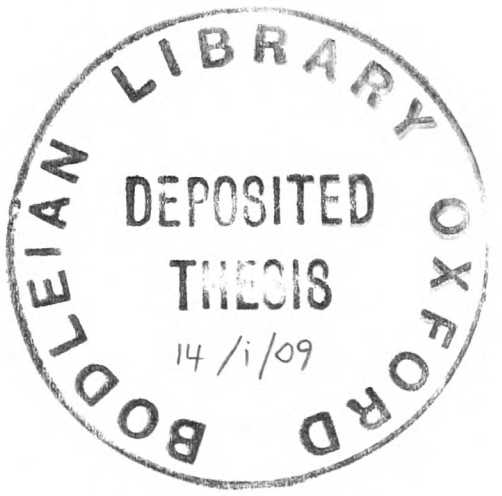
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‘The Distinction’ and ‘The Relation’:

Creation and the Creator in Burrell and Schillebeeckx



'The Distinction' and 'The Relation': Creation and the Creator in Burrell and Schillebeeckx

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Abstract

This treatise investigates the philosophical components of Christian creation-faith, considering their character and the connections between them, developing a particular expression of the distinction and relation between creation and its Creator. The work of David Burrell and Edward Schillebeeckx furnishes tools for that development, in two ways: firstly, by supplying a terminology of distinction and relation that shapes the discourse; consequently, by facilitating the study of the interaction between 'the distinction' and 'the relation' of creation, which, in both authors' work, is dialectical in character.

The study assesses whether Burrell and Schillebeeckx each stress one of these concepts at the expense of the other, finding the evidence suggestive but not compelling. It examines dialectic more closely, describing Burrell's dialectic as polar and Schillebeeckx's as relational. The polar nature of Burrell's dialectic generates a tension between the *relata*, tending to pull them apart. Schillebeeckx's relational dialectic results, rather, in a mutual interaction in which the *relata* support and enrich one another.

A preference is voiced for Schillebeeckx's relational dialectic, an organizing principle not only of his account of creation, but of his philosophical theology more generally. His method of correlation is examined, concentrating on the way it directs his accounts of praxis and of humanism. Relational dialectic then serves as the basis for the articulation of a Schillebeeckian philosophical theology, following in his footsteps without imitating him exactly. This gives rise retrospectively to a novel reading of Aquinas on analogical language about God. It offers the prospect of a seamless philosophical theology, drawing on the idea of participation to speak of the humanization and divinization of men and women. Relational dialectic also facilitates the expression of a mutual interaction between God's free commitment to creation and humanity's free commitment to a better future for the world.

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'The Distinction' and 'The Relation': Creation and the Creator in Burrell and Schillebeeckx

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Long Abstract

This treatise investigates the character of and connections between the philosophical components of Christian creation-faith, developing a particular way in which to express the distinction and relation between creation and its Creator. It proposes that these concepts and the interaction between them can structure human discourse about God and the world, and about the humanization and divinization of men and women. In doing so, this study articulates the place of creation in philosophical theology, but not in a manner that opposes this aspect to any other, such as salvation, or formulates their relation competitively.

The thesis progresses by considering the work of David Burrell and Edward Schillebeeckx, describing them both as dialectical philosophical theologians. Broadly speaking, this places both thinkers into a group often characterized as correlational.[1] However, the analysis of how they use dialectic results in a preference for Schillebeeckx's pattern of thinking, favouring what is described as his relational dialectic over Burrell's polar dialectic. Using relational dialectic as a resource, a robust and vibrant account of creation-faith and the possibilities it discloses is developed, drawing on Schillebeeckx's work, but not always following him exactly. A philosophical theology is advocated

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[1] See M.A. Higton, 'Hans Frei and David Tracy on the Ordinary and the Extraordinary in Christianity', *Journal of Religion*, 79 (1999), 566-591 (p. 566); Gareth Jones, *Critical Theology: Questions of Truth and Method* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), pp. 113-18; David Tracy, 'The Uneasy Alliance Reconceived: Catholic Theological Method, Modernity and Postmodernity', *Theological Studies*, 50 (1989), 548-570 (pp. 553, 562-63); Marguerite Thabit Abdul-Masih, *Hans Frei and Edward Schillebeeckx: A Conversation on Method and Christology* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2001), pp. 92-93; Dennis Rochford, 'Experience from Modern to Postmodern: The Concept of Experience in Correlational Theology' (Paper for LEST IV – Religious Experience and Contemporary Theological Epistemology, Leuven, November 5-8, 2003), <http://www.theo.kuleuven.be/ogtpc/lest4/ppseniors/rochford.pdf> [accessed 19 May 2005], p. 3.

that follows in his footsteps and, at the same time, creatively completes his ideas, in a manner termed Schillebeeckian.[2]

Chapter One locates this study in the wider context of debate about the structure of theological discourse and, in particular, of discourse about creation. It traces the way that a number of contemporary writers oppose the oppositional character of much modern discourse, seeking to delineate ways of speaking about God and the world that are more sensitive to postmodern concerns and insights. It notes the tendency, despite this, towards a hegemony of difference and the accompanying interchangeability of the language of difference and distinction. In doing so, it raises concerns that remain throughout the study and which help delineate the terminology of distinction and relation used subsequently. It introduces the ideas of functional complementarity and of forming a community of argument, articulated by Kathryn Tanner, as ways of bridging the divides often thought to exist between differing approaches to philosophical theology.[3] This provides both a context and a helpful starting point for the comprehensive enquiry into the work of Burrell and Schillebeeckx carried out in the remainder of the thesis.

In Chapters Two and Three, the possibility is considered that Burrell and Schillebeeckx offer functionally complementary accounts of creation. According to Tanner, such accounts share a certain amount of common ground,[4] the evidence for which is gathered in Chapter Two. The two authors articulate a number of misunderstandings, from which creation must be adequately distinguished if it is to be conveyed correctly. Creation is not adequately described in a pantheist, dualist or emanationist system; neither is it an explanation of the universe or limited to initiation. In studying

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[2] The thesis uses the neologism Schillebeeckian to speak of a way of doing philosophical theology that is based on that of Schillebeeckx but does not do exactly what he does. This approach holds that sometimes, the best way to ensure continuity with the master's ideas is to change them – in some cases, continuity is best assured through breaks. Cf. William L. Portier, 'Interpretation and Method', in *The Praxis of the Reign of God: An Introduction to the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx*, ed. by Mary Catherine Hilkert, and Robert J. Schreiter, 2nd edn (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), pp. 19-36 (p. 27); Edward Schillebeeckx, *Theologisch testament: Notarieel nog niet verleden* (Baarn: Nelissen, 1994), p. 69.

[3] See Kathryn E. Tanner, *God and Creation in Christian Theology: Tyranny or Empowerment?* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), pp. 31-32, 118 and Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), p. 123; *God and Creation*, pp. 83-84, 118 respectively.

[4] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 32.

the way that the Burrell and Schillebeeckx speak of creation more positively, this Chapter identifies a shared terminology of distinction and relation, though Burrell is seen to use this terminology with slightly less care, especially with regard to his use of prepositions associated with the master terms.

Chapter Three investigates whether Burrell and Schillebeeckx emphasize complementary elements of this common discourse, doing the same thing in different ways. In their articulation of creation according to the shared terminology of distinction and relation, it does appear to be the case that Burrell stresses the former term whilst Schillebeeckx accentuates the latter. This seems to make their philosophical theologies equivalent, such that each one could prevent the other from overstating the case that each wishes to make. The way that they speak of presence, hope and optimism, and the apophatic and kataphatic aspects of theology supply further evidence that could be used to support a functional complementarity thesis. However, when the role of dialectic in their thinking is examined in more detail, the functional complementarity thesis is disrupted, allowing a preference to be voiced for Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology which forms the basis of the second half of the treatise. It also harmonizes with the multivalent analysis of history offered by Schillebeeckx, leading to an account of continuity and change in his thinking and also offering the prospect of enunciating a Schillebeeckian philosophical theology in his footsteps.

An analysis of the way that relational dialectic shapes and directs Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology is carried out in Chapter Four, articulating, firstly, his method of correlation. This distinguishes him sufficiently from others who call themselves correlational theologians to circumvent the objections voiced by proponents of cultural-linguistic theology.[5] One of the main features of his thinking is the way that he resists polarization, resulting in a much richer and more complex understanding of the dynamic interplay between aspects of philosophical theology. The chapter illustrates this by means of two examples: praxis and humanism. The first is described as the relational dialectic of theory and practice, and of mysticism and politics, displaying how relational dialectic can act as a resource for complexity within a particular system, as well as between schemes

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[5] For an insightful analysis and rewarding critique of this debate, see Tanner, *Theories of Culture*.

of thought.[6] An investigation into the sense in which his philosophical theology can be called perspectivist follows, examining his debate with atheistic secular humanism. The relational dialectic of finitude and contingency is shown to play a key role in his articulation of the inexhaustibility of the Christian concept and experience of finitude. This means that atheistic secular humanism, for Schillebeeckx, is a valuable, yet in the final analysis inadequate, expression of humanism. The Chapter ends by considering the way that Schillebeeckx speaks of following in the footsteps of other theologians, surveying the concept of *sequela* that he uses to describe this.

Chapters Five and Six go on in a similar spirit to outline a Schillebeeckian philosophical theology, indicating the role that relational dialectic can play, both retrospectively and prospectively, in this task. Chapter Five proposes a Schillebeeckian retrospect, applying relational dialectic to Thomas Aquinas's treatment of analogical language about God. This allows middle ground to be found between two rival views: the majority of commentators hold that Aquinas changed his mind on the structure of analogical language about God between writing *De Veritate* and the *Summa Theologiae*; a minority view avers that the two express the same structure, so his position did not change. The Chapter argues that a Schillebeeckian approach to continuity and change sees the two as distinct and related, with certain aspects that remain constant and others that change or are discarded. It proposes a multivocal reading of the material from the *Summa Theologiae* which is able to take into account that not all analogous statements need be analysed in the same way, yet this does not necessarily imply that there are separate types of analogy.

In Chapter Six, some of the Schillebeeckian prospects for philosophical theology are addressed, beginning with the linking of creation, anthropology, soteriology and eschatology made possible by understanding creaturely existence as participation in God. Relational dialectic is shown to play a significant role in the articulation of a mutually critical correlation of divine and human action, facilitating talk of God's creation of the universe and of humanity's making of the actual history of the world as complementary actions. In this setting, God can be said freely to commit

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[6] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 83.

Godself to creation in a way that invites men and women to respond by freely committing themselves to making a better future for the world. This has implications for the character of God's knowledge of creaturely actions, which are seen to exist in a complementary, rather than competitive, relation.

The proposal of relational dialectic as the structuring component of Schillebeeckx's account of creation, and of his philosophical theology more generally, makes an original contribution to two other current debates. It exposes the polemical presuppositions of many current appeals for a more relationally-based theology and can play a role in the debate about the relation between theology and religious studies in the contemporary academy. This latter topic opens up the wider issue of how to do theology, in which a praxical approach is recommended, drawing on the articulation of praxis in Chapter Four.

In a Schillebeeckian praxical philosophical theology, the mutually critical correlation of theory and practice puts theologians more clearly at the service of the reign of God, apprenticing them to those in whose footsteps they seek to tread, such that they are able to be faithful both to their forebears and to the place and time in which they live. They become ever more able both to articulate and to show forth the God who is 'concerned for humanity', for its humanization and divinization and, as such, is the God who 'wants people to be concerned for humanity as well'.[7] As they do theology this way, they become more fully alive with a human life that is the face of God in the world,[8] which, Schillebeeckx says, is 'the best definition of what creation amounts to.'[9]

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[7] Edward Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History in What is Called the New Paradigm', trans. by Margaret Kohl, in *Paradigm Change in Theology: A Symposium for the Future*, ed. by Hans Küng and David Tracy (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), pp. 307-319 (p. 316).

[8] See Irenaeus's maxim, 'The glory of God is the living man and woman; this selfsame human life is the face of God.' Author's translation of the Latin text: '*Gloria Dei, vivens homo: vita autem hominis, visio Dei.*' (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies (*Adversus Haereses*)*, trans. by A. Roberts and W.H. Rambaut, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (10 vols.), *Volume 1: The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1885), pp. 309-567 (*Adversus Haereses*, IV, 20, § 7, p. 490, col. 1).

[9] Author's translation of the Dutch text: 'de beste definitie van wat schepping betekent.' (Edward Schillebeeckx, *Tussentijds verhaal over twee Jesus boeken* (Bloemendaal: Nelissen, 1978), p. 131; *Evangelie verhalen* (Baarn: Nelissen, 1982), p. 94).

Abbreviations used

Throughout this thesis, the main works by the two major authors will be referred to using an abbreviated version of the title. For ease of reference, the abbreviations are listed below.

Works by Edward Schillebeeckx:

I	*Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*
II	*Christ: The Christian Experience in the Modern World*
III	*Church: The Human Story of God*
EV	*Evangelie verhalen*
FSG	*For the Sake of the Gospel*
G&M	*God and Man*
GAU	*God Among Us: The Gospel Proclaimed*
GFM	*God the Future of Man*
GNEM	*God is New Each Moment*
HT	*I am a Happy Theologian: Conversations with Francesco Strazzari*
IR	*Interim Report on the Books* Jesus *and* Christ
JWC	*Jesus in Our Western Culture: Mysticism, Ethics and Politics*
LF	*The Language of Faith*
O&T	*Openbaring en Theologie*
R&T II	*The Concept of Truth and Theological Renewal (Revelation and Theology: Volume II)*

TT	*Theologisch testament: Notarieel nog niet verleden*
TV	*Tussentijds verhaal over twee Jesus boeken*
UF	*The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*
W&C	*World and Church*

Works by David B. Burrell:

APL	*Analogy and Philosophical Language*
AGA	*Aquinas: God and Action*
ERU	*Exercises in Religious Understanding*
F&F	*Faith and Freedom: An Interfaith Perspective*
F&C	*Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions*
FWT	*Friendship and Ways to Truth*
KUG	*Knowing the Unknowable God: Ibn-Sina, Maimonides, Aquinas*

Other works whose titles are abbreviated:

G&C	*God and Creation: An Ecumenical Symposium*
PRG	*The Praxis of the Reign of God: An Introduction to the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx*

Introduction

This treatise explores the character of and connections between the philosophical components of Christian creation-faith, elaborating a specific way to express the distinction and relation between creation and its Creator. In proposing that these can and should structure human discourse about God, it has implications for the theoretical and practical organization of philosophical theology, recommending a particular way of speaking about God and the world and about the humanization and divinization of men and women. It develops specific expressions of the interrelation of distinguishable aspects of human knowledge of God and of God's knowledge of the world.

The study focuses on the work of David Burrell and Edward Schillebeeckx, characterizing them both as dialectical philosophical theologians. However, it also shows that, because of their differing philosophical backgrounds and presuppositions, they do not use dialectic in the same way, allowing a preference to be expressed. What the thesis calls Schillebeeckx's relational dialectic is favoured over Burrell's polar dialectic. This choice serves as the basis for the development of an articulation of creation-faith and its possibilities that draws on the work of Schillebeeckx, but does not always follow him exactly. A philosophical theology is advocated that follows in Schillebeeckx's footsteps and, at the same time, creatively completes his ideas, in a manner that is termed Schillebeeckian.[1]

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[1] The thesis uses the neologism 'Schillebeeckian' to speak of a way of doing philosophical theology that is based on that of Schillebeeckx but does not do exactly what he does. This approach holds that, sometimes, the best way to ensure continuity with the master's ideas is to change them – in some cases, continuity is best assured through breaks. Cf. William L. Portier, 'Interpretation and Method', in *The Praxis of the Reign of God: An Introduction to the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx*, ed. by Mary Catherine Hilkert, and Robert J. Schreiter, 2nd edn (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), pp. 19-36 (p. 27), (Henceforth *PRG*); Edward Schillebeeckx, *Theologisch testament: Notarieel nog niet verleden* (Baarn: Nelissen, 1994), p. 69 (Henceforth *TT*).

The Importance of Creation

Burrell and Schillebeeckx agree that creation is of crucial importance in theology. Burrell says that the second article of the creed has so overshadowed the first in Christian theology that there is a need to restore a balance – something, he believes, that can be done by adopting 'an expressly interfaith perspective'.[2] This helps restore the sense of the universe as gift rather than as given, helping to overcome a naturalistic attitude towards the world that has all too often marked Christian theological discourse.[3] Schillebeeckx avers that creation is the foundation of theology:[4]

> For me, creation-faith is ultimately the foundation of all theology. At present, the demand is put to theology from many sides to treat the doctrine of creation in its rightful place. There is so much said about the history of salvation that there is need now for a new reflection on creation-faith [...]. It is necessary to find new words in order to render a point of faith [...] an understandable notion.[5]

Like Burrell, Schillebeeckx also thinks that there is a need to restore a balance between creation and redemption, as the above quote shows.[6] He advocates it, too, in the way

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[2] David Burrell, and Elena Malits, *Original Peace: Restoring God's Creation* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1997), pp. 3-4. This book is co-authored with one of Burrell's long-term associates (see, for example David Burrell, *Analogy and Philosophical Language* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), p. xi (Henceforth *APL*) and David B. Burrell, *Aquinas: God and Action* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. xiii (Henceforth *AGA*), where he thanks her for her assistance). Despite this, and despite the fact that they stress that they take joint responsibility for the text (see Burrell and Malits, pp. 1-2), Burrell is clearly willing to take on as his own the views expressed, as can be seen, for example, by the way that many of them are reprised in some of his more recent articles in David Burrell, *Faith and Freedom: An Interfaith Perspective* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004) (Henceforth *F&F*).

[3] David B. Burrell, *Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), p. 3 (Henceforth *F&C*).

[4] Edward Schillebeeckx, *I am a Happy Theologian: Conversations with Francesco Strazzari*, trans. by John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1994), p. 47 (Henceforth *HT*).

[5] Author's translation (i.e. the author of this thesis). Dutch text: 'Voor mij is het scheppingsgeloof uiteindelijk het fundament van alle theologie. Op het ogenblik wordt van vele kanten de vraag gesteld aan de theologie om de leer over de schepping op zijn juiste plaats te behandelen. Er is zoveel over heilsgeschiedenis gesproken, dat er nu behoefte bestaat aan nieuwe bezinning op het scheppingsgeloof [...]. Het is nodig nieuwe worden te vinden om en geloofspunt [...] tot verstaanbar begrip te brengen' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 85). This text is not altogether unrelated to Schillebeeckx's *HT*. As he points out in the Foreword to *TT*, it is based on the series of interviews that he gave to Francesco Strazzari in 1992, which were subsequently published in Italian (and English). Rather than simply reprint this version for Dutch readers, he reworked it, so that it now reads more like an openhearted conversation with himself, as well as a kind of reply to the many questions he has been asked by readers who have contacted him (see Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 7).

[6] It must be said, however, that how this balance is achieved and whether creation or salvation is prior in Schillebeeckx's theology are contentious matters in the secondary literature.

he links the two, stating that 'the beginning of the history of human liberation coincides with the beginning of creation'[7] and that the kingdom of God 'has its ultimate foundation in the divine act of creation'.[8] Speaking more particularly about the relationship of faith, he says that 'creation is the beginning of a relationship of dialogue between God and the human person.'[9]

Creation-faith also has practical implications. According to Schillebeeckx, 'the conciliar process, "justice, peace and the integrity of creation", has everything to do with Jewish-Christian belief in creation' and, together with 'the significance of redemption in Jesus Christ [...] belongs at the heart of the Christian creed.'[10] He maintains that creation-faith helps a prophetic impetus to emerge in Christianity, leading to a liberating praxis, such that creation-faith is not just another theory.[11] It is also the foundation of prayer and mysticism[12] and the basis of Christian humanism.[13]

Burrell, too, in his more interfaith mode, says that the 'common confession of God's creating initiative'[14] is, indeed 'must be utterly central to any philosophical theology executed

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[7] Edward Schillebeeckx, *Interim Report on the Books* Jesus *and* Christ, trans. by John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1980), p. 119 (Henceforth *IR*). Cf. Edward Schillebeeckx, *God Among Us: The Gospel Proclaimed*, trans. by John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1983), p. 99 (Henceforth *GAU*).

[8] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 99.

[9] Schillebeeckx, *World and Church (Theological Soundings 3)*, trans. by N.D. Smith (London: Sheed and Ward, 1971), p. 244 (Henceforth *W&C*).

[10] Edward Schillebeeckx, *Church: The Human Story of God*, trans. by John Bowden (London: SCM Press; New York: Crossroad, 1990), p. 238 (Henceforth *III*). This way of referring to the Christological trilogy written by Schillebeeckx is one that is often used and which, in fact, goes back to Schillebeeckx himself. In the Dutch version of *IR*, Edward Schillebeeckx, *Tussentijds verhaal over twee Jesus boeken* (Bloemendaal: Nelissen, 1978) (Henceforth *TV*), Schillebeeckx refers to the 'two Jesus books' of the title as I and II. The nomenclature is also adopted partly to overcome the difficulties that arise because the English editions of the texts have very different titles to their Dutch counterparts – *III*, for example, in the original Dutch is Edward Schillebeeckx, *Mensen als verhaal van God* (Nelissen: Baarn, 1989) (Henceforth *Mensen*), which, translated, is *Human Beings as the Story of God.* Admittedly, the title of *III* might not seem so different in Dutch and English, yet, whilst one main thrust of the book is, indeed, ecclesiological, Schillebeeckx would not want to limit the story of God to those men and women who are members of the Roman Catholic Church.

[11] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 100.

[12] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 122; cf. *GAU*, p. 102; *III*, p. 234.

[13] Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 23.

[14] David B. Burrell, 'Does Process Theology Rest on a Mistake?', *Theological Studies* 43.1 (1982), 125-35 (p. 131) (Henceforth 'Mistake?').

by Jews, Christians, or Muslims.'[15] In the search for truth that is a common element of both Christianity and Islam, 'there can be no truth without creation'.[16] His work is very much centred on that of Thomas Aquinas, referring to Josef Pieper in almost all of his major works, who, he says, characterizes creation as 'the central though often hidden element in Aquinas' philosophical discourse.'[17] Creation also plays a key role in many of Burrell's cardinal themes. He holds that analogical language depends on it and, thereby, the ability to use perfection terms of God.[18] It is central to securing the metaphysics that Aquinas adopts, adapting his Aristotelian sources to take a distinctive position on being (*esse*) and adapting his Neoplatonic sources to take a distinctive position on participation.[19]

Creation and Philosophical Theology

Burrell notes that it could be said 'that the vast majority of endeavours in philosophy of religion over the past few centuries in the west have been devoted to ways of confirming creation.'[20] However, he does not think that the analysis of creation is best located in that discipline. Although Aquinas, according to Burrell, sought to acknowledge, at the outset of the *Summa Theologiae*, the intrinsic connection between theology and 'the exigencies of the human mind to understand how all things stand', he did not intend, thereby, to propose 'that those intellectual exigencies could *ground* this study of God'. That task 'is deemed at the outset to require something beyond philosophy, namely revelation.'[21] As a result, Burrell

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[15] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 113.

[16] David B. Burrell *Friendship and Ways to Truth* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), p. 3 (Henceforth *FWT*).

[17] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 136, referring to Josef Pieper, *The Silence of Saint Thomas*, trans. by J. Murray and D. O'Connor (New York, 1957). He also refers to this work in *APL*, pp. 150-51; David B. Burrell, *Knowing the Unknowable God: Ibn-Sina, Maimonides, Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), p. 34 (Henceforth *KUG*); *F&C*, p. 11; *FWT*, p. 48.

[18] See Burrell, *F&F*, pp. 118 and 129-30 respectively.

[19] See Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 33, 100, 200; *F&F*, p. 118.

[20] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 5.

[21] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 21.

portrays his study of creation as belonging more properly to philosophical theology than philosophy of religion.[22] Situating the study thus stresses the importance of analysing the particular faith traditions with which he is concerned, rather than considering an abstraction called theism; it also emphasises that each of those traditions seeks to appropriate a revelation in its articulation of creation.[23]

Although Schillebeeckx never considers such matters explicitly, the fact that he is usually considered to be a theologian also helps site this present investigation in philosophical theology. That he is a very philosophically aware theologian is pointed out by Philip Kennedy. The majority of the influences he traces in Schillebeeckx's work are philosophical and, as for Burrell, 'it is important to note that religious faith is always prior to philosophy in Schillebeeckx's writings.'[24] The way that the two elements go hand in hand is clear from the parallel that Schillebeeckx draws when he says: 'I usually speak of the "Christian belief in creation" without separating the Christian and the philosophical aspects.'[25]

A Project for Today

Both writers speak of the contemporary character of their discourse. Schillebeeckx insists 'I am not writing for posterity. I am writing for people here and now.'[26] This could be taken as implying that his contribution is evanescent, but that is not what he means. As with many elements of his theology, Schillebeeckx wants to take a position between two extremes. On the one hand, he writes 'for the men and women of today who are in a particular context', yet

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[22] See Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 2 and 114, Notes to Introduction, n.1; *FWT*, p. 96; *F&F*, p. 76.

[23] See Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 1 and 42-43 respectively.

[24] Philip Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx* (London: Chapman, 1993), pp. 31-32. See pp. 31-52 for the various influences that Kennedy catalogues.

[25] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 151, n. 83 (also see main text on p. 126).

[26] Edward Schillebeeckx, in conversation with Huub Oosterhuis and Piet Hoogeveen, *God is New Each Moment*, trans. by David Smith (New York: The Seabury Press, 1983), pp. 120-21 (Henceforth *GNEM*).

insists, at the same time, that the 'relevance of a theology is not an ephemeral relevance.'[27] On the other hand, he does not wish to found a school of theology which will last for ever, since, '"school making" in theology is now, fortunately, *passé*';[28] yet he says that if 'a particular theology can nourish and inspire a coming generation, that's what it's all about.'[29] He recognizes, of course, that he is not the best judge of this: 'Whether my theology does that, history will tell.'[30]

Burrell's interfaith studies are in a more explicitly historical mode, but his aim is partly to enable something in the present that he can show has been done in the past. He does this by practising inter-faith dialogue in his academic work, such that the advantages of comparative study are 'displayed, rather than argued for'.[31] In *F&C*, he makes reference to a number of inter-faith colloquia that he has been present at and has helped to organize, something that he continues to do up to the present day.[32] In more recent works, he also speaks favourably of postmodernism, observing, for example, that 'to suggest that faith and reason might complement one another in executing human inquiry is to move beyond the thought categories of modernism', in which such a suggestion 'would have displayed a severe breach of etiquette, if not constituted an oxymoron.'[33]

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[27] Schillebeeckx, *HT*, p. 80.

[28] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'Het "school maken" in de theologie is nu, gelukkig, passé'. (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, pp. 171-72).

[29] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'Als een bepaalde theologie ook een komende generatie kan voeden en inspiren, is dat al heel wat.' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 172).

[30] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'Of ook mijn theologie dat doet, zal de geschiedenis moeten uitwijzen.' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 172).

[31] Burrell, *F&C*, p. x.

[32] Burrell, *F&C*, pp. ix-x. See, for example, *God and Creation: an Ecumenical Symposium*, ed. by David B. Burrell and Bernard McGinn, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990) (Henceforth *G&C*).

[33] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 140; cf. pp. 143-45.

What their Project Is Not

It is important to stress that neither author presents the history of theology as a one-sided narrative of decline. Burrell does chart a series of steps that result in the separation of creation and redemption a number of times in his works, but notes that these are 'more rhetorical than logical'.[34] These consist in the cumulative effects of the liturgical shift from the Sabbath to the day of Christ's resurrection, the distinction of the supernatural from the natural in the thirteenth century and the separation of history from nature in the nineteenth century.[35] Although Burrell maintains that a *ressourcement* project in the philosophical theology of the medieval era can shed light on the contemporary situation, he is not advocating a return to a perceived Golden Age. It is, he says, only if a linear model of history is followed that there is a narrative either of development or of decline; a dialectical approach is more promising: in a similar way that modernity 'could be called "post" or even "antimedieval" [...] some forms of "postmodern," in the sense of "antimodern," discourse would display affinities with medieval inquiry, since "postmodern" could be translated as "anti-antimedieval."'[36] Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology by no means ignores medieval sources, but, again, his use of them is not in order to return to a prior age in theology, but to shed light on the contemporary quest. He says that, even after he had stopped using Aquinas as the focus of his theology, 'Thomas kept playing an important role in my work, from now on, however, more as a kind of touchstone; someone you cannot ignore, and who keeps you from making stupid mistakes.'[37]

The characterization of creation is not a search for an indubitable foundation on which to rest the whole of theology. Burrell opposes this in two ways, the first of which is by

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[34] David B. Burrell, 'Creation or Emanation: Two Paradigms of Reason', in *G&C*, pp. 27-37 (p. 28).

[35] See Burrell, 'Creation or Emanation', p. 28, which has just the first two of these; *F&C*, pp. 3-4; *F&F*, p. 235; Burrell and Malits, pp. 57-59.

[36] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 141.

[37] Eric Luijten, 'Scholastic Concepts Tend to Become Almost Eternal Concepts – Interview with Prof. Edward Schillebeeckx o.p.' (1999), Newspage of Thomas Instituut te Utrecht, 16 February 1999, <http://www.thomasinstituut.org/thomasinstituut/scripts/index.htm> [accessed 9 June 2006] (para. 10 of 22).

stressing that creation has to do with faith.[38] He also opposes foundationalism more generally, in this way following his guide and mentor Bernard Lonergan,[39] who Burrell says anticipated that critique 'by starkly contrasting the "need for certitude" to the "quest for understanding"'. Burrell notes that despite 'the anxiety pervading Descartes' endeavour', the various proposals that have been made to supply 'the *need* for bedrock' have all failed. As a result, 'it may prove more fruitful to expose the need itself, as Lonergan set himself to do.'[40] In Burrell's review of Karl Rahner's *Foundations of Christian Faith*, he suggests that Rahner's turn is not so much to the subject as to subjectivity, not so much to descriptions of human actions – most importantly knowing, understanding and judging – as to the transcendental conditions of the possibility of such actions.[41] This helps to distinguish Lonergan's concerns as well as his intellectual lineage from those of Rahner.[42] It could also, as far as Burrell is concerned, make Rahner vulnerable to the charge of foundationalism.

Schillebeeckx occupies quite a different locus in philosophical theology to Burrell in this regard. Although the transcendental approaches of Rahner and Lonergan are widely used today, Schillebeeckx is not a transcendental thinker.[43] Rather than present a transcendental analysis of human development, as Lonergan does, Schillebeeckx sees it as 'originally historical, social, and embedded in the Christian narrative tradition.'[44] He has gone so far as to

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[38] In addition to the earlier references, see also Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 4, 15.

[39] He refers to Lonergan as mentor in Burrell, *KUG*, p. ix, which he dedicates to the memory of Lonergan, 'Mentor and Liberator' (*KUG*, p. v); he speaks of Lonergan as one of his 'mentors and friends' in *FWT*, p. 45 (and see section on Lonergan, *FWT*, pp. 46-50) and as one of his 'mentors' in *F&F*, p. viii. Cf. *APL*, p. xi; *F&C*, p. x; *FWT*, p. 25.

[40] Burrell, *FWT*, p. 45. Burrell's description of the Cartesian endeavour as anxious sounds somewhat similar to the presentation of Cartesian psychology, made along Wittgenstinian lines, in Fergus Kerr, *Theology After Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), *passim*, and in Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 22-28. It is also perhaps significant that Kerr uses creation as a way of critically responding to the Cartesian pull towards epistemology (Kerr, *After Aquinas*, pp. 30-32).

[41] David Burrell, '*Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* by Karl Rahner', *Theology Today*, 36 (1979), 425-430 (p. 426).

[42] See Burrell, '*Foundations of Christian Faith*', pp. 429-30.

[43] See Portier, 'Interpretation and Method', *PRG*, p. 21.

[44] Maureen Patricia Carroll, *Framework for a Theology of Christian Conversion in the Jesus-Project of Edward Schillebeeckx* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1985; abstract in *Dissertation*

say that he finds Rahner's supernatural existential '"useless" ("nutteloos") and "meaningless" ("zinloos").'[45] He is a markedly situational thinker,[46] and, as far as the particular debate about the knowledge of God in Catholic theology goes, found his inspiration and guide in the approach taken by Dominic de Petter rather than Joseph Maréchal (a key figure in the Catholic transcendental tradition).[47]

Similarly, the investigation of the philosophical theology of creation is not a search for a lowest common denominator, to which all interlocutors can commit themselves, so as to assure a common starting point. Burrell does speak of a 'common confession of God's creating initiative' in Christianity, Judaism and Islam, but resolutely speaks of it as a link, not as something that is the same in all three traditions.[48] He also stresses that in analysing this link, it is important to pay attention to the particular ways in which each tradition deals with the questions, such that each can mutually illuminate the others.[49] Schillebeeckx's interlocutors are more likely to be atheist humanists, especially in his earlier works, and whilst he holds that 'believers and non-believers alike can find common ground for dialogue', he does not think of this as both parties thinking the same thing. He says that although the position of the believer is not that everything said by the non-believer is wrong, nevertheless,

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Abstracts International, 46 (1985), 1007-A; citation and abstract on UMI ProQuest Digital Dissertations <http:// wwwlib.umi.com/dissertations/fullcit/ 8506731> [accessed 23 June 2005]), abstract.

[45] Philip Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus: The Knowability of God in the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx* (Fribourg: University Press, 1993), p. 105.

[46] See, for example, Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 99; Edward Schillebeeckx, *God and Man (Theological Soundings II)*, trans. by Edward Fitzgerald and Peter Tomlinson (London: Sheed and Ward, 1969), p. 210 (Henceforth *G&M*); Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 12.

[47] See Philip Kennedy, 'Continuity Underlying Discontinuity: Schillebeeckx's Philosophical Background', *New Blackfriars*, 70 (1989), 264-277 (pp. 268-69); Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 22; and Erik Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx: A Theologian in his History. Volume I: A Catholic Theology of Culture (1914-1965)* trans. by John Bowden (London: Continuum, 2003), pp. 40-42. For Schillebeeckx's De Petterian response to Maréchal, see the Appendix to Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Concept of Truth and Theological Renewal (Revelation and Theology: Volume II / Theological Soundings I/2)*, trans. by N.D. Smith (London: Sheed and Ward, 1968), pp. 157-206 (Henceforth *R&T II*).

[48] Burrell, 'Mistake?', p. 131.

[49] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 95.

the possibilities that the non-believer speaks of are given 'an entirely new significance' in the believer's standpoint.[50]

This focus on creation is not, as Schillebeeckx highlights, 'a fashionable adaptation to later trends'.[51] It is not just a response to the current ecological crisis and an attempt to get closer to the natural world. As Kevin Treston points out, the manner in which human thinking has become used to separating humanity from the rest of the created order, calling only the latter 'nature', is typified in the way that lists of what to praise God for in the natural world rarely include anything that is the fruit of human labour.[52] Schillebeeckx, in a way that will be seen to be typical of him, says that 'Christian salvation also comprises ecological, social and political aspects, though it is not exhausted by these. Christian salvation is more than that, but it is that, too.'[53] Burrell, likewise, emphasizes that human culture is part of God's creation. He says that the presupposition that the energies associated with the natural world and with human culture are opposed to each other must be challenged, because this 'bifurcation [...] has helped to countenance policies that [...] simply presume that short-term efficiencies must characterise human endeavour, while any other perspective is dubbed "romantic."'[54]

Burrell is also clear that he is not engaged in what often passes for 'creation theology' or 'creation spirituality'. The problem with these, he says, is that they tend to be one-sided, just as much as the prevailing theology or spirituality. However, intending 'to eclipse the drama of redemption with a more primordial one of creation' is simply making the same mistake again, at the opposite pole.[55] It is not just a case of juxtaposing and replacing the

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[50] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, pp. 212-13; cf. pp. 232-33.

[51] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 263, n. 4.

[52] See Kevin Treston, *Walk Lightly Upon the Earth* (Wilston: Creation Enterprises, 2003), pp. 17-18, whose list includes a number of human technological advances, such as the possibility of global communication via satellite and air travel.

[53] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 100.

[54] Burrell and Malits, p. 20.

[55] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 243.

transcendent God of redemption with the immanent God of creation. Such a misinterpretation of what is often called 'classical theism' (although Burrell notes that this is not so much a term of reference as one of abuse) is one that he finds in process theology.[56] Once a connection has rightly been made between revelation and creation, the voice of revelation may well come from without, but it also corresponds to what is deepest in human existence. As a result, what is called for is not so much a replacement of transcendence with immanence, but 'a fresh use of the term *transcendent*, one that invokes immanence as well.'[57] Schillebeeckx also seeks an appropriate balance between creation and redemption. He says that connecting the message and person of Jesus with creation makes the message of the New Testament universal, 'because it anchors it in the universal happening of creation.' As a result, creation and salvation 'shed mutual and essential light on one another.'[58] Both authors, then, oppose the opposition of creation and salvation in ways that share certain traits.

What their Project Is

Burrell, speaking more positively, says that his aim is to restore 'the tension and rapport between creation and redemption', to investigate 'how a fruitful dialectical rapport' between them 'must characterize a fully Christian theology.'[59] Schillebeeckx says that creation is 'inwardly directed to the life of grace', that there is an intimate connection between them.[60] As a result, he can speak of Christology as 'concentrated creation' and seamlessly connect creation with praxis and humanism without conflating them.[61]

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[56] See Burrell, 'Mistake?', esp. pp. 127-29; *AGA*, pp. 36, 79, 83-84.

[57] Burrell and Malits, pp. 34-35. They cite Kathryn E. Tanner's *God and Creation in Christian Theology: Tyranny or Empowerment?* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), published in the United States as *God and the Doctrine of Creation* (New York: Blackwell, 1990) (see Burrell and Malits, pp. 97, n. 12 and 98, n. 7). As will soon be seen, this is an important organizing source, both for Burrell and also for this thesis.

[58] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 111.

[59] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 234. The place and function of dialectic in the thinking of both authors will be investigated in more detail in Chapter Three.

[60] Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 27.

