38.

102. Pieper, *Defense*, 79.

103. Pieper, *Defense*, 80.

104. Pieper, *Defense*, 80.

105. Pieper, *Defense*, 92.

sense to press on with research’).” This dictum has two aspects. On the one side it reveals that all things are accessible to an ever-deeper cognition, on the other side it is impossible for things to be comprehended completely. Both the ability and the inability to perceive reality can be experienced empirically.

And yet, the notion that both spring from the same root, that both are—in a certain sense—even identical; that, more specifically, all things in themselves are entirely knowable because they originate in the infinite *lucidity* of the divine Logos, and that they are, nevertheless, inexhaustible for us because they originate, once again, in the *infinite* lucidity of the divine Logos—this, of course, lies beyond all empirical demonstration.¹⁰⁶

It is categorically impossible to deny that “the rootedness of all things in the thought of an inventive and creative Mind, and on the other hand to take for granted, and to explain as if nothing had happened, the empirically manifested fact of the knowability of these very same things.”¹⁰⁷ Good science needs to be done. Humankind should continue to investigate further the depths of the nature. Every bit of new true scientific discovery teaches the philosopher and theologian more about the universe.

And this opens up the question: How does the theological virtue of hope pertain to the practice of philosophy and modern science?

Status Viatoris, Philosophy, and Science

As we have seen thus far, there is a separation between reality and our ability to perceive reality because it is creatively thought by God. This same kind of separation is also found in Pieper’s anthropology and how the virtue of hope relates to the practice of doing philosophy and science. Essential to the virtue of hope is a “negative” element that has become associated with the very idea of philosophizing from its very start.¹⁰⁸ “Ever since it began, philosophy has never been understood as a special, superior form of knowing, but rather, as a form of knowing one’s own limits.”¹⁰⁹ This “negative” aspect of hope is captured in the tradition’s conception of the *status viatoris*, which “is one of the basic concepts of every Christian rule of life.”¹¹⁰ What is being expressed in the *status viatoris* is that humankind’s being is always dynamic, it

106. Pieper, *Defense*, 78–79.

107. Pieper, *Defense*, 76; also see Cuddeback, “Truth,” 234, 237.

108. For an excellent study on the divine ideas in Aquinas and the metaphysics of hope see Benjamin DeSpain, “Hope for the Doctrine of the Divine Ideas: A Study on the Habit of Thinking Theologically in the Summa Theologiae of Thomas Aquinas” (PhD diss., Durham University, 2016), <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/11530/>. See especially 120–35.

109. Pieper, “Act,” 125–26; Josef Pieper, *For the Love of Wisdom: Essays on the Nature of Philosophy*, ed. Berthold Wald, trans. Roger Wasserman (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2006), 303.

110. Josef Pieper, “On Hope,” in *Faith, Hope, Love*, trans. Mary Frances McCarthy (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1977), 91; Pieper, *End of Time*, 146–47; also see Schumacher, *Philosophy of Hope*, 41.

“is never just ‘there.’” Humankind, as physical and spiritual reality is constantly moving on, is existentially “becoming”; that is, we are “on the way.” For humankind to “be” Pieper writes, “means to ‘be on the way’”—humankind “*cannot be* in any other form; man is intrinsically a pilgrim, ‘not yet arrived,’ regardless of whether he is aware of this or not.”¹¹¹ In a Thomist sense, the end and goal of this becoming, and the driving force behind it, is the good. “Even if a person pursues evil, they intend some conceived good. This yearning is for happiness.” Everyone, whether conscious of it or not, yearns for perfect happiness. “In *this* lies man’s fulfillment, man’s *good*, the beckoning aim and destiny of his unfolding existence.”¹¹² We have not yet achieved this end, thus we are *viators* and hope to achieve the goal of happiness. For Pieper, in the virtue of hope, more than in any of the other virtues, humankind understands and affirms that we are *creatura*, that we have been created by God¹¹³ and that there is some end that we move towards that we have not achieved yet.¹¹⁴ What will be shown below is that for Pieper hope is the domain of philosophy, not modern science.