[61] See Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 128; *GAU*, p. 102; III, p. 233 and *W&C*, pp. 10-11 respectively.

Burrell suggests a striking image for his project, which invites the reader to view creation and redemption stereoscopically, indicating that 'we are *adding* that other focus to our reflections', rather than replacing one with the other.[62] He explores this image in more detail in *OP*, in which he calls for a 'Keplerian revolution' in Christian theology. He chooses this nomenclature deliberately, saying that the key astronomical shift was not so much that from a geocentric to a heliocentric system, but that from circular to elliptical orbits for the heavenly bodies. Ellipses, he notes, have twin foci, but what he finds interesting is 'the energy generated between these two centers',[63] which he describes as 'the dialectical tension between creation and redemption.'[64]

This image surfaces repeatedly in this treatise and is one that this Introduction has sought to suggest could be applied in a number of areas of philosophical theology. These include philosophy and theology, the kataphatic and apophatic, theoretical and practical expressions of faith, divine transcendence and immanence, human beings and the rest of the created order, and atheistic and religious humanism. These and other themes will recur throughout the thesis, which aims to investigate them by taking God and the world, as understood in creation, as the focus of enquiry. In the course of that enquiry, the question will arise as to whether the interpretation offered by Burrell is the best way to picture the connections listed above, or whether an alternative image might be preferred.

Rules for Discourse about Creation

Kathryn Tanner's *God and Creation* offers some organizing principles for the discussion, since it is both focussed on the account of creation given in Christian theology and also seeks to make observations that are applicable in more general terms, about the connection between

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[62] Burrell, *F&F*, pp. 243-44.
[63] Burrell and Malits, pp. 4-5.
[64] Ibid., p. 19.

philosophy and theology. She speaks of 'the naturalistic features of modern methods of inquiry, which separately reify and serially order conceptual distinctions',[65] echoing the comments made by Burrell and Schillebeeckx about the separation of salvation from creation. She notes that, in such a naturalistic discourse, a 'dome is thereby formed, around a self-enclosed created order of causes'.[66]

She proposes that the contemporary emphasis on language in philosophical theology can help, changing the focus of attention from what is being said to how it is being said. As a result: 'Statements about God and world become rules for discourse, proposals about what should and should not be said.'[67] She formulates a 'rule' for talk of divine transcendence, proposing that 'whatever you say about God and the world, do not simply identify or oppose their attributes.'[68] She also draws what she regards as an important 'distinction between contrastive and non-contrastive accounts of divine transcendence', recommending the latter as a way of progressing.[69]

This study considers how to speak non-contrastively of the Creator and creation using Burrell and Schillebeeckx as the two main interlocutors. Chapter One lays the groundwork for the investigation by surveying the way that a number of contemporary authors speak of God and the world, indicating some concerns that remain throughout and which help delineate the terminology used subsequently. In Chapters Two and Three a first possibility is considered, that Burrell and Schillebeeckx offer functionally complementary accounts of creation.[70] Such

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[65] Tanner, *God and Creation*, pp. 143-44 and 138.

[66] Ibid., pp. 144, 134.

[67] Tanner, *God and Creation*, pp. 11-12. She refers here to Burrell's *AGA* and also to David B. Burrell, *Exercises in Religious Understanding* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974) (Henceforth *ERU*) (see Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 171, n. 5). This reference to Burrell shows that the illumination of the authors is mutual – Burrell's grammatical approach to philosophical theology inspires Tanner, whose rules for discourse then help Burrell to further elucidate his practice.

[68] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 28.

[69] Ibid., p. 45.

[70] Tanner, *God and Creation*, pp. 83-84.

accounts share a certain amount of common ground,[71] the evidence for which is marshalled in Chapter Two. Chapter Three examines whether Burrell and Schillebeeckx emphasize complementary elements of this common discourse,[72] which does to some extent, at least, appear to be the case. However, when the role of dialectic in their oeuvres is more closely scrutinized, the functional complementarity thesis is disrupted, allowing a preference to be expressed for Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology which forms the basis of the second half of the thesis.

Chapter Four elucidates the way that Schillebeeckx's dialectic shapes and directs his philosophical theology, considering in some detail the interplay of theory and practice and of mysticism and politics. The particular manner in which he speaks of the humanization of man and woman in dialogue with atheistic secular humanism is described, as well as the way in which his philosophical theology can be said to follow other significant figures in the Christian tradition. Chapters Five and Six go on in a similar spirit to outline a Schillebeeckian philosophical theology, indicating the role that relational dialectic can play, both retrospectively and prospectively. Chapter Five develops a Schillebeeckian reading of Thomas Aquinas on analogical language about God. Chapter Six considers the possibilities disclosed by the theme of participation in God, particularly with regard to divine and human action, the interaction of freedom and commitment and God's knowledge of creaturely action.

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[71] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 32.

[72] Ibid., pp. 83-84, 118.

Chapter One

The Structure of Discourse

Before turning to the work of Burrell and Schillebeeckx on creation in more detail, it helps to articulate a context for their contribution by surveying some of the attempts made by some contemporary thinkers to address a phenomenon that Tanner calls the breakdown of theological discourse,[1] a tendency to isolate fields of enquiry from one another such that they cannot interact other than in a competitive fashion. The authors investigated in this chapter address wider issues with reference to the structure of discourse about creation, showing the role that this discourse can play as a worked example of the dynamics involved in other areas.

The breakdown of discourse has had widespread consequences, resulting in a number of problems that did not seem as serious in previous eras. Tanner mentions in particular 'mind/body dualism, the fact/value split, the alienation of free human subjects in a depersonalized world, the problem of free will'[2] and is far from alone in her view. Servais Pinckaers speaks of ethical enquiry being 'victimized by a supposed dichotomy, a conflict between man and God, freedom and grace, the natural and the supernatural [...] as if giving to one required taking from the other.'[3] He, too, indicates that this structure is not something that has always been present, saying that it is not found in Aquinas's thinking.[4] Alfred Freddoso avers that an inviolable boundary between philosophy and theology is particularly toxic to Roman Catholic faculties, and that the temptation must be resisted to understand the distinction between theology and philosophy as a separation between those who 'articulate

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[1] See Tanner, *God and Creation*, Chapter 4, 'The Modern Breakdown of Theological Discourse', esp. pp. 121-30.

[2] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 129.

[3] Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, p. trans. by Mary Thomas Noble (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), p. 90.

[4] Pinckaers, pp. 189-90.

and transmit Catholic wisdom' and those who 'engage in active interchanges with nonbelieving philosophers'.[5] Denys Turner notes that the bishops of the First Vatican Council 'declared it to be an article of faith that the existence of God can be known by reason alone',[6] indicating an interaction between faith and reason that later thinkers often find hard to appreciate or understand.

The dichotomies of modern theology are widely challenged in what is often called the current postmodern era and Tanner is not alone in this tendency, either. Matthew Lamb notes that, in the philosophy of science since Thomas Kuhn's seminal work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, the 'walls which positivism and logical empiricism had erected between subject and object, history and logic, value and fact, ideology and science, and so on, began to crumble at an increasing rate.'[7] Sue Patterson links a similar tendency to remove divisions between being and doing and intention and action in ethics to what she calls 'the language-riddenly relational understanding of personhood' that is often used today.[8] In doing so, she indicates that a stress on the linguistic in philosophical theology and a challenge to the tendency to reify conceptual distinctions may well go hand in hand in contemporary enquiry.

A Task for Contemporary Philosophical Theology

Pinckaers traces the widening gap between the theologian, the spiritual leader and the pastor of souls that developed with scholasticism in the universities in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, resulting in a separation that persists today. He says that one of the tasks facing

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[5] Alfred J. Freddoso, 'Two Roles for Catholic Philosophers', in *Recovering Nature: Essays in Natural Theology, Ethics, and Metaphysics in Honor of Ralph McInerny*, ed. by Thomas Hibbs and John O'Callaghan (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), pp. 229-252 (pp. 231-33, 244-45).

[6] Denys Turner, *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. x.

[7] Matthew L. Lamb, 'The Dialectics of Theory and Praxis within Paradigm analysis', trans. by Margaret Kohl, in *Paradigm Change in Theology: A Symposium for the Future*, ed. by Hans Küng and David Tracy (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), pp. 63-109 (p. 86).

[8] Sue Patterson, *Realist Christian Theology in a Postmodern Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 122.

contemporary theology is that of 'reestablishing a lost unity, notably after a council that gave priority to pastoral ministry.'[9] The need for a more vital connection between the theoretical and the practical in theology will resurface later in this thesis, but at this point it is worth asking whether re-establishing is the best way to articulate this task. Speaking thus can give the impression of an attempt to return to a perceived Golden Age, with the concomitant narrative of decline that such an attitude suggests.

Pinckaers himself gives an example that is worth pausing over and which suggests an alternative way of speaking of the task. He notes that, in the period he is considering, Francis de Sales merits mention as one who managed to combine elements of all three roles: 'Thanks to his literary genius, he conveyed theological knowledge, the spiritual experience of God's love, and pastoral concern in a manner that placed his works within the reach of all.'[10] Although Pinckaers himself says that Francis was reestablishing unity in doing this, it is at least as worthwhile to understand his contribution as doing something new as well as old: something that did in his day what good theology had also done in previous eras.

Tanner's conclusion to *God and Creation* uses similar language, and, in doing so, indicates a direction in which this thesis will aim to proceed. She, like Pinckaers, speaks of the need for the 'recovery of a coherent discourse' about God the Creator, but, helpfully, recognizes that this is 'a matter for first-order theological construction.' Rather than propose a return, not just to the sources, but to a previous way of thinking about God and the world, she maintains that the task facing contemporary theologians is 'to fracture anew the language of the ordinary, so that traditional affirmations about God and the world come to hang together intelligibly once again.'[11]

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[9] Pinckaers, pp. 257-58, referring to the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church.
[10] Pinckaers, p. 256.
[11] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 169.

This first-order theological construction can be construed, like the contribution made by Francis de Sales, both as something new and something old. Ellen van Wolde speaks of the new contribution that thinking about creation can make to theology and religious practice. She notes that in the 1970s and 1980s, there was a great deal of reflection on the narrative of Exodus as a resource for development. She both recognizes and recommends that, in the 1990s, 'a growing interest has been shown in the book of Genesis.'[12] Other authors stress more that positing the central importance of creation to philosophical theology is in continuity with what has gone before. Brian Davies says that the notion of creation pervades the writings of Aquinas,[13] and Denys Turner takes a similar position. He says that the Five Ways at the beginning of the *Summa Theologiae* 'are not meant to tell you anything much about God at all, for rather they tell you something about the world, namely that it is *created.*'[14] In fact, understanding the Five Ways as proofs only makes sense within what Turner calls the 'complex circle of argument' that takes place in the context of 'Thomas's conception of God as Creator.'[15]

This thesis recommends this dual sense of something new and old as a useful way, not only of thinking about the place of creation in philosophical theology, but also of speaking about the two major authors whose work is to be investigated. Both Burrell and Schillebeeckx have passed through changes in their writings: indeed, the place of continuity in change is disputed amongst the secondary sources, particularly with regard to Schillebeeckx. It is suggested here that a dialectic of fidelity and creative completion can not only be used to

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[12] Ellen van Wolde, 'Editorial', *Concilium*, 2000.4 (2000), 7-10 (p. 7).
[13] Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 33.
[14] Denys Turner, *Faith Seeking* (London: SCM Press, 2002), p. 9.
[15] Turner, *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God*, pp. 241-42, cf. p. 260.

understand the development of the two main authors, but can also provide a useful characterization of how it is possible to follow them today.[16]

The way that both Burrell and Schillebeeckx oppose the opposition of creation and salvation is also common to other contemporary authors. Patterson indicates that providence and creation should not be separated from each other, because everything created is dependent on the Creator not only for its origin, but also for its continuing existence.[17] Kerr stresses, with reference to the work of A.N. Williams, that Aquinas's project 'is wholly shaped by Thomas's relentless portrayal of God as the God who is intent on union with humanity.'[18] The God whom Aquinas presents in the *Summa Theologiae*, he says, 'is never aloof or separated from creatures [...]. On the contrary, the divine intention to bring into being creatures destined for union with himself has been there all along.'[19]

Rosemary Radford Ruether says something similar, that the God who creates the world is not other than the God who redeems it: 'Redemption is the fulfilment of creation, its completed manifestation of its true being and God's hope.'[20] Patrick Kelly recommends a way of speaking of God and creation that mirrors talk of the divine and human in Jesus. He observes that the Chalcedonian definition offers:

> four adverbs to describe how that which is divine and that which is human in our Lord relates to each other: they are related to each other without being confused with each

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[16] The idea of fidelity and creative completion can be gleaned from the way that Burrell uses the thinking of Aquinas in what is, for him, both a historical and a contemporary inter-faith project. See Burrell, *APL*, pp. xi, 1-2 and 161, n. 75; *AGA*, pp. 154 and 161; and Burrell, *KUG*, pp. ix and 109. It can also be seen at work in the way that Schillebeeckx uses the idea of *sequela* in his thought. See Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus in Our Western Culture: Mysticism, Ethics and Politics* trans. by John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1987), p. 43 (Henceforth *JWC*); Edward Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History in What is Called the New Paradigm', trans. by Margaret Kohl, in *Paradigm Change in Theology*, pp. 307-319 (p. 314); Schillebeeckx, Edward, 'You Cannot Arbitrarily Make Something of the Gospel!', trans. by David Smith, *Concilium*, 170 (1983), 15-19 (p. 18).

[17] Patterson, pp. 100-101.

[18] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 157.

[19] Ibid., p. 160. The work of A.N. Williams, to which Kerr refers on pp. 157 and 160, will be discussed in Chapter Six, when the topic of divinization is addressed.

[20] Rosemary Radford Ruether, 'The God of Possibilities: Immanence and Transcendence Rethought', *Concilium*, 2000.4 (2000), 45-54 (p. 50).

> other, changed by each other, separated from each other, or divided from each other. It seems to me that in the gift of this teaching of the Bishops gathered at the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451, we are also given a foundation for understanding how all that is created relates to the one who is Creator.[21]

This suggestion sets the scene for a more detailed analysis of how to undertake that project, which will take up most of this opening chapter. In it, the accounts presented by a number of contemporary authors, many of whom have already been mentioned, will be investigated, to see how they balance the needs suggested by those four adverbs. As that investigation proceeds, some of the implications for other aspects of philosophical theology, already mentioned in the Introduction, will be teased out. In addition, some reservations will be expressed about how to speak of creation and the Creator, which will serve as reminders for the more detailed analysis of Burrell and Schillebeeckx's work to follow.

Opposing Oppositions

Ruether makes an appeal to rethink the opposition of God's transcendence and immanence. She says that Christian feminists recognize that separating the two in a dualistic manner is problematic, and seek to hold them together: 'As long as we continue to assume that transcendence means disconnectedness and distance and [to equate] immanence with a reduction to what presently is, [...] we will not be able to break through this impasse.'[22] A similar difficulty arises, she notes, in talking about the place of humanity in relation to the rest of nature, in that 'as we have become increasingly able to dominate and control nature, we have come to imagine ourselves as transcendent to it, independent of it.'[23] She avers that this is a false consciousness, and that an equally false consciousness of God's transcendence has

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[21] Patrick Kelly, 'Stewards of Creation', *Briefing*, 33.8 (August 2003), 33-37 (pp. 35-36).

[22] Ruether, p. 46. The words in parentheses are added in order to help the sentence to flow. They – or words like them – appear to have been omitted from the published text.

[23] Ruether, p. 52.

been modelled on it. As a result, what Tanner would call a contrastive account of divine transcendence develops, which is then also contrasted with divine immanence.

A similar contrastive account can also be detected in what Tanner calls the 'two-storey conception of the relation between nature and grace' that developed in Catholic thought after Cajetan's commentary on Aquinas. What happens here, says Tanner, is that it is assumed that the 'conceptual distinctions between nature and grace reflect a real difference between the natural and the supernatural; the natural and the supernatural are not the same.'[24] This interchangeability of the terms 'distinction' and 'difference' is rightly shown here to be the product of a contrastive pattern of thought, and is a suspicion that will arise a number of times as this thesis progresses.

Kerr also opposes the opposition of nature and grace, noting that, for Aquinas, contrary to the way in which he was interpreted after Cajetan, 'nature as it actually is is always already shot through with grace'.[25] Williams makes a similar point, saying that Aquinas's stress on the need of grace for salvation does not mean a separation of nature and grace with regard to humanity. Speaking of the state of affairs before the Fall 'as one in which humanity did not need grace is absurd in his view, since without divine sustenance human persons would not exist at all – we would have fallen into nothingness'.[26]

Ann Astell addresses a similar need to reshape the way that the world is spoken of, observing that the metaphors of 'the carnival and the wasteland hint at the possibility of

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[24] Tanner, *God and Creation*, pp. 143-44.

[25] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 64.

[26] A.N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 82.

kataphatic and apophatic ways through the postmodern world.'[27] Her analysis of how this can take place uses the idea of 'the creative tension of opposites held in balance':[28]

> These oppositional pairings (like the linking of the carnival with the desert) do not, properly speaking, "collapse" binaries, but rather, "overcome" and transform them through love – a love which values both unity and diversity and establishes a polar relationship between them.[29]

Such an account succeeds in being non-contrastive, according to Tanner's nomenclature, and makes possible an interesting way of relating the apophatic and kataphatic traditions in theology. Astell seeks to hold opposites together in a polar relationship in order to overcome their separation. This sounds not altogether unlike Burrell's proposal to think of creation and salvation in terms of an ellipse with twin foci. Indeed, the structural similarities with it will be seen to be manifold, when the structure of dialectic in Burrell's account is investigated in Chapter Three.

Timothy Radcliffe proposes what appears to be a similar intertwining of apophatic and kataphatic elements in his proposal that the most fundamental crisis facing the world is the crisis of meaning. In the face of this crisis, he says, there is a need for theologians to live life as 'the celebration and exploration of gift', because the meaning that humanity seeks is, along with the world and everything in it, given. As a result, he says that the world needs:

> theologians who live a certain kind of life. And I would say that the test and fruition of this life is joy. [...] In a world suffering from a crisis of meaning, our task is to express our joy in the gift. [...] This happiness does not come easily, it is the fruit of faith and the hard labour of searching for the truth, struggling to understand, stretching our minds.[30]

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[27] Ann W. Astell, 'Postmodern Christian Spirituality: A *Coincidentia Oppositorum*?', *Christian Spirituality Bulletin*, 4 (1996), 1-5 (p. 3).

[28] Astell, p. 5.

[29] Astell, p. 4.

[30] Timothy Radcliffe, 'The Joyful Task of Theology', *Concilium*, 2000/4 (2000), 11-14 (pp. 12-13).

However, if joy is the fruit of the hard labour of struggling to understand, the image suggested seems to be an organic one, in which the kataphatic arises out of the struggles of the apophatic. Thus the interplay of apophatic and kataphatic theology might be more mutual than the geometric image of the ellipse suggests. This possibility will arise in greater detail in Chapter Three, when the shape and structure of Schillebeeckx's dialectic is investigated alongside Burrell's.

Anthony Campbell combines two of the themes addressed so far, saying that faith and experience seem to 'require that we hold together, as a paradox in the mystery of the divine, both the powerlessness of a loving God – who rages, weeps and rejoices with us – and the 'otherness' of God.'[31] He says that, in doing so, it may be that 'we have to hold together in one faith the God who is 'utterly other' (of whom we can hardly speak and had best be silent), and the God who has been and is 'here among us' (with whom we must engage).'[32] That he speaks of the combination of the two as paradoxical will also be seen to be a common feature as this chapter progresses. Campbell is significant at this point, however, because he makes the clear connection between God's transcendence and immanence and the apophatic and kataphatic in theology, suggesting a certain structural isomorphism.

Difference and Relation

Although the subject explicitly addressed by David Cunningham is the Trinity, he, too, strives to speak of God and the world using what he calls, echoing Tanner's nomenclature, a non-dichotomous conceptuality.[33] In doing so, he uses terms to speak about the distinction

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[31] Anthony F. Campbell, 'Ignatius Loyola and God's Unconditional Love', *The Way*, 43 (2004), 31-42 (pp. 31-32).

[32] Campbell, p. 32.

[33] David Cunningham, *These Three are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 41.

involved in creation that seem to come dangerously close to making the kind of mistakes that Tanner – and others in this chapter – highlight.

When speaking of the processions within the Trinity, Cunningham is willing to use relational language, going so far as to refer to 'the Three as "relation without remainder"'.[34] However, when he comes to speak of God and creation, he says that they are 'separated by what Kierkegaard called an "infinite qualitative difference."'[35] A difference that separates seems hard to understand as anything other than a contrast, but Cunningham appears to think that this can be otherwise. His understanding of the terms 'separation' and 'infinite difference' must be very flexible if he is able to do this. Perhaps Cunningham thinks that an 'infinite qualitative difference' and a 'distinction' are interchangeable – this is quite a common thought, as will become more apparent in the next section, but it raises the suspicion that Cunningham is at least in danger of being unable to sustain his non-contrastive account, because of this interchangeability. Cunningham is also a good example of the thinker who proposes that 'difference' and 'relation' can serve as correlative terms – again, a common suggestion, but one that will be challenged later in this chapter.

Tending Towards Difference and Sameness

Karen Jones identifies the challenge facing Christian Youth Ministry in the contemporary world as an attempt to find a way between two extremes. One is an emphasis on relationship, for which she gives William Blake as an example: 'Blake tends to find commonality between all things that would normally be conceived of as different, and he prefers to completely

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[34] Cunningham, *These Three are One*, p. 65.
[35] Ibid., p. 75.

dissolve all distinctions between these things.'[36] To articulate the other, she proposes the image of sand as a metaphor for many postmodern views of young people – as individual, separate and discrete grains. Her attempt to find a way between them is to propose 'Sifting through the Sand', a process of 'separating the superficial and the symbolic from the genuine core.'[37] She claims that the 'expressions of a generation are merely ways that youth attempt to meet basic human needs for acceptance, identity, relationship and significance.'[38] She seems to be using a difference and relation scheme here as the basis of her analysis, but it is one in which there is a strong tendency towards difference and sameness, as indicated by her use of 'merely' in the last citation. After all, although the ways in which young people seek to meet their basic human needs differ from one generation to the next, and although it could also be said that the actual content of these basic needs differs, the needs themselves remain the same.

Strangely, in other works than *God and Creation*, Tanner too seems to be prey to this tendency. She says, in a non-contrastive manner, that the reality of the creature and its dependence on God exist in a direct, not an inverse, proportion. However, she goes on to say:

> The distinctness of the creature is thus the consequence of a relationship with God as its creator; here difference is the product of unity, of what brings together, of relationship. The perfection of created life, the perfection of the creature in its difference from God increases with the perfection of the relationship with God: the closer the better.[39]

This citation shows that the distinction and the relation of creation are parsed in terms of difference and relationship, even unity, which seems at least on the way towards sameness. This could easily be a slip on Tanner's part, a relaxing of vigilance, rather than a change of mind about the advantages of distinction-based language and the disadvantages of difference-

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[36] Karen Jones, 'To See a World in a Grain of Sand: The Futile Attempt to Describe Youth Culture', *Journal of Youth and Theology*, 2.1 (April 2003), 57-67, p. 57.

[37] Ibid., pp. 63 and 65.

[38] Ibid., p. 64.

[39] Kathryn Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity: a Brief Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), p. 3.

based language. However, the fact that Tanner herself can display such tendencies shows how difficult it is to escape the naturalistic structure of modern discourse.

A difference and sameness scheme seems to be used by Keith Ward, speaking about the attempt to find the essence of religion. Commenting on Schleiermacher's attempt, he says that it might be called 'the 'holistic vision', seeing all things as parts of a totality, ceaselessly active in all its parts, but seen in an infinite number of different ways.'[40] Otto, on the other hand, identified the essence of religion with a feeling of the numinous, 'a sense of being confronted by something 'wholly other', quite outside normal experience, completely alien.'[41] The two authors articulate their position in terms of difference (stressed by Schleiermacher) and sameness (stressed by Otto). Ward comments that Otto's position is 'probably much too bold', appealing to William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience* to present his own view: 'Religion is more diverse than that. There are [...] many varieties of religious experience and many ways of encountering the gods.'[42] The suggestion that Ward seems to be making is that, since there is only one God to be encountered, all religious experiences have a component in them that is the same, namely that which is experienced. Nevertheless, there are varieties of religious experience, and, as such, the experience itself differs from one person and religious tradition to the next.

Denys Turner clearly uses a difference and sameness scheme to understand language, and also to understand the way in which distinctions are made: 'I can distinguish kinds from one another against the background of more general descriptions: I can tell horses from sheep because they differ as animals'. He says that one creature is distinct from another 'by means of its difference in respect of some background sameness which they share.' This structure of

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[40] Keith Ward, *God: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2002), p. 19.
[41] Ward, p. 25.
[42] Ward, p. 29.

language is one that he characterizes as 'the logic of difference'.[43] Whilst not being naturalistic in the sense that Tanner uses that term, it is a structure of discourse that will be examined in more detail as the chapter progresses. It will be seen to provide a good foil against which to develop an understanding of 'the distinction' and 'the relation' involved in creation that will be of use in analysing Burrell and Schillebeeckx.

Privileging Difference

Writing about the challenges facing contemporary Christian spirituality, Ronald Rolheiser approvingly cites David Tracy, who, he says, 'submits that the biggest challenge confronting us today is that of facing our differences, of accepting, truly accepting, otherness.'[44] The differences that Rolheiser is speaking of are those between human beings, but Ward and Turner also seem to privilege difference when speaking of God and creation.

In Ward's brief section on the thought of Maimonides – an author of whom he obviously thinks highly, as he borrows the subtitle of his book from him – he says that the 'absolute difference between God and anything else is basic for Jewish prophetic thought.'[45] When he considers the doctrine of analogy, he says that 'God is nothing like anything we can imagine. The analogy points to a radical difference.'[46] He amplifies this thought subsequently: 'We can say that God knows and wills the universe, but these terms are analogies, nothing like human knowing and willing.'[47] If they are nothing at all like human knowing and willing – or, perhaps, if human knowing and willing are nothing like divine knowing and willing, and

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[43] Denys Turner, 'Tradition and Faith', *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 6 (2004), 21-36 (p. 27).

[44] Rolheiser, Ronald, 'Facing Otherness and Differences' (5 January 2004), <http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/ron/ron_171differences.html> [accessed 16 June 2006], (para. 1 of 11).

[45] Ward, pp. 45 and 46.

[46] Ward, p. 62.

[47] Ward, p. 142.

the directionality could well be of crucial importance – then the analogy will surely be hard to sustain, as it sounds as if this use of analogy is not far short of absolute equivocity.

Turner says something similar, when he speaks of 'the difference between God' and creation or creatures.[48] When he considers 'the pseudo-Denys' (Turner's term for pseudo-Dionysius), he says that he gives 'quite the most sophisticated theology of 'difference' in the Western Christian theological tradition'. One of the marks of this sophistication is the position he takes that 'the more we are aware of the difference between God and creatures, the less hold our minds have on the nature of this difference.' [49] The issues that this raises are many for Turner, but before considering them in more detail, it is worth outlining some other characteristics of the tendency towards difference and sameness that is present in these, and other, authors.

Difference and Distinction as Interchangeable

When Tanner is describing the transcendental philosophical theology of Karl Rahner, she uses difference and distinction in a way that suggests interchangeability: 'The difference between God and the world as the difference between transcendental ground and the categorical world of objects grounded is indeed the original distinction, the precondition required for any possibility of specifying objects in their distinction from others at all.'[50] Admittedly, she is characterizing Rahner here, so she may not accept such interchangeability herself, but, taken in addition to the earlier text, the suspicion of at least a lack of care is strengthened.

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[48] Turner uses this language a great deal in 'Tradition and Faith': twice on p. 22, four times on p. 26, and on pp. 27 and 33.

[49] Turner, 'Tradition and Faith', p. 26.

[50] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 67, referring to Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, p. 62 and *Theological Investigations,* Volume IV, p. 51.

Ward explains Aquinas's understanding of divine simplicity in a way that makes clear his interchangeable use of difference and distinction: 'God is not made up of parts, is not divisible, and we cannot even distinguish different elements in the divine being.'[51] Strictly speaking, this position is correct, because the conceptual distinctions made in discourse about God distinguish ways in which human beings think and talk about God. God is thought of differently if God's knowledge, wisdom, love, and so on, are considered. However, these are conceptual distinctions – God's knowledge, wisdom and love, for Aquinas, are not really different things. The difference is in the human thinker, not in God. In God, there are no real distinctions; real distinctions are only found in the created world. Hopefully, though, the way in which this has just been expressed is somewhat more successful than Ward in being careful about how the terms are used. Difference and distinction, in particular, are not simply interchangeable.

Williams shows a similar predisposition to interchangeability when she considers analogical discourse: 'In maintaining that intelligibility belongs properly to God, Aquinas once again underlines the distinction between God and all else. In showing how the human mind may nevertheless conceive of this God, he indicates a bridge over the divide.'[52] What Williams might be thought to be presenting here is the asymmetrical character of 'the distinction' of creation – that it is a distinction between God and the world, yet an absolute divide between the world and God. However, as her book progresses, she seems to use the expressions 'ontological divide' and 'ontological distinction' interchangeably,[53] and speaks of both the 'distinction between Uncreated and created' and 'the distinction between created and Creator'.[54]

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[51] Ward, p. 52.
[52] Williams, *Ground of Union*, p. 42.
[53] Ibid., pp. 79, 82, 95 and pp. 80-81 respectively.
[54] Ibid., pp. 81 and 95 respectively.

When Turner considers Eckhart, he appears to shift terminology from difference to distinction:

> If difference is central to that theology and spirituality, the carefully hierarchical gradings of the pseudo-Denys found in chapters 4 and 5 of his *Mystical Theology* collapse into one central distinction which entirely eclipses all others; the distinction, on the one hand, between those created distinctions which obtain between one creature and another [...] and, on the other, that distinction which obtains between every [creature and God.]'[55]

However, he analyses all these distinctions with reference to 'the logic of difference', mentioned earlier. He also shifts in his terminology in a way that strongly suggests interchangeability.[56] Taken as a whole, this implies that, for Turner, a distinction is a kind of difference. As will become clear later, it is an unusual kind of difference, and 'the ontological distinction' between the world and God may be a unique kind. However, for Turner, talk of it is nevertheless governed by the logic of difference.

Privileging the Negative

Ward's material on Maimonides and Aquinas stresses the apophatic character of their theology. Maimonides says that God cannot be said to have any positive attributes; all that it is possible for creatures to know about God is what God is not – that God is not any of those things that it is possible for a creature to know, since all of them are created. Advance towards knowledge of God is made by ruling out what God is not.[57] Similarly, with regard to Aquinas, Ward points out that he says: 'We cannot know what God is, only what he is not'.[58] This does not mean that images of God are of no use, however. In that sense, Aquinas seems not to be as

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[55] Turner, 'Tradition and Faith', p. 27.

[56] He speaks of 'the difference between God' and creation or creatures five times in 'Tradition and Faith', pp. 26-27, and says that 'God is distinct' from any creature twice on p. 27. He then uses the term 'ontological distinction' on p. 29 and three times on p. 30. On p. 33, however, he returns to the language of 'difference'.

[57] Ward, p. 46.

[58] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 3 (referred to in Ward, p. 51).

extreme as Maimonides: 'He is saying that they are precisely images, and it is essential to take them as such. If we are trying to get at what God really is, we must move beyond all images.'[59] Thus, although Aquinas, for Ward, favours the apophatic, the kataphatic is also present.

In fact, when Ward turns to consider pseudo-Dionysius, apophatic and kataphatic elements in theology can be seen to function in a sameness and difference scheme. Ward points out that, for pseudo-Dionysius, 'God is 'Nothing', not-a-thing, but that Nothing is not sheer vacuum. It is that in which all distinctions fade away, but in which they are rooted.'[60] As a result, attributes can be affirmed of God, but they do not apply to God the way that they apply to things. So, the kataphatic and the apophatic are doing the same thing in different ways: 'To affirm everything at once is just about the same thing as denying anything in particular.'[61]

Turner holds a very similar thesis to Ward in this regard, and, like him, finds its fullest expression in pseudo-Dionysius. Turner says that he points out that 'God is beyond our comprehension not because we cannot say anything about God, but because we are compelled to say too much, more than we can know how to mean.'[62] In a way that is even clearer than the expression found in Ward, Turner says that 'for the pseudo-Denys, and for Thomas following him, the 'apophatic' consists in the superfluity of the 'cataphatic', the 'darkness of God' consists in the excess of light.'[63] For Turner, then, it is not just that the apophatic and kataphatic traditions are doing the same thing in different ways, but also that what they are doing is best expressed by the apophatic tradition: after all, as he puts it, the apophatic

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[59] Ward, p. 52.
[60] Ward, p. 58.
[61] Ward, p. 58.
[62] Turner, 'Tradition and Faith', pp. 33-34.
[63] Ibid., p. 34.

consists in the superfluity of the kataphatic. Such a reading is further strengthened by a comment Turner made in the discussion following the presentation of this paper at a conference in Oxford. He said that his favourite negative theologian was Julian of Norwich, someone who is usually referred to as a kataphatic theologian and mystic, rather than an apophatic one.[64]

Turner analyses this relation between the apophatic and kataphatic traditions in another recent article, in which he says that the reason for the:

> logical interdependence of the negative and the affirmative ways is not the true but trivial reason that *logically* until you have something to affirm you have nothing to negate. The reason is the more dialectically interesting one that it is in and through the very excess, the proliferation, of discourse about God that we discover its failure as a whole.[65]

Two observations can be made about this text. The first is that, as suggested earlier, the negative way is privileged here. Ultimately, as Turner stresses in a footnote, images of God 'fail, not of truth, but of God.'[66] But, to say this about them is to say, more or less, that the point of affirmative theology is to show that no image 'captures' God (in the sense of comprehending, grasping, capturing God's nature). Not only is this definition of affirmative theology expressed in negative terms, but it is actually the definition usually given of negative theology.

Secondly, he admits that it is true (although trivial) that the logic of language applies here – which he characterizes in 'Tradition and Faith' as the logic of difference. Hence, would it not also be the case that the structure he has in mind here too is one of difference and

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[64] The conference, which was held at Harris Manchester College, Oxford, on 18 January 2003, was called 'Between Reason and Faith: The Role of Tradition in Roman Catholic Theology'. The papers in the issue of *International Journal of Systematic Theology* that contains Turner's article were all given at that conference.

[65] Denys Turner, 'Apophatism, Idolatry and the Claims of Reason', in *Silence and the Word: Negative Theology and Incarnation*, ed. by Oliver Davies and Denys Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 11-34 (p. 16).

[66] Turner, 'Apophatism', p. 16, n. 9.

sameness? As such, the kataphatic tradition could be understood as different to the apophatic, against a common background of negativity. They are, in the final analysis, different ways of doing negative theology.

Relation and Relationship as Interchangeable

This tendency is not present in the two articles by Turner under consideration, but is certainly present in Ward. In his analysis of Martin Buber's *I and Thou*, Ward's citation from it uses the term 'relation', but when he comments on what Buber is saying, he uses the term 'relationship.'[67] Similarly, in his consideration of the Ten Commandments, Ward says that these 'exist precisely to set apart the people of Israel as different from other people, as chosen for a special covenant-relation with God.'[68] On the following page, he describes them as 'the ground rules for keeping that special relationship with God going.'[69] There is a tendency here to understand the two terms interchangeably, such that if it is possible to have a relation to/with another, it is also possible to have a relationship with that other.

This pattern of interchangeability is widely found. John English says that to 'be created is to be taking part in the divine dance, to be in relationship with all other creatures, human and non-human, to be in communion with the three persons of the Trinity.'[70] At first glance, this does not seem to be such a controversial statement, but if it is considered that a genuinely interpersonal relationship requires both *relata* to be capable of relating personally, it is, in fact, highly controversial. Trileigh Tucker says something similar when she comments that 'a geologist friend of mine loves to point out that every atom of our bodies is borrowed

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[67] Compare the quote from Buber on p. 32 with the analysis of it by Ward on pp. 32-33.
[68] Ward, p. 73.
[69] Ward, p. 74.
[70] John English, 'Dialoguing with the Dance of Creation', *The Way*, 43 (2004), 19-30 (p. 21).

temporarily from a rock. (Think of this the next time you hold a rock: your relationship with it will be transformed.)'[71] Is it really possible to have a relationship with a rock?

Tanner shows a similar tendency towards interchangeability in speaking about the way that the creature is related to God. She says that the 'distinctness of the creature is [...] the consequence of relationship with God as its creator', and speaks of this as the 'non-competitive relation between creatures and God'.[72] Kerr seems to use the terms in a similar way. He says that, for Aquinas, being created 'means that there is nothing in the creature other than a relationship to the creator', and that 'the divine creative act is nothing other than God with a relationship to the created'. He then goes on to say, more or less immediately, that 'creating, "creation in its active sense", is nothing other than God with a relation to the creature'.[73]

The way that the terms are used by Williams shows similar characteristics, too, in a way that helps to move the discussion forward. She speaks of the link between earthly contemplation and the beatific vision of heaven both as a relationship and a relation between them.[74] She also says that Aquinas understands the connection between creature and creator asymmetrically, such that there is 'a one-way ontological relationship between God and creature, so that God's relation to the creature is understood as a purely conceptual relation, while the creature's relation to God is real'.[75]

The first thing to recognize about relational language is to note that it can apply both to a relation and to a relationship. The latter two, however, are not the same, and may not

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[71] Trileigh Tucker, 'Ecology and the Spiritual Exercises', *The Way*, 43 (2004), 7-18 (p. 9).

[72] Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity*, p. 3.

[73] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 43.

[74] See A.N. Williams, 'Mystical Theology Redux: The Pattern of Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*', *Modern Theology*, 13 (1997), 53-74 (pp. 61 and 71 respectively).