The structure of hope grounded in the *status viatoris* is an important point of distinction between philosophy and the sciences. Both philosophy and science have built-in a hopefulness of wonder, which is the very structure of hope.¹¹⁵ But, for Pieper, “it is in the nature of the special sciences to emerge from a state of wonder to the extent that they reach ‘results.’” But the philosopher never emerges from wonder.¹¹⁶ There is a “relationship with the object that is different in principle in the two cases.” The question of the sciences “is in principle ultimately answerable, or, at least, it is not unanswerable.” The answer to scientific questions can be found in a final way, or will be found one day. The kinds of questions appropriate to science are something like, “What is the cause of a certain disease?” Questions that are appropriate to philosophy are “What does it mean to say ultimately?” “What is it to know something?” “What does it mean to be human?” These philosophical questions can never be conclusively and exhaustively answered.¹¹⁷ It is not possible that someone will say, “It is now philosophically proven that such and such is the case, and can’t be otherwise.”

Pieper notes that the proper antonym to the *status viatoris* is to be *status comprehensoris*. To be a *viator* means to be progressing towards eternal happiness and to have encompassed this goal; to be a *comprehensor*, means to possess beatitude.¹¹⁸ “Beatitude is to be understood primarily as the fulfillment objectively appropriate to our nature and only secondarily as the subjective response to this fulfillment. And this fulfillment is the

111. Josef Pieper, *Only the Lover Sings: Art and Contemplation*, trans. Lothar Krauth (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988), 42 emphasis original.

112. Pieper, *Only The Lover Sings*, 43; Pieper, “On Hope,” 97; Aquinas, *Potentia Dei*, 5, 1, ad 16.

113. Pieper, “On Hope,” 98.

114. For more on the relationship between creation and the virtue of hope, see Pieper, “On Hope,” 93, 96, 97; Pieper, *Silence*, 69–70. Pieper cites Aquinas to express the importance of creation; see Aquinas, *ST*, 1–2, q. 53, a. 3, ad 3; 1, q. 10, a. 5; Aquinas, *Potentia Dei*, 5, 1, ad 16.

115. For a short, but illuminating discussion of science and wonder see Harrison, *Territories*, 169.

116. Pieper, “Act,” 125–26.

117. Pieper, “Act,” 125–26.

118. Aquinas, *ST*, 3, q. 15, a. 10.

Beatific Vision.”¹¹⁹ Being and hope are “grounded in absolute being and having an existential orientation towards being, toward one’s own being and, at the same time, towards Divine Being.”¹²⁰ One who has fully comprehended, and arrived, is no longer a *viator*, but a *comprehensor*.¹²¹ The end, the beatific vision, happiness, is to comprehend and is in part to know the essence of the *ipsa res*. We simply do not fully comprehend until we have attained the end appropriate to our rational natures. The one who asks philosophical questions is constantly “on the way,” is constantly *viator* to a full comprehension of the ultimate foundation of the world and existence. A comprehension that is never able to be attained.¹²² “Philosophical thought is not pure knowledge; it is a path directed toward a grasp of being and the world, an attentive listening to the silent voice of the world, in which the truth of being is manifest.”¹²³ The philosopher “who endeavors to reflect on the totality of the world and existence, that is, to philosophize, sets foot on a path that in this life will never come to an end.” Humankind is always, by virtue of being human, “one the way” and this hope will “never find fulfillment.”¹²⁴

In sum, to do philosophy and to ask philosophical questions is to be on the way “(loving, searching, hoping)” to the goal and final end of human existence, and yet, “it is in principle incapable of reaching this goal.”¹²⁵ The scientific worldview does “not acknowledge any unsolvable riddles; all our knowledge of reality is gained strictly through the techniques of the different scientific disciplines; any other ‘ontology’ is so much empty talk.”¹²⁶ As we have seen, for Pieper, philosophy, and even existence itself, is structured on hope. This opens up the possibility that one must first have to acknowledge and to accept the vague connection “between the intrinsic structure of existence and the philosophical act as the mind’s attention, in search and hope, to the mystery of the world—not merely as something ‘quite possible’ but as something that man cannot ignore nor do without.”¹²⁷ The ethical deed, which includes the virtue of hope, is not more or less than manual techniques but is a movement towards self-realization.