[75] Williams, *Ground of Union*, p. 67. The formulation is almost exactly the same in her earlier article A.N. Williams, 'Deification in the *Summa Theologiae*: A Structural Interpretation of the *Prima Pars*', *The Thomist*, 61 (1997), 219-225 (p. 224).

even differ against a common background. If this is the case, they are best not used interchangeably. Even if they do differ against a common background (for example, the background of relationality), it may still be worth carefully delineating how the two terms function, in order to avoid confusing them. A relation between two *relata* functions differently from a relationship between them, even though, in both, it is true to say that the two *relata* are related to one another. The use of prepositions can be of great help here – a personal creature can be related to a non-personal one (can stand in a particular relation to it) without thereby being in relationship with it.

This leads naturally on to the second point, that a human being can be related without thereby being in a personal relationship, something that can be demonstrated even in human relations. A child who does not know that she is adopted will think that she has a personal relationship with her biological parents – one that grows as a result of genuinely human acts, performed both by her and by those who are actually her adoptive parents. In fact, the personal relationship she has is with her adoptive parents, not her biological parents. She is, of course, related to her biological parents, otherwise she would not have been born, but this relation is not a personal relationship. Given this distinction, the ways in which a human can be related to a stone might now be able to be explained. A human can be related spatially to a stone, and Tucker's geologist friend offers the possibility of being temporally related to one. However, both these examples are of being related to the stone, not of being in a personal relationship with the stone.

These distinctions can also be useful in thinking about creation. Given that human beings are creatures (or, speaking philosophically, *qua* creature), they are related to the Creator, as are all creatures – they exist in a relation to God. This relation, however, is not the same as a personal relationship with God, which humans can have because they are personal

creatures (in philosophical terms, *qua* human or, perhaps more precisely, *qua* personal)[76]. Such personal creatures are capable, in a way that other, non-personal creatures are not, of having a personal relationship with an other, as long as the other is also capable of having a personal relationship with that creature.[77] Therefore, relational language can be used of humans and God to speak of both the relation of creation and the relationship of faith, which are distinct in the ways outlined above.

Directional sensitivity

This sensitivity about relational language can also lead on to a similar need to be sensitive about the directionality of both relational and distinctional language. As was noted earlier, Williams points out that the relation of creation is asymmetrical. Since the correlative term to 'the relation' is 'the distinction', there is a need to be vigilant in its use, too. In fact, such vigilance is more widely applicable, as Pinckaers points out. Speaking of the connection between nature and grace, he admits that it is possible to understand Aquinas's saying that grace perfects nature in a two-storey context. The implication of this would be that it is necessary first to understand natural gifts and then move on to a study of grace and the supernatural. He observes that this is not the only way to proceed, however: 'we could as well, perhaps better, conclude that since grace perfects nature, the more we study human

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[76] This latter possibility is added because of the chance that there are other personal creatures, which, as such, are capable of personal relationships. These need not be found on Earth, although some do wonder if dolphins, for example, might be persons.

[77] The rider 'as long as' is inserted because of the examples of the adopted child and the stone. The phrase 'capable of having a personal relationship' is used, rather than 'in a personal relationship' because, using the adopted child example, what is preventing her from being in a personal relationship with her biological parents is the fact that she does not know she is adopted. Once she does know, there is a sense in which there is a personal relationship between the child and her biological parents, although this may be as slender as to be almost non-existent (in the case of the adopted child who makes no attempt to trace or contact her biological parents). The coming-to-know affects the possibility of a relationship – what was impossible before, now becomes possible. It may remain an unactualized possibility, but before coming-to-know, a personal relationship was impossible.

nature in the light of faith, the better we will understand its essence and potential.'[78] Such a proposal does not remove the distinction between nature and grace, but recognizes that the character of the distinction between the two is directionally sensitive.

The asymmetry of 'the distinction' of creation means that it is important to take care in speaking of it. A certain lack of care seems to be displayed by Williams, who speaks both of 'the fundamental distinction between Creator and creature' and 'the distinction between creature and Creator'.[79] At least here, she speaks of both in terms of distinction, whereas elsewhere she speaks of 'the ontological divide between Uncreated and created', saying that the 'distinction between creature and Creator can now be parsed as the difference between the One who voluntarily and generously shares his life, and those who can only be recipients of that life.'[80] 'The distinction' of creation, however, is only ontological between creatures and Creator; if there were an ontological distinction between the Creator and creation, then God would not be able to be active in the created world, which in turn would mean that creatures would be unable to continue in existence. This problem seems especially acute with regard to the preposition 'between', as it seems that many authors are less than fully aware of (or less careful than they might be with regard to) the directional character of this preposition. As a result, Davies refers to 'the difference between God and creatures' as a way of speaking about the asymmetry of the creation relation, when it would seem more helpful to speak of the distinction between creation and the Creator.[81]

Gerard Hughes is happy to speak of 'a gap between the divine perfections and the corresponding human perfections' without saying anything about the nature of that gap –

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[78] Pinckaers, p. 292.

[79] Williams, *Ground of Union*, pp. 81 and 95 respectively. See also other examples of the first form on p. 81 and another of the second on p. 67.

[80] Williams, 'Deification', p. 221.

[81] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 75-76 (quote from p. 76).

whether it is a real one or not.[82] Turner says that 'there can be *no* calculation, whether in terms of sameness or difference, of the "gap" between God and creatures.' There is, he says, no good sense in speaking of 'the greater and lesser degrees of "distance" which lie between Creator and creatures as contrasted with that between one creature and another'.[83] But the reason for this is that both the distinction between the creature and God and the distinction between God and the creature are not like the distinctions that are found in the created world. But each of them is unlike those distinctions in a completely different way.

This manner of using the preposition 'between' is also a feature of a number of the contributions to the symposium on God and creation, the proceedings of which Burrell and McGinn edited. Fazlur Rahman says that, for the Muslim philosopher Ibn Sina, 'between God and the world there is a radical ontological dislocation whereby the status of the world in terms of being becomes purely derivative from that of God.'[84] Seyyed Hossein Nasr speaks of 'the radical hiatus which exists between God and the world' in Islamic thinking.[85] Eric Ormsby says that no distinction 'is so fundamental to Islamic thought, nor perhaps so all-encompassing, as that between the eternal and the created-in-time',[86] and in his response to Ormsby's paper, Paul Hardy agrees.[87] The directionality of these statements seems also to lack care, although, in the case of Islam, it may be that the directionality may not be quite the same as it is in Christianity. This theme will recur when the presentation of 'the distinction' and 'the relation' in Burrell is addressed in the next chapter, because the distinction of creation is linked to the way that essence and existence are distinguished in creatures and in

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[82] Gerard J. Hughes, 'Aquinas and the Limits of Agnosticism', in *The Philosophical Assessment of Theology: Essays in Honour of Frederick C. Copleston*, ed. by Gerard J. Hughes (Tunbridge Wells: Search Press, 1987), pp. 35-63 (p. 47).

[83] Turner, *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God*, p. 213.

[84] Fazlur Rahman, 'Ibn Sina's Theory of the God-World Relationship', in *G&C*, pp. 38-52 (p. 38).

[85] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 'Response', in *G&C*, pp. 316-321 (p. 319).

[86] Eric L. Ormsby, 'Creation in Time in Islamic Thought with Special Reference to Al-Ghazālī ', in *G&C*, pp. 246-264 (p. 246).

[87] Paul A. Hardy, 'Response', in *G&C*, pp. 265-275 (p. 265).

God, and it would seem that the directionality of those latter distinctions is not the same in the Islamic and Christian medieval sources.

However, the fact that some of the Christian contributors to that symposium also seem to lack care in the directionality of their 'between' statements shows that the issue is a significant one. Bernard McGinn says that the doctrine of creation speaks of 'the distinction between God and the world';[88] that it 'has to be able to express as best it can the paradox of how God is not only utterly distinct from all things, but also completely indistinct from them (to use Eckhart's terms)'.[89] But, is this a paradox (as Langdon Gilkey also puts it)[90] or is it to do with the directional sensitivity of 'the distinction'? Is the challenge not, rather, to express how, on the one hand, God is utterly distinct from all things and, nevertheless, on the other hand, all things are not really distinct from God? This is no less of a challenge, but it seems less paradoxical.

Beyond Difference and Sameness

The idea that the reality of God lies beyond human concepts is one that all the authors so far surveyed accept. How to elucidate this further is, however, one of the great challenges that faces philosophical theology. Turner does so in a way that suggests that, for him, even the logic of difference, which governs how human language is used, is penultimate rather than ultimate. He asks, 'what may we say about language that can cope with the difference between God and creation? It follows that it cannot cope at all; or, if we are to say anything

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[88] Bernard M[c]Ginn, 'Do Christian Platonists Really Believe in Creation?', in *G&C*, pp. 197-219 (p. 209).
[89] Ibid., p. 211.
[90] See Langdon Gilkey, 'Creation, Being and Nonbeing', in *G&C*, pp. 226-241 (p. 230).

about this distinction, it is what Eckhart says about it'.[91] He proposes two alternatives, which he examines in turn.

The first is that the structure of human language cannot cope at all with 'the distinction' – that the logic of difference collapses in the face of it. Such a conclusion might well be welcomed by Michel Foucault, who speaks of a similar collapse, provoked, however, not by talk of God, but by a taxonomy of animals he found in a Chinese encyclopaedia. This taxonomy, was so strange, so peculiar, that it made him laugh, a laughter which began:

> breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other.[92]

The other possibility, which Turner prefers, intimating that it is based on Eckhart, is that the difference between God and creation – as he puts it – 'is beyond our comprehension because 'difference' and sameness' have, in God, collapsed into that which is beyond both.'[93] He puts it more strongly still elsewhere, drawing on pseudo-Dionysius:

> Thomas is at one with the pseudo-Denys when he says that, at the climax of ascending scales of God's difference from all else, God must be thought of as off *every* scale of sameness and difference and thus beyond 'every assertion … beyond every denial'.[94]

Here, the collapse is not into meaninglessness, but into God. Language about God, for Turner, is language stretched to breaking point, language on the brink of collapse, but failing, 'not of truth, but of God.'[95] This move takes the one who seeks to know God into the mystery of the God who is beyond concepts and therefore beyond language. There is also a link here with his account of the apophatic and kataphatic traditions as different kinds of negative theology.

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[91] Turner, 'Tradition and Faith', p. 27.

[92] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. anonymous (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), p. xv.

[93] Turner, 'Tradition and Faith', p. 35.

[94] Turner, 'Apophatism', p. 29.

[95] Turner, 'Apophatism', p. 16, n. 9.

Although, for him, both traditions fail of God, they do so in different ways. The suggestion of the move beyond in the apophatic tradition takes the form of a tendency towards silence. In the kataphatic, it involves piling up language, metaphors and images almost to the point of collapse: here, 'theology, one might say, is an excess of babble.'[96]

Between Difference and Sameness

The move beyond difference and sameness is, however, not the only alternative to total collapse. There is a third possibility: that, in Foucault's words, what is threatened with collapse is the distinction between the Same and the Other, the very tendency towards difference and sameness that seems to be so widespread. This need not imply complete flux, as in Foucault, but could indicate the possibility of another approach. If God and the world are not only not opposed, but not different, then perhaps 'the distinction' and 'the relation' lie between difference and sameness, rather than being interchangeable with them. If the way in which the terms themselves interact is considered, this proposal can be substantiated.

No two things can be both different and the same in the same respect at the same time. As Turner has pointed out, a difference between things always presents itself against a background of sameness. Therefore, if two things are different in a particular respect, they cannot be the same in that respect at the same time. With regard to any particular respect, two things have to be either the same or different at a particular time. Thus, the logic of difference is oppositional in character at its very basis. Two things, however, can be both distinct and related in the same respect at the same time. Indeed, the very way in which they are related can be understood by talking about the way in which they are distinct, and vice versa. So, a pattern of thought based on distinction and relation is, to use Tanner's terminology, non-

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[96] Turner, 'Apophatism', p. 18.

contrastive. In such a pattern, a distinction is not understood as a kind of difference, but rather a difference is understood as a kind of distinction – a real distinction, rather than a conceptual distinction. Burrell and Schillebeeckx both seek to use such a non-contrastive structure in their accounts of the distinction and relation of creation. In the next chapter, their accounts will be outlined and compared, but before doing so, another of Tanner's ideas will be introduced that will assist that comparison, that of the community of argument.[97]

Forming a Community of Argument

Although Tanner develops her idea of the community of argument during her detailed consideration of the dialogue between cultural-linguistic and correlational theology, she clearly means it to be applied more widely. She says that in a naturalistic structure of discourse, different cultural groups and theological approaches or schools are thought of as sharply bounded, self-contained wholes.[98] These presuppositions, she asserts, are contested in postmodern discourse. Sharp boundaries are no longer seen to be needed,[99] such that the boundaries between cultural groups and systems of thought are understood to be permeable.[100] Different groups are still thought of as wholes, but rather than being understood as internally homogenous, are considered to be 'contradictory and internally fissured wholes.'[101] The significance of the boundary between cultural groups is transformed by Tanner's analysis. Rather than being the limit of what is acceptable, the point beyond which there is no return, it becomes, instead, the place where what is distinctive is crafted: 'the distinctiveness of a

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[97] Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), p. 123.

[98] Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, p. 95. Cf. pp. 105-7, for the way that she applies this to the debate between cultural-linguistic and correlational theology.

[99] Ibid., p. 53.

[100] Ibid., p. 152. Also see Patterson, p. 7 for a similar idea.

[101] Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, p. 57.

Christian way of life is not so much formed *by* the boundary as *at* it; Christian distinctiveness is something that emerges in the very cultural processes occurring at the boundary'.[102]

In seeking to form a community of argument of this type, this thesis aims to carry out two distinct and related tasks. The first is to set up a dialogue between the two authors in order to investigate the possible complementarity of their systems of thought. In turn, this task will contribute to the development of one of the two positions, since, in a community of argument, as well as 'mutual hearing and criticism by those who disagree', there is also 'a common commitment to mutual correction and uplift'.[103] Disagreement takes place in the context of a common desire to make real progress rather than simply being an attempt to prove the opponent's view incorrect or to score points off each other. As the thesis proceeds, therefore, a Schillebeeckian approach to the philosophical theology of creation will be elaborated, in continuity with Schillebeeckx whilst, at the same time, creatively completing some of his views.

Functional Complementarity and Theological Schools

Tanner develops a particular way of expressing how different approaches to a shared topic can be shown to be complementary in connection with the doctrine of creation, making it particularly appropriate to the dialogue pursued in this thesis:

> Any number of different theological accounts may be capable of explaining the compatibility of Christian claims about God and the world. Even logically incompatible schemes (that is, schemes that cannot be included within one logically consistent system of discourse) may yet be functionally equivalent: each may be doing the same things, performing the same explanatory function, in virtue perhaps of shared rules for discourse.[104]

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[102] Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, p. 115.

[103] Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, p. 123.

[104] Tanner, *God and Creation*, pp. 31-32.

Tanner's specific concern in *God and Creation* is talk of divine and creaturely action. In her wide-ranging survey of various approaches to this topic taken by theologies drawing on Platonic, Aristotelian, personalist and Kantian inspirations,[105] she draws out what she calls a 'body of rules', which become 'resources for complexity in Christian theology.'[106]

> The rules may be divided into two sets depending on whether statements formulated according to the rules in question highlight God's gifts to the creature or the sovereignty of the divine agent who gives them. The same rules may therefore be used with a diversity of emphases. The theologies that result are thereby functional complements.[107]

Functionally complementary theologies of creation can, therefore, be paired up and these pairings advance Christian thinking in two ways. Firstly, Tanner notes that 'theologies of the one sort may assume what theologies of the other sort make explicit' and that 'together they may represent, therefore, the whole of legitimate Christian claims on the topic of God and creation and the rules by which they can be made.'[108] Secondly, understanding the approaches as functionally complementary means that they can 'cut off possible misconstruals of one another.'[109] In other words, the fact that one approach stresses what the other takes for granted – of thinks of as secondary – means that each can stop the other from going too far.

The next two chapters investigate whether the thinking of Burrell and Schillebeeckx on creation is functionally complementary, in three stages: Firstly, the common ground occupies by the two authors will be described. This is found not only in their shared subject matter, but also in the non-contrastive character of their discourse. The second task is to ask if the two authors use the terms they share in a functionally equivalent manner. Burrell does indeed seem to stress 'the distinction' of creation, whilst Schillebeeckx appears to emphasize

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[105] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 55.
[106] Ibid., p. 83.
[107] Tanner, *God and Creation*, pp. 83-84.
[108] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 118.
[109] Ibid.

'the relation'. As such, Tanner's description seems apt: 'Different theologies may be functionally equivalent or analogous in that they perform the same job while using different tools.'[110]

The fact that Tanner expresses her idea using the language of sameness and difference leads to a third and decisive stage in the investigation. If Burrell and Schillebeeckx are doing the same thing in different ways, they will do so in virtue of a shared structure of discourse. This will be probed with reference to the role played by dialectic in the thinking of both authors. The differences revealed disrupt the complementarity thesis enough for a preference to be expressed for Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology.

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[110] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 30.

Chapter Two

Investigating Complementarity I: Common Ground

In order to investigate whether Burrell and Schillebeeckx offer functionally complementary accounts of creation, it is helpful to establish the parameters for the enquiry by briefly surveying the material to be examined. It is also advantageous to demonstrate, in more detail than previously done, that both authors offer a non-contrastive account of creation and to outline the terminology they use with regard to creation, which is at least to some extent shared.

Non-contrastive accounts

Burrell explicitly affirms Tanner's non-contrastive mode of discourse about God,[1] stating that it is important to speak of God and the world neither as opposed to one another nor in parallel to one another, as if God were simply on a par with other things.[2] He refers to her account of discourse that 'tends to reify the structure it means to convey',[3] observing that if two *relata* are distinguished without also articulating the relation between them, there is a tendency to characterize them over against one another.[4] Tanner's proposal of rules governing discourse about God and the world is very much in harmony with Burrell's project, which also has a profoundly linguistic emphasis.[5]

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[1] See Burrell, *F&F*, p. xxi (and especially n. 22), p. 134, n. 15, pp. 138-39.

[2] See Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 9 (and 185, notes to Chapter One, n. 2), 102 (and 201, n. 16); *FWT*, pp. 93 (and 109, n. 9) Burrell and Malits, pp. 72 (and 101, n. 1).

[3] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 98.

[4] Burrell and Malits, pp. 67-68.

[5] See Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 60, 70.

This emphasis can be found not just in his later publications, more obviously dealing with creation, but throughout Burrell's oeuvre. In his first major work, he distances himself, in a Lonergonian fashion, from what he calls the 'temptation to explain understanding on the model of seeing', saying that the best way to avoid this is to pay 'closer attention to language.'[6] Similarly, speaking of the fruits of his long friendship with Diogenes Allen, he highlights the need for sensitivity in the use of language, 'an acquired expertise in knowing how to use properly terms which [...] defy definition'.[7]

Burrell considers Aquinas to be a metalinguist rather than a metaphysician, concerned with 'mapping out the grammar appropriate *in divinis*.'[8] Aquinas's project, he maintains, delineates what God is not, rather than what God is, in a way that draws on the example of his Jewish and Muslim predecessors.[9] Major themes in Aquinas's work – including divine simplicity,[10] essence and existence,[11] God's agency as cause[12] and primary and secondary causation[13] – aim to establish grammatical strategies for how to speak (and how not to speak) of God.[14] Burrell describes God's simpleness, goodness, limitlessness, unchangeableness and oneness as 'formal features',[15] indicating that rather than being features of God, they establish features of discourse about God. They are at the service of the distinction of God from the world, and creation, too, is best considered as 'an organising or formal fact'.[16]

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[6] Burrell, *APL*, p. 122. For this theme in Lonergan, see Terry J. Tekippe, *What is Lonergan up to in INSIGHT? A Primer* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), p. 118; Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972), p. 238.

[7] Burrell, *FWT*, p. 22.

[8] Burrell, *AGA*, pp. 16-17, 40-41. Cf. *F&C*, pp. 100 and 200, n. 10, which refers to *AGA* and *KUG*.

[9] Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 31-32 and 188, n. 5, which also refers to *AGA*.

[10] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 5.

[11] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 37; *F&C*, p. 41.

[12] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 117.

[13] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 101.

[14] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 79; *F&C*, p. 10.

[15] See Burrell, *AGA*, p. 16; *KUG*, p. 38; *F&C*, pp. 31-32. His first use of the term 'formal feature' is in Burrell, *AGA*, p. 15 where he acknowledges his indebtedness to Ludwig Wittgenstein and Eddy Zemach (see *AGA*, p. 177, n.4). See also *KUG*, pp. 46-47 and 121, n. 21; *FWT*, pp. 104 and 111, n. 30.

[16] See Burrell, *KUG*, p. 50 and *AGA*, p. 135 respectively.

The links between Schillebeeckx and Tanner are not as direct, but can still readily be made. Kennedy emphasizes the 'markedly anti-dualist and anti-supernaturalist' structure of Schillebeeckx's material on creation,[17] in a way that Schillebeeckx himself affirms.[18] Daniel Speed Thompson describes the general pattern of Schillebeeckx's thinking as 'nondualistic' and 'nonantithetical'.[19] In speaking about Christian creation-faith, Schillebeeckx says that he does not separate the Christian and philosophical aspects.[20] Although human beings need to recognize that 'the other, including nature, needs us',[21] this otherness does not separate human beings from the rest of the created order.[22]

The non-contrastive structure of Schillebeeckx's thought is also displayed in the way he speaks about faith and politics. Bradford Hinze notes that, for Schillebeeckx, an 'ethical way of life is logically distinct yet inseparable from religion, especially within Christianity.'[23] Donald Goergen also acknowledges that, according to Schillebeeckx, Jesus refused 'to sanction an orthodoxy separated from orthopraxis'.[24] Schillebeeckx admits that some of his critics accuse him of paying 'too much attention to social and political liberation and not enough to the mystical liberation of mankind', but strongly denies that the two should be contrasted with each other.[25] Although it is true to say that the kingdom of God 'is certainly not the goal of politics and economics', nevertheless, it is not at all indifferent to their goals and methods.[26] Since 'Christian salvation is salvation of and for human beings [... it] also

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[17] Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 93.

[18] Schillebeeckx, 'Foreword' to Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. x.

[19] Daniel Speed Thompson, *The Language of Dissent: Edward Schillebeeckx on the Crisis of Authority in the Catholic Church* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), pp. 12-13.

[20] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 151, n. 83.

[21] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 238.

[22] Ibid., p. 236.

[23] Bradford E. Hinze, 'Eschatology and Ethics', in *PRG*, pp. 167-183 (p. 177).

[24] Donald J. Goergen, 'Spirituality', in *PRG*, pp. 117-131 (p. 122).

[25] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 105.

[26] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 99.

comprises ecological, social and political aspects, though it is not exhausted by these.'[27]

This pattern can be found throughout Schillebeeckx's oeuvre. He says that, as a creature, 'I am myself in dependence on God: the more I am God's, the more I become myself'.[28] God is 'not, in any sense the competitor with man's historical growth';[29] the human person's growth in God and growth in humanity exist in direct, not inverse, proportion. He opposes Cartesian dualism, saying that its problem is intractable because the theory taken as the starting point not only gives rise to the problem but at the same time makes it insoluble.[30] Similarly, Christian humility is neither opposed to nor identical with ancient philosophical notions of magnanimity,[31] and Christian humanism is both distinct from and related to atheistic secular humanism.[32]

The Sources

Three of Schillebeeckx's books contain 'concise explanations' of his thinking on creation, 'singularly succinct expositions' which all follow 'exactly the same line of argument.'[33] The sections of *IR*, *GAU* and *III* examined here are somewhat more extensive than those that Kennedy refers to, since the more explicitly Christological material in *GAU* that was incorporated into the English translation of *IR* is included.[34] This is partly because of the way in which it speaks of Christology as concentrated creation,[35] allowing these two elements of

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[27] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 100.

[28] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 215.

[29] Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 15.

[30] Ibid., pp. 231, 240.

[31] Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[32] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, pp. 225-26.

[33] See Philip Kennedy, 'God and Creation', in *PRG*, pp. 37-58 (p. 42); Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 82.

[34] The sources are Schillebeeckx *IR*, Chapters Six and Seven (pp. 105-39); *GAU*, Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen (pp. 91-115); *III*, Chapter Five, pp. 229-46. Kennedy's references can be found in 'God and Creation', *PRG*, p. 42.

[35] See Section heading, Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 126. Strangely, although the Section Headings in *IR* are derived from the same source as that which is found in *GAU*, the *GAU* text lacks them.

Christian thought to be linked in a non-contrastive manner. It is also because this material can be of help in elucidating the other texts.[36] If the Dutch texts are considered, moreover, the three (or, perhaps more accurately, four) expositions can in fact be called parallels, since they appear to be based on one another, with the later accounts building on, editing and adapting the earlier ones.[37] This adaptation of earlier material in the formation of later writing facilitates the identification of corrections or shifts of emphasis, as well as of places where the Dutch text is identical, with variation entering only as a result of translation. Such parallels are far from unusual in Schillebeeckx's oeuvre and can also be found in his earliest published works.[38]

Burrell's oeuvre is more easily portrayed as a way of theologizing philosophically about creation, although this is more readily concluded from the later, explicitly inter-faith works, from *KUG* on, which take creation as the focus of their investigations. As has already been intimated, however, creation is far from absent from Burrell's earlier works: in *AGA*, for example, he characterizes it 'as a self-involving affirmation', since affirming that the world is created makes a difference to the way that the believer speaks of and engages the world.[39] In *F&C*, he similarly affirms that creation makes a radical difference to thinking about origins, to the understanding of existence and to the history of ideas, particularly in the three

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[36] Chapter Seventeen of *GAU* was originally published as 'Ik geloof in Jezus van Nazareth' in *Tijdschrift voor Geestelijk Leven*, 35 (1979), 451-73 (See GAU, p. ix; also see *Bibliography 1936-1996 of Edward Schillebeeckx O.P.*, compiled by Ted Schoof and Jan van de Westelaken (Baarn: Nelissen, 1997) Stichting Edward Schillebeeckx <http://rome.hosting.kun.nl/schillebeeckx/bibliografie.pdf> [accessed 19 May 2005], p. 124). A parallel text was published the following year: Edward Schillebeeckx, 'I Believe in Jesus of Nazareth: the Christ, the Son of God, the Lord', trans. by Gerard Sloyan, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 17 (1980), 18-32 (Henceforth 'I Believe'). This article thus serves as a fourth source.

[37] The Dutch texts, in addition to 'Ik geloof in Jezus van Nazareth', are: Edward Schillebeeckx, *Evangelie verhalen* (Baarn: Nelissen, 1982), pp. 91-115 (Henceforth *EV*); *TV,* pp. 121-140; *Mensen*, pp. 247-263.

[38] Borgman notes that the first articles that Schillebeeckx ever published in the public forum, a series of three bearing the title 'Christelijke Situatie' (published in Kultuurleven, 12 (1945), 82-95, 229-242, 585-611), not only stick closely to earlier material he had written in the internal Dominican journal *Biekorf*, but that some of the material was 'taken over almost word for word from the *Biekorf* article "Nature and Supernature"' (Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, p. 87).

[39] Burrell, *AGA*, pp. 139-40.

Abrahamic traditions.[40] The fact that so much discussion in philosophical theology simply overlooks it,[41] or reads Aquinas, in particular, as if creation were not important 'challenges us to specify the philosophical difference which creation makes.'[42] Accordingly, the first major issue for investigation is the way that Burrell and Schillebeeckx characterize what creation is not, so as to begin to articulate this difference.

Specifying Misunderstandings of Creation

In outlining what he takes as three significant threats to an apposite understanding of creation, Burrell refers to Irenaeus of Lyons, a figure who will also be seen to be significant for Schillebeeckx. If creation and redemption are separated from one another, he says, 'we might presume with many philosophers that the universe was either itself divine or emanated necessarily from the One; or we might fall prey to the diverse dualisms of the Gnostics.'[43] William Hill speaks of Schillebeeckx's success in finding middle ground between 'the Scylla of deism on the one hand and the Charybdis of pantheism on the other.'[44] In fact, Schillebeeckx counters a number of misunderstandings in the creation parallels, although he deals with some in somewhat summary fashion and care is needed to spot the arguments. As he points out with regard to the political and mystical liberation of humanity, however, the number of pages he devotes to a subject need not necessarily reflect the importance of a theme in his thought. Some ideas that are quite peripheral are nevertheless complex, whilst other, more important, themes are more easily expressed or countered.[45]

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[40] See Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 21-22, 46-47 and 48-49 respectively.

[41] As Burrell says that offered by Christopher Hughes does, in *On a Complex Theory of a Simple God: An Investigation in Aquinas' Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) (see Burrell, *F&C*, p. 46, referring to Hughes, *Complex Theory*, p. 27).

[42] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 113.

[43] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 177.

[44] William J. Hill, 'A Theology in Transition', *PRG*, pp. 1-18 (p. 7).

[45] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 105.

Pantheism

Neither Burrell nor Schillebeeckx treats pantheism at length and Burrell notes that this is also true of Aquinas.[46] He says that Aquinas's article on pantheism in the *Summa Theologiae* is designed to rule out the possibility of understanding God as the form of the world, since this denies God the transcendence appropriate to the Creator of all that is.[47] Schillebeeckx says that pantheism makes one of two errors: either it considers everything other than God to be illusory, or it makes it part of the definition of God.[48] Both these errors, he says, deny the existence of the created world as world. This denial constitutes a misunderstanding of creation because it 'is good that man is simply man, the world is simply world'.[49] In a pantheistic scheme, God's power also appears to be compromised, since 'God would not seem to have sufficient active presence to have the power to bring autonomous, non-godly beings into existence.'[50]

Panentheism

Another way to tread the middle ground between pantheism (and the complete immanence of God) and dualism (and God's utter transcendence) which has found advocates recently is panentheism.[51] Its supporters contend that it differs from pantheism in that it holds that all is in God, rather than that God and the world are identical, such that the world does not exhaust the reality of God.[52] The authors who contribute to the first edited collection of articles on

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[46] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 76.

[47] Ibid., pp. 19, 76 (referring to *ST* I, 3, 8).

[48] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 114; parallel *GAU*, p. 93.

[49] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 113). Dutch text: 'Het is goed dat de mens slechts mens is, de wereld sléchts wereld' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 129; parallel *EV*, p. 92, which adds the stressing accent to the first *slechts* as well as the second. Surprisingly, this part of the paragraph in *EV* is missing in the translation found in *GAU*).

[50] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 93; parallel *IR*, p. 114.

[51] See John Polkinghorne, *Faith, Science and Understanding* (London: SPCK, 2000), pp. 89-92.

[52] See the definitions of panentheism offered by John Cobb, 'Panentheism', in *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. by Alan Richardson and John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1983), p. 423 and *The Oxford*

panentheism, produced after a symposium held in 2001,[53] offer varied characterizations of it, many of them focussing on how strong the 'en' of panentheism should be,[54] and how these should be related to what is often termed by these authors 'classical theism'.[55] Schillebeeckx does not present an explicit counter to panentheistic understandings of creation, and Burrell does so only once and very much in passing. He says that such conceptualizations err in 'offering more than a metaphorical expression' of the way that creation is related to the Creator, implying that he considers panentheism to be offering an explanation for the universe,[56] a misunderstanding that will be considered soon.

However, if, as Celia Deane-Drummond notes, process thinking is so ubiquitous in contemporary panentheism that it effectively serves as 'the measure of [its] "orthodoxy"',[57] the critique that both Burrell and Schillebeeckx offer of process thought could also apply. Burrell criticises process-centred approaches to theology, especially those of Charles Hartshorne and Schubert Ogden,[58] pointing out that their use of 'classical theism' is more a term of abuse than classification,[59] falling well short of Aquinas's account of creation.[60] If, as Michael Brierley contends, panentheism was reintroduced into British philosophical theology

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Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed. by F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, 3rd edn (Oxford: OUP, 1997), p. 1213.

[53] *In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Panentheistic Reflections on God's Presence in a Scientific World*, ed. by Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004) (henceforth *Panentheistic Reflections*).

[54] See Arthur Peacocke, 'Introduction: "*In* whom we live and move and have our being?"', in *Panentheistic Reflections*, pp. xviii-xxii (p. xix).

[55] See the contributions to *Panentheistic Reflections* by Michael W. Brierley, Niels Henrik Gregersen, Denis Edwards and Joseph A. Bracken.

[56] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 238.

[57] Celia Deane-Drummond, 'The Logos as Wisdom: A Starting Point for a Sophianic Theology of Creation', in *Panentheistic Reflections*, pp. 233-245 (p. 234).

[58] See Burrell, *AGA*, pp. 78-89; *F&C*, pp. 102-4; 'Mistake?', *passim*. Cf. *KUG*, p. 120, n. 13.

[59] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 102.

[60] Burrell, 'Mistake?', p. 128; *F&C*, pp. 102-3.

by John Robinson, the fact that Schillebeeckx argues at some length against Robinson suggests that he would also be opposed to such a process-centred panentheism.[61]

Dualism

The anti-dualistic character of both authors' thinking has already been documented, but is worth briefly stressing here, especially with regard to Schillebeeckx. Kennedy remarks that Schillebeeckx 'does not regard God and humanity as opposites',[62] even in the condition of sin in which humanity is found in need of salvation. A dualistic conception of the world, according to Schillebeeckx, understands its finitude as the result either of a defect in creation or of sin, something that will be removed by God at some point in the future. Salvation – 'the true, integral form of our humanity' – is placed either into a lost paradise or an apocalyptic future.[63] Dualism 'denies therefore that God willingly created the world as world and men and women as human beings.'[64] As a result, it is pessimistic about the current state of the world and seeks to escape it. Yet 'belief in creation is liberating only if we understand creation neither in dualistic nor in emanationary terms.'[65]

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[61] Michael W. Brierley, 'Naming a Quiet Revolution', in *Panentheistic Reflections*, pp. 1-15 (p.3). According to Brierley, this reintroduction occurred in Robinson's book *Exploration into God* (London: SCM Press, 1967), developing suggestions he had made in *Honest to God* (London: SCM Press, 1963). Schillebeeckx published two complex and nuanced articles considering and opposing Robinson's *Honest to God*, in 1963 and 1964. These were adapted slightly, reversed in order and made into one continuous piece for their publication in English as 'Life in God and Life in the World', in *G&M*, pp. 85-209. (Information about how the articles were adapted is from the Table of Original Publications, *G&M*, p. 304).

[62] Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, p. 383.

[63] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 112; parallel *GAU*, pp. 91-92.

[64] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 112; parallel *GAU*, p. 91.

[65] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 91; parallel *IR*, pp. 111-12.

Emanationism

Emanationism, says Schillebeeckx, is not so different from dualism, but arises from another stress in the attitude towards God and the world: a desire to maintain God's transcendence.[66] In that sense, it can be thought of as the obverse of dualism, which emphasizes more that creation is flawed. In an emanationist understanding, divine transcendence would be threatened if God were to deal directly with creation. God therefore 'entrusts creation to a caretaker, a first governor of a somewhat lower order.'[67]

Both emanationism and dualism also misunderstand salvation, in that both think of it as an escape from finitude, as 'life above our creaturely status.'[68] However, according to the book of Genesis, such hankering after infinity, immortality and omniscience is not salvation, but 'the so-called primal human sin'.[69] It is a desire to be like God absolutely, not to be like God in the condition of a creature, the condition of finitude and contingency. Finally, Schillebeeckx contends that 'the emanation of things from God is also seen as a necessary process',[70] an assertion shared with Burrell.

In Burrell's more historical mode of enquiry, distinguishing creation from emanation is vital. Aquinas, like his Jewish and Muslim predecessors Moses Maimonides and al-Ghazali, needed to distinguish creation from the understanding of emanation which came, via Ibn-Sina, from al-Farabi and which was the philosophically favoured way of accounting for the origin of the world at the time.[71]

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[66] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 112; parallel *GAU*, p. 92.

[67] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 112; parallel *GAU*, p. 92, which uses a different image, that of a lieutenant of a lower rank, reflecting a change in the Dutch text (cf. Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 128; parallel *EV*, p. 92).

[68] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 121; parallel *GAU*, p. 99.

[69] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 112; parallel *GAU*, p. 92.

[70] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 92; parallel *IR*, p. 112.

[71] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 115; *KUG*, p. 9; 'Creation or Emanation', pp. 1-2; *F&C*, p. 13; Burrell and Malits, p. 67.

In his early work on creation in an inter-faith context, Burrell juxtaposes intentional creation with emanation, understanding the latter as the necessary bringing-forth of all that is from God.[72] He is certainly not alone in this: Robert Sokolowski, Steven Baldner and William Carroll, Williams and Tanner interpret things in a similar fashion.[73] During the symposium that produced the articles in *God and Creation*, however, as a result of comments made by McGinn, he came to appreciate that the situation was somewhat more complex. The necessity that governed the prevailing scheme resulted not so much from it being based on emanation as such, but because of the model of logical deduction it used.[74] This recognition is not entirely absent from the paper Burrell gave at the symposium,[75] but he makes sure thereafter to stress the inappropriateness of understanding emanation after the model of the logical deduction of conclusions from first principles, rather than simply opposing emanation as such.[76]

Burrell holds that Aquinas also objected to the prevailing emanation scheme because, in it, creatures could act as intermediaries in creating, compromising the distinction of the Creator from creatures.[77] What was needed instead was a way of articulating creation that allowed God to have direct and immediate access to all creatures, something that came with the shift from speculative to practical knowing in conceptualizing God's knowledge,[78] a change advocated by Maimonides and carried out by Aquinas.[79] This allowed the clear

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[72] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 73; 'Creation or Emanation', pp. 29-30; *F&C*, pp. 13, 30, 102.

[73] See Robert Sokolowski, 'Creation and Christian Understanding', in *G&C*, pp. 179-192 (p. 184); *Aquinas on Creation: Writings on the "Sentences" of Peter Lombard 2.1.1.*, trans. with an introduction and notes by Steven E. Baldner and William E. Carroll (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1997), p. 7; Williams, 'Deification', p. 241; Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 76.

[74] Burrell, *F&F*, pp. 76-77, 130.

[75] Burrell, 'Creation or Emanation', pp. 1-2, 31.

[76] Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 13-14, 53; Burrell, *FWT*, p. 46; Burrell and Malits, p. 67

[77] Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 14-15; 'Creation or Emanation', pp. 29-30; *F&F*, pp. xiv-xv. Cf. Williams, 'Deification', p. 243.

[78] Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 73, 81; 'Creation or Emanation', pp. 30-31.

[79] Burrell, 'Creation or Emanation', pp. 30, 32, although Burrell recognizes that a certain amount of creative completion is required in this regard (see the first quote, as well as *F&F*, p. 34).

distinction of intentional creation from necessary emanation,[80] rendering the latter scheme incoherent and redundant.[81]

Having effectively dismantled the emanation scheme of the time, Aquinas then used the term as a metaphor for creation, thus correcting some of the possible implications of his master metaphor.[82] Alongside the shift from speculative to practical reasoning, Aquinas used the metaphor of the artisan recommended by Maimonides,[83] because God knows what he is doing.[84] Proposing emanation as another metaphor that interacts with the first [85] precludes the misunderstanding that God makes creatures from anything, assuring that the dependence of the creature on God is absolute.[86]

Creation is Not an Explanation

Schillebeeckx insists that creation-faith is not, and can never be, an explanation of the world and of humanity.[87] Seeking explanations is not a bad thing in itself, but it is important to realize that the quest to understand why the world is the way it is seeks within the world.[88] It is an understanding that reaches out 'from within the socio-historical, contingent free will of humanity'[89] and should not seek to reach beyond it, trying to see things from God's point of view. This is impossible for two reasons: Firstly, human beings are historical, situated,

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[80] Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 29, 73; cf. Tanner, *God and Creation*, pp. 71-72.

[81] Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 33, 95; *F&F*, pp. 115, 151.

[82] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 115.

[83] Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 67, 87-88; *F&C*, pp. 58-59.

[84] Burrell, 'Creation or Emanation', pp. 32-33; *F&C*, pp. 71-72, 107, 108.

[85] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 68; *F&F*, p. 37, where he cites Rudi A. te Velde, *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), p. 98; also see David B. Burrell, '*Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* by Rudi A. te Velde', *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 37, (1997), 101-4 (p. 102).

[86] Burrell, *AGA*, pp. 136, 138 ; 'Creation or Emanation', pp. 34, 29-30 (which refers to the first *AGA* text).

[87] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 113; not present in *GAU*, since this is part of the excised paragraph not translated from *EV* (cf. *TV*, p. 129; parallel *EV*, p. 92). Cf. *IR*, p. 116; *GAU*, p. 91, a paragraph which is moved from the middle of the *IR* material to the beginning of the *GAU* article, possibly in order to make a striking start to the latter.

[88] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 118; parallels *GAU*, p. 96; *III*, p. 231.

[89] Author's translation, cf. Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 231 (parallels *GAU*, p. 96; *IR*, p. 118). Dutch text: 'vanuit de historisch-maatschappelijke, contingente vrije wil van de mensheid' (Schillebeeckx, *Mensen*, p. 249; parallels *EV*, p. 97; *TV*, p. 134).

contingent, finite beings, characteristics that are abolished if creation is thought of as an explanation.[90] There is no *conscience survolante*.[91] Secondly, strictly speaking, God does not have a point of view, because, as Creator, God is not a situated being. Thus, 'God's creative activity cannot be added to the inward forces of evolution within this world',[92] because appealing to God as an explanation reduces God to an element within the world. This removes the distinction of God from the world and turns God into a creature – albeit a very powerful one – transforming the world into a puppet show in which God holds the strings.[93]

Burrell, in similar fashion, states that if an explanation of the world is sought, it cannot simply be one that runs parallel to the explanation of things within the world.[94] Thinking of creation as emanation along the lines of logical deduction made precisely this error, because it took an explanatory system within the world and sought to extend it to God.[95] Rather than stress the situated character of human life, however, he analyses more deeply the attempt to move beyond explanations in this world. He says that opposing creation as an explanation 'focuses on the lacuna between what we can explain and what we cannot but nevertheless want to.'[96] There is a dynamism in human understanding that seeks after complete explanations, a demand that points 'beyond what we are able to come up with.'[97] However, rather than seeking an indubitable foundation, something that he describes as 'the anxiety pervading Descartes' endeavour', he says that 'it may prove more fruitful to expose the need itself, as Lonergan set himself to do.'[98]

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[90] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 116-17; parallels *GAU*, p. 95; *III*, p. 230.
[91] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 8.
[92] Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 242.
[93] Schillebeeckx uses this image in *III*, pp. 229-30.
[94] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 13.
[95] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 198; *FWT*, p. 101; 'Creation or Emanation', pp. 26, 30-31; *APL*, pp. 147-51.
[96] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 14.
[97] Burrell, *FWT*, p. 92.
[98] Ibid., p. 45.

Creation is Not Just Initiation

Creation, Schillebeeckx maintains, is not a one-off chronological event, taking place somewhere at the beginning of the universe. It is, rather, a continuous, lasting, dynamic event, taking place here and now: 'God wants to be, here and now, the source of the worldliness of the world and of the humanity of men and women. He wants to be with us, in and with our finite mandate in the world.'[99] This emphasis is also present in his early works, where he says that everything 'comes directly from the hands of God.'[100] It is not the case that God created 'a primordial atom or a primordial mist from which the whole of the world later came into being from within, by means of a gradual development, without any further activity on the part of God the creator.'[101] The statement that human beings receive their existence from God should not be interpreted as meaning only that 'I have been called into existence by God, it means at the same time that I continually receive my being from him'.[102]

Burrell observes that a telling indication of Aquinas's thought in this regard is shown by the fact that he is willing to consider the eternity of the world. If, as Aquinas showed, again following the lead of Maimonides,[103] it is not possible to prove philosophically whether or not creation began with time, then creation cannot merely be initiation.[104] A relation of dependence is compatible with either temporal arrangement and it is this dependence of the creature upon the Creator that is the primary emphasis of the doctrine.[105] Trying to prove by reason what can be known only by faith – that creation begins with time – serves only to bring

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[99] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 116; parallel Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 94). Dutch text: 'God wil oorsprong zijn, hier en nu, van de wereldlijkheid van de wereld en van de menselijkheid van de mens. Hij wil bij ons zijn in en bij onze eindige opdracht in het wereld.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 132; parallel *EV*, p. 94).

[100] Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 242.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 215.

[103] Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 7, 25.

[104] Burrell and Malits, pp. 40, 69.

[105] Burrell, *AGA*, pp. 136-37; *KUG*, p. 75

ridicule on those who attempt it.[106] This priority of dependence,[107] in Aquinas in particular,[108] is corroborated by many commentators. Baldner and Carroll also draw the link with Maimonides,[109] stating that a creature's dependence on God 'is precisely the same at the beginning of the creature's duration as it is all throughout its duration.'[110] They describe the philosophical theology of Aquinas as one in which 'philosophy and theology are perfect working partners: what philosophy can know only incompletely is complemented by the revelation of faith.'[111] Thus, a correct understanding of creation transforms the way that the world is understood.

It means that there is no need to postulate conservation as a separate action of God, as Bonaventure felt impelled to do.[112] There is, Burrell states, 'no difference between God's conserving activity and God's creating'; in other words, 'all of God's activity partakes of creating: all that God can do is to create'.[113] This stresses creaturely dependence, because if God were to withdraw creative activity from the creature, it would immediately fall into nothingness.[114] Schillebeeckx's talk of God as with and in human beings and their experience and action in the world,[115] of God's revelation in and through nature, history and human action,[116] displays a similar emphasis. Mary Catherine Hilkert indicates that creation is under

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[106] Burrell and Malits, p. 69; Burrell, *F&F*, p. 153.

[107] See Pieter Smulders, 'Creation I: Theology', in *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. by Karl Rahner, (London: Burns and Oates, 1975), pp. 313-319 (p. 318) and David Kelsey, 'The doctrine of creation from nothing' in *Evolution and Creation*, ed. by Ernan McMullin, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), pp. 176-196 (p. 177).

[108] See Keith Ward, *Religion and Creation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 290-91; Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 36; Baldner and Carroll, pp. 26, 53-54.

[109] Baldner and Carroll, p. 20.

[110] Ibid., pp. 42-43.

[111] Ibid., p. 62.

[112] Baldner and Carroll, pp. 48-49.

[113] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 68.

[114] Ibid., p. 103; cf. p. 118.

[115] In addition to the text previously cited, see Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 115; parallel *GAU*, p. 94, on positive and negative experiences.

[116] See Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 116; parallel *GAU*, p. 91 and, for the latter notion, Schillebeeckx, *III*, pp. 234-35.

the guidance of a liberating creator, for Schillebeeckx, and the believer holds 'that reality is finally gracious, that, in the end, all creatures – and creation itself – fall into the hands of the living God.'[117] This is another constant emphasis: Borgman notes that, in Schillebeeckx's first published articles, his 'starting point was the classic Thomist conviction that as creatures human beings are supported by God and are orientated on God.'[118]

Another notion that is transformed by understanding the world as created is that of contingency. According to Burrell, if the world is understood merely as a given, contingency means that states of affairs in it could be otherwise; if it is understood as a free gift, because it is created, a new level of contingency opens up, 'that all this might not be at all.'[119] On the basis of the distinction that Ibn-Sina drew between essence and existence,[120] Aquinas was able to articulate this new sense of contingency, at the heart of which lies the dependence of all things on the Creator.[121] Schillebeeckx, too, says that, in addition to meaning that things could be otherwise,[122] the contingency of the world and humankind means that they 'could just as well not have been'.[123]

According to Schillebeeckx, creation-faith enriches the understanding of the world in another way, the precise character of which will be examined later in this study. The believer understands the world and all it contains not only as contingent, but also as finite. This

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[117] Mary Catherine Hilkert, 'Experience and Revelation', in *PRG*, pp. 59-77 (p. 59).

[118] Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, p. 89.

[119] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 79; cf. p. xviii.

[120] Rahman, 'Ibn-Sina's theory of the God-world relationship', *G&C*, p. 38.

[121] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 107; cf. *APL*, pp. 147-51. The role of Islamic philosophy in this process is also noted by Patterson, pp. 100-1 and Hardy, 'Response', *G&C*, p. 265. Cf. the citation of Charles Kahn in Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 124-25, n. 13.

[122] Author's translation: 'If God is Creator, of course the creation is not-God, other than God; in that case it could be otherwise' (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 114; parallel *GAU*, p. 93). Dutch text: 'Als God Schepper is, dan is het schepsel niet-God, anders dan God; dan mag het anders zijn' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 130; exact parallel *EV*, p. 93).

[123] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 113. This is part of the material omitted from *GAU*, but present, with one small change, in *TV*, p. 129 and *EV*, p. 92. Cf. *G&M*, p. 164, n. 7.

finitude, he says, is '*par excellence* the never-failing source of all religion.'[124] In the contact between the infinite and the finite, 'there arises, as mystics say, the spark of the soul; there all religion takes fire.'[125] He sometimes uses the two terms interchangeably: when he says that understanding creation neglects the most essential aspect of all historicity, he says that this is 'finitude: everything could equally well not have been and could have been other than it in fact is.'[126] This is the definition of contingency quoted earlier and, appearing to support interchangeability further, he adds, in III, '(i.e. contingent, a philosophical technical term).'[127] However, this thesis will maintain in Chapter Four that finitude and contingency are not interchangeable for Schillebeeckx, but, rather, that finitude has a depth that even the enriched notion of contingency lacks.

God is Not a Thing

The final transformation that creation effects in philosophical theology which also points out a misunderstanding is that it does not think of God as a thing. Burrell says that, logically speaking, 'the source of all-that-is cannot belong to that set', so 'the believer's universe does not contain one more item than the unbeliever's.'[128] If God is thought of as Creator without specifying God's uniqueness in this way, 'it is inevitable that one will picture God as "the biggest thing around"',[129] failing to 'secure a logical space for the transcendence proper to the "beginning and end of all things."'[130]

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[124] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 233.

[125] Ibid., p. 234.

[126] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 117; parallels *GAU*, p. 95; *III*, p. 230). Dutch text: 'eindigheid: alles had er evengoed kunnen niet zijn en het had anders kunnen zijn dan het in feite is.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 133; exact parallels *EV*, p. 95; *Mensen*, p. 248).

[127] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 230.

[128] Burrell, *FWT*, pp. 91 and 93 respectively.

[129] Ibid., p. 93.

[130] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 19.

This strategy has profound grammatical implications for discourse *in divinis*. Burrell avers that the only alternative to using language about God analogously is to treat God as a thing, commenting that Maimonides' remarks about idolatry in this regard are well made.[131] Any language about creatures and God must be careful to avoid entailing similarity,[132] any shared feature of the world and God.[133] Univocity in such language inevitably presents a God who is merely the biggest thing around, thereby eliding '"the distinction"'.[134] Similarly, and in a way that echoes Tanner's rules for non-contrastive discourse, he notes that speaking of God in contrast to the world has the same effect.[135] Distinguishing between two things, he observes, 'easily turns them into two separate objects.' Doing so with God, however, objectifies God, resulting in thinking of the Creator as a created thing.[136]

Schillebeeckx's creation parallels do not contain an obvious example of this pattern of thought, but his earlier material certainly does. He says that 'God's creative activity cannot be added to the inward forces of evolution within this world.'[137] God is not just another agent, on a par with agents in the created order. At the same time, however, the creation of a human being is best understood 'as a divinely transcendent act which does not take place from without, but which from the very essence of all things holds them creatively in its hand'.[138] God's creative activity takes place neither within the world nor without. Or, expressed in a more non-contrastive manner, action is attributed to creatures and to God in a way that neither identifies nor opposes them.

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[131] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 47; *F&F*, p. 119.

[132] Burrell, *APL*, p. 164.

[133] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 117.

[134] Burrell, *FWT*, p. 96.

[135] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 104.

[136] Burrell and Malits, p. 68, citing Tanner (see p. 101, n. 15). Tanner herself makes much the same point in *God and Creation*, pp. 45-46.

[137] Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 242.

[138] Ibid., p. 243.

The Language of Creation

As has been intimated already, the language of creation used by Burrell and Schillebeeckx can be summed up in the interplay of two terms, 'the distinction' and 'the relation'. This pairing is by no means unique to them, although there is a great deal of variation in the ways that the terms are expressed by the authors who use them. Sokolowski says that creation establishes 'a distinction and a relationship'[139] that exist throughout the creature's existence. Kerr points out that, far from espousing an ontology of completely separate objects, Aquinas pictures 'a constantly reassembling network of transactions, beings becoming themselves in their doings.'[140] Jean-Pierre Torrell emphasizes this relational aspect, citing Aquinas that creation 'pertains [...] to the category of relation.'[141] What 'the distinction' and 'the relation' of creation mean for Burrell and Schillebeeckx is the subject of the remainder of this chapter. There is common ground here too, although, as the enquiry progresses, divergent emphases arise, which will be investigated more comprehensively in Chapter Three.

Burrell on 'The Distinction'

Burrell uses both terms in his account of creation, saying that the three Abrahamic traditions all think of the free creation of the universe in terms of an 'admittedly ineffable relation of creatures to creator' and 'an understanding of the creator adequately distinct from a creation which cannot be separate from it',[142] a presentation that already suggests a certain priority. In an article subtitled 'The Dialectical Dimension of Philosophical Theology', he says that Aquinas succeeded both in distinguishing God from creation and relating God to all

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[139] Sokolowski, 'Creation and Christian Understanding', in *G&C*, p. 179.

[140] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 48.

[141] Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* II 18, n. 952, cited in Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Volume 2. Spiritual Master*, trans. by Robert Royal (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), pp. 230, 231-32.

[142] Burrell, *F&F*, p. viii.

creatures,[143] intimating that balancing the two is also important. The fact that he speaks of this balance in dialectical terms will be seen to be significant as the discussion progresses.

For Burrell, the ability to make distinctions epitomizes philosophy,[144] yet the distinction of the Creator from creation is unique and quite unlike any other.[145] Articulating it helps distinguish creation from emanation, since it adds something to the dependence of the creature upon the Creator, which the latter scheme also postulates.[146] Sokolowski plays a key role in Burrell's articulation of 'the distinction'. After encountering *God of Faith and Reason* in the early 1980s,[147] he says that the task of articulating a grammar of 'God' can also be thought of as specifying 'the startling "distinction" of God from "all things"'.[148] In seeking to know the unknowable God, 'we must always work with "the distinction" in mind'.[149] He acknowledges Sokolowski in all his subsequent major works,[150] noting that this distinction of God from the world complements Tanner's non-contrastive language.[151]

Burrell also draws on Sokolowski's 'distinction' in other elements of his work. He says that the formal features of divinity can be understood as being at its service and that it helps found an analogical approach to discourse *in divinis*.[152] He draws attention to the structure of discourse about distinctions in the world as being based on sameness and otherness, saying that this structure does not apply to discourse about God and the world: the

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[143] Burrell, *F&F*, pp. 87-88, 89.

[144] Burrell, *AGA*, pp. 10-11.

[145] Burrell, *FWT*, pp. 92-93.

[146] David B. Burrell, 'Divine Practical Knowing: How an Eternal God Acts in Time', in *Divine Action: Studies Inspired by the Philosophical Theology of Austin Farrer*, ed. by Brian L. Hebblethwaite and Edward Hugh Henderson (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990), pp. 93-102 (p. 95).

[147] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 217.

[148] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 2 (cf. p. 35).

[149] Ibid., p. 3, citing Sokolowski's *God of Faith and Reason* for the first time (see *KUG*, p. 114, Notes to Introduction, n. 2).

[150] See Burrell, 'Creation or Emanation', pp. 29 and 37, n. 2; *F&C*, pp. 5 (and 185, Notes to Introduction, n. 1), 12, 165; *FWT*, pp. 48 (and 63, n. 11), 92 (and 108, n.8); *F&F*, pp. xviii, 33 (n. 40), 71 (n. 24), 123, 132 (n. 10), 139, 154, 167 (n. 26), 197 (n. 8), 204 (n. 16), 217-233; Burrell and Malits, pp. 66 and 100, n. 12

[151] Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 9 (and 185, Notes to Chapter One, n. 2); cf. pp. 102 and 201, n. 16.

[152] See Burrell, *KUG*, p. 50 and *FWT*, p. 96 (and also *F&F*, p. 123) respectively.

two types must be contrasted.[153] 'The distinction' becomes a shorthand formula for Burrell, able to stand on its own to refer to the unique distinction that is creation.[154] It will also be used thus in this study.

Is 'The Distinction' Specifically Christian?

Burrell remarks that 'the "distinction of essence from existing [*esse*]" [...] is the corollary in the created universe of "the distinction" of creator from creatures'.[155] The former distinction is one that Aquinas adopts from Ibn Sina, who 'employs the distinction of existence from essence as [the] conceptual vehicle' for the distinction of the One from the world.[156] The fact that the directionality of the two statements is not the same is significant, because, according to Burrell, Aquinas both adopts and adapts Ibn Sina's distinction. Thus, although 'one seems justified in attributing to Ibn Sina an attempt to offer a philosophical idiom for creation',[157] it is also true to say that Aquinas thoroughly reworks it,[158] realizing its potential in a way that Ibn Sina did not.[159] Aquinas reversed the priority he found in Ibn Sina, whose characterization of existence as something that happened to essences was as compatible with logical emanation as with creation proper.[160] By starting from existing, and from *esse* (existence as act) Aquinas was able to transform what he discovered and, at the same time, put it to use in securing creation as the act of God.[161]

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[153] Burrell, *F&F*, pp. 219-20.

[154] See Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 6, 8, 15, 17-18, 24, 35, 46-50, 68, 76-79, 82, 89, 94; *F&C*, pp. 12-13, 25, 27, 61, 103, 110, 165; *FWT*, pp. 48, 81, 92, 95-101, 103-105, 107; Burrell and Malits, p. 68.

[155] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 163 (*esse* in square brackets as in the original text); cf. *KUG*, pp. 35, 69; *FWT*, pp. 100-1.

[156] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 35. Cf. Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 7.

[157] Burrell, 'Creation or Emanation', p. 35.

[158] Burrell, 'Creation or Emanation', p. 35; *F&C*, pp. 31-32; Burrell and Malits, p. 67.

[159] Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 27-28.

[160] Baldner and Carroll, p. 14.

[161] See Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 29-30 (and *F&C*, p. 43) and *KUG*, pp. 36, 43.

Burrell observes that Sokolowski refers to the distinction of creation as 'the Christian distinction'.[162] Sokolowski's debate engages Christian and pagan understandings of divinity, the latter as expressed and refined by Greek and Roman philosophies.[163] He proposes that the Christological controversies of the early church provided a crucible in which to articulate a unique distinction,[164] one which is ultimate for one of the *relata* but not for the other: because God establishes 'the distinction', he is not subject to it.[165] In his response to Sokolowski's paper at the *God and Creation* symposium, David Tracy remarks that the section of the paper 'entitled "The Christian Sense of Creation," could, without any loss of content, be entitled "A Jewish-Christian-Muslim Sense of Creation."'[166] So, do Christians, Jews and Muslims mean the same thing when they speak of 'the distinction', or not?

Sokolowski is more insistent than Burrell on the uniqueness of 'the distinction' in Christianity, whereas the latter prefers to speak of it as a shared revelation and belief in the Abrahamic traditions.[167] He admits that Sokolowski 'gives cogent reasons for further identifying it as "the Christian distinction"',[168] such that, 'despite the overall similarity [...] "the distinction" can be more perspicuous in Christian thinkers who attend to these realities.'[169] He prefers, nevertheless, to speak of the analogous expression of 'the distinction' in the three traditions.[170] As will be seen in Chapter Five, for Burrell, analogous terms are

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[162] See Burrell, *FWT*, pp. 92, 94.

[163] See Robert Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason: Foundations of Christian Theology*, rev. edn (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1995) (Originally published Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), especially Chapter Two, 'Pagan Divinity', and Chapter Three, 'Voices Expressing the Christian Distinction'.

[164] Sokolowski, 'Creation and Christian Understanding', G&C, pp. 184-5. Cf. *God of Faith and Reason*, Chapter Four.

[165] Sokolowski, *God of Faith and Reason*, pp. 32-33 (quote from p. 33).

[166] David Tracy, 'Response', in *G&C*, pp. 193-196 (p. 194).

[167] Burrell, *FWT*, pp. 63-64, n. 12.

[168] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 132, n. 10.

[169] Ibid., p. 230. Cf. pp. 232-33.

[170] Ibid., p. 230.

used in different and related senses,[171] a structure that seems to influence his philosophical theology more generally.

Agreeing with Sokolowski, he says, on the one hand, that a specifically Christian articulation of 'the distinction' was forged during the Christological controversies of the early church.[172] And yet, on the other hand, he agrees that Ibn Sina can be credited with the first attempt to provide a philosophical idiom for creation.[173] Struggling to reconcile these two historically conflicting statements, he says that 'what Christianity adds, it seems, is not specificity so much as illumination';[174] that Christology 'offers Christianity a singular advantage in doing what all three Abrahamic faiths must do'.[175] He proposes that 'the distinction' and the hypostatic union are best thought of as the twin foci of an ellipse, such that each belief illuminates the other.[176] This solution also displays a difference and relation structure, pregnant with tension, as the correlation of the two terms is an uneasy one. Such tension can also be traced in Burrell's account of 'the distinction' itself, because of the interchangeability of distinction and difference in his articulation of it.

Distinction and Difference

Burrell explicitly uses a difference and relation structure in articulating why Aquinas uses the notion of participation to express 'the distinction'. He says that it is 'an attempt to characterize the relation of creatures to the creator, once one has so accentuated their difference.'[177] Ibn Sina's distinction of essence and existence, similarly, is meant 'to secure the difference of the necessary existent from everything emanating from it' and also 'to

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[171] See his description of analogous terms as 'at root equivocal' in Burrell, *AGA*, p. xii.
[172] Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 88-89; *F&C*, p. 61.
[173] See Burrell, 'Creation or Emanation', p. 35.
[174] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 96.
[175] Burrell and Malits, pp. 66-67.
[176] Ibid., p. 69.
[177] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 118.

distinguish possible from necessary being'.[178] This could be read as attentiveness to the directionality of 'the distinction', because its character is not the same in both directions. However, elsewhere, Burrell also refers to 'the crucial difference of creature from Creator'.[179] Perhaps, then, this tendency could be explained as something of a lack of care, which might also explain his use of the expression '"the infinite qualitative difference"'[180] interchangeably with 'the distinction.'[181] In many of the places where Burrell uses this language, he acknowledges its source as Søren Kierkegaard,[182] particularly his *Sickness unto Death*,[183] which therefore merits brief examination.

The fact that Burrell places Kierkegaard and Sokolowski in parallel with one another seems strange,[184] because Kierkegaard's starting point in *Sickness unto Death* is neither creation nor Christology, but sin.[185] He declares that the Christian revelation about sin 'confirms the qualitative difference between God and man', which is 'an infinite qualitative difference'.[186] The difference is reinforced when he says that 'God and man are two qualities separated by an infinite qualitative difference',[187] which means that, as a sinner, 'man is separated from God by the most chasmal qualitative abyss.'[188] Here, at least, the directionality of the statement is correct, but he immediately continues: 'In turn, of course, God is separated from man by the same chasmal qualitative abyss when he forgives sins.'[189] Kierkegaard, then,

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[178] Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 25 and 27 respectively.

[179] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 215.

[180] Burrell, *AGA*, pp. 42, 47; *F&C*, pp. 174-5; *FWT*, p. 46.

[181] See Burrell, *F&F*, pp. 116 and 118.

[182] Burrell, *ERU*, pp. 176, 179; *FWT*, p. 72; *F&F*, p. 116.

[183] Burrell, *ERU*, p. 162; *FWT*, pp. 85-86, n. 13; *F&F*, p.p. 146, n. 6.

[184] As he does in Burrell, *FWT*, pp. 78 and 85-86, n.13; *F&F*, p. 116 (and n. 11).

[185] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 120 (cited by Burrell in *ERU*, p. 149).

[186] Kierkegaard, pp. 121 and 127 respectively.

[187] Kierkegaard, p. 126.

[188] Kierkegaard, p. 122.

[189] Ibid.

seems to have a quite different understanding of God and humanity, one that uses a different logic to that of 'the distinction' and 'the relation'. Why, then, would Burrell want to appeal to him?

One of the ways that Burrell finds Kierkegaard useful is in support of the agnostic emphasis in his philosophical theology. He says that Kierkegaard uses his 'infinite qualitative difference' in order to make a dialectical point about what can and cannot be said about God. 'What cannot be said – and infinitely much cannot – must somehow be translated into the *form* of the discourse so that the inadequacy *shows*.'[190] For Kierkegaard therefore, Socrates is a good example of someone who seeks to know God by highlighting God's unknowability, keeping watch over the deep gulf between God and man, so that the two do not merge.[191] He also speaks of the threat of 'the qualitative difference between God and man [being] pantheistically abolished',[192] suggesting that his analysis is perhaps not entirely unrelated to creation. Nevertheless, his apparent lack of sensitivity to the directionality of 'the distinction' makes Burrell's use of him risky at least.

Directionality Issues

Similar concerns about directionality arise when Burrell's language about 'the distinction' is examined with regard to the prepositions it uses: 'from' and 'between'. In using the first, he speaks, in the vast majority of cases, about 'the distinction of God from the world', or of 'creator from creatures'.[193] This stresses, quite properly, the directionality of the distinction from the world towards God. Occasionally, however, he also speaks of '"the distinction" of

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[190] Burrell, *ERU*, p. 158.

[191] Keirkegaard, p. 99, cited with approval in Burrell, *ERU*, p. 162; *FWT*, pp. 85-86, n. 13.

[192] Kierkegaard, p. 117.

[193] See Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 3, 5, 7, 64, 69, 70; 'Creation or Emanation', p. 29; *F&C*, pp. 5, 9, 111, 128, 163-65, 169, 170-71, 174; *FWT*, pp. 48, 92, 100, 103; *F&F*, pp. viii, 81, 119, 123; Burrell and Malits, pp. 66, 67.

creatures from the creator',[194] or uses the two expressions interchangeably.[195] In itself, this may not seem serious; after all, there is a distinction in both directions, even if the nature of the distinction is not the same in both directions.

However, when the other preposition is considered, the situation becomes more problematical. Occasionally, Burrell does speak of '"the distinction" between creatures and creator',[196] which, again, emphasizes correctly the directionality of the distinction from the world towards God. Much more often, however, he speaks of the 'distinction between creator and creatures',[197] mirroring a bi-directionality and pattern of use also found in Sokolowski.[198] Again, in itself, this is not too damaging, but when the interchangeability of the language of distinction and difference is added, problems start to arise. Burrell speaks of 'the "ontological difference" separating creatures from creator',[199] correctly suggesting that, for creatures, 'the distinction' is an absolute barrier. However, saying that 'the hiatus between eternity and time presents another manifestation of "the distinction"' is at least somewhat infelicitous, and may be more serious than that.[200] He also says that the logic of analogy 'demands we mark a difference between the source of all things and the things themselves'[201] and his Kierkegaardian influences lead him to refer to 'the infinite qualitative difference between creator and creature'.[202]

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[194] Burrell, *F&F*, p. xix.

[195] As he does in Burrell, '*Participation and Substantiality*', pp. 101, 103.

[196] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 146.

[197] Burrell and Malits, p. 68; Burrell, *FWT*, p. 6; cf. *F&F*, p. 33.

[198] See Sokolowski, *God of Faith and Reason*, pp. x, 33, 34, 46, 106, 114 (between the world and God) and xiv, xv, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, 32, 33, 37, 39, 40, 107, 108, 111, 113, 115, 116, 122, 123, 124, 147, 152 (between God and the world).

[199] Burrell, *FWT*, p. 54.

[200] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 110.

[201] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 66.

[202] Ibid., p. 47; cf. David Burrell, 'Naming the Names of God: Muslims, Jews, Christians', *Theology Today*, 47 (1990), 22-29 (p. 26).

This pattern of Burrell's language can be traced in the way that he adapts a pair of expressions in *KUG*. At its beginning, he speaks of 'the distinction of God from the world' and 'the connection between God and the world',[203] such that the former stresses one direction and the latter the other. As the opening chapter progresses, however, he talks about 'the distinction between God and God's creation' and 'between God and the world'[204] alongside 'attempting to distinguish God from the world' and 'from everything else which is'.[205] As a result, he ends the chapter with a pair of terms, 'the distinction between God and the world' and 'the connection between God and the world', which, though appearing to be correlates, both operate in the same direction, leading to the interchangeability and attendant problems highlighted earlier. Burrell's articulation of 'the relation' of creation is somewhat more careful in this regard, but also has problematical aspects.

Burrell on 'The Relation'

Burrell observes that, for Aquinas, the act of causation is more properly a relation.[206] This relation shows that the effect depends on the cause in a particular respect, or to a certain extent.[207] In the case of creation, the dependence is absolute, such that creation offers a 'scheme for affirming the radical dependence of each created to-be'.[208] The dependence exists only in one direction, such that, for creatures, 'their very to-be is to-be-in-relation to the creator',[209] whereas God does not need to create in order to be God. Thus, creatures exist in a 'non-reciprocal relation of dependence' on the Creator.[210]

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[203] Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 2, 3, 5, 7, and 10 respectively.

[204] Ibid., p. 16.

[205] Ibid., pp. 17 and 18 respectively. A similar interchangeability of 'from' and 'between' language with respect to 'the distinction' is seen in Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 12-14; *F&F*, p. xviii; Burrell and Malits, pp. 66-68.

[206] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 132.

[207] Ibid., pp. 133-134

[208] Ibid., p. 139; cf. *FWT*, p. 93.

[209] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 120.

[210] Ibid., p. 120; cf. pp. 134-5, 139.

A shorthand term for this relation is much harder to find in Burrell, again suggesting the priority of 'the distinction' in his discourse on creation. The closest he comes to one is to speak of 'the creation-relation'[211] or, more often, 'the creator/creature relation'.[212] He also hyphenates the latter term,[213] and, elsewhere, speaks of 'the creator-creature relationship'.[214]

Relation and Relationship

A relation and a relationship are not the same thing, as pointed out in Chapter One, and Burrell does appear to at least blur a legitimate distinction between the two that can be helpful. This can be shown from the pattern of his language, and, again, from his use of prepositions. He says that, in the context of friendship with the Creator, 'an entirely new relation of human beings with the rest of creation is possible as well.' He then appeals, in the next paragraph, for a transformation of 'humankind's relation to the rest of nature and hence to our creator and to other human beings.'[215] He uses 'relation with' elsewhere, too,[216] and also uses the form 'relationship to',[217] in a way that seems to imply interchangeability.

This suspicion of interchangeability is strengthened when Burrell's talk of 'relationship' where 'relation' might seem wiser is observed. He uses 'relationship' to speak of the connections between teaching and learning,[218] essence and existence,[219] prayer and work and redemption and creation.[220] He also uses it interchangeably with the more generic

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[211] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 48.
[212] Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 60, 62, 64, 70, 72, 76; *F&F*, pp. 134, 141, 156, 157; Burrell and Malits, p. 68.
[213] Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 107, 113.
[214] Burrell, *FWT*, p. 69.
[215] Burrell and Malits, p. 21.
[216] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 34; *F&F*, p. 123.
[217] Burrell, *AGA*, pp. 84, 142; *KUG*, pp. 23, 91; *F&C*, p. 77; *FWT*, pp. 20, 83; Burrell and Malits, p. 48.
[218] Burrell, *APL*, p. 1.
[219] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 41; *KUG*, p. 36.
[220] Burrell and Malits, p. 12.

terms 'related' and 'to relate'.[221] There are, in addition, a number of places where, during the course of an argument, he moves freely between 'relation' and 'relationship' whilst talking about the same connection.[222]

A possible reason for this flexibility and interchangeability can be found in Burrell's statement that causal language – and in particular the causal language of creation – 'must be open to a personal reading'.[223] This is because of the significance of the personal character of human existence: since humans are intrinsically personal beings, it is appropriate to use personal terms to describe God, who gives them their existence.[224] This tendency is reinforced by Burrell's desire to speak of the possibility of friendship with the Creator, which he describes as 'the apogee of the creator-creature relationship.'[225] Yet, his relational language is problematical for the same reason as his language about 'the distinction'.

Directionality Issues

Burrell uses the prepositions 'to' and 'between' with regard to 'the relation', as he does with 'the distinction', though he speaks more often of 'the relation of creator to creation' and 'of God to the world',[226] than of 'the relation of creature to creator'.[227] He does, however, intensify some of the latter references with terms such as 'immediate', 'founding', 'ineffable' and 'grounding',[228] indicating that the character of 'the relation', like that of 'the distinction', depends on its direction. He uses 'between' less frequently, speaking, on the one hand, of 'the

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[221] See Burrell, *AGA*, p. 129; *KUG*, pp. 22, 71, 88; *F&C*, p. 24; *AGA*, p. 143, where only the last of these involves an interpersonal relationship (that between father and son).

[222] See Burrell, *AGA*, pp. 85, 133-134; *KUG*, pp. 91, 104, 108; *F&C*, pp. 18-19, 94, 126, 163.

[223] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 99.

[224] Ibid., pp. 99-100.

[225] Burrell, *FWT*, p. 72.

[226] See Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 85, 86, 105; *F&C*, pp. 48, 50, 59, 80, 112, 123; *FWT*, p. 48; *F&F*, p. 80; Burrell and Malits, pp. 66, 67, 72 and Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 72, 74, 75, 106 respectively.

[227] Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 93, 165; Burrell, 'Mistake?', p. 131; *F&F*, pp. xx, 170.

[228] See Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 90, 91; *F&F*, p. viii and Burrell and Malits, p. 73 respectively.

relation between creator and creature' and 'between God and the world',[229] and, on the other, of that 'between [...] creatures and their creating source'[230], 'between the universe and its creator' and 'between free creatures and the free creator of all'.[231] Reflecting his use of 'the distinction', Burrell uses the two prepositions interchangeably,[232] but here this presents less of a problem, as both could be said to reach in the same direction.

All creatures, he says, exist in 'a real relation to the creator',[233] explaining that, according to Aquinas, '"real relations" will have the effect of modifying one of the *relata*'.[234] This is true not only of 'the relation' of creation, but of other relations, too: since a human person is changed by coming to know something, the knower is really related to the known.[235] He explains Aquinas's famous distinction between *relatio realis* and *relatio rationis* twice in *AGA*. The first is a grammatical explanation: when the respect in which the two *relata* are related can be specified, in terms of a natural process or inherent property, the relation is real; if the respect cannot be so specified, the relation is merely one of reason. In this latter case, a respect must be supplied in order to express the relation, in the form of an 'intellectual fabrication'.[236] It is the fact that 'we are consciously constructing'[237] that makes it what might be called a notional relation.