The human self, which grows toward perfection by accomplishing to good, is a “work” that surpasses all preconceived blueprints based upon man’s own calculations. Because we are *status viatoris*, an important aspect of humanness directly related to the virtue of hope, there can be no technique for the good or for perfection. The architectural plan of humankind is only given in parts and is revealed to us moment to moment.¹²⁸

119. Pieper, “On Hope,” 92.

120. Pieper, “On Hope,” 97; 95; Aquinas, *Potentia Dei*, 5, 4.

121. Pieper, “On Hope,” 91–92.

122. Schumacher, “Faith and Reason,” 205.

123. Schumacher, “Faith and Reason,” 206.

124. Pieper, *Defense*, 85; Josef Pieper, *Hope and History* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 19.

125. Pieper, “Act,” 130.

126. Pieper, *Defense*, 85–86.

127. Pieper, *Defense*, 86.

128. Josef Pieper, “Prudence,” in *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, trans. Clara Winston and Richard Winston (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 3–42 at 29–30. For Gilbert Meilaender’s take on Pieper and hope see Gilbert Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 25, 38, 42–43; also see Schumacher, *Philosophy of Hope*.

Conclusion

I hope to have shown how Pieper, as a previously untapped resource, can be a relevant and important voice against the claims of contemporary scientism and against the assumptions of non-metaphysically framed knowledge. But this demonstration raises further questions. For example, Given what we know about Pieper's approach to science, what are the problems with scientism? From Pieper's perspective, it is important to remember that the scientific method is intended to cut off the edges of inquiry for the sake of clarity, distinction, and precision. The scientific method is not intended to give us the full picture of reality. Something is precise if it is neatly cut off, meaning that a certain aspect, a partial phenomenon, is separated from a more complex reality and is present as an isolated specimen to the observer.¹²⁹ What inevitably develops from this approach is that the "'objective' world, in its most restrictive sense, is taken to be the totality of what is real, which constitutes a first impoverishment; and human reality is treated like the most inert of these 'objects' to which it is assimilated."¹³⁰ The understanding of reality in all its mystery and fullness, however, cannot be made precise in this way. The danger of a knowledge culture that is instrumentally unconcerned with transcendence and ontology and values scientific precision, is the possibility of epistemic hubris given the above. In the West we have developed a perspective about the practice of science and its discoveries that everything that can be known is able to be discovered by modern science. This remains a mostly unstated assumption that is perpetuated by unnuanced statements by news outlets that resemble remarks like, "science has now shown X." Because of our unquestioned assumptions about the nature of science and our own knowledge, statements like these are commonplace and remain unchecked and assumed.

How is it, then, that theology should be engaged with culture, modern science, and the "secular" academy? Why does modern science need theological foundations? Pieper, I think, has a good answer to these kinds of questions in his book *Leisure: Basis of Culture* through his discussion of *cultus* and worship, but more specifically in his essay "Openness to the Totality of Things." What makes a university its orientation of *universum*, an orientation to the "totality of things."¹³¹ As mentioned earlier, science knowledge is perfect if it succeeds in capturing a specific and "cut off" instance of reality, "no matter what kind, through clear concepts and precise description."¹³² The university is a place where disciplines with a variety of methodologies and objects of study have the opportunity to come into dynamic contact. It is in this context that opportunities for dialogue where the sciences keep philosophers and theologians

129. Pieper, *Defense*, 100.

130. Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, trans. Edith M. Riley, Anne Englund Nash, and Mark Sebanc (London: Sheed and Ward, 1949), 425; also see Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986). Funkenstein argues that after the Enlightenment all knowledge is reduced to one methodology.

131. Pieper, "Openness," 60.

132. Pieper, *Defense*, 86–87.

responsible to new developments and discoveries and philosophy and theology continue to remind the sciences of the big picture. In Pieper's essay "What Does 'Academic' Mean?" he writes, "it is this moving out of our enclosed narrow environment—with all its rigidly defined aspects—into the open universe of total reality where we encounter being as being. It is the astonishment experienced, as penetrating research presses forward and is confronted with the unfathomable depths of the world"—for example with the "mysterious character of being itself."¹³³ Reality is impenetrable, but we can delve deeper into the mystery if a variety of academic disciplines remain focused on the totality of being and in dialogue with each other in the spirit of *universum*.

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133. Pieper, "Academic," 14.