So, when Aquinas says that 'being related to creatures is not a reality in God',[238] he simply means that there 'is no process or property inherent in divinity which demands or

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[229] See Burrell, *KUG*, p. 91 and *KUG*, p. 80, 88 respectively. (Also cf. Burrell, *KUG*, p. 92; *F&C*, p. 113).
[230] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 95.
[231] Burrell, *FWT*, p. 67, referring to the projects of *KUG* and *F&C* respectively (see *FWT*, p. 84, n. 1).
[232] See, for example, Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 79-80.
[233] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 34.
[234] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 147.
[235] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 147.
[236] Ibid., pp. 84-85.
[237] Ibid., p. 85.
[238] In *Summa Theologiae* I 13.7.4, as Burrell notes in *AGA*, p. 85.

results in creatures.'[239] Or, to put it in terms akin to Burrell's previous explanation: 'If "real" respects are limited to natural processes or inherent properties, then a free creator could not be said to be "really related" to his creation.'[240] The believer must consciously construct the property of creating and ascribe it to God in order to speak about the Creator at all. By denying that God is really related to the world, however, 'Aquinas is actually setting the stage for a more effective affirmation', which Burrell goes on to explore in terms of how God creates – 'by knowledge and love'.[241]

Intentionality

The move to knowledge and love makes it possible to describe creation as a personal relationship – something that may well contribute to the interchangeability of 'relation' and 'relationship' in his account. Burrell says that, far from implying that divinity is needy of the love of creatures – indicating a lack in God which would mean that God would have to create in order to be God – using the interaction of lover and beloved speaks of 'the undeserved and utterly spontaneous character of a free creation'.[242] Burrell challenges the idea that love is inescapably needy by asking rhetorically: 'Is it our experience that we love more authentically the less we relate to others *as* fulfilling our needs, and the more we come to enjoy them for what they are in themselves?'[243] If this is the case, then it is possible to show 'by analogy from a progressively selfless human love' that the perfect love of God is not at all needy.[244]

The fact that this characterization of creation as an act of love is important to Burrell can also be gleaned from the way in which he speaks of how to retain and sustain 'what we

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[239] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 85.
[240] Ibid., p. 86.
[241] Ibid., p. 87.
[242] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 128; cf. also Burrell and Malits, p. 70.
[243] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 88.
[244] Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 102-3, referring to the *AGA* text.

deem most precious – human life with human relationships' in the midst of the abuse of that life and those relationships by totalitarian or authoritarian regimes.[245] He says that one of the things that makes 'relation [...] the most elusive of Aristotle's categories' is that it does not, strictly speaking, 'exist *in* another so much as "between" the *relata*.'[246] If this is so, the quality of the relation between the human creature and God is surely enhanced if it can also correctly be called a relationship. Although God is not really related to creatures, relating to them by knowledge and love relates God to the world intentionally. This '*intentional* relation', spoken of by Aquinas, 'is open to a great deal of development along more personalist lines.'[247] He does this explicitly in *OP*, which, with its dual-focus approach, says that it is the same God who creates and redeems, 'who creates "from the beginning" with a view to friendship.'[248] What is new in the new creation is 'a transformation of the human potential for friendship with God', suggesting that this potential has, in some form at least, been there all along.[249] This, he suggests, is the best way to understand the relation between the natural and supernatural, saying that prior to the separation of the two in 'baroque theology, *supernatural* simply called attention to the quality of intimacy that God extends to those who are faithful.'[250]

In the early phase of his more creation-centred writing, Burrell uses the notion of intentionality to specify the relation between God and the world, balancing his denial that God is really related to creatures. Such a denial, as he points out, does not at all rule out 'intentional relationships'.[251] Not surprisingly, he speaks of an 'intentional relation' too,[252]

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[245] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 7.
[246] Ibid., p. 23.
[247] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 86.
[248] Burrell and Malits, p. 58.
[249] Ibid., pp. 20-21.
[250] Ibid., p. 65.
[251] Burrell, *AGA*, pp. 40, 84.
[252] Ibid., p. 86.

and also uses the more generic terms 'relating' and 'to relate to'.[253] He links intentional language about God to the use of personal language about the causality of the Creator and to understanding God's knowledge as practical rather than speculative.[254] However, in the most recent material, this intentionality analysis fades.

One reason for this might be Burrell's growing familiarity with phenomenology, via Sokolowski. In phenomenology, intention and intentionality are used primarily of cognitive intentions, not practical ones.[255] As a result, 'all consciousness is intentional',[256] including consciousness of 'ideas and fantasies, desires and aspirations',[257] so intentional relations would not so easily secure the reality of the world [258] – God's speculative knowing would be just as intentional as God's practical knowing. Another possible reason is the increasing difficulty, in the late twentieth century, of holding together consciousness and intentionality, despite the best efforts of Lonergan, and of Burrell after him. When Burrell analyses Aquinas in *F&C*, he does so almost exclusively using a 'faculty psychology' of intellect and will,[259] in order to make it clear that there is 'no hint of "voluntarism" in Aquinas' account'.[260] Burrell, however, came across another way of referring to the relation of God to creatures that not

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[253] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 72.

[254] See Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 100 and 116-7 respectively.

[255] Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 8.

[256] Eric Matthews, *Twentieth-Century French Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 61.

[257] Bernard Delfgaauw, *Twentieth-Century Philosophy*, trans. by N.D. Smith (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1969), p. 119.

[258] A.J. Ayer, *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1984), p. 214.

[259] The shift from a 'faculty psychology' to an intentionality analysis happened in Lonergan's *Insight*, according to Michael L. Rende in *Lonergan on Conversion: The Development of a Notion* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), p. 96. Lonergan himself says that, although, in *Insight*, 'I still spoke in terms of faculty psychology, in reality I had moved out of its influence and was conducting an intentionality analysis.' See Bernard J. F. Lonergan, 'Insight Revisited', in *A Second Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan*, ed. by William F.J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrell (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), pp. 263-278 (p. 277).

[260] See Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 87-94 (quote from p. 88). In Lonergan, intentionality analysis is always an analysis of *conscious* intentionality, on all four of Lonergan's levels, namely experiencing, understanding, judging and loving (See, for example Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972), pp. 9, 103. For the levels of conscious intentionality, see Bernard Lonergan, 'Cognitional Structure', in *Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan*, ed. by F.E. Crowe (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1967), pp. 222-23; *Method*, p. 133). In a scheme of conscious intentionality, any separation between a faculty of reason and a faculty of will disappears (Rende, p. 161). Lonergan himself explicitly denies that the loving operations of the fourth level of conscious intentionality are acts of will (Lonergan, *Method*, p. 268).

only steered well clear of voluntarism, but may have also appealed to Burrell's agnostic penchant.

Non-duality

The alternative came from Sara Grant, whose comparative study of Aquinas and Sankara,[261] the most influential figure within the Hindu tradition of Advaita Vedanta,[262] yielded the borrowed expression 'non-duality'.[263] Burrell calls this 'a positive way to express the relation attendant upon "the distinction"'.[264] Nondualism seeks to occupy middle ground between the tendency to think of the distinction of God from the world as a separation (dualism) and that which links them so closely as to remove any relation between them (monism).[265] As such, it provides 'an attempt to state positively what Kathryn Tanner puts negatively.'[266] He also adds: 'Correlating "relation" with "distinction" can align this treatment with that of Robert Sokolowski',[267] completing the links with the thinkers he aligned his presentation with previously. Burrell's characterization of 'the relation' of creation as a 'non-reciprocal relation of dependence' in his most recent writings, noted earlier, is also drawn from Grant and provides him with a way of speaking about the asymmetry of 'the relation' without having to appeal to an intentionality analysis.[268] It is worth noting, however, that even this positive

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[261] Sara Grant, *Towards an Alternative Theology: Confessions of a Non-Dualist Christian. (The Teape Lectures, 1989)* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002).

[262] See Bradley Malkovsky's 'Editor's Introduction' to *Towards an Alternative Theology*, pp. ix-xix (p. xvi).

[263] David B. Burrell, 'Act of Creation with its Theological Consequences', in *Aquinas on Doctrine: A Critical Introduction*, ed. by Thomas G. Weinandy, Daniel A. Keating and John P. Yocum (London: T & T Clark, 2004), pp. 27-44 (p. 31).

[264] Burrell, 'Act of Creation with its Theological Consequences', p. 43, n. 15.

[265] Burrell and Malits, p. 75.

[266] Ibid., p. 72.

[267] Ibid., p. 101, n. 6.

[268] He uses this expression in Burrell, *F&F*, pp. 120, 134, citing Grant, p. 40 (see p. 134, n. 16). References to Grant can also be found in *F&F*, pp. xx-xxi, 209, n. 18 and 238, n. 13; 'Act of Creation', pp. 38-40; David B. Burrell, 'Aquinas's Appropriation of *Liber de causis* to Articulate the Creator as Cause-of-Being', in *Contemplating Aquinas: On the Varieties of Interpretation*, ed. by Fergus Kerr (London: SCM Press, 2003), pp. 75-83 (pp. 77-78, 83).

equivalent of non-contrastivity is expressed in a negative fashion, which fits in well with the agnostic and apophatic emphases in Burrell's philosophical theology.

Schillebeeckx on 'The Distinction'

It has been helpful to elucidate Burrell's philosophical theology of creation before that of Schillebeeckx, partly because Burrell is much clearer in defining his terminology. Schillebeeckx's theology abounds with philosophical concepts, but, as Kennedy notes, they are 'more often than not given merely laconic definitions'.[269] In delineating the structure of Schillebeeckx's thought, as a result, greater attention must be given to his practice, the way he uses language – an approach that has already helped in the explication of Burrell's thinking. The definition of creation that Schillebeeckx offers does not explicitly mention the terms used in this thesis, but expresses itself in a way that reflects them:

> Creation is an act of God which, on the one hand, places us unconditionally in our finite, non-Godly situation, destined for true humanity, *and*, on the other hand, simultaneously places Himself in gratuitous love therein as *our* God: our salvation and happiness, the supreme content of true and good humanity.[270]

A similar dual emphasis can also be traced in *III*, where, on the one hand, Schillebeeckx says: 'Secularity means finitude, that which is non-godly.'[271] This, like the first half of the definition above, can be interpreted as talking about 'the distinction' of creation. On the other hand, he immediately says that 'for the believer, non-divine finitude is precisely the place where the infinite and the finite come most closely into contact.'[272] Again, like the second half of the quote above, this articulates of 'the relation'. This pattern of expression is

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[269] Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 2.

[270] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 104; parallels 'I Believe', p. 19; *IR*, p. 126). Dutch text: 'Schepping is en daad van God, die enerzijds ons onvoorwaardelijk poneert in onze eindige, niet-goddelijke, eigenheid, bestemd tot ware menselijkheid, én, anderzijds, tegelijkertijd, daarin Zichzelf in belangeloze liefde poneert als ónze God: ons heil en geluk, opperste inhoud van ware en goede menselijkheid.' (Schillebeeckx, EV, p. 105).

[271] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 234.

[272] Ibid.

extremely common in Schillebeeckx, but, as will become clearer in the next chapter, he is not using it in quite the same way as Burrell. In his earlier material, too, he says that, 'on the one hand, I am really and truly myself [...]. On the other hand, in this whole being I am at the same time [...] wholly from God'.[273] Similarly, and, again, using expressions that will come to be seen as typical, he points out that the doctrine of creation says that 'I really am myself and yet am completely and thoroughly in and of' God, that in 'this dependence on God, I am nevertheless myself'.[274]

Schillebeeckx only rarely uses the term 'distinction' to talk of God and the world, preferring to use a network of terms which, nevertheless, express it. Near the opening of the parallel material, he states: 'If God is creator, then of course He creates that which is not-divine, that which is wholly other than Himself [...]. Creatures are not copies/replicas of God.'[275] This use of the term 'not-divine', and of the associated concrete form 'not-God', in conjunction with 'other-than-God', characterizes these opening paragraphs.[276] These speak about the world in its contingency, which, as has been shown, is a deeper and richer notion than that of many philosophers, since the contingent might not only have been otherwise, but might not have been at all.

Is 'The Distinction' Specifically Christian?

This depth-dimension of contingency is linked to the issue of whether the idea of 'the distinction' is specific to Christianity, or is held in common with others. Schillebeeckx's main

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[273] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 9.

[274] Ibid., pp. 215 and 9 respectively.

[275] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 113; parallel *GAU*, p. 92). Dutch text: 'Als God schepper is, dan schept Hij uiteraard het niet-goddelijke, het geheel andere dan Hijzelf is [...]. Schepselen zijn geen kopieën van God.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV,* p. 129; parallel *EV*, p. 93, which changes 'kopieën' to 'repliek').

[276] The consistency is more easily spotted in the Dutch than in English, which unwisely introduces variation, perhaps to avoid repetition. The Dutch terms, 'niet-goddelijk(e)' and 'niet-God', along with 'anders dan God', 'totaal-andere van God' and 'andere-dan-God' appear often in Schillebeeckx, *TV,* pp. 129-131; parallel *EV*, pp. 92-94 (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 113-115; parallel *GAU*, pp. 92-94).

interlocutors in this regard are atheistic secular philosophers, such as Jean-Paul Sartre. When describing the lectures on creation that he gave in Nijmegen just before his retirement, Schillebeeckx says:

> I finished eventually with an analysis of the notions *contingent* and *Le Néant* in the existentialism of J.-P. Sartre. What is the distinction, not just in conceptual content, but properly the experiential distinction between the 'common' experience of contingency of the believer and of an agnostic or militant atheist? How can a common experience nevertheless be distinguished in its inner character? Agnostics assign that ['common'] to it [the experience of contingency] so that it is the same experience, but then they say that believers erect a superfluous superstructure on top of that same experience. As a believer, I deny this. Because, in that case, the experience of contingency is 'empty' – an experience of a full-stop, but for this reason boxed in on all sides.[277]

What Schillebeeckx opposes in the agnostic or atheistic position is that the experience of contingency of the believer and the non-believer are the same, so that the supernatural can be dismissed as superfluous. However, this opposition does not rule out the possibility that contingency is somehow 'common' in these approaches to the world. So, the positions of the believer and the non-believer are not characterized by sameness and difference, but are related and, as rendered above, distinct (*verschillend*). This term is used throughout the albeit brief section of *TT* on creation,[278] except where he speaks of dualism, where he uses another term, as will become apparent in the next sub-section.

'Distinction' and 'Difference'

Schillebeeckx does appear to use the term 'difference' to articulate 'the distinction' – in one English translation of his text at any rate – making the reader wonder if there is a similar

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[277] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'Ik belandde tenslotte bij een analyse van de begrippen *contingentie* en *Le Néant* in het existentialisme van J.-P. Sartre. Wat is het verschil, niet slechts in begripsinhoud, maar juist het ervaringsverschil, tussen de 'gemeenschappelijke' contingentie-ervaring van een gelovige en van een agnost of militante atheist? Hoe kan een gemeenschappelijke ervaring, innerlijk niettemin verschillend zijn? Agnosten geven toe dat het om een zelfde ervaring gaat, maar zeggen dan dat de gelovigen een overbodige bovenbouw bovenop diezelfde ervaring timmeren. Als gelovige loochen ik dit. Want in het ene geval is de contingentie-ervaring 'leeg' – een ervaring van een eindig-volle, maar hierom aan alle kanten omheinde binnenkamer' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, pp. 85-86).

[278] See Schillebeeckx, *TT*, pp. 85-87.

interchangeability in his thinking as was observed in Burrell's. If the Dutch text is examined, however, this suspicion is mitigated. *GAU* correctly translates thus: 'From a Christian perspective, the world and man are totally other than God, but within the presence of the creator God.'[279] The freer translation found in *IR*, which speaks of the world and man as 'totally different from God,'[280] therefore raises suspicions unnecessarily.

Schillebeeckx does use another term occasionally in his discussion of creation that can accurately be translated as 'difference', but he does not use it to speak of 'the distinction'. Opposing New Age conceptions of the world, he says: 'I am against a one-sided interiorization of man, because this leads to a new dualism, a discord and break between inwardness and outwardness, a difference that, to a certain extent, is a pure abstraction.'[281] The expression that Schillebeeckx uses here, *onderscheid*, speaks of an approach that separates and opposes in a dualistic manner. This reading of the term is strengthened when he speaks, later in the same paragraph, of the 'dichotomy between inwardness and outwardness' that characterizes New Age thinking.[282]

These two terms are often used interchangeably in Dutch, but it seems reasonable to suggest that there might be a deliberate motive for Schillebeeckx's pattern. The compound verb *onderscheiden* is derived from the root *scheiden*, which means to divide or compartmentalize. Perhaps, then, the stress of *onderscheiden*, as used by Schillebeeckx at any rate, is to make things subject to (to place them under the power of) division, separation, compartmentalization – to pull them apart conceptually. *Verschillen*, on the other hand, is

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[279] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 93. The Dutch reads: 'Christelijk gezien zijn de wereld en de mens het totaal-andere van God, echter binnen de presentie van de scheppende God.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 93; exact parallel *EV*, p. 130).

[280] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 114.

[281] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'Maar ik ben tegen een eenzijdige verinnerlijking van de mens, omdat dit leidt tot een nieuw dualisme, een tweespalt en breuk tussen innerlijkheid en uiterlijkheid, en onderscheid dat tot zekere hoogte een pure abstractie is.' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 86).

[282] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'De dichotomie tussen innerlijkheid en uiterlijkheid is een modern fenomeen, dat meer nog dan vanuit het Griekse denken, veeleer stamt iut het moderne cartesiaanse dualisme.' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 86).

derived from *schillen*, meaning to peel. When used in compound verbs, *ver*, which on its own means far, has connotations of making or rendering. *Verschillen*, then, could perhaps have implications of peeling away layers, rather than separating out elements from one another. Similarly, a distinction leaves the relation between the *relata* intact, whereas a difference makes it at least problematic and often destroys it altogether.

Although Schillebeeckx rarely uses *verschillen* in the creation parallels, he does use *onderscheiden* once, in comparing pantheism and creation-faith. He says, speaking of God's presence in creation: 'Herein christian creation-faith also differentiates itself from *pantheistic* conceptions'.[283] This makes it sound as if there is a difference between a pantheistic understanding of God and the world and one based on creation-faith. Here, however, the term is justified, because, like the distinction between God and the world and between the world and God, its character is not the same in both directions.[284]

Directionality Issues

Schillebeeckx also seems to use 'between' in what was argued to be the wrong direction when Burrell was examined earlier: 'The boundary, after all, between God and us is *our* boundary,

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[283] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 114, which translates the verb as 'differs from' and *GAU*, p. 93, which translates it as 'distinguishes itself from'). Dutch text: 'Hierin onderscheidt het christelijk scheppingsgeloof zich ook van *pantheïstische* opvattingen' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 130; exact parallel *EV*, p. 93).

[284] It is also worth briefly remarking on possible counter-examples with regard to *verschillen*. Speaking of misunderstandings of creation that are all explanations, he says that whether the ideal order is put at the beginning of time or at the end 'makes little difference structurally' and, again, 'makes no difference to the explanatory scheme in operation'. Author's translations (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 116; parallels *GAU*, p. 95; *III*, p. 230). Dutch texts: 'maakt structureel weinig verschil' and 'maakt als gehanteerd verklaringsschema geen verschil' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 132; exact parallels *EV*, p. 95, *Mensen*, p. 248). Similarly, he says that whether an optimistic explanation of history is given in Teilhardian or Marxist terms 'makes no difference structurally.' Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 98). Dutch text: 'maakt structureel geen verschil.' (Schillebeeckx, *EV*, p. 98). These examples do not, however, threaten the overall presentation, partly because the use of the term 'difference' is idiomatic in such expressions in English, and may not necessarily be so in Dutch. Also, although it makes little or no difference what kind of explanatory scheme is used, Schillebeeckx does not want to say that they are all the same in the end. The mistake may be a common one, but this does not mean that they all make the same mistake. The problem – that of thinking of creation as an explanation of the way the world is – is expressed distinctively in each of the schemes mentioned.

not that of God.'[285] This seems at least somewhat infelicitous, even if the second half of the sentence tries to correct the possible implication of the first that there is a real boundary between God and the world. Later on the same page, he says: 'To want to abolish this boundary, from us out towards God, the Bible calls the fundamental human sin'.[286] 'The distinction' is only a boundary, then, between the world and God, or, perhaps more felicitously, from the world towards God. There is no boundary in God: the distinction of the world from God is, to borrow terminology from 'the relation', not real, but notional. This reading is further supported by a later text, which is almost identical. It puts *immers* later in the sentence, so as to create a pause between the first and second half, inviting the reader to understand the first half of the sentence in the context of the second: 'The boundary between God and the world is, after all, *our* boundary, not that of God.'[287]

Schillebeeckx is not entirely reliant on the reading suggested, however, because, in at least one place, he corrects his earlier language in a later edit. He says that, in the face of the challenge that is the human task in the world to make a better and more human future, it is not possible to expect God to come to the rescue and do it himself, 'in view of the inexorable boundary (on our side) between the Infinite and the finite, as a result of which God is in His own and humanity is in this world.'[288] There are two problematical phrases here. The first is

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[285] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 115; parallel *GAU*, p. 94). Dutch text: 'De grens immers tussen God en ons is ónze grens, niet die van God.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 131; exact parallel *EV*, p. 94).

[286] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 115; parallel *GAU*, p. 94). Dutch text: 'Deze grens, van ons uit naar God, te willen annuleren noemt de bijbel de fundamentele mensenzonde' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 131; exact parallel *EV*, p. 94). The translation offered here is rendered quite literally, although it sounds a little clumsy in English, in order to accurately render the image that Schillebeeckx is using. In that sense, it accords with the spirit of the *GAU* translation, which also gives the impression of a desire to annul the boundary by reaching over it from within the world.

[287] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, 'I Believe', p. 25; parallels *GAU*, p. 110; *IR*, p. 134). Dutch text: 'De grens tussen God en het schepsel is immers onze grens, niet die van God' (Schillebeeckx, *EV*, p. 111). *Immers* is rendered here somewhat loosely as 'after all', partly in order to place a pause in the middle of the sentence and partly because it is related also to *en toch* (nevertheless, and yet), which, as will be seen later, is a key expression in Schillebeeckx.

[288] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 118; parallel *GAU*, p. 96). Dutch text: 'gezien de onverbiddelijke grens (aan onze kant) tussen het Oneindige en het eindige, waardoor God in het Zijne is en de mens in deze wereld.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 134; exact parallel *EV*, p. 96).

that 'between' is being used in the wrong direction again, even if it is best read as suggested above. Secondly, though, and seemingly compounding the difficulty, there is the result of the boundary. It sounds as if God is in his world and humanity in this one, which is what the *GAU* translation says, and, though perhaps less obviously, the *IR* rendering finds it hard to avoid, talking of God's 'sphere'. The translation offered above reads strangely, begging the question 'God's own what?', but perhaps that's the point. It is impossible for creatures to talk accurately about the context for God's life, because God is not situated in a context. In *Mensen*, however, Schillebeeckx addresses both issues, removing the second half of the quote altogether and reversing the directionality of the first. The human task cannot be shifted over to God, 'in view of the inexorable boundary (on our side) between the finite and the infinite.'[289]

When Schillebeeckx speaks of his final Nijmegen creation lectures in *HT*, at the end of the course, 'I said that there is a difference between God and the creature, but the difference, the frontier, is not in God, but in us.'[290] In the comparable Dutch text in *TT*, however, he uses the pattern of language that has been outlined above: 'There is a distinction between God and the creature, but the boundary, the distinction, is not on God's side, but on our side. It is our boundary.'[291] There is a distinction between God and the world, but it does not have the same character as that between the world and God. The latter is a boundary, the former is not. Nevertheless, does not speaking of God's side imply that it is, somehow, real for God, too?

Light can be shed on this by analysing the term that Schillebeeckx uses. Later on in the creation parallels, he speaks of God's proviso, saying that an emphasis on it does not place any extra burden on human finitude: 'God's proviso and the finitude of humanity and world

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[289] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 231). Dutch text: 'gezien de onverbiddelijke grens (aan onze kant) tussen het eindige en het oneindige.' (Schillebeeckx, *Mensen*, p. 249).

[290] Schillebeeckx, *HT*, p. 48.

[291] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'Er is een verschil tussen God en het schepsel, maar de grens, het verschil, ligt niet aan de kant van God, maar aan onze kant. Het is onze grens.' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 86).

are two sides of the same coin.'[292] In that case, perhaps he is intending the term *kant* to suggest the same image when, just two sentences earlier, he says, of God's proviso: 'On our side of the boundary it means this: acceptance of the finitude of humanity, of the world and history.'[293] If this is the case, the two 'sides' of 'the distinction' are more likes the sides of a coin than the sides of a boundary or frontier. That means that they can be two perspectives on one complex reality – 'the distinction' as seen from the point of view of the creature (in which case, it presents the 'face' of an absolute boundary) and as seen from the point of view of God, so to speak (in which case, it presents to the human enquirer the 'face' of a notional boundary, which is not really a boundary at all).

Schillebeeckx on 'The Relation'

Since there is no real boundary between God and the world, Schillebeeckx can speak of God issuing this invitation to humanity, which he describes as a challenging call: 'Come, my dear people, you are not alone.'[294] Similarly, in much earlier material, he says that, in 'the final analysis the definition of man is *vocational*: he is defined by God's call.'[295] This means that Gods absolute character is not opposed to being relational. Or, as Schillebeeckx puts it: 'his absoluteness or non-relativity is *relational* as well, i.e. in absolute freedom restricted by

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[292] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 119; parallel *GAU*, p. 98). Dutch text: 'Gods voorbehoud en de eindigheid van de mens en wereld zijn de twee kanten van dezelfde medaille.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 135; exact parallel *EV*, p. 99).

[293] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 119). Dutch text: 'Aan onze kant van de grens betekent dit: aanvaarding van de eindigheid van de mens, van de wereld en de geschiedenis.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 135) In *EV*, Schillebeeckx changes the text quite radically, saying that the meaning is 'non-acceptance of the contingency of man, the world and history.' (Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 98, accurately translating *EV*, p. 99). However, in the later text, Schillebeeckx separates this implication from the previous sentence by a colon rather than by a full stop. Schillebeeckx has just been saying that God's proviso is often wrongly narrowed to an eschatological proviso. In *TV*, he then returns to what the proviso of the creator God (correctly) means, but it could be that when he came to edit the text in the preparation of the article found in *EV*, he thought that this was potentially confusing, and changed what followed to indicate the misunderstanding of the merely eschatological proviso, which does not accept contingency.

[294] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 246.

[295] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 213.

nothing, *itself related to* his creation'.[296] He recognizes that the distinction he is making here might be thought to be somewhat artificial, but argues that it is, nevertheless, an important one: 'I deliberately use the (somewhat pedantic) word "relational" in order to avoid the ambiguity of "relative". Relative stands over against absolute; this need not be the case with the word "relational".'[297] As has been noted before, 'relational' is a generic term, which incorporates both relations and relationships. How does Schillebeeckx speak of these?

Relation and Relationship

When he responds to the challenge put to creation-faith by its many misconceptions, he does so first of all by speaking of the absolute boundary between the world and God: 'Between world and God there is nothing that can be called in, in order to interpret their relation.'[298] The term that he uses here is *verhouding*, a word which has, as its primary meaning, 'proportion' and which is used to refer to mathematical relations. It is also used to speak of other relations, including relationships, but, as a starting point, it seems reasonable to suggest that here it refers to 'the relation' of creation. Similarly, in the summary of what creation-faith means that Schillebeeckx moves from the middle of *IR* to the beginning of the *GAU* article, he uses the same term: 'This faith is good news, which says something about God, humanity and world, in their relation to one another.'[299] In both these cases, *verhouding* stands without a

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[296] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, 'I Believe', pp. 19-20; parallels *GAU*, pp. 104-5; *IR*, p. 127). Dutch text: 'is zijn absoluutheid of niet-relativiteit tevens *relationeel*, d.i. in absolute, door niets bepaalde vrijheid *zichzelf betrekkend op* zijn schepsel' (Schillebeeckx, *EV*, pp. 105-6).

[297] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, 'I Believe', p. 20, n. 2; parallels *GAU*, p. 255, Notes to Chapter Seventeen, n. 2; *IR*, p. 151, n. 84). Dutch text: 'Opzettelijk gebruik ik het (wat pedante) woord "relationeel", om het dubbelzinnige van "relatief" te vermijden. Relatief staat *tegenover* absoluut; dit hoeft met het woord "relationeel" niet het geval te zijn.' (Schillebeeckx, *EV*, p. 105, n. 2).

[298] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 114; parallel *GAU*, p. 93, which both use the term 'relationship' here). Dutch text: 'Tussen wereld en God is er niets dat er bij gehaald kan worden voor de interpretatie van hun verhouding.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 130; exact parallel *EV*, p. 93).

[299] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 116; parallel *GAU*, p. 91, which, again, both use 'relationship'). Dutch text: 'Dit geloof is een blijde boodschap, die iets zegt over God, mens en wereld, en wel in hun onderlinge verhouding.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 132; parallel *EV*, p. 91).

preposition and refers to 'the relation' of creation. When it is used with a preposition, however, it is the preposition that best supplies the meaning intended.

He says that the way that the world looks is best understood 'from within the socio-historical, contingent free will of humanity itself, in its dialectical relation to nature.'[300] If, as has been argued in Chapter One, it is not possible to have a personal relationship with a non-human creature, the preposition *tot* here must be taken to mean 'to' rather than 'with' (the latter being the translation in both *IR* and *GAU*). Further backing for this contention can be presented from a later passage in *III*, in which he examines how humans and the rest of the natural world (which he calls nature) are related to God. He points out that, strictly speaking, nature cannot pray. Human beings are unique in this regard, in that, by virtue of what he calls their 'somatic spiritual awareness',[301] they 'can bring to mind their relationship with God.'[302]

Perhaps surprisingly, he is not using the term *relatie* here technically to specify a relationship, since, as the text continues, he uses *relatie* and *verhouding* interchangeably. There does, however, seem to be a pattern in his use of pronouns. He notes that it is not only the case that animals do not pray, but, again, strictly speaking, they do not see beautiful views or landscapes either. For them, 'there is only territory for feeding and prey'.[303] This puts a responsibility onto humans that is not found in the rest of the natural world, one that, once the above is admitted, is self-evident: 'it speaks for itself that the relation of humanity to nature cannot be reduced one-sidedly to dominion and technology',[304] but, rather, 'our relation to

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[300] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 231; parallels *GAU*, p. 96; *IR*, p. 118, all of which use 'relationship'). Dutch text: 'vanuit de historisch-maatschappelijk, contingente vrije wil van de mensheid zelf in haar dialectische verhouding tot de natuur.' (Schillebeeckx, *Mensen*, p. 249; parallels *EV*, p. 97; *TV*, p. 134).

[301] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 238.

[302] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 238). Dutch text: 'haar relatie met God indachtig kan worden.' (Schillebeeckx, *Mensen*, p. 256).

[303] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 238.

[304] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 239). Dutch text: 'het spreekt vanzelf dat de relatie van de mens tot de natuur niet eenzijdig tot beheersing en techniek mag worden herlied.' (Schillebeeckx, *Mensen*, p. 257).

nature falls under ethical values and norms'.[305] This criticism of a one-sided emphasis sounds similar to his critique of the New Age, emphasizing that Schillebeeckx is offering a non-contrastive approach. As a result, he appeals for 'a more contemplative and ludic relation to nature and the animal world'.[306] In sum, the relationship that men and women have with God has implications for their relations to the natural world and the animal kingdom, showing that there is both a distinction and a relation between the two.

Returning to the idea that God's being is relational as well as absolute in *TT*, Schillebeeckx says: 'And so God's being, which is absolute freedom, seen in relation to us (which is the only way we can express it with human, finite concepts) is "new each moment",'[307] in spite of the fact that God does not change. If, then, the relations of God to the world in creation and of men and women to the rest of the created order are best spoken of using the expression 'relation to', what of the personal relationship of faith?

The Relationship of Faith

When it comes to articulating this, Schillebeeckx does not change vocabulary, but introduces an unusual term which he uses as an adjective. In *TT*, he says: 'Holiness is *theologaal* life (faith, hope and charity),[308] which he goes on to describe further as 'the interpersonal relationship between God and human beings'.[309] The texts of *HT* and *TT* are slightly divergent here, indicating that Schillebeeckx may have reworked the material, but both sources contain valuable insights into his train of thought. He says that holiness 'is human integrity, but taken

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[305] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 239). Dutch text: 'onze verhouding tot de natuur onder ethische waarden en normen valt' (Schillebeeckx, *Mensen*, p. 257).

[306] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 240). Dutch text: 'een meer contemplatieve en ludieke verhouding tot de natuur en dierenwereld' (Schillebeeckx, *Mensen*, p. 257).

[307] Author's translation (cf. the related text in Schillebeeckx, *HT*, p. 55). Dutch text: 'En zo is Gods wezen, dat absoluut vrijheid is, gezien in relatie tot ons (al kunnen we dit slechts met menselijke, eindige begrippen uitdrukken), "ieder ogenblik nieuw"' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 89).

[308] Author's translation (cf. the similar text in Schillebeeckx, *HT*, p. 60). Dutch text: 'Heiligheid is theologaal leven (geloof, hoop en liefde)' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 94).

[309] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'de interpersoonlijke relatie tussen God en mens' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 94).

up into intersubjectivity with God';[310] that the 'interpersonal bond between the human person as creature and God is the life of grace: "*theologaal*" life'.[311] How, then, are life as a creature and this *theologaal* life connected?

> The creation is the presupposition for entering into relations with God. God, in creating, has created human beings in their humanity, and human beings in their autonomous spirituality can enter into a personal relationship with God. This relationship is called grace. [...] Creation is certainly a kind of grace, but it is not the grace of [*theologaal*] life, which is the intense dialogue between human beings and God. Before having an intersubjectivity and an interpersonality, i.e. the life of grace between God and human beings, it is necessary to be a creature. So there is a distinction between grace and creation.[312]

In other words, the life of the human creature – life lived in relation to God (something that human creatures share in common with all other creatures) – is not yet *theologaal* life – life lived in intersubjectivity, in an interpersonal relationship with God. It is, nevertheless, fundamentally ordered towards *theologaal* life. The two are distinct and related, in such a way that there is a real distinction between creaturely life and *theologaal* life (since, after all, the latter is, as the term 'supernatural' recognizes, beyond human power). And yet, this is a one-way boundary, because the man or woman who lives a *theologaal* life of intimacy with God can also live genuinely creaturely values as well.

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[310] Schillebeeckx, *HT*, p. 60. It is this element of intersubjectivity that distinguishes *theologaal* from *bovennatuurlijk* ('supernatural') according to Schillebeeckx: 'Since the term *bovennatuurlijk* only directly refers to the surpassing of human powers and says nothing explicitly about the reciprocity in the intersubjectivity with God (with which we are formally concerned), we give preference to the term *theologaal*' (Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 161, n. 4). (Also see Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, pp. 101-2 for a similar argument). The term *theologaal* is something that Schillebeeckx came across during his time of studies in *Le Saulchoir* with Marie-Dominique Chenu and Yves Congar, who used its French equivalent to speak of the 'theological virtues' of faith, hope and charity which Schillebeeckx characterizes as *theologaal* life. (See the way that Chenu speaks of the theological virtues in Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Aquinas and his Role in Theology*, trans. by Paul Philibert (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002), pp. 47-50. Cf. Yves M. J. Congar, *La foi et la théologie* (Tournai: Desclée, 1962), cited in Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, p. 102, n. 119).

[311] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'De interpersoonlijk band tussen de mens als schepsel en God is het leven van genade: "theologaal" leven' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 93). The Dutch term *theologaal* is used throughout this thesis in order to draw attention to this peculiar term and to keep in mind its unusual character. The word often used to translate it, 'theologal', is too easily read as 'theological', and Schillebeeckx clearly distinguishes between these, too. He says that, although the virtues of the *theologaal* life – faith, hope and charity – used to be called the theological virtues, the use of the term has shifted over the centuries (probably in accordance with 'supernatural', effectively separating these virtues from others that might be called 'natural'), such that the term cannot be used to say what he wants to say. (See Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 161, n. 4).

[312] Schillebeeckx, *HT*, pp. 57-58.

This pattern can also be discerned in Schillebeeckx's earlier writing. Describing God's act of salvation, he says: 'The One who is independent in existence, who has no need of anyone in order to be fully that which he is, had already made himself God-for-us in and through his act of creation, and now in his love becomes more still, God-with-us.'[313] The Christian, as a result, has a theological definition of human personhood as '[*theologaal*] intimacy with God'.[314] This becomes the primary point of reference for the believer, such that: 'Although the distinction between the secular and the sacral remains, the two spheres form real aspects of human presence with God.'[315] The fact that this distinction is only real in one direction means that 'secular' and 'sacral' are not mutually exclusive alternatives for the believer. Thus, from the Christian perspective, 'man's creation is the beginning of a relationship of dialogue between God and the human person' and, at the same time, 'the secular task of giving meaning becomes the embodiment of authentic love of God and authentic love of mankind: concrete charity or a [*theologaal*] approach to existence.'[316]

The believer can, as a result, speak of having a 'natural orientation towards God [that] is, as it were, a call that makes him long for a personal encounter or immediate intersubjectivity with God',[317] which can be seen as a response to the 'thematic appeal'[318] from God that began this section – 'Come, my dear people, you are not alone.'[319] Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology, then, has a more optimistic tone in its consideration of life in God and life in the world than Burrell's more agnostic account.[320] This opens up the

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[313] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 183.

[314] Ibid., p. 216, cf. also pp. 217, 220, 225, 226.

[315] Ibid., p. 226.

[316] Ibid., pp. 244 and 228 respectively.

[317] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 171.

[318] Ibid., p. 226.

[319] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 246.

[320] 'Life in God and Life in the World' is, in fact, the title given to one of the articles that has provided one of the main sources for the material from Schillebeeckx's early work here (see Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, pp. 85-209). The other, which also displays the non-contrastive character of Schillebeeckx's thinking, is entitled 'Dialogue with God and Christian Secularity' (*G&M*, pp. 210-233).

next stage in the investigation of functional complementarity: that, on the basis of this common ground, Burrell and Schillebeeckx place the stresses in their accounts of creation (and of related themes) in such a way that what is thought of as primary by one author is secondary for the other and vice versa.

Chapter Three

Investigating Complementarity II: Complementary Emphases and Dialectic

This Chapter examines further the common ground occupied by Burrell and Schillebeeckx in two ways: Firstly, it considers the evidence that their accounts of creation are functionally complementary – that they are doing the same thing in different ways.[1] If this is the case, then, according to Tanner, they may well share rules for discourse in philosophical theology,[2] a possibility explored thereafter. The place of dialectic in the thought of both authors is examined, showing that there are important differences in their use of dialectic: Burrell's is polar, whereas Schillebeeckx's is relational. This will allow a choice to be made between the two authors in favour of Schillebeeckx, which will determine the general shape of the second half of the thesis.

Balancing 'The Distinction' and 'The Relation'

Reading Burrell as Prioritizing 'The Distinction'

Burrell describes the formulation of 'the distinction' as 'the quintessential theological task', needed to 'assure the required transcendence' of divinity.[3] Speaking of the quest to know the unknowable God, he says that 'we must always work with "the distinction" in mind',[4] that in the attempt to resist the Neo-Platonic pull of the logical emanation scheme, what 'is at stake is "the distinction" of God from the world.'[5] Elsewhere, he maintains that it is central to philosophical theology to articulate the essential elements of the faith-tradition in which it is done, and that 'it

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[1] Cf. Tanner, *God and Creation*, pp. 83-84, 118.
[2] Ibid., pp. 31-32.
[3] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 2.
[4] Ibid., p. 3.
[5] Ibid., p. 95.

could be argued that the most critical of these is "the distinction" of God from the world.'[6] Alongside the fact, noted in Chapter Two, that he uses 'the distinction' as a shorthand term, but not 'the relation', the suggestion is that 'the distinction' is the primary element in his account of creation.

This contention can be supported from historical comments that he makes. What he refers to as Ibn Sina's 'attempt to offer a philosophical idiom for creation' is his distinction of existence from essence, so as to distinguish God from the world.[7] He notes that, 'in Aquinas' hands, this distinction will become the key to conceiving created beings in relation to their creator',[8] which, whilst making it clear that both concepts are needed, makes 'the relation' dependent upon articulating 'the distinction'. He draws a similar parallel between Aquinas and Maimonides, stating that both 'had recourse to philosophical tools to give sharper expression to "the distinction" of God the creator from the created world which each took to capture the biblical doctrine of creation.'[9]

When Burrell uses both terms, he does so in a way that emphasizes 'the distinction': 'The relation of created spiritual creatures to the creator can only be conceived properly if one keeps "the distinction" to the fore.'[10] This could be read as affirming that the both concepts are needed, but when he articulates his position somewhat more technically, the priority is clear. He says that, in order to make sure that God is not thought of as part of the world, philosophical theology needs to 'insist on establishing "the distinction" of God from the world as a necessary preliminary to elucidating the grammar of living in relation to such a One.'[11]

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[6] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 88.
[7] Burrell, 'Creation or Emanation', p. 35.
[8] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 18.
[9] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 11.
[10] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 165.
[11] Ibid., p. 171.

In what appears to be a summary of his overall position in Chapter Five of *FWT*, he spends ten pages articulating 'the distinction', after which he notes that this 'is but one side of the activity of creating; the other is registered by Aquinas' easily misread insistence that this One is not "really related" to what it creates.'[12] However, as he continues, he speaks of 'the internal linkage between simpleness and creating in God as the conceptual correlate of "the distinction" of creator from creation',[13] speaking of them in terms of 'the distinction.'[14] As the chapter draws to a close, he briefly mentions '"non-duality"', one of Burrell's ways of articulating 'the relation', but this takes up less than half a paragraph.[15]

The secondary character of 'the relation' is strongly suggested by the very way that Burrell investigates it. He recognizes Aquinas's succinct and subtle insistence that 'creation consists in a relation of the creature to the creator', that 'the very being of the creature is to-be-related'[16] and calls the major section of *F&F* 'Creator/Creation Relation'.[17] In spite of this, however, the major theme of that section is 'the distinction'. In *KUG*, he spends four chapters (out of six) defending and drawing out the importance of 'the distinction', only then turning to ask 'how can we hope to relate God to God's world? If the interests of distinguishing creator from creation be served by such a transcendental grammar, what steps need to be taken to articulate the positive side of the creator-creation relationship?'[18]

A secondary place for 'the relation' is also supported by other comments, which speak of both elements. After outlining the characteristics of the distinction in the Prologue to *F&F*, he says that 'any attempt to articulate the creating activity of God, with the subsequent relation of

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[12] Burrell, *FWT*, p. 102.
[13] Ibid., p. 103.
[14] Ibid., pp. 103-106.
[15] Ibid., p. 107.
[16] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 237.
[17] Section Heading for Part One, which accounts for half the book (see Burrell, *F&F*, p. 1).
[18] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 71.

creatures to their creator, must surpass ordinary ways of expression.'[19] Similarly, addressing participation, he says that Aquinas imports the notion from Neo-Platonic philosophy 'in an attempt to characterise the relation of creatures to the creator, once one has so articulated their difference.'[20] Again, summarising how to use perfection terms properly of God, he speaks of 'the distinction' as a 'grounding fact', which must be brought to awareness. This grounding fact must be articulated with care, he holds, as human language-users know so little about how properly 'to express this all-important "distinction" and the consequent relations obtaining between creator and creatures.'[21]

Such a pattern of language might seem strange for someone who speaks of human life and its relationships as 'what we deem most precious'[22] and wants to make sure that creation is open to a personal reading as a act of love,[23] yet there is a certain parallel here with Lonergan, a thinker who looms large in Burrell's intellectual background. Michael Rende observes that, for Lonergan, it is shared meaning that makes persons: 'Each of us is an individual inasmuch as he or she is merely alive. Each of us becomes a person inasmuch as his or her living realises and incarnates some meaning.'[24] Similarly, communities of persons can be contrasted with groups of individuals by the fact that the former 'are constituted by a common meaning and regulated by a common value' which develops over time.[25] In that case, it seems possible to characterize Burrell as a thinker who presents 'the distinction' as the key concept in the meaning and value of creation. Its significance develops over time, as is shown by his historical survey of its coming to fruition in Aquinas; its form also changes over time, particularly in the expression of its ancillary concept, 'the relation'.

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[19] Burrell, *F&F*, p. xx.
[20] Ibid., p. 118.
[21] Ibid., p. 119.
[22] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 7.
[23] See Burrell, *AGA*, p. 86; *F&C*, p. 99; Burrell and Malits, p. 65.
[24] Rende, p. 108.
[25] Rende, p. 136.

Reading Schillebeeckx as Prioritising 'The Relation'

Kathleen McManus says that, from the beginning of his life, Schillebeeckx was profoundly influenced by the quality of the human relationships that he enjoyed in his family life and sought to develop in his dealings with others.[26] It is no surprise, she says, that he chose to become a Dominican, attracted by 'the joy and human warmth that balanced Dominic's intellectual commitment to truth.'[27] In this context, he developed what she calls his 'relationally based' theology and way of life.[28] Borgman notes that, in his earliest published writings, Schillebeeckx connected this desire for human flourishing with creation, in a way that sounds akin to the connection between creation and salvation noted in Chapter Two. Schillebeeckx's *cultuurtheologie*, he says, holds that the development of genuine humanity is a communal task, not an individual one. Schillebeeckx concludes, therefore, that 'the human being as nature is directed towards the human being as culture'.[29] In this way, 'he made clear both the need for a theology of culture as a sub-division of the theology of creation and its possibility.'[30]

Schillebeeckx's love for philosophy, already alluded to in Chapter Two, also has a relational emphasis. As Richard Kearney observes, phenomenology, critical theory and structuralism are all relationally-based philosophical methods,[31] connecting Schillebeeckx's

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[26] This can also be shown from Schillebeeckx's own account of his early life in *TT*. When he speaks, with obvious affection, about the close-knit character of his family, he notes with great regret that his brother Louis, a Jesuit, was not able to be present at the celebrations for the diamond wedding anniversary of their parents. There is not a single photograph of the whole family together, he says – Louis is always missing. (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 15; cf. *HT*, p. 3).

[27] Kathleen Anne McManus, *The Place and Meaning of Suffering in the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, 1999; abstract in *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61 (2000), 1039-A; twenty-four page preview on UMI ProQuest Digital Dissertations <http://wwwlib.umi.com/dissertations/preview/ NQ46673> [accessed 19 May 2005]), p. 12; parallel Kathleen Anne McManus, *Unbroken Communion: The Place and Meaning of Suffering in the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), p. 9. Cf. the account of Schillebeeckx's entry into the Dominicans, marked, he says, by the genuine warmth and humanity of the response he received, which he experienced as something of a contrast to his time at school with the Jesuits. (See Schillebeeckx, *GNEM*, pp. 8-9; *HT*, pp. 4-6; *TT*, p. 21; cf. Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, p. 35).

[28] McManus, *Unbroken Communion*, p. 10.

[29] Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, p. 90, citing Schillebeeckx, 'Christelijke Situatie: Grondbeginselen voor een Cultuurtheologie' [CS II], *Kultuurleven*, 12 (1945), 229-242 (p. 230).

[30] Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, p. 90.

[31] Richard Kearney, *Modern Movements in European Philosophy: Phenomenology, Critical Theory, Structuralism*, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 2.

relational approach to life with his philosophical theology. Diane Steele makes the connection directly, noting that, for Schillebeeckx, creation 'is ultimately about the relation between the Creator God [...] and God's creation.'[32] Kennedy, too, emphasizes the relational, saying that Schillebeeckx's creation-faith employs a '"relational ontology" or "ontology of relation"',[33] such that 'creatures exist *in relation* to divine being.'[34] In such an ontology, 'the relation *constitutes the creature*'.[35]

Schillebeeckx seems to prioritize 'the relation' of creation in just this way. In the striking text that begins the *GAU* material, he says that creation faith 'says something about God, humanity and world, in their relation to one another.'[36] Elsewhere, he avers that it is possible to theologize about everything, because 'there is nothing in history that can not and must not be related to God.' In fact, more strongly still: 'It is the task of theology to search for that relation between everything and God.'[37] The relation between God and the world, one that is not yet a relationship in creation, but which is fundamentally ordered to the *theologaal* relationship of faith, is spoken of by Schillebeeckx as follows:

> Creation is ultimately the meaning that God has wanted to give his divine life. He wanted, freely, to be God for others, and expected them, with their finite free will, which was open to other possibilities, to accept his offer. Otherwise I do not understand at all why he, God, resolved to take the final precarious decision of creating human beings.[38]

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[32] Diane Steele, *Creation and cross in the later soteriology of Edward Schillebeeckx* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2001; abstract in *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61 (2001), 4049-A; twenty-four page preview on UMI ProQuest Digital Dissertations <http://wwwlib.umi.com/dissertations/preview/9989756> [accessed 19 May 2005]), p. 7. (Manuscript obtained from the author).

[33] Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, p. 106.

[34] Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 89.

[35] Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, p. 363.

[36] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 116; parallel *GAU*, p. 91). Dutch text: 'iets zegt over God, mens en wereld, en wel in hun onderlinge verhouding.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 132; parallel *EV*, p. 91).

[37] Edward Schillebeeckx, 'God, the Living One', *New Blackfriars*, 62 (1981), 357-70 (p. 365), cited by Kennedy as an explanation of his ontology of relation in *Schillebeeckx*, p. 89.

[38] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 232.

It is the relational aspect of creation and salvation that appears to be emphasized in all these texts and a similar relational emphasis can be observed elsewhere in his philosophical theology. Speaking of the *humanum*, by which he means 'a true and good, happy and free human being [...,] a *livable humanity*',[39] he says that the 'definition of human existence is not a preexistent datum.'[40] In that case, what it means to be fully human can only be given as a set of '*anthropological constants*'.[41] He proposes seven of these, which are all relational in character: the relation of the human beings to 'Human Corporeity, Nature and Ecological Environment', to other human beings, 'to Social and Institutional Structures', to space and time; the 'Relation between Theory and Praxis', between the 'Religious and "Para-Religious" Consciousness' of human beings and, finally, between all six of these relations.[42]

It would seem, then, that Burrell and Schillebeeckx offer functionally complementary accounts of creation. Whilst Burrell emphasizes 'the distinction' and makes 'the relation' secondary and ancillary to it, Schillebeeckx emphasizes 'the relation', understanding 'the distinction' as complementing it and helping to explicate its character. This tendency for one author to stress what the other regards as secondary is typical of theologies that are 'functional complements'.[43] It can also be detected in other areas of the two authors' work.

Other functionally complementary themes

Three such themes will be explored, serving in part to offer support for the reading above. However, as this section progresses, a suspicion grows that this reading of Burrell and

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[39] Edward Schillebeeckx, 'Questions on Christian Salvation of and for Man', *LF*, pp. 109-26 (p. 110); parallel *II*, pp. 731-43 (p. 731). (The *LF* text re-edits and expands on that found in *II* in a way that is familiar from the creation parallels).

[40] Schillebeeckx, 'Questions', *LF*, p. 110; parallel *II*, p. 731.

[41] Schillebeeckx, 'Questions', *LF*, p. 113; parallel *II*, p. 733.

[42] See Subject Headings, Schillebeeckx, 'Questions', *LF*, pp. 116-21; parallel *II*, pp. 734-41.

[43] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 33.

Schillebeeckx is something of an over-simplification, one that needs to give way to an analysis at a deeper level.

The Directionality of Presence

Burrell speaks of presence in the context of his discussion of divine eternity, a formal feature of discourse about God.[44] He says that the limitlessness of the simple God does not imply chaos, but, rather, omnipresence.[45] In that case, God cannot be timeless, because whatever is eternal must be alive and active, whereas temporal becoming is simply irrelevant to timeless things.[46] He proposes that, rather than follow the lead of Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, who speak of '"atemporal duration" [...] at "the heart of the concept of eternity"',[47] the 'metaphor of *presence*' is a better way to mark the difference between timelessness and eternity.[48] This metaphor allows the philosophical theologian 'to discover *how* it is that a temporal event is *present* to the Eternal', something that Stump and Kretzmann's proposal fails to do.[49]

He recommends that 'we keep a firm grip on our tenses',[50] reflecting 'on the sense of presence evoked by the *now* of our continuing consciousness',[51] in order to speak of 'two *now's*: that of present time and that of presence to the Eternal.'[52] The latter, which he calls the 'eternal present',[53] 'never becomes the past', as the temporal present does.[54] He quotes Aquinas in

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[44] David B. Burrell, 'God's Eternity', *Faith and Philosophy*, 1 (1984), 389-406 (p. 390); *F&C*, p. 111.

[45] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 16.

[46] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 9.

[47] Burrell, 'God's Eternity', p. 394, citing Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, 'Eternity', Journal of Philosophy, 78 (1981), 429-58 (p. 444). (Cf. *F&C*, pp. 103 and 201, n. 18).

[48] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 9.

[49] Burrell, 'God's Eternity', p. 398.

[50] David B. Burrell, 'Divine Practical Knowing: How an Eternal God Acts in Time', in *Divine Action: Studies Inspired by the Philosophical Theology of Austin Farrer*, ed. by Brian L. Hebblethwaite and Edward Hugh Henderson (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990), pp. 93-102 (p. 98); cf. *F&F*, p. 12.

[51] Burrell, 'God's Eternity', p. 394; *F&F*, p. 9.

[52] Burrell, 'God's Eternity', p. 396.

[53] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 107.

[54] Burrell, 'Divine Practical Knowing', p. 97; *F&F*, p. 10.

support of his argument: 'events which are future with respect to their proximate causes, are nonetheless infallibly known to God, insofar as they come under divine perusal in their presentness (or: their presence to God)'.[55] He says this 'order of *presence to* must be respected' in language about God,[56] yet acknowledges that the image Aquinas uses to explicate it, of the strategically placed observer, is 'infelicitous' and 'misleading',[57] because it seems to place God at a distance from the world that God creates. Despite this, Burrell argues that 'the upshot of this image as well is to remind us of the presence of creator to creature',[58] that what God knows 'is present to God as coming into being by divine creative action'.[59]

These latter comments suggest another sense of presence, to which Burrell does refer, but which is very much secondary in his account. He says that 'it is God's effective presence which constitutes the present',[60] 'a presence that flows from God's gratuitous creative activity.'[61] This sense is stressed by Janet Soskice, who says that it is 'a God of presence and action, and not of stasis, who addresses himself to Moses from the bush – a God who has acted, acts and will act.'[62]

W. Norris Clarke similarly states that the fullness of being is suggested by '*active presence*, that which *presents* itself positively to others through some mode of action.'[63] It is this sense of presence that is accentuated by Schillebeeckx.

Borgman observes that Schillebeeckx is a typical Dominican in this regard, having an attitude to life that stresses 'the comprehensiveness of the gracious presence of God which

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[55] Burrell, 'Divine Practical Knowing', p. 100, citing Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, 14, 13; cf. *KUG*, p. 101; *F&F*, p. 55.

[56] Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 69-70, pp. 100-1; *F&F*, p. 55.

[57] See Burrell, *F&F*, pp. 58 and 59 (also 'Divine Practical Knowing', p. 99) respectively.

[58] Burrell, 'Divine Practical Knowing', p. 99.

[59] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 102; cf. *F&F*, p. 54.

[60] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 127.

[61] Burrell and Malits, p. 60.

[62] Janet Martin Soskice, 'The Gift of the Name: Moses and the Burning Bush', *Gregorianum*, 79 (1998), 231-246 (p. 242).

[63] W. Norris Clarke, 'Action as the Self-Revelation of Being: A Central Theme in the Thought of St. Thomas', in *History of Philosophy in the Making*, ed. by Linus J. Thro (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), pp. 63-80 (p. 65), cited in Burrell, *F&C*, p. 32.

precedes all human efforts and supports them.'[64] Schillebeeckx is willing to admit that there is an aspect of the experience of being human, based on 'the distinction', in which the boundary between the world and God is experienced as an absolute gulf:[65] 'Finitude or contingency mean that mankind and the world in and of themselves hang in a vacuum above absolute nothingness.'[66] However, the other side of the coin of creation-faith – based on 'the relation' – is 'that the angst of this hanging above absolute nothingness has, at the same time, a counter-weight in the absolute presence of God in and with the finite.'[67] This presence is absolute in the sense that it is guaranteed, not only in the positive way suggested above, but in everything that finitude brings along with it:[68] 'But what is a very oppressive burden in itself means at the same time that God is near and with us, even *in* our failure, our suffering, our death, just as much as he is in and near all our positive life-experiences and experiences of meaning.'[69]

Thus, the despair that finitude can provoke is transformed by God's absolute presence, which 'correctly stimulates towards constantly renewed hope. For He, the Creator, is the creator of the whole of the "saeculum", such that there are no times, no ages, no hours, even, in which

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[64] Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, p. 118.

[65] Cf. Kierkegaard, p. 122.

[66] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 114). Dutch text: 'Eindigheid of contingentie betekend dat de mens en de wereld in en uit zichzelf in een vacuüm, boven het absolute niets hangen.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 130). The parallel text varies slightly, missing out the last phrase and describing the vacuum itself as absolute (Schillebeeckx *EV*, p. 93; *GAU*, p. 93). Jean-Paul Sartre uses Kierkegaard's idea of the gulf, transferring his anxiety in the face of sin to an atheistic situation, compatible with Heidegger's anguish in the face of nothingness (see Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. by Hazel E. Barnes (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 53).

[67] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 114; parallel *GAU*, p. 93) Dutch text: 'dat de benauwenis van dit hangen boven het absolute niets tegelijkertijd de absolute presentie van God in en bij het eindige tot tegenwicht heeft.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 130; exact parallel *EV*, p. 93) Schillebeeckx uses the word *keerzijde* to speak of this other side of creation-faith, a term often used to indicate the reverse of a coin or medal. The use of 'angst' in this translation is intended to echo the existential angst spoken of by Kierkegaard and Sartre. (On despair and anxiety, see Kierkegaard, pp. 25-26; cf. the clustering of abandonment, despair and anguish in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, trans. with an introduction by Philip Mairet (London: Methuen, 1948), pp. 32-39). Whilst Schillebeeckx admits that this angst can be experienced as a heavy weight, as in Kierkeggard and Sartre, the absolute presence of God is a counter-weight that can restore balance to human life.

[68] See Schillebeeckx, *EV*, p. 111: 'Hij in al wat die eindigheid concreet met zich ken meebrengen "bij ons" is' (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 134; parallels *GAU*, p. 110; 'I Believe', p. 25).

[69] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 115; parallel *GAU*, p. 94). Dutch text: 'Maar deze op zichzelf erg benauwende last betekent tegelijkertijd dat God bij en met ons is, ook *in* ons valen, ook *in* ons lijden, ook *in* ons dood, evengoed als in en bij onze positieve belevenissen en zinservaringen.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 131; parallel *EV*, p. 94, in which the last word is *zinervaringen*).

He has not borne witness to Himself.'[70] Schillebeeckx is able to describe finite beings as 'a blend of solitude and presence'[71] – not of presence and absence, because the creature is never alone. This is because God's absolute presence is needed for the creature's very existence; if God left a creature alone even for a millisecond, it would cease to exist. Schillebeeckx calls this 'the insight of faith that finitude is not left in its solitude but is supported by the absolute presence of the creator God.'[72]

This emphasis on living 'within' two situations which balance one another – that of finitude and that of the absolute presence of God – is typical of Schillebeeckx.[73] His use of the term 'within' is one of the hallmarks of his situational thinking,[74] offering a distinctive account of the human condition to the transcendental one given by Burrell. It is also present in his earlier works, when he stresses that 'the believer's efforts are not made in isolation';[75] that 'in the personal loneliness in which we exercise our freedom, we are securely held in the embrace of God';[76] and that even the fact that 'a particular undertaking is a fiasco cannot separate us from the living God.'[77]

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[70] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 119; parallel *GAU*, p. 98). Dutch text: 'stimuleert juist tot telkens vernieuwde hoop. Hij, de Schepper, is immers de schepper van heel het "saeculum", zodat er geen tijden, geen eeuwen maar ook geen uren zijn waaring Hij zich onbetuigd laat.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 136; exact parallel *EV*, p. 99).

[71] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 114; exact parallel *GAU*, p. 93). Dutch text: 'Eindige wizens zijn een mengsel van eenzaamheid en presentie' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 130; exact parallel *EV*, p. 93).

[72] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 121-22; parallels *GAU*, p. 101; *III*, p. 233). Dutch text: 'het geloofsinzicht dat de eindigheid niet in haar eenzaamheid wordt gelaten maar gedragen wordt door de absolute aanwezigheid van de scheppende God.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 138; exact parallel *EV*, p. 102; parallel *Mensen*, p. 251).

[73] See Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 118; parallels *GAU*, p. 96; *III*, p. 231 for a clear statement of the two.

[74] See the way that Schillebeeckx speaks of the shaping of the world (*IR*, p. 117; parallels *GAU*, p. 95; *III*, pp. 230-31), the search for the *humanum* ('The Role of History', p. 319) and the realization and articulation of authentic Christianity (*I*, pp. 575-76).

[75] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 14.

[76] Ibid., p. 233.

[77] Ibid., p. 232.

Hope and Optimism

Burrell marks a distinction and expresses a preference between optimism and hope, though he admits that this far from easy to do.[78] He asserts that what makes the sin of Adam and Eve 'originative is not the transgression as such, but their subsequent attempt at cover-up',[79] so denying 'that there is "something wrong"' leaves its mark.[80] It is this which distinguishes hope from optimism, because an assessment of the human situation in which action takes place based on an awareness of original sin 'makes it quite difficult to suspect that "I could do any better."' Any initiative attempted in denial of original sin and of 'the gracious action of God', must make precisely this assertion and that results in 'what we call optimism, or unfounded hope!'[81] Hope, in contrast to optimism, is founded on the gracious action of God in the world, as a result of which the believer can do better, but only because of God's help.

For Schillebeeckx, however, optimism, founded on the absolute presence of the Creator God, is the basis of Christian hope. His optimism is voiced in what has been called his critical period,[82] so it seems reasonable to call it critical optimism,[83] to characterize it as one of the elements of his critical creation-faith. It is neither unfounded, as Burrell avers, nor naïve, as he implies, in his critique. Schillebeeckx's optimistic approach can be detected in his description of creation as 'good news'[84] and when he says that God's honour and glory lie in human

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[78] Burrell and Malits, p. 23.

[79] Ibid., p. 22.

[80] Ibid., p. 27.

[81] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[82] See Vincent Jude Miller, *Tradition and Experience in Edward Schillebeeckx's Theology of Revelation* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1997; abstract in *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 58 (1997), 1775-A; twenty-four page preview on UMI ProQuest Digital Dissertations <http://wwwlib.umi.com/dissertations/preview/9732481> [accessed 19 May 2005]), pp. 13-14; cf. Portier, 'Interpretation and Method', *PRG*, pp. 30-34.

[83] Cf. the 'practical optimism' spoken of by Max More, 'Principles of Extropy: Version 3.11', <http://www.extropy.org/principles.htm> [accessed 7 July 2006], paras. 23 to 29 (of 59), which he also calls 'critical optimism' (para. 28) and 'dynamic optimism' (Max More, 'Dynamic Optimism: An Extropian Cognitive-Emotional Virtue' (1998) <http://www.maxmore.com/optimism.htm> [accessed 7 July 2006]).

[84] In addition to the text from Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 116; parallel *GAU*, p. 91 cited in Chapter Two, cf. *IR*, p. 116; parallels *GAU*, p. 95; *III*, p. 230.

happiness.[85] He expresses this more strongly still elsewhere: 'Enjoying and loving what is worldly in this world, what is human in man and woman, is to enjoy and love what is godly in God.'[86] The foundation for this 'optimistic faith in creation'[87] is, ultimately, the nature of God as 'Pure Positivity'.[88] This allows him to distinguish his own optimism from an unbridled confidence in technology, consumerism and economics[89] and also from other optimistic views, based on patterns of explanation, which see change as inevitable.[90]

Apophatic and Kataphatic Aspects

The interplay between the positive and negative elements of Burrell's philosophical theology of creation aligns with the way in which he uses the theoretical and the practical to define how it operates. He seeks to delineate rules for discourse *in divinis* which show, in the way that they are used, that language is an inadequate tool for the enquiry, yet one that 'we cannot help but employ.'[91] This also echoes Burrell's understanding of Lonergan, who, he says, provides a way of doing theology rather than a system, such that the one who follows after him goes on 'to do what he is doing [...] to do his thing and become what he is.'[92] Burrell's stressing of 'the distinction' correlates with his emphasis on negativity in this regard, in that, although 'the distinction' can be enunciated clearly, the resulting talk of God affords believers merely 'some notion' of the God to whom they refer.[93] As a result, the grammar of 'God' is resolutely

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[85] See Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 130; *GAU*, p. 100.

[86] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 115; parallel *GAU*, p. 94). Dutch text: Geneitend van en liefhebbend wat er wereldlijk is in de wereld, wat er menselijk is in de mens, is genieten van en liefhebben wat er goddelijk is aan God.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 131; exact parallel *EV*, p. 94).

[87] Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 8.

[88] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 120; *GAU*, p. 99; 'The Role of History', p. 317.

[89] See Schillebeeckx, *III*, pp. 239-40; 'The Role of History', p. 316; Edward Schillebeeckx, 'You Cannot Arbitrarily make Something of the Gospel!', trans. by David Smith, *Concilium*, 170 (1983), 15-19 (p. 16).

[90] See Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, pp. 97-98.

[91] Burrell, *APL*, p. x; cf. *AGA*, pp. 10, 20; *FWT*, p. 20.

[92] David B. Burrell, 'Method and Sensibility: Novak's Debt to Lonergan', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 40 (1972), 349-367 (p. 358).

[93] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 2; *APL*, p. 164; *AGA*, pp. 56, 69; *F&F*, pp. 10, 31-32.

negative, for language can only mislead.[94] If, however, the assertions of philosophical grammar are restricted, properly, to displaying the one thing that it is possible to know about God – his transcendence [95] – its 'austere'[96] and 'severely formal'[97] character show its wisdom, such that the inconceivable God can somehow be spoken of.[98] This extremely negative emphasis is voiced by Burrell as 'the radical unknowing that must characterise philosophical theology'[99] as 'Aquinas' apophatic intent'[100] and 'properly agnostic philosophical theology'.[101]

What grounds this negativity is not theory, but performance, allowing language to do what it can, analogically.[102] Thus, the sections of the *Summa Theologiae* dealing with *actus* and its consequences complete and complement the grammar of divinity, not by supplying a theory that underpins them, but by displaying how to use this grammar of 'God'.[103] Burrell speaks of this as using different 'levels of discourse',[104] such that grammar can be used in the service of religious affirmation.[105] This displays another Lonerganian influence, with Burrell speaking of Aquinas's use of *actus* as 'the insight animating his grammar of "God"'[106] and as 'the transcendent expression',[107] saying that 'the real conversion to which Aquinas is inviting us' is that which results in understanding '*esse* as act',[108] all of which are key concepts in Lonergan. He makes the connection with regard to action explicitly in the way that he distinguishes Lonergan from Rahner, saying that the latter's work is markedly refracted through Kant and 'the

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[94] Burrell, *FWT*, pp. 53-54.
[95] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 86.
[96] Burrell, *AGA*, pp. 13, 71, 89; *KUG*, p. 38.
[97] Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 31-32.
[98] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 89; *KUG*, pp. 2-3.
[99] Burrell, *FWT*, p. 6.
[100] Burrell, *AGA*, pp. 43, 48.
[101] Ibid., p. 142.
[102] Burrell, *AGA*, pp. 57-58.
[103] Ibid., pp. xii, 26-27.
[104] Ibid., pp. 81-83.
[105] Ibid., pp. 87-89.
[106] Ibid., p. 116.
[107] Ibid., p. 174.
[108] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 45.

ensuing array of German philosophers who preferred *subjectivity* to subjects, and transcendental conditions of possibility to descriptions of actions.'[109] Although Burrell is content to admit that Lonergan bids for the transcendental class, he seeks a practical foundation, 'in the experience each of us has of understanding something to be the case', the 'concrete psychological fact' of understanding.[110]

Schillebeeckx opposes the agnostic approach to philosophical theology that he finds in Joseph Maréchal.[111] He says that there must be more than a conceptual aspect in knowledge of God: 'Simply notional knowledge seemed to Aquinas to lead only to agnosticism'[112] and, unlike Burrell, Schillebeeckx reads Aquinas as not being content to rest there. Contrary to Maréchal, who postulates a non-noetic dynamism of the human spirit as the complement to this conceptual agnosticism,[113] Schillebeeckx insists that, although the dynamic element, experience, is non-conceptual, it is, nevertheless, noetic.[114] If God were not knowable in some way, the denial that human concepts grasp God would fall onto one of the horns of the Kantian dilemma, because they would then be blind.[115] For Schillebeeckx, following Dominic De Petter,[116] God's being is

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[109] David Burrell, '*Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* by Karl Rahner', *Theology Today*, 36 (1979), 425-430 (p. 426).

[110] Ibid., pp. 429-30.

[111] Maréchal and Lonergan are often linked, as are Maréchal and Rahner (see, for example, Neil Ormerod, *Introducing Contemporary Theologies: The What and the Who of Theology Today* (Newtown, Australia: Dwyer, 1990); E.L. Mascall, *The Openness of Being: Natural Theology Today* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971) and Gerald A. M^{c}Cool, 'The Philosophical Theology of Rahner and Lonergan', in *God Knowable and Unknowable*, ed. by Robert J. Roth (New York: Fordham University Press, 1975), pp. 123-157). However, even though Lonergan acknowledges the influence of Maréchal's thinking on him, this influence was not direct. (Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1957), p. xxii; also see Frederick E. Crowe, *Lonergan*, (London: Chapman, 1992), pp. 39-40). Lonergan's project takes him in a distinguishable direction from that of Rahner and other so-called Maréchalians, so it will not do to locate Lonergan, 'and so conveniently dispose of him, as another follower in the school of Maréchal.' (Frederick E. Crowe, *The Lonergan Enterprise* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1980), p. 54; cf. Michael Vertin, 'Maréchal, Lonergan and the Phenomenology of Knowing', in *Creativity and Method: Essays in Honour of Bernard Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. by Matthew L. Lamb (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1981), pp. 411-422).

[112] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 173.

[113] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, pp. 161, 17-18; cf. M^{c}Cool, p. 125.

[114] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 161; cf. *G&M*, p. 169 for an explicit reference to experience.

[115] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 167.

[116] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, pp. 18-22; *G&M*, pp. 167-69. Cf. Kennedy, 'Continuity Underlying Discontinuity', pp. 268-69; Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, pp. 40-42.

to be sought in the very direction in which the concepts point, such that, although human knowledge cannot grasp God, it may, nevertheless, accurately be said to reach out for God in and through the concepts it uses.[117]

This expression of the kataphatic in and through the apophatic is characteristic of his philosophical theology. Kennedy stresses the apophatic aspect of Schillebeeckx's critical creation-faith, saying that its critical force 'lies in its criticism of overly pessimistic and optimistic conceptions of human history and society.'[118] This is true, but on the other hand, it also has 'a critical and productive force',[119] not simply opposing, but proposing as well.[120] It is not just the case that, 'by allowing people fully to accept the worth of finitude, [creation-faith] frees them for their own tasks in the world.'[121] It also indicates a direction for that action, so that it is guided towards its proper and desired end – the fullness of humanity and the *theologaal* relationship with God.

Moving Towards Dialectic

As has become apparent as this section has progressed, the interplay between the elements of the philosophical theologies of Burrell and Schillebeeckx seems somewhat more complex than the primary and secondary analysis offered by functional complementarity allows. Both authors seek to give expression to both sides – most clearly in the apophatic and kataphatic debate – trying to strike a balance between them. Perhaps, then, it is not that the two authors each understand one opposing term as prior in the correlation between them, but that they view that very correlation

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[117] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, pp. 171, 175; *G&M*, p. 169. He makes a very similar point in his Prologue to *PRG* (*PRG*, pp. xi-xii). Cf. his use of the phrase 'dark light' from the Flemish mystics Hadewych and Ruusbroec to describe this interaction, in *PRG*, p. xv.

[118] Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 89.

[119] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 119; parallel *GAU*, p. 98. Cf. *IR*, p. 122; parallels *GAU*, p. 102; *III*, p. 233.

[120] See, for example, Schillebeeckx's comment about 'the critical force of creation faith, which at the same time therefore represents salvation for man and the world and a judgment upon them.' (Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 94; cf. *IR*, p. 115).

[121] Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, pp. 89-90.

differently. The rest of the chapter will investigate this possibility, using a term that is found in both authors' work – dialectic.

The Dialectics of 'The Distinction' and 'The Relation'

One problem with the functional complementarity analysis above is registered by Burrell, who observes that the world and God 'cannot be correlatives if creating is to be the gracious gift of God',[122] because to do so elides 'the distinction', thinking of God as a thing. If there is to be a correlation involved in the philosophical theology of creation, it must be a correlation of 'the distinction' and 'the relation'. Similarly, Schillebeeckx says that the norm of orthodoxy is not a particular articulation of faith which must be maintained for ever, but, rather, the relation between the message of faith and its context. It is in maintaining this relation that the identity of faith is assured across the centuries. Continuity of meaning 'is not a matter of "corresponding terms but corresponding relation of terms"'.[123]

Dialectic is a widely used tool in philosophy and theology, traceable to certain key figures in both disciplines. Thompson refers to 'a Hegelian or Marxist dialectic of historical opposition and overcoming, and a Barthian dialectic of transcendent otherness opposed by human self-delusion and disobedience.'[124] There is a common shape to dialectic in these approaches: an opposition develops which is then overcome in order to bring unity. Thus, Barth's '"Critical negation" has a dialectical character; which means that it includes in itself an assertion and its reversal, which tend to ultimate unity.'[125]

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[122] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 102.

[123] Marguerite Thabit Abdul-Masih, *Hans Frei and Edward Schillebeeckx: A Conversation on Method and Christology* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2001), p. 92, citing Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 313.

[124] Thompson, *Language of Dissent*, pp. 12-13.

[125] Henri Bouillard, 'Dialectical Theology', in *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. by Karl Rahner (London: Burns & Oates, 1975), pp. 344-47 (p. 345).

Lonergan uses dialectic as the fourth of eight 'functional specialties' in his theological method. Although it is diversely used, 'the sense we intend is simple enough. Dialectic has to do with the concrete, the dynamic, and the contradictory.'[126] It succeeds History, which shows that, on any particular issue, there have been various, sometimes conflicting, viewpoints over the course of time. Dialectic takes that study one step further, 'beyond the fact to the reasons for conflict.'[127] In doing so, it considers the horizons of thought within which the viewpoints arose, which 'may be complementary, related genetically as successive stages in a single process of development, or opposed dialectically.'[128] In this 'objectification of horizon',[129] the oppositions revealed are then 'sublated'. At first, he uses this term in Hegel's sense, that the lower horizons are 'retained, preserved, yet transcended and completed' by the higher.[130] In *Method*, he finds Rahner more conducive, since his sublation does not involve removing the opposition in the lower horizons:

> what sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis, yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary, needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context.[131]

Lonergan's dialectic can be characterized as polar, since the lower horizons are not only not compatible, but are opposed to each other. In themselves they pull apart, but dialectic transforms this tension into a productive one, which, whilst not nullifying or removing it, changes its character into something that generates insight.

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[126] Lonergan, *Method*, p. 129.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Mark D. Morelli and Elizabeth A. Morelli, Editorial Introduction to the relevant section of *The Lonergan Reader*, ed. by Mark D. Morelli and Elizabeth A. Morelli, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 518.

[129] Lonergan, *Method*, p. 250.

[130] B.F. Lonergan, 'The Subject', in *Second Collection*, pp. 69-86 (p. 80). Lonergan is careful to note that he omits 'the Hegelian view that the higher reconciles a contradiction in the lower.' (Ibid.).

[131] Lonergan, *Method*, p. 241, referring in n. 3 to Karl Rahner's *Hörer des Wortes*.

Although Burrell does not cite Lonergan directly with regard to dialectic, a number of its features can be seen to echo him. In Burrell's early study of Augustine, he says that it is helpful to identify the wide variety of schemes used to analyse his *Confessions*, in a way that calls to mind Lonergan's History. He then suggests asking why these schemes are used, calling his proposed analysis '"dialectical" in the straightforward sense of positioning the issues.'[132] He notes that closer attention to language can help avoid the 'temptation to explain understanding on the model of seeing',[133] and that theologizing this way involves dialectic.[134] He describes Aquinas's grammatical attempt to express 'God's eternal activity in relation to our temporal actions' as a 'dialectical strategy'.[135] He portrays his twin-foci proposal for creation and redemption as one involving 'dialectical tension' and 'tension and rapport'.[136] Finally, he cites with approval John McDade's suggestion that creation and salvation act 'as two poles' within the Christian tradition, saying that it articulates what he is proposing with his dual focus model.[137]

The term 'correlation' has been used during this chapter to portray Burrell's philosophical theology and, according to David Tracy, describes a way of doing theology that is dialectical.[138] He says that correlational theology is polar, progressing by moving back and forth between the poles in order to balance them against each other.[139] He describes himself and Burrell as hermeneutical correlational theologians, following and correcting Lonergan.[140] By doing both, they aim to address a problem that faced earlier exponents of correlational theology

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[132] Burrell, *ERU*, p. 12; cf. *F&C*, p. 87; *FWT*, pp. 25, 32-33.

[133] Burrell, *APL*, p. 122. This theme is very important for Lonergan: see *Method*, p. 238.

[134] Burrell, *APL*, p. 123.

[135] Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 101 and 200, n. 12 respectively.

[136] See Burrell and Malits, p. 19 (and also pp. 59-60) and Burrell, *F&F*, p. 234 respectively.

[137] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 236, citing John McDade, 'Creation and Salvation: Green Faith and Christian Themes', *The Month*, 23 (1990), pp. 433-41 (p. 436).

[138] David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (London: SCM Press, 1981), p. 413.

[139] David Tracy, 'The Uneasy Alliance Reconceived: Catholic Theological Method, Modernity and Postmodernity', *Theological Studies*, 50 (1989), 548-570 (pp. 550 n. 6 and 562, n. 56).

[140] David Tracy, 'Lindbeck's New Program for Theology: A Reflection', *The Thomist*, 49 (1985), 460-472 (pp. 462-63, 468).

(including Paul Tillich and Rahner), which Tracy calls 'the return of the same'.[141] In a hermeneutically sensitive correlational theology, dialectics of distinction and relation seem to play an important role.[142]

Burrell's Dialectic

Burrell observes that there is a tendency, in contemporary discourse about God and the world, to 'elide the distinction so as to be able to conceptualise the relation more "adequately"'.[143] The opposition that his position presupposes between the *relata* is worth bearing in mind as Burrell presents his alternative to it. He speaks of 'our relation to this One who speaks the universe' as the 'crucial corollary of the "distinction"' in way that that suggests a correlational link between them.[144] In addition, some of the evidence presented in support of the priority of 'the distinction' earlier may actually be intended to be at the service of a dialectical correlation: his insistence that 'the relation' 'can only be conceived properly if one keeps "the distinction" to the fore'[145] and that his philosophical theology uses 'distinct yet related senses'[146] of action in its analogical propensity could be expressing the need for balance rather than priority. When he stresses that non-duality mediates between monism and dualism[147] and that, in it, the distinction between the world and God 'does not amount to a separation'[148] he could, nevertheless, mean to imply that

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[141] Tracy, 'The Uneasy Alliance Reconceived', p. 562. Tracy says that this is something that correlational theology has become aware of in its critique of Hans Georg Gadamer as having 'too sanguine a notion of the complementarity of all differences.' (Tracy, 'The Uneasy Alliance Reconceived', pp. 561-62). Cf. David Tracy, 'Hermeneutical Reflections in the New Paradigm' in *Paradigm Change in Theology: A Symposium for the Future*, ed. by Hans Küng and David Tracy (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), pp. 34-62 (p. 43) and David Tracy, 'Some Concluding Reflections on the Conference: Unity Amidst Diversity and Conflict?', in *Paradigm Change in Theology*, pp. 461-471 (p. 467).

[142] Tracy, 'The Uneasy Alliance Reconceived', pp 562-63.

[143] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 71.

[144] Burrell, *F&F*, p. xx.

[145] Burrell, *F&C*, p.165.

[146] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 97; cf. *AGA*, pp. 45, 129.

[147] Burrell and Malits, p. 75.

[148] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 120.

'the relation' inwardly tends towards monism and 'the distinction' towards dualism and that it is only by dialectically correlating the two that these tendencies can be transcended and sublated.[149]

A dialectical structure also expresses his account of *actus* in Aquinas better, along Lonergonian lines of conscious intentionality. He says that Aquinas models divine activity 'on the intellectual activity of knowing and loving with which we are intimately aquainted'[150] and that it is 'the desire to understand that characterises human intelligence.'[151] He connects the faculties of intellect and will, so as to avoid both voluntarism and idealism, saying that all 'human action is intention through and through.'[152] The desire to understand does not stop at knowledge, but also involves what Lonergan terms 'a judgement of value [which] reflects a step beyond mere understanding',[153] in an 'intelligible procession from intellect to will'.[154] In a sense, it appears that will is more transcendent than intellect, but Burrell does not let this impression last long. He says that it is true that 'willing differs from understanding, [...] as an activity, however, willing cannot be understood independently of understanding.'[155]

The transcendent expression involved is *actus*: 'Intentional activity seems able to reconcile opposites.' As a result, for Aquinas, contemplation is the best analogy for divine activity: not only 'can [it] free us from space and time; it can also resolve impasses by allowing hitherto incompatible horizons to merge.'[156] This dialectical solution maintains the tension between intellect and will, but allows them to work together in the act of understanding brought to its completion in the act of judgment. The thinkers of the century following Aquinas were not

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[149] A similar account of theologies of creation as teetering 'on a thin line between monism and dualism', with each of them 'leaning towards one of these poles' is offered by Langdon Gilkey ('Creation, Being and Nonbeing', *G&C*, p. 229).

[150] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 117.

[151] Ibid., p. 120.

[152] Ibid., p. 122.

[153] Ibid., p. 158.

[154] Ibid., citing Bernard J. Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. by David B. Burrell (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968), p. 202.

[155] Ibid., p. 159.

[156] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 174.

able to grasp the significance of this transcendent expression, so the debate fell back into that between intellectualism and voluntarism which had raged in Muslim thought before Aquinas had proffered his solution.[157]

Similar themes can be traced in Maimonides, who pits the view of 'the philosopher' on creation against what 'he is willing to call (for dialectical purposes) "the opinion of all who believe in the law of Moses"'.[158] The tension generated can be calmed by an understanding of creation involving practical knowing, which Maimonides proposed and Aquinas developed. Maimonides' 'dialectical work' helped Aquinas to realize that there was an alternative to 'a formal opposition between theological and philosophical enquiry', which was to 'expand their categories in the direction indicated by revelation to make them over into useful intellectual tools for probing such transcendent reaches.'[159] The conversion brought about by responding to revelation transcends the tension, but not so as to remove it.[160] This conversion is better understood as a sublation of that tension, transforming philosophy and theology from contradictory opposites to correlational partners.

Burrell presents the task facing the philosophical theology of creation as one that involves avoiding both Scylla and Charybdis. On the one hand lies the hazard of 'western attempts to separate creatures from the Creator' and, on the other, of 'some "eastern" attempts to collapse the two.' The dominant fear in the west has been of pantheism, but, in response, the tendency has been 'to parse the *distinction* as *separation*', falling victim to dualism.[161] This inbuilt tendency of the two terms is also displayed in his delineation of the correlative tradition

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[157] Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 74, 107-8.

[158] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 28, citing Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* 2.13. 'The philosopher' here is Aristotle, but Burrell observes that Maimonides has a tendency to conflate Aristotle's opinions with those of Ibn Sina, his source.

[159] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 37.

[160] Conversion is another key notion in Lonergan, involved in the transcending of horizons that takes place with an act of insight (Rende, pp. 90-95). A conversion, whilst punctiliar in nature, usually needs reflection upon it to be fully incorporated into a person's conscious intentionality (Rende, p. 156).

[161] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 77.

of mysticism within Christianity, 'which prefers pantheistic language for describing the indescribable "relation between" God and creatures.'[162]

Using the expression 'on the one hand ... on the other hand' to indicate the need for balance is a common phenomenon. Burrell says that 'distinguishing between two things easily turns them into two separate objects. [...] On the other hand, to articulate the unique relatedness of that One to whatever exists as the "nonduality" of God and the universe appears to annihilate the all-important "distinction."'[163] In Islamic thought, this contradiction forces an either/or choice: those Muslim thinkers who privilege 'the relation' (who are mainly mystically orientated) 'might easily be thought to confuse creature with creator, [...] On the other side, those concerned to secure the distinction between creator and creatures would inevitably seem to render the God of the Qur'an remote.'[164] Polar dialectic's use of 'on the one hand [...] on the other hand' suggests an image of the two hands held out flat in front of the user of the expression, like the scales of a balance. Balance is hard to maintain, so each time a statement is placed 'on the one hand', one must immediately be placed 'on the other hand.'

This pattern can also be found in Williams's account of the importance of participation and deification in Aquinas. She uses what could be called a polar dialectic, 'insisting on the one hand on a genuine participation in divine nature, but, on the other hand, on a distinction between modes of possession of that nature'.[165] As a result, she says:

> Aquinas is always walking a fine line between the desire to draw very firm distinctions between Creator and creature and the desire, which pulls in the opposite direction, to affirm the reality of interaction between these two ontologically distinct realms. His concern [is] to hold these two poles together in creative tension.[166]

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[162] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 76.
[163] Burrell and Malits, p. 68.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Williams, 'Deification', pp. 224-25.
[166] Williams, *The Ground of Union*, p. 81.

In this creative tension, the 'doctrine of deification engages in a never-ending shuttle between these poles',[167] attempting to hold 'the distinction' and 'the relation' in balance. Similarly, Burrell, in his review of Rudi te Velde's *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas*, 'assays Aquinas's use of participation [...] with an eye on the role this philosophical tool plays in articulating the relation of creator to creatures.' He also refers to 'the tension between substance and participation',[168] suggesting that these two pull in opposite directions because they correspond to 'the distinction' and 'the relation' respectively.

The dialectical strategy proposed by Burrell offers a way forward in the debate about what is prior in philosophical theology. In his articulation of creation, what comes first, ultimately, is neither 'the distinction' nor 'the relation', but the difference between them, a difference that can, nevertheless, be transcended and sublated by the polar dialectic that he employs. Such a polar dialectic transforms the tension between the two concepts from destructive (which is all it can be before the dialectical transcendence takes place) to productive, resulting in a balance that leads to mutual illumination.

Burrell speaks in a similar fashion of what could be termed the polar dialectic of creation and salvation in his twin-foci proposal for Christian theology. He says that what is interesting about this proposal 'is the energy generated between these two centers', which he describes as 'a creative tension.'[169] He says that even the image of a balance seems somewhat static, preferring to speak of 'a more dramatic, not to say dialectical, field of force',[170] in which 'we can understand one of these poles, say, creation, only by reference to the other, and vice-versa.'[171]

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[167] Williams, 'Deification', p. 221.

[168] David B. Burrell, '*Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* by Rudi A. te Velde', *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 37, (1997), 101-04 (p. 101).

[169] Burrell and Malits, p. 4.

[170] Ibid., p. 91.

[171] Ibid., p. 92.

Schillebeeckx's Dialectic

Schillebeeckx is a thinker for whom God is revealed in human experience 'in a dialectical, rather than a direct fashion', in contrast to Rahner, who argues that God is directly present.[172] His position, according to Abdul-Masih, involves 'a dialectical unity of an encounter with reality (i.e., God), an interpretative framework (i.e., faith) and language' which expresses the interaction between the 'different aspects of the revelatory experience that are held in tension.'[173] This tension-filled description is challenged by Thompson, who says that the fundamental pattern of Schillebeeckx's thinking is expressed in 'the phrase "nonantithetical and dialectical relationship"'.[174] He explains what he means in terms that sound very much in tune with Tanner's recommendation of non-contrastive language about God and the world: Firstly, '"Dialectical relationship" refers to the nondualistic nature of his thought.'[175] Nonantithetical, a rider he credits to Schreiter,[176] distinguishes Schillebeeckx's dialectic from Hegelian, Marxist and Barthian modes: 'In Schillebeeckx's dialectical thinking, unity is not created by the overcoming of some fundamental opposition but by the reestablishment of the irreducible and cooperative relationships which make up all of reality'.[177]

Thompson consistently uses the term relationships as he elucidates his proposal,[178] rendering it vulnerable to the criticism presented in Chapter One that he does not adequately distinguish between relations and relationships in his account of relationality. In addition, his description is given purely in negative terms: Schillebeeckx's dialectic is nonantithetical and nondualistic. There are two problems with this, one of which also reveals a problem with Tanner's recommendation: expressing a proposal in purely negative terms sets it in opposition to

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[172] Hilkert, 'Experience and Revelation', *PRG*, p. 60.
[173] Abdul-Masih, p. 60.
[174] Thompson, p. 12 *et passim*.
[175] Ibid., p. 12.
[176] Ibid., p.166, n. 7.
[177] Ibid., p. 13.
[178] See especially Thompson, pp. 13-22.

other ways of using language, making the non-contrastive proposal polar – and therefore, to at least some extent contrastive. Secondly, Thompson's expression does not sufficiently stress the critical and productive (and therefore positive) force present in Schillebeeckx's creation-faith.

Perhaps, then, examining the case for understanding Schillebeeckx as a correlational theologian might hold more promise. Schillebeeckx is often placed alongside Hans Küng as a correlation theologian,[179] also being associated with Rahner and Longergan in this regard,[180] as well as more recent hermeneutical correlational theologians, such as Tracy.[181] Tracy considers Schillebeeckx to be doing what he and Burrell are doing and says that Schillebeeckx's phrase, '*mutually critical correlations*, is a useful one for the new paradigm'[182] of hermeneutical correlational theology. Abdul-Masih, likewise, says that Schillebeeckx makes use of the insights of other disciplines in theology, and that the 'relationship is correlative.'[183] 'In summary,' she states, 'the relationship between theology and other disciplines in Schillebeeckx's method is correlative, that is, they exert a critical influence on each other. This relationship is parallel to Schillebeeckx's method of critical correlation between situation and tradition.'[184]

Baum also contends that Schillebeeckx fits into the general pattern of correlational theology, seeking to express the double fidelity expected of the theologian – 'to the gospel of

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[179] See Dennis Rochford, 'The Theological Hermeneutics of Edward Schillebeeckx', *Theological Studies*, 63 (2002), 251-267 (pp. 266-67); Gregory Baum, 'Response to Edward Schillebeeckx and Jürgen Moltmann', trans. by Margaret Kohl, in *Paradigm Change in Theology*, pp. 340-345 (p. 341). David Ford groups Schillebeeckx with Rudolf Bultmann, Tillich and Küng under the heading 'Existentialism and Correlation' in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by David F. Ford, 2 vols, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), I, p. 107. Although in the second edition, he removes Schillebeeckx and Küng from that grouping, he still notes that their theologies 'display many features of the same type'. (*The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century,* ed. by David F. Ford, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 67). Cf. Ford's Introduction, printed in both editions, p. 3.

[180] Tracy, 'The Uneasy Alliance Reconceived', p. 553.

[181] Tracy says that Schillebeeckx's more recent work in hermeneutics and critical theory is an advance on his earlier articulations. (Tracy, 'Lindbeck's New Program for Theology', p. 464).

[182] Tracy, 'Hermeneutical Reflections in the New Paradigm', p. 59. Cf. 'Some Concluding Reflections', p. 462.

[183] Abdul-Masih, p. 140.

[184] Ibid., p. 142.

Jesus Christ and to contemporary, critical self-understanding.'[185] In this task, Schillebeeckx 'recognises the two poles and their mutual, critical interrelation.'[186] But is Schillebeeckx a polar thinker, as Baum and Abdul-Masih explicitly state and Tracy implies?[187] There seems to be room here for what Tanner calls 'first order theological construction',[188] developing an alternative model of dialectic that avoids the problematic polarity at the heart of Tanner's proposal of non-contrastivity. Schillebeeckx's mutually critical correlation is better described as relational dialectic,[189] such that, in articulating creation-faith, he emphasizes not so much 'the relation' but the interrelation between 'the distinction' and 'the relation'.

The Characteristics of Relational Dialectic

In Schillebeeckx's relational dialectic its constituent elements are not considered as polar opposites, but aspects,[190] allowing them to be described as mutually co-constitutive. In this spirit, Schillebeeckx refuses to polarize the elements of scientific enquiry, which often takes place in the context of the term 'Paradigm Shift'. He describes this polemic as being about the 'primacy of either theory or of the so-called "hard facts" (or experience, which is itself already "laden with theory").'[191] In characterizing experience as laden with theory, he is not supporting one side of a polar dialectic over against the other, but, as the overall tenor of his comment makes clear, asserting that this polar structure of thinking is wrong-headed – theory and experience are mutually co-constitutive.

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[185] Baum, p. 340.

[186] Ibid., p. 341.

[187] Abdul-Masih avers that Schillebeeckx's correlation is polar in Abdul-Masih, p. 98.

[188] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 169.

[189] For expressions of the phrase 'mutually critical correlation', see Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 51; 'Erfahrung und Glaube', trans. by Robert J. Schreiter, in *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, ed. by Robert J. Schreiter (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984), p. 83.

[190] This term is used technically here, as it is in philosophical Aspect Theory (see Stephen Priest, *Theories of the Mind* (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 150-53; Jerome A., Shaffer *Philosophy of Mind* (Englewood Cliffs; London: Prentice-Hall, 1968), pp. 51-57). As will be shown in Chapter Four, there is a link between aspect theory and what Schillebeeckx calls his 'perspectivism' in his early material. (See Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 8; Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, pp. 84, 383; Thompson, pp. 16 and 168-69, n. 36).

[191] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 307.

He responds in a similar way to criticism that, in the first two volumes of his christological trilogy, he over-emphasizes the political liberation of humankind at the expense of its mystical liberation. Again, he says that 'the two cannot be contrasted with each other. Restructuring and inner conversion form a dialectical process.'[192] This dialectic is not one in which mystical and political liberation are held together in constructive tension by dialectically transcending and sublating them. The two *relata* themselves are more interrelated than that presentation implies, since mysticism and politics 'are each at the heart of the other.'[193] Schillebeeckx's relational dialectic not only transforms the way the two *relata* are conceptualized – as mutually co-constitutive – but also the way that the dialectical relation between them is thought of – as a mutually critical correlation.

In such a correlation, a dynamism is recognized between the aspects, a synergy in which neither can be reduced to the other without loss.[194] It is this which shapes and directs Schillebeeckx's unusual use of the expression 'on the one hand … on the other hand,' found often throughout the creation parallels. His definition of creation uses it, saying that, on the one hand, creation places humanity in its own situation. Nevertheless, on the other hand, this does not mean that humanity is alone, because God at the same time places himself in the midst of that situation as the God of humanity.[195] Not surprisingly, Schillebeeckx also uses the expression when considering what true and good humanity consists in. It is urgent to try to answer this question, he says, particularly 'the more we note that on the one hand people fall short, fail and

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[192] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 105.

[193] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 318. Cf. how Schillebeeckx refuses to polarize revelation and experience in 'Erfahrung und Glaube', *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, pp. 85-86.

[194] Cf. Rafael Esteban, 'An Experience of Priesthood in Two Continents', *The Way Supplement*, 83 (Summer 1995), 25-33, esp. pp. 28-31. Esteban proposes an ecclesiology and a pastoral theology of the presbyterate that seeks to relate liberal and conservative elements of what he recognizes as a polarized Catholic Church in the United States. He recommends virtuous, rather than vicious, circles, which create synergy between the groups. Or, to put it another way, any member of a particular group should be able to say to the members of others: 'Without you we are no longer ourselves'. ('The Common Identity Card of the Salesian Family of Don Bosco', Department for Salesian Family (2000), <http://www.sdb.org/ENG/Documenti/2000/ZIP/_2_15_23_1_2.zip> [accessed 11 July 2006], article 3, para. 4 of 6).

[195] See Schillebeeckx, EV, p. 105 (cf. Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 104; parallels 'I Believe', p. 19; *IR*, p. 126).

above all are abused, and on the other hand already experience fragments of human healing and self-liberation.'[196] Both expressions involve a relational dialectic of positive and negative elements, but the relation between them is that the positive is present even in and through the negative, such that they are not polar opposites.

Relational dialectic uses this expression in another way, which can generate confusion, because the two sets of statements might not at first seem to be adequately distinguished from each other (something that some of Schillebeeckx's opponents accuse him of). On closer analysis, however, the *relata* are seen to be distinct and related in a way that reflects the structure of creation. Returning to the image of the hands held out in front of the enquirer, used to speak of polar dialectic, in a relational dialectic, the two 'hands' are not thought of as held out flat, like the pans of a balance. Rather, they are envisaged as being held out with the palms facing one another, perhaps holding an object between them. Here, the force of the two hands is towards each other, supporting that which they are holding. This force is, therefore, a synergy, attracting each of the *relata* to the other, rather than a tension, in which they attempt to pull apart from one another. This attraction does not, however, threaten to collapse the two into one another, because it is an attraction based on relation, not sameness. The logic of distinction and relation, rather than that of difference and sameness, also holds here.

Thus, in the relational dialectic Schillebeeckx's creation-faith, what is ultimately 'first' is a relation. However, this is not so much 'the relation' of creation, as Kennedy implies,[197] but that between 'the relation' and 'the distinction'. This makes a different logic possible for articulating not only creation, but the whole of philosophical theology. Talk of God is not governed by 'the logic of difference',[198] taking place at the point where that logic begins to break down, tending

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[196] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, pp. 100-1; parallel *III*, p. 232.
[197] See Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 89; *Deus Humanissimus*, p. 363.
[198] Turner, 'Tradition and Faith', p. 27.

either towards silence (in the apophatic tradition) or babble (in the kataphatic).[199] It is, rather, governed by the logic of distinction and relation, which, as has been shown in Chapter One, works in significantly different ways. Two examples of how this works in Schillebeeckx can be found in his account of God's mediated immediacy and in the relational dialectic of continuity and change.

Mediated Immediacy

Mediated immediacy is an important idea in Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology. It is by no means unique to him, as Kennedy points out, noting that it is also found in Rahner and John Baillie.[200] It is one of Schillebeeckx's richest concepts, according to William Hill, who describes it in a way that is reminiscent of Schillebeeckx's definition of creation: 'while all contact with the divine is mediated through creatures, at the very heart of that mediation, God mysteriously gives us nothing less than God's uncreated self.'[201] Hill, however, describes this concept as paradoxical,[202] which fits better with polar dialectic than relation dialectic.

The structure of creation is worth pursuing with regard to mediated immediacy, not least because Schillebeeckx himself links the two. Whilst it is true to say that 'the relation of dependence between the world and God is not mutual [...] there is a mutuality of real contact between God and the religious person, at least in the mind of the Christian tradition of experience.'[203] This asymmetrical character of 'the distinction' and 'the relation' of creation shows itself in the idea of mediated immediacy. In the mutual relationship of faith, men and women can never access God immediately, because of the absolute boundary from the world out

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[199] Turner, 'Apophatism', p. 18.
[200] Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, p. 250, n. 167; 'God and Creation', *PRG*, p. 52.
[201] Hill, 'A Theology in Transition', *PRG*, p. 7.
[202] Ibid., p. 12.
[203] Schillebeeckx, 'Prologue', *PRG*, p. xiii.

towards God.[204] God's access to men and women, however, is immediate because God is Creator and, as a result, the boundary 'is *our* boundary, not that of God.'[205] As a result, whilst 'the term *immediacy* refers to the divine manner of the real presence of the creator to the creature, *mediated* describes the mode in which people encounter the divine presence.'[206]

The account of mediated immediacy that Schillebeeckx gives in *II* begins by expressing something that looks like Tannerian functional complementarity. He compares the accounts of the relationship of faith as formulated in the past with those expressed more recently:

> Does the believer have a direct relationship with God or not? The decisive question here is whether both the men of the past and the so-called moderns have clearly formulated the scope of this problem. Perhaps both have seen part of the truth, and in each case have interpreted it in a one-sided way. [...] If by talking of the death of the 'immediacy of God', one means that man has no unmediated relationship with God, then I fully agree. However, things look different if we consider this same, i.e. mediated, relationship from the other side, for in my view there is an unmediated relationship between God and us.[207]

The confidence of the traditional view and the seeming lack of confidence of the more recent view are complementary – perhaps even two sides of the same coin. It is also worth noting that the relationship with God looks different to the human enquirer depending on the point of view (or side of the coin) under consideration. He is not saying that God has a point of view, but that this is the only way that humans can consider things.

When he analyses the two components more closely, he moves beyond – or, more accurately, between – functional complementarity to express a relational dialectic. He first points out that, in this case, it is not true that 'immediacy on only one side of a mutual relationship

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[204] Schillebeeckx speaks thus of this boundary in *TV*, p. 131; exact parallel *EV*, p. 94 (cf. *IR*, p. 115; parallel *GAU*, p. 94).

[205] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 115; parallel *GAU*, p. 94). Dutch text: 'De grens immers tussen God en ons is ónze grens, niet die van God.' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 131; exact parallel *EV*, p. 94).

[206] Janet M. O'Meara, 'Salvation: Living Communion with God', *PRG*, pp. 97-116 (p. 109); cf. Kennedy, 'God and Creation', *PRG*, p. 52 for a similar statement.

[207] Schillebeeckx, *II*, p. 809.

amounts to an inner contradiction.'[208] Because the *theologaal* relationship of faith is with the Creator, 'we are confronted with a unique instance, an instance in which the immediacy does not do away with the mediation but in fact constitutes it. Thus from our perspective there is *mediated immediacy*.'[209] He continues:

> Between God and our awareness of God looms the insuperable barrier of the historical, human and natural world of creation, the constitutive symbol of the real presence of God for us. The fact that in this case an unmistakeable mediation produces immediacy, instead of destroying it, is connected with the absolute or divine manner of the real presence of God: he makes himself directly and creatively present in the medium, that is, in ourselves, our neighbours, the world and history. This is the deepest immediacy that I know.[210]

Like all created realities, the *theologaal* relationship with God is totally dependent on God for its existence. God is immediately present to the believer, in the absolute presence of the creator God in all that is finite. Thus God creates the mediated relationship of faith and sustains it in being for as long as it exists.

In a similar way, in an earlier text, Schillebeeckx grapples with whether the believer's access to God is direct or indirect:

> We can never reach the Absolute *directly* in our consciousness-in-the-world, but we are given it *directly*, as a mystery, in God's revelation of himself, experienced and expressed in the history of the Christian faith, although this gift is made thematically or explicitly only in an *indirect* historical expression. On the basis of this new situation, however, this indirect "secular" expression is qualified inwardly, by virtue of the "light of faith", by the fact that the Absolute is given *directly*.[211]

Here, rather than referring to the doctrine of creation, Schillebeeckx refers to the self-revelation of God. However, if the approach taken in this thesis is correct and creation and salvation – and therefore revelation – are distinct and related, it is also possible to connect these using relational

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[208] Schillebeeckx, *II*, p. 809.

[209] Ibid.

[210] Schillebeeckx, *II*, p. 809.

[211] Edward Schillebeeckx, 'The Problem of the Infallibility of the Church's Office: A Theological Reflection', trans. by David Smith, *Concilium*, 9 (1973), 77-94 (p. 91).

dialectic. God's self-revelation is direct because God has direct or immediate access to creation. The human reception of that self-revelation is indirect or mediated because humans are situated in time and place, history and culture. These two statements are not at all contradictory, paradoxical, or in need of dialectical transcendence and sublation. They fit together, mutually enriching and supporting one another, in and through the relational dialectic of mediated immediacy.

Continuity and Change

There is considerable controversy in the secondary literature about how much Schillebeeckx's thinking has changed during the course of his writing. Vincent Miller presents a three-stage development, with major changes taking place in the late 1960's and the early 1970's as he encountered critical theory and hermeneutics.[212] Portier offers a similar analysis, with the key dates specified as 1966 (the encounter with hermeneutics) and 1971 (that with critical theory).[213] McManus adds a third shift in what she calls Schillebeeckx's 'hermeneutical spiral', as a result of his encounter with modern biblical exegesis.[214]

An extreme expression of change is found in Endean's interpretation of Borgman, who he reads as proposing that Schillebeeckx's 'early writings, couched in the idiom of Neoscholasticism, are peripheral to a mature achievement that could only start with the breakthrough achieved at Vatican II.'[215] Borgman does, it is true, say that in 'the second half of the 1960s Schillebeeckx then abandoned not only De Petter but also the "Thomistic principles" which, since the beginning of his career, had so much formed the starting point of his

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[212] Miller, pp. 13-14.

[213] Portier, 'Interpretation and Method', *PRG*, pp. 27-34. Also see Thompson, pp. 22-46. According to Abdul-Masih, Hilkert offers a similar classification in her doctoral thesis. (See Abdul-Masih, pp. 55-56).

[214] She introduces the term in McManus, *Unbroken Communion*, pp. 15-16. (See pp. 17-26 on hermeneutics, 26-35 on critical theory and 35-39 on biblical exegesis).

[215] Philip Endean, 'Erik Borgman: *Edward Schillebeeckx*', *Times Literary Supplement*, 23 July 2004, p. 26.

theology.'[216] However, he also explicitly states that he wishes to trace the continuity lying behind the shifts and fractures,[217] such that Schillebeeckx's 'earlier ideas [...] have become dated as a result of the later developments, though they have not been superseded in a deeper sense.'[218]

Others also point out that there is continuity underlying the changes in Schillebeeckx's thought.[219] Kennedy affirms that 'a doctrine of creation still undergirds Schillebeeckx's more recent religious epistemology.'[220] Hinze interprets continuity and change as existing 'in a tensive and productive relationship',[221] sounding very much like a polar dialectic. However, it seems better to investigate the relation between the two using Schillebeeckx's own portrayal, rather than import one from elsewhere. Not surprisingly, he does not see the two as fundamentally incompatible. For example, the dust jacket of *W&C* describes the earlier volume in the Theological Soundings series, *R&T II*, as asking: 'How can faith remain the same and at the same time develop through history?' William Portier points out Schillebeeckx's position that 'continuity "comes only through breaks"',[222] or, as Portier clarifies later in his article, that some forms of continuity, at least, can only come this way.[223] Accordingly, Schillebeeckx's account of history will be examined, in which he maintains that history is a multi-layered reality, with the pace of change varying according to which aspect of history is considered. Subsequently, evolution will be proposed as an image for the relational dialectic of continuity and change.

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[216] Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, p. 378.

[217] Ibid., p. 8.

[218] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[219] See Hill, 'A Theology in Transition', *PRG*, p. 16; Susan A. Ross, 'Church and Sacraments', in *PRG*, pp. 133-148 (p. 134).

[220] Kennedy, 'God and Creation', *PRG*, p. 52. Cf. Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, pp. 200-217; 'Continuity Underlying Discontinuity'.

[221] Speaking of the connection between his earlier and later expressions of eschatology. (Hinze, 'Eschatology and Ethics', *PRG*, pp. 167-68).

[222] Portier, 'Interpretation and Method', *PRG*, p. 27, citing Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 69.

[223] Ibid., p. 33.

(i) Schillebeeckx on History

Schillebeeckx offers a broadly similar account of history in *I* and 'The Role of History', which, whilst not close enough to be called parallels, are certainly related texts. In 'The Role of History', Schillebeeckx distances himself from an analysis of change based on Thomas Kuhn's notion of paradigm shift, saying that it is perhaps not as useful as that presented by 'the *Annales*-school of French historiography',[224] which can thus be said to form the basis for Schillebeeckx's account.[225] He draws a distinction between three aspects of history:[226]

> There is 'fact-constituted history' or 'ephemeral history', with its brief and rapidly expiring rhythm: the events of every day come and go; there is 'conjunctural history', which is more expansive, has a more profound reach and is more comprehensive, but then at a much slower tempo or rate of change [:] in other words, a cultural conjuncture lasts for a long time; lastly there is 'structural history', with a time-span of centuries, almost bordering on the central point between what moves and what does not, although not standing outside of history.[227]

It is important to recognize, firstly, that there is no unchanging aspect of history. Structural history almost borders on the point between what moves and what does not, but if it were to cease to move altogether it would thereby cease to be part of history. Schillebeeckx stresses this point in 'The Role of History', saying that structural history, 'in spite of being history, passes very slowly. It is characterised by an age-long duration which is almost identical with stagnation, and yet it moves.'[228]

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[224] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 309.

[225] Schillebeeckx refers to these thinkers in *I* as 'French writers on culture' (Schillebeeckx, *I*, p. 577), listing works by Fernand Braudel, François Furet and Pierre Chaunu (Ibid., p. 732, n. 1). Cf. Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, pp. 207-213; Thompson, pp. 33-34.

[226] Again, aspect language is used here deliberately, in the philosophical sense, in order to avoid the tendency towards separation suggested by terms such as 'type', 'kind' or 'sort'. Schillebeeckx calls them 'planes' in *I* (p. 577), but is careful not to use a term at all in 'The Role of History' (p. 309).

[227] Schillebeeckx, *I*, p. 577; cf. 'The Role of History', p. 309.

[228] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 309.

In *I*, he uses multiple imagery to speak of these three aspects, such that there cannot be said to be an overall master image.[229] He first speaks of planes, but says that these are not 'adjacent or parallel but enfold and interpenetrate one another, and together constitute the one history of humankind.'[230] This suggests complementing the image of planes with that of the intertwining cords of a rope, destabilising the plane image somewhat. Two other images follow rapidly: of 'concentric orbs about a slow-moving axis' and 'a turning but stationary top, around which everything revolves, fast or not so fast.' Finally, as the single paragraph containing all these images closes, he returns to the image of planes.[231] Similarly, in the account of human thinking that follows, he uses multiple imagery: first, of concentric circles,[232] then of planes and, finally, aspects.[233] In the account of history he offers in 'The Role of History', however, he seems not to use any clear imagery at all. There are suggestions of the image of a tree, when he says that conjunctural history 'branches out further, penetrates deeper' and of a river, when he says, of structural history, that it 'passes very slowly' and that it's duration 'is almost identical with stagnation, and yet it moves',[234] but these are extremely light touches, using metaphors rather than models.[235]

This multiple imagery and aspect theory allows Schillebeeckx to approach what happens in a paradigm shift (to use Kuhn's category) in a more satisfactory way than Kuhn's followers can. These hold, quite rightly, that all human thinking takes place within particular frameworks or models and that, within any theory, there is always 'a remainder of facts' that cannot be

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[229] This presentation disagrees with that offered by Abdul-Masih, both in the account of structural history offered and of the relations between the images. (See Abdul-Masih, pp. 73-76).

[230] Schillebeeckx, *I*, p. 577.

[231] Ibid. As the multiplicity shows, however, this is not intended to be a return to a master image.

[232] Ibid.

[233] Ibid., p. 578.

[234] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 309.

[235] See the distinction that Soskice draws between the two, that a model views one object or state of affairs in terms of another, whereas a metaphor speaks of one thing 'in terms that are suggestive of another'. (Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 55 and 23 respectively). Metaphors can, as a result, suggest various models, as shown by the first example here, which could equally well suggest a river as a tree.

accommodated. At a certain point, this remainder becomes so large that it provokes a crisis: 'then the model itself is called into question and science proceeds to reflect upon it until a new interpretative model is found that can explain (at least most of) the surplus.'[236] For Kuhn, this model, or paradigm, is absolute, whereas Schillebeeckx places models in conjunctural history. When the model changes, he says, it is not the case that everything changes at once. Even relatively sudden changes take time and thus have a history, in which both old and new models make sense, otherwise it would not be possible to compare them and effect the transition. What makes the comparison and choice possible is the deeper, structural aspect of history, in which the models find their place.[237]

(ii) Schillebeeckx's History of Thought as Evolution

This understanding of history can be interpreted as expressing a relational dialectic of continuity and change, in which the two are not opposed, but mutually co-constitutive. As such, it can also be applied to Schillebeeckx's own development. As time has gone by, particular ephemeral aspects of his thought have come and gone, without disturbing the overall development taking place within a particular conjunctural stage. There have also been changes of framework, what might be called paradigm shifts. These have, however, been conjunctural changes – important, yes, but not ultimate. The structural aspects of Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology – creation among them – have developed slowly through these changes, finding expression in the various conjunctural eras in distinct and related ways.

Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology can be described as one that has been in a continual process of evolution, holding continuity and change together in a relational dialectic. Over many years, Schillebeeckx's work has developed and adapted itself to a changing world and church that have made changing demands on theologians. This evolutionary development

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[236] Schillebeeckx, *I*, pp. 579-80; cf. 'The Role of History', pp. 309-10.
[237] Schillebeeckx, *I*, pp. 580-81; cf. 'The Role of History', p. 310.

has also facilitated his interaction with other thinkers, not connected with the church, in the hope that his philosophical theology might 'be useful to many people.'[238] This structural application of the model of evolution is perhaps the most obvious one, but it can also be used to speak of conjunctural changes.

Sometimes what scientists call 'evolutionary explosions' take place, resulting in enormous changes in a relatively short period of time. The most spectacular of these is probably the so-called 'Cambrian explosion', which marks the 'first appearance of multicellular organisms with hard parts in the fossil record'.[239] For a time, this evolutionary explosion – evidence for which was first found in a bed of rock called the Burgess Shale in British Columbia in the early twentieth century – marked the beginning of the Cambrian Era, the first in the geological time-scale.[240] Scientists speculate as to what might have triggered the explosion, but note that environmental changes often play a significant role.[241] What is particularly significant about these explosions is that they do not contradict the overall slow and gradual pace of change that is spoken of in evolutionary theory, but complement it.

Environmental changes have also played a role in Schillebeeckx's evolutionary development. As has already been shown, his two major shifts correspond with his discovery of hermeneutics and critical theory: Schillebeeckx has said that his encounter with hermeneutics

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[238] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. xvi.

[239] Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1990), p. 55.

[240] See Gould, p. 23; cf. Simon Conway Morris, *The Crucible of Creation: The Burgess Shale and the Rise of Animals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), Chapter 6, who also recognizes the significance of the Burgess Shale. Both authors point out that what used to be called the Pre-Cambrian era is now divided into eras itself based on fossils found subsequently. The 'Cambrian explosion' still marks an important boundary, however, because the fossilised organisms found earlier do not have any hard parts. (Conway Morris, p. 27; Gould, pp. 58-60. Both mention in particular the so-called Ediacaran fossils of soft-bodied animals found in Southern Australia, deposited in what is now called the Vendian era).

[241] See Conway Morris, pp. 140-47.

changed the way he did theology, triggering a 'clear break' with De Petter.[242] But significant changes can also take place as a result of less dramatic influences; such as making available a terminological expression giving form to an idea that has been developing for some time. Thus, although Schillebeeckx admits the significance of De Petter and Maurice Merleau-Ponty for his thinking, he also cautions that a study of influences can go too far. As McManus points out: 'By his own admission, he has absorbed fragments from countless thinkers over the years, has incorporated what has been helpful – sometimes gripped more by a brief article or a single phrase than by an entire study.'[243]

Schillebeeckx says something similar in his 'Foreword' to Kennedy's *Schillebeeckx*, pointing out 'that sometimes ordinary everyday occurrences in my life may very well have influenced my thinking more profoundly than some school of thought that I have studied and subsequently mentioned in the critical apparatus of my books or articles.'[244] This demonstrates that it is not only the theoretical and extraordinary, but also the practical and the everyday that are significant. This theme surfaces again in the next chapter, which explores some of the implications of relational dialectic for Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology.

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[242] See Luijten, 'Scholastic Concepts Tend to Become Almost Eternal Concepts', para 8 of 22 and Schillebeeckx, *I*, p. 618 respectively. For the break with De Petter, cf. Miller, p. 13; Thompson, p. 22; Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, pp. 42-44; Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, pp. 7, 214-17.

[243] McManus, *Unbroken Communion*, p. 41, n. 4. She credits this to a personal interview with Schillebeeckx.

[244] Edward Schillebeeckx, 'Foreword' to Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, pp. ix-x.

Chapter Four

Relational Dialectic in Schillebeeckx's Philosophical Theology

Schillebeeckx's correlational thinking has been portrayed to some extent in Chapter Three; this Chapter begins by briefly examining how Schillebeeckx describes correlation in theology. This allows Schillebeeckx to be correctly depicted as a correlational theologian, as long as the method he uses is adequately distinguished from the polar approach taken by the majority of correlational theologians. Secondly, it paves the way for a more complex rendering of relational dialectic than was possible in Chapter Three. Since Schillebeeckx's method of correlation is not polar, it does not always involve a correlation of only two terms. This makes it possible to apply relational dialectic to more complex interactions, two major examples of which are investigated in this chapter.

The first is the relational dialectic of praxis, which plays a pivotal role in Schillebeeckx's mutually critical correlation both of theory and practice and of mysticism and politics. The second is the connection between his early perspectivism and later relational dialectic in response to the challenge of atheistic secular humanism. The relational dialectic of finitude and contingency expressed in the creation parallels allows Schillebeeckx to show that humanism based on creation-faith is better justified than atheistic secular humanism. Finally, the chapter explores the possibility of developing a Schillebeeckian approach to philosophical theology by considering his notion of *sequela*. This allows his particular way of following Aquinas, Irenaeus and Jesus to be understood and provides a way of following Schillebeeckx without needing to imitate him.

Schillebeeckx's Method of Correlation

Schillebeeckx outlines his method of correlation in a cluster of parallel texts,[1] in which, according to Abdul-Masih, he says that the continuity of Christianity is not assured by 'a certain articulation of faith; rather, it is the relationship between the message and the context that forms the norm.'[2] As a result, 'Schillebeeckx's hermeneutics is not strictly linear but rather proportional.'[3] Her presentation is valuable, despite using 'relationship' where 'relation' seems more appropriate, because she describes the shape of Schillebeeckx's correlational method well: 'there is a proportionality between Jesus' message and his historical cultural context on the one hand, and contemporary understanding of faith and the contemporary historical context on the other.'[4] Schillebeeckx represents this schematically in the form of a diagram,[5] making it clear that there are four terms in three relations. This distinguishes his correlation from a polar one, which would entail a direct relation between two terms.[6]

Bernard McGinn expresses admiration for Schillebeeckx's proposal, saying that he 'has given us not just a paper, but the bare bones of a book, or of a whole theological programme.'[7] This is true, but, as Schillebeeckx's use of the proportional norm as far back as *UF* shows, the theological programme it expresses is one already extant in his work. The difficulties that McGinn articulates, however, display his polar presuppositions: 'how we are to conceive the relation between the original message, the transcendent, or vertical, pole of all temporal expressions of Christian faith and history itself. Is the "original message" inside or outside

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[1] Edward Schillebeeckx, *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan anno 1983* (Baarn: Nelissen, 1983); 'The Role of History'; and *III*, pp. 33-45.

[2] Abdul-Masih, p. 92. Thompson also consistently speaks of 'relationship' in his translation of *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, a tendency also present in *III*. (See Thompson, pp. 118-19 and Schillebeeckx, *III*, pp. 41-42).

[3] Abdul-Masih, p. 94. Also see Schillebeeckx, *UF*, pp. 58-63, where he speaks of the 'criterion of the proportional norm' (p. 58).

[4] Abdul-Masih, p. 94.

[5] Schillebeeckx, *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, p. 15; parallel *III*, p. 42.

[6] As Abdul-Masih finds in Paul Tillich, for example (Abdul-Masih, p. 93).

[7] Bernard McGinn, 'Response to Edward Schillebeeckx and Jürgen Moltmann', trans. by Margaret Kohl, in *Paradigm Change in Theology*, pp. 346-51 (p. 348), commenting on 'The Role of History'.

history?'[8] This question presupposes that the correlation sought is between the non-historical, vertical pole of the original message of Christianity and the historical, horizontal pole of its socio-cultural, temporal expressions. Schillebeeckx, however, criticizes the very structure of thinking that leads to McGinn's question, saying that it is wrong-headed to try to conceive a direct relation between a transcendent original message and the contemporary situation.[9]

Schillebeeckx's reluctance to use polar language is best shown in *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, where he speaks of 'The "two poles": tradition and situation'[10] and generally tends to place polar language in inverted commas.[11] He says: 'If, then, one is allowed to speak of two poles at all,'[12] these are not to be found in the so-called original source of Christianity and in its situated expression at some later point in history, as if this latter 'pole' is 'only the area of dissemination'.[13] 'The distinction between, on the one hand, source (the Bible) and, on the other hand 'situation', which can only be understood as 'context', is inadequate and even misleading.'[14] If two things in relation must be spoken of, it is better to speak of the indirect relation between the cultural forms of historical Christian faith at a particular time and place in the past and the cultural forms of historical Christian faith here and now.[15] This terminology of culture is, in fact, preferred to that of correlation by Schillebeeckx, perhaps because correlation

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[8] McGinn, 'Response to Edward Schillebeeckx and Jürgen Moltmann', p. 347.

[9] This is because access to the transcendent pole would have to be possible independent of the thinker's relation to it in order to effect the comparison. To do this, the thinker would have to stand outside of all time and place, which is impossible, because humans are situated beings. There is no view from nowhere, no *conscience survolante* (see Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 8).

[10] Section Heading, author's translation. Dutch text: 'De "twee polen": traditie en situatie' (Schillebeeckx, *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, p. 6).

[11] See Schillebeeckx, *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, pp. 10 and 12.

[12] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 312; parallel *III*, p.37). Dutch text: 'Als men dan van al twee polen mag spreken' (Schillebeeckx, *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, p. 10).

[13] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 37; parallel *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, p. 10.

[14] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 312 (not present in parallels).

[15] Because the so-called original message, whether that is taken to be the proclamation and praxis of Jesus of Nazareth or the words of the Christian Testament of the Bible, are situated in time and place, too.

tends almost inevitably towards polarity and the correspondence of terms, and is, to that extent 'an inexact term, misleading in itself.'[16]

The correlation he uses finds identity of meaning '*on the level of the corresponding relation between the original message (tradition) and the always different situation*, both in the past and in the present.'[17] There is 'a fundamental unity and equality,' but this is to be found not between the terms, but in 'the corresponding relations between the terms'.[18] Thus, it is the 'relation of equality between these relations [that] carries within itself the Christian identity of meaning.'[19] Schillebeeckx uses *verhouding* throughout this crucial section of *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan* and *Beziehung* throughout the German original of 'The Role of History'.[20] In itself, this latter may seem like an arbitrary choice, since *Beziehung* and *Verhältnis* are often used interchangeably in German to speak both of relations and personal relationships. However, if Schillebeeckx is compared with Rahner, an interesting contrast becomes apparent. In his *Grundkurs des Glaubens*, Rahner uses *Verhältnis* to speak generally of a whole variety of relations and relationships.[21] He uses *Beziehung* only when he comes to speak of Christianity as 'an existentiell process',[22] i.e. when he is using terms that draw explicitly from transcendental philosophy. Schillebeeckx's use of *Beziehung* in German and *verhouding* in Dutch – as well as

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[16] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 312). Dutch text: 'Correlatie is, om uit te drukken, een oneigenlijke, zelfs misleidende term.' (Schillebeeckx, *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, p. 10).

[17] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 313; cf. parallels *III*, p. 41 (which uses 'relationship') and *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, p. 15 (which uses 'verhouding').

[18] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 313; cf. parallels *III*, p. 41 (uses 'relationships) and *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, p. 15 (uses 'verhouding').

[19] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 313; cf. parallels *III*, p. 42 (uses 'relationships) and *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, p. 15 (uses 'verhouding').

[20] Edward Schillebeeckx, 'Die Rolle der Geschichte in dem, was das neue Paradigma genannt wird', in *Das neue Paradigma von Theologie: Strukturen und Dimensionen*, ed. by Hans Küng and David Tracy (Zurich: Benzinger Verlag, 1986), pp. 75-86.

[21] He uses it to refer to man's 'relation' to his transcendent ground (Karl Rahner, *Grundkurs des Glaubens: Einführung in den Begriff des Christentums* (Freiburg: Herder, 1977), p. 83); the 'relationship' that man has to God is his creatureliness (p. 84); the 'relationship' between the knower and the known (p. 85); the 'relationship' between God and the world and between God and creatures (p. 86); the actual 'relationship' of the believer to Jesus Christ (p. 203); and the actual 'relationship' of faith (p. 203). For the English translations listed, see Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, trans. by William V. Dych (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978), pp. 75, 76, 77, 78, 203 and 203 respectively).

[22] Rahner, *Grundkurs*, p. 298; *Foundations*, p. 306.

Margaret Köhl's consistent translation of *Beziehung* as 'relation' – help to substantiate further the position of this thesis that Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology is careful in its use of relational terminology.

Schillebeeckx also calls his correlational approach dialectical, speaking of the dialectical relation between tradition and situation,[23] as well as that between theory and praxis.[24] He characterizes this latter interrelation interchangeably as 'a critical and nevertheless continuous relation between the past christian tradition and our contemporary social-historical and existential situation and the current concrete praxis of christians'[25] and as forming '*one* dialectical whole'.[26] This dialectical unification does not, however, level out the real distinctions between the *relata*: 'The unity is a unity in depth'.[27] This depth-dimension of relational dialectic will be a recurring theme in this chapter, but at this stage it leads on to a brief consideration of a second problem McGinn has with Schillebeeckx's correlation. He picks up on precisely the features just addressed, asking, if it is the case that the Christian identity of meaning is never seen in itself, is not fixed across time and cannot be harmonized on one level, 'what kind of claim' is being made 'when we say that Christian identity is one, as Schillebeeckx asserts?[28] In the final analysis, McGinn is asking whether Schillebeeckx's correlation is compatible with realism. Is there something beyond history, beyond the situational, to which the Christian faith refers?

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[23] Author's translation (Heading Title, not present in parallels; cf. Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p.311; parallel *III*, p. 36). Dutch text: 'Dialectische verhouding tussen Traditie en Situatie' (*Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, p. 9). Also see *III*, pp. 36, 40; parallel *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, pp. 9, 12 and 13.

[24] 'The relation to praxis, called provisionally 'orthopraxis', is essential for theological theory itself.' (Author's translation. Dutch text: 'De relatie tot de praxis, noem het voorlopig 'orthopraxis', is wezenlijk voor de theologische theorie zelf.' Schillebeeckx, *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, p. 8. Cf. parallels 'The Role of History', p. 314, which replaces this provisional reference to orthopraxis with a reference to *sequela Jesu*, and *III*, p. 35, which removes the special term altogether). Also see *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, p. 6, not present in the parallels.

[25] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 39). Dutch text: 'een kritische en niettemin continue relatie tussen de voorbije christelijke traditie en onze eigentijdse sociaal-historische en existentiële situatie en de hedendaagse concrete praxis van christenen' (*Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, p. 12).

[26] Author's translation (cf. *III*, p. 40). Dutch text: 'een dialectische geheel' (*Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, pp. 12 and 13). The relation between theory and praxis will be examined more closely in the next section.

[27] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 42;cf. parallels *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, p. 15; 'The Role of History', p. 313.

[28] McGinn, 'Response to Edward Schillebeeckx and Jürgen Moltmann', p. 348.

This question is not answered in the material analysed thus far, but an answer can be found in an earlier article from *Concilium*. In it, Schillebeeckx begins by addressing the relation between revelation and its interpretation: 'Revelation is God's saving activity in history experienced and expressed by believers in answer to the question about the meaning of life.'[29] He opposes a direct correlation between God's saving activity and the interpretation of the believer in a similar way to his opposition of the correlation of terms in the later material.[30] Instead, the correlation is mediated via the history of the believer's life in a particular time and place and the questions that this life raises. There are thus three terms: God's saving activity, the life of the believer and the believer's interpretation. Schillebeeckx is not, however, denying a direct relation between God's saving activity and the life of the believer here, so the three-term structure of the correlation includes a two-term direct relation, but is not reduced to that alone.

In the same article, he considers what the truth of the Christian faith could be and how it could be linked to the fact that humans are situated beings. He states that his 'perspectivist' understanding of truth 'is not a form of relativism, but a recognition that coming to the truth is a continuous historical process.'[31] The problem with relativism is its coherence theory of truth, its assertion that '"true" is what provides the most coherent answer to a contingent questioning.' Schillebeeckx continues: 'The ultimate answer to the question of truth cannot be found in this correlation because truth is orientated towards a universal consensus.'[32] Thus, truth is not solely to be found in the correlation between question and answer, yet this correlation cannot be done away with. Again, there is a three-term, two relation structure, in which the correlation between question and answer is related to absolute truth.

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[29] Edward Schillebeeckx, 'The Problem of the Infallibility of the Church's Office: A Theological Reflection', trans. by David Smith, in *LF*, pp. 55-69 (p. 55).

[30] The fact that this article is related to the overall discussion can also be shown by the fact that Schillebeeckx refers to it in the material on history in *I* that was considered at the end of the previous chapter (see Schillebeeckx, *I*, p. 732, n.2).

[31] Schillebeeckx, 'The Problem of the Infallibility of the Church's Office', p. 59.

[32] Ibid., p. 60.

The two correlational structures that Schillebeeckx proposes (involving three terms and four) are, however, related, as can be seen when two people who are searching for the truth become interlocutors. There is a need to go beyond the historical interplay of question and answer in a particular situation, either to include a reference to truth itself, or into dialogue: 'it is [...] only when my truth is played off against the other person's in dialogue that we are really *on the way towards* the truth in history.'[33] Here is the familiar four-term, three-relation structure, in which, first of all, a perspective on truth is formed by each of the interlocutors as a result of an interrelation between question and answer in their particular times and places.[34] These perspectives are then related to one another, which helps each of the interlocutors towards truth itself.

This multiple character of correlation allows for an analysis that can relate two, three or four terms just as easily. The feature common to all these correlations is that they are not polar, displaying the unique character of Schillebeeckx's method of relational dialectic. In the next two sections of this chapter, this multiplicity will serve as a resource for an account of his understanding of praxis and of humanism.

Praxis

Many authors speak of the importance of praxis for Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology. According to Goergen, it influences his entire approach to spirituality, 'the whole of human life interpreted from the perspective of authentic Christian praxis.'[35] Kennedy, too, sees it as a cardinal notion in Schillebeeckx's later writings, noting that the term surfaces there 'with

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[33] Schillebeeckx, 'The Problem of the Infallibility of the Church's Office', p. 60.

[34] The phrase 'times and places' is used here because it is not necessarily the case that interlocutors live and the same time or in the same place. Burrell and Schillebeeckx both enter into dialogue with Aquinas, who lived in a different time and place to both of them.

[35] Goergen, 'Spirituality', *PRG*, p. 117.

unremitting frequency'.[36] Frustratingly, however, Schillebeeckx 'does not spell out in any detail what he means by it.' Consequently, there is a need both 'to ferret out and throw into sharper relief the philosophical postulates that are implicitly imbedded and referred to in his writings'[37] and also to examine more closely the interactions between the terms Schillebeeckx uses, to see if a pattern emerges.

Praxis and Practice as Interchangeable

Praxis is often treated as interchangeable with practice in Schillebeeckx's writings. Goergen, for example, speaks of the 'preoccupation with orthopraxis' in his later works, which 'raises the question of how to bridge the gulf between theory and practice.'[38] The earthly Jesus reacted to the prevailing attitude of his day, 'in which theory and practice had drifted apart', by refusing 'to sanction an orthodoxy separated from an orthopraxis.'[39] Abdul-Masih points out that, for Schillebeeckx, orthopraxis is 'the criterion for the truth of interpretation'.[40] This means that orthopraxis is not just involved with the practical application of theory, but 'is constitutive of faithful interpretation.'[41] Hill, too, holds that the Christian life 'is more a matter of orthopraxis than orthodoxy; it is more a matter of living out the truths and values of the gospel than of illuminating them theoretically.'[42]

Kennedy offers a valuable account of the philosophical background to Schillebeeckx's thinking on praxis which covers an array of sources, starting with Aristotle and the debates about *theoria* and *praxis* in ancient philosophy. He indicates the role played in the development of Schillebeeckx's critical thinking by Marx and critical theorists such as Habermas and

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[36] Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 33.
[37] Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 33.
[38] Goergen, 'Spirituality', *PRG*, p. 122.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Abdul-Masih, p. 95.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Hill, 'A Theology in Transition', *PRG*, p. 3.

Horkheimer.[43] These critical theorists challenged the Aristotelian tendency to subordinate *praxis* to *theoria*, maintaining that praxis (understood as practical activity) enjoys a primacy over theory.[44] This debate can be seen as one in which each group takes one of two *relata*, recognized as interrelated by both, as primary, making their positions functionally complementary.

There is certainly some evidence that Schillebeeckx speaks of the primacy of praxis over theory. As noted in the previous section, he says that theology cannot simply be reduced to theory, that the relation of theory to praxis is essential.[45] In the creation parallels, speaking of the inexhaustible surplus of creation-faith, he says 'that it is precisely the critical and productive force of authentic creation-faith'[46] that results in this surplus, such that what emerges from it can never be completely secularized.[47] In the parallel texts, he incrementally adds more material to make it clear where this critical and productive force is best found. In *GAU*, he says it is 'realized in Jesus' and in *III* he specifies further 'in [his] proclamation and praxis'.[48] This could be understood as articulating a dialectic between Jesus' theoretical proclamation and his practical activity, but is this the best way to express it?

The problem with understanding Schillebeeckx's praxis thus is that it leads either to tension or paradox, as Thompson and Kennedy note. Thompson says that, in his critical phase, Schillebeeckx pairs praxis with theory in a dialectical relationship.[49] In this relationship, praxis is seen as 'the *disclosive source* for and *critical test* of truth and its theoretical expression' and, at the same time, 'in a reciprocal fashion, praxis finds its *disclosive source* and *critical test* in

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[43] Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, pp. 274-283.

[44] See Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, pp. 275-6 on Aristotle and pp. 277-79 on the critical theorists.

[45] See Schillebeeckx, *Theologisch Geloofsverstaan*, p. 8; cf. parallels 'The Role of History', p. 314; *III*, p. 35.

[46] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 122; parallels *GAU*, p. 102 and *III*, p. 233). Dutch text: 'dat het juist de kritische en productieve kracht van het scheppingsgeloof is' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 138; exact parallel *EV*, p. 102; parallel *Mensen*, p. 251).

[47] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 121-22; parallels *GAU*, pp. 101-2 and *III*, pp. 232-34. Also see the next section, in which this idea will be examined in more detail.

[48] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 102; *III*, p. 233.

[49] Thompson, p. 35.

theory.'[50] This solution, Thompson avers, is filled with tension, wanting to place theory and praxis in mutual interrelationship and also to maintain the primacy of praxis.[51] Again, the polar character of his solution comes to the fore. Kennedy prefers to call Schillebeeckx's position paradoxical, in the way that it postulates 'both a pre- and a post-practical function' for theory, such that 'theory precedes praxis.'[52] There certainly does seem to be a paradox since, if praxis and practice are interchangeable, all three following statements must be true at once: theory precedes praxis, yet praxis is primary with respect to theory and theory has both a pre- and a post-practical function. But what if, as in the correlation of tradition and situation above, relational dialectic does not level everything out? If this is the case, perhaps praxis and practice are not simply interchangeable and a more complex correlational structure is needed.

The Relational Dialectic of Theory and Practice

The possibility of an alternative structure can be supported by Hill's comment that the Christian life 'is far more than the practical implementation of theory. Praxis means precisely this dialectical interacting of theory and concrete action',[53] suggesting a three-term relational dialectic. Portier's observation that Schillebeeckx deliberately speaks of praxis rather than practice can also help here. Practice, he says, 'implies a prior theory that we then apply practically; *praxis*, by contrast, is understood as co-constitutive of theory'.[54] The interplay between Schillebeeckx and Liberation Theology helps to place this possibility on a surer footing. Denis Carroll notes that, in their accounts of creation, 'theologies of liberation' have a

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[50] Thompson, pp. 40 and 41.
[51] Ibid., p. 41.
[52] Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, p. 283.
[53] Hill, 'A Theology in Transition', *PRG*, p. 3.
[54] Portier, 'Interpretation and Method', *PRG*, p. 30.

'dialectical notion of praxis as critical interplay of theory/practice.'[55] In a similar way, Michael Allsopp says that liberation theology 'insists on the active integration of thought and action (the mutual interaction of theory and practice)'.[56]

In fact, the interaction between Schillebeeckx and liberation theology may well be mutual. The first major work by Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, cites Schillebeeckx twice on the topic of praxis. The first of these is particularly significant, as it introduces a theme that will return in the next section of this chapter when the dialogue with atheistic secular humanism is considered. Schillebeeckx is quoted as saying that the Church, down the ages, 'devoted its attention to formulating truths and meanwhile did almost nothing to better the world', leaving the latter task to nonbeleivers.[57] It seems significant that he was writing about these themes as Liberation Theology was moving between what Juan Luis Segundo calls its birth and its later baptism by Gutiérrez.[58] During its infancy, which stretches back at least ten years before *A Theology of Liberation* was published in 1971,[59] various groups all over Latin America, particularly students, were becoming aware of 'the mystifying ideologies used by our governments to hide and to justify the inhuman situation of the majority of our population', and

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[55] Denis Carroll, 'An Essay in the Theology of Creation: Gabriel Daly and the Challenge of Modernity', in *The Critical Spirit: Theology at the Crossroads of Faith and Culture*, ed. by Andrew Pierce and Geraldine Smyth (Dublin: Columba Press, 2003), pp. 15-26 (p. 25).

[56] Michael E. Allsopp, *Renewing Christian Ethics: The Catholic Tradition* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2005), p. 77.

[57] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, trans. by Caridad Inda and John Eagleson, rev. edn (London: SCM Press, 1988), p. 8 (also see p. 10). The source for both comments is an article printed in Bilbao in 1970 ('La teologia', in *Los catôlicos holandeses* (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 1970) (see Gutierrez, p. 181, nn. 35 and 46). In addition, it is also worth noting that at around the same time, Schillebeeckx published articles on critical theory which spoke of praxis and orthopraxis. (The article 'Theological Criteria', referred to in the previous chapter with regard to the proportional norm, also contains a section on 'The Criterion of Christian Orthopraxis' (Schillebeeckx, *UF*, pp. 63-70). Two other articles in the same volume of *Theological Soundings*, 'The New Critical Theory' and 'The New Critical Theory and Theological Hermeneutics' (*UF*, pp. 102-123 and 124-155 respectively) also contain sections on praxis (see esp. *UF*, pp. 106-109, 120-122 and 142-148). These latter two articles were originally published in 1971, and 'Theological Criteria' in 1969 (see Information on Original Publication, *UF*, p. 166).

[58] Juan Luis Segundo, 'The Shift Within Latin American Theology', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 52 (September 1985), 17-29 (p. 17).

[59] Segundo's first lectures on the theme of liberation were presented in 1959, as Alfred Hennelly points out (see Alfred Hennelly, *Theology for a Liberating Church: The New Praxis of Freedom* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1989), p. 29 and p. 179, n. 20.

were thereby unmasking them.[60] This sounds somewhat akin to the process that Schillebeeckx underwent with his discovery of hermeneutics and critical theory at around the same time.

Praxis is More than Practice

In the creation parallels, Schillebeeckx speaks of the interaction of theory and practice thus: 'God must, after all, always be so thought of that he is never merely thought of; talk of God stands under the primacy of praxis. It stands under the question: 'Where are we headed?''[61] Schillebeeckx is saying that God is not mere theory for Christians. The translation offered for the question put by praxis is intended to show that this question is not only about what is done; it is about where Christians are going and how they get there.

When he considers the eschatological surplus of creation-faith, he says: 'As exegete of God and as practician of a way of life in accordance with the reign of God,'[62] Jesus did not act on the basis of a pre-determined plan for eschatological salvation. The word that is rendered 'practician' here is *practicus* in Dutch, a term often used in contrast to *theoreticus*; practician rather than theoretician. In saying that Jesus was also an exegete of God, however, Schillebeeckx implies that he was both: he interpreted God for and with those with whom he came into contact both theoretically and practically. Schillebeeckx, however, goes on to speak not of practice, but, rather, of 'praxis'.[63] He says that the theory of eschatological salvation that Jesus put into practice was not complete before his ministry began. Rather, in and through his actions of healing, liberating and reconciling, he saw the dawning of this eschatological salvation as a

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[60] Segundo, 'The Shift Within Latin American Theology', p. 18.

[61] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'God moet immers steeds zo gedacht worden dat Hij nooit sléchts gedacht wordt; spreken over God staat onder het primaat van de praxis. Het staat onder de vraag: Waar gaan we naartoe?' (*Tussentijds verhaal* (Henceforth *TV*), p. 136. *Evangelie verhaal* (Henceforth *EV*) p. 99 has the same text, but starts a new sentence where *Tussentijds verhaal* has the semi-colon). *IR* translates the key phrase as 'the primacy of action' (p. 120), whereas *GAU* speaks of 'the primacy of praxis' (p. 99).

[62] Author's translation (cf. *IR*, p. 124). Dutch text: 'Als exegete van God en practicus van een handelen overeenkomstig het rijk Gods' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 140).

[63] Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 140.

distant vision. This suggests that 'his own historical and thus limited, situated praxis of "going round doing good"'[64] was more than his actions. It also had to do with the depth-dimension of this definitive eschatological salvation that he saw as a distant vision.[65]

This suggests a conceptualization of the correlation which does not level out the terms. In his account of the Christian life of faith, he says:

> In our times, an authentic faith in God only seems to be possible in the context of a praxis of liberation and of solidarity with the needy. It is in that praxis that the idea develops that God reveals himself as the mystery and the very heart of humanity's striving for liberation, wholeness and soundness. The concept of that mystery, which is at first concealed in the praxis of liberation and making whole, is only made explicit in the naming of that concept in the statement made in faith that God is the liberator, the promoter of what is good and the opponent of what is evil.[66]

If a concept can develop in praxis, praxis must be more than practice. At first, it is the practical, active aspect that is visible; the concept of God that animates the action is hidden. But as the interplay of theory and practice continues, the concept of God becomes more explicit and can be clearly expressed. This interpretation involves three terms, in which praxis is the relational dialectic of theory and practice.

A four-term correlation is also possible:

> Seen from a Christian perspective, "experiences" have authority therefore first of all in the living context of a mutual *theoretical-critical* and *practical-critical correlation* of the apostolic experiences of faith then and our experiences now, wherein the intervening period plays a special role.[67]

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[64] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'zijn eigen historische en dus beperkt gesitueerde praxis van 'weldoende rondgaan' (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 140; cf. *IR*, p. 124 above).

[65] This idea of 'depth-dimension' is one that Schillebeeckx uses in the creation parallels, as well as elsewhere in his philosophical theology. When he places two *relata* in a relational dialectic, they are often not intended to be related as equals – one of them has a depth-dimension that the other lacks. (See, for example, the depth dimension of Christian humanism, in Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 121; parallels *GAU*, p. 101 and *III*, p. 233 as well as *W&C*, pp. 10 and 23-24 and *G&M*, pp. 14-15). This is one of the hallmarks of Schillebeeckx's situated thinking, which uses language of depth rather than that of transcendence.

[66] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 318.

[67] Schillebeeckx, 'Erfahrung und Glaube', *Schillebeeckx Reader*, p. 85.

The correlation is not simply between experiences then and now as a polar pair, nor between theory then and practice now, but experience is first recognized as having both a theoretical and a practical component. Then, a critical correlation is set up, between theory and practice then and theory and practice now. This is a four-term, three relation structure, in which praxis is the relational dialectic between the two relations.

Again, in his treatment of 'the hermeneutical problem' facing Christianity, Schillebeeckx is keen to avoid two extremes. He says that 'it is impossible to determine "first" the essence of the Christian faith in order subsequently – "in the second instance", as it were – to interpret it as accommodated to our time.'[68] It is not the case, in other words, that the theoretical component of faith must be fully articulated first, so that all that remains is to apply it to another place and time. This could be called 'mere' orthodoxy. On the other hand, he continues:

> All the same, we cannot make of Christianity just what we fancy. Within the variable, shifting dimensions of history an authentic Christianity, true to Jesus' message, must be realized and must be articulated. A mere appeal to the practical conduct of life or 'orthopraxis', as being praxis of the kingdom of God, affords no solution here; for the essential nature of God's rule, as that has drawn near to us in Jesus, is the very thing at issue.[69]

Schillebeeckx opposes what might be called 'mere' orthopraxis, too: simply appealing to practical conduct as being what Christianity is all about is as artificial as appealing to the unchanging essence of Christianity in doctrine. Both extremes miss the point that the praxis of the kingdom of God is distinct from both orthopraxis and orthodoxy. It is, in fact, found in the relational dialectic of the two; hence Christianity's message must both be realized (practically) and articulated (theoretically).

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[68] Schillebeeckx, *I*, p. 575.

[69] Schillebeeckx, *I*, pp. 575-76.

What Comes First?

When Schillebeeckx reworks the material from *II* about the anthropological constants of the *humanum* in 'Questions on Christian Salvation', he adds a long paragraph to the section on the relation between theory and practice.[70] It is complex in its layering, but can assist in understanding the order of priority within the relational dialectic. First of all, Schillebeeckx distinguishes between two levels in the interaction of faith and action. The first of these he calls '*fides qua*' and the second '*fides quae*'.[71] On the level of *fides qua*, he says, 'faith is only authentic to the extent that it leads to action.' He draws a parallel with Marx, saying that the 'interpretative theory of the world' he offers is one 'which should be read as a criticism of certain groups and which is therefore apt to be used for a particular, determined (society-changing) praxis.' What makes Marxist theory apt in this way is that 'it happens to be a theory with a practical-critical intention.'[72] So, in order to be an authentic Marxist, the theory must be put into action. Similarly, in order to be an authentic Christian, faith, which comes first, has to be put into action.

Secondly, there is the level of *fides quae*, 'or of the content of faith', which is needed because 'a statement of faith does not become true because it is put into practice or untrue because it is not put into practice. Consistent practice does not determine the truth value of a theory.'[73] This last statement is best read as backing up the previous point: consistent theoretical-practical correlation, which is consistent praxis, does not make a theory true – it makes the person who holds it and puts it into practice authentic. In this context, Schillebeeckx's example works well: a consistent Nazi is faithful both to the Nazi ideology and its practice; he or she is an authentic Nazi, but this does not make Nazism true.

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[70] See Schillebeeckx, *II*, p. 740 and 'Questions on Christian Salvation', pp. 118-119.
[71] Schillebeeckx, 'Questions on Christian Salvation', p. 119.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Schillebeeckx, 'Questions on Christian Salvation', p. 119.

The development of the content of faith takes place on this level of *fides quae*. What happens is that faith – a basic approach to life, having a theoretical character that is not yet fully developed – is put into action. As a result of this praxis of faith and action, the theoretical content of that faith develops. So faith precedes action – and therefore, in that sense, comes before praxis – and also praxis is prior to the development of the theoretical content of faith that is pursued in theology.[74] If these two levels get mixed up – if praxis and practice are treated as interchangeable – then the problems begin: 'Theologians often mix up these two levels and then refer to the primacy of praxis over faith.'[75] So, overall, faith precedes praxis and praxis is prior to theological reflection on faith. This leaves one major question left to answer. If, as Schillebeeckx says, 'praxis is decisive',[76] why is this?

Praxis as a Way of Life

Schillebeeckx suggests interpreting praxis as a way of life when he speaks of the fact that religions are not merely theoretical systems: 'Religions are not systems of truth constructs; they try to trace a way of life, albeit not without truth and insights.'[77] Understanding praxis as a way of life – or a form of life, perhaps – is something that Schillebeeckx probably draws from the phenomenological tradition, but it is equally applicable to the language-rich approach to theology being widely advocated today.[78] Merleau-Ponty, for example, believes that the world

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[74] See Schillebeeckx, 'Questions on Christian Salvation', p. 119.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 75; parallel in excerpt from 'Jeruzalem of Benares? Nicaragua of de Berg Athos?', in *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, pp. 272-74 (p. 274).

[77] Schillebeeckx, 'Prologue', *PRG*, p. ix.

[78] See, for example, from various backgrounds and points of view, Fergus Kerr, *Theology After Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Sue Patterson, *Realist Christian Theology in a Postmodern Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Turner, *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God* and Janet Martin Soskice, 'The Truth Looks Different From Here, or On Seeking the Unity of Truth From a Diversity of Perspectives', in *Christ and Context: The Confrontation Between Gospel and Culture*, ed. by Hilary D. Regan and Alan J. Torrance (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), pp. 43-59.

'is not what I think, but what I live through.'[79] This influence can also be traced in the way that Schillebeeckx characterizes experience, especially in the puzzling expression 'experience with experiences' in his analysis of the components of experience.[80] The crucial word that he uses, according to Kennedy, 'is *beleving*, which, while closely related to the idea of experience (*ervaring*) is not simply, and without further ado, synonymous.'[81] This description of experience speaks of two levels, rather like the analysis of faith referred to earlier. Kennedy says that '*Beleving* could be understood as the moment of actually *living through* a new contact with a previously unencountered reality.'[82] It could also indicate this kind of contact with any reality, whether previously encountered or not. It is the experiential aspect of the way of life that is lived.

The 'further refinement' that Schillebeeckx's account of praxis receives in *III* fits well with this interpretation.[83] According to Kennedy, Schillebeeckx examines praxis here 'under the rubric of the *sequela Jesu*, that is, in terms of a way of life that attempts to emulate Jesus' way of life.'[84] Following Jesus has a positive and a negative aspect: 'To begin with, it is a way of life that rejects oppressive powers in favour of an audacious human commitment to the poor and oppressed. On the other hand, it is a *via crucis*, a way of suffering and of the cross.' In this relational dialectic of critical positivity and critical negativity, '*praxis is resistance and surrender.*'[85]

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[79] Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception, as cited in Richard Kearney, *Modern Movements in European Philosophy: Phenomenology, Critical Theory, Structuralism*, Second edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 75.

[80] This expression is found, for example, in Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 5-7 and is drawn from Eberhard Jüngel and Gerhard Ebeling, although Schillebeeckx notes that he uses the term in 'a somewhat different way' (*IR*, p. 143, n.2). The analysis from Kennedy that follows is based on material found in *Gerechtigheid en Liefde*, esp. pp. 26-30; cf. *II*, pp. 31-36.

[81] Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, p. 267.

[82] Ibid., p. 267.

[83] Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, p. 336.

[84] Ibid., p. 337.

[85] Ibid. Cf. Schillebeeckx's comments about 'the power (dynamis) of a defenceless and disarming love' (Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 319) and 'the cognitive power which is peculiar to the story of a "pathic" praxis' (Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 178).

The development of the theoretical and practical components of praxis takes place in a similar fashion to the description offered earlier. 'According to the Christian confession of faith, a non-theoretical but practical prolepsis or anticipation of the new world is given in Jesus'.[86] Although Jesus did not present a fully developed theory of definitive eschatological salvation, it would be wrong to say that he had no idea where he was headed. As Christians follow him consistently and authentically they, too, enter into 'the praxis of the kingdom of God [... a] way of life [... which] gives orientation and direction to the action of Christians in the world.'[87] The orders of priority in the earlier material can also be detected: 'The question which arises here (in connection with the *fides qua*) is that of the primacy of the Christian story and Christian praxis over all theological theory.' Also, at the same time: 'Liberating action in faith does not call for less but more critical-theological analysis.'[88] Praxis, here, is articulated in yet another way – as well as being a way of living, it is also a story of life, something that harmonizes easily with the narrative style of Schillebeeckx's later philosophical theology. If those who live the lifestyle of the praxis of the reign of God are following Jesus, the story of their lives and that of his are related. Thus, the structure of Schillebeeckx's trilogy can be seen to flow quite naturally from this idea of the *sequela Jesu*: the story of Jesus – the Story of a Living One – is closely related to the Human Story – a Story of Justice and Love, of Grace and Liberation – which, as a result, can be portrayed as the Story of God.[89]

Schillebeeckx's way of doing theology

If, as this section has argued, praxis is the relational dialectic of theory and practice, why does Schillebeeckx not make this clearer? After all, his lack of clarity leads to a great deal of

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[86] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 176.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid., p. 178.

[89] Cf. the Dutch titles of the trilogy: *Jezus, het verhaal van een levende*, *Gerechtigheid en liefde: Genade en bevrijding* and *Mensen als verhaal van God* respectively.

confusion in the interpretation of his oeuvre, as well as entailing extensive detective work on the part of his interpreters. There are two possible reasons for this.

The first concerns the narrative character of Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology, which is markedly rhetorical. In this style of writing, the main concern of the author is that the reader catches the drift of the argument, coming to see where the author is headed.[90] Interestingly, this tendency could actually be seen as Schillebeeckx putting his theory about praxis into practice. The theoretical structure of his philosophical theology is refined, develops a better fit with the complexities of the Christian way of life that he is seeking to trace, as he works and reworks the material. He has a structure in mind at the start of the process, it is true, but this structure is shaped in and through the process of writing. It might not be too much of an exaggeration to say that, from this point of view, he can be understood as being engaged in the praxis of philosophical theology in the whole of his oeuvre.

Secondly, the way that he interacts with the work of other authors is also significant. When he uses materials he has found in the work of others, he is often 'thinking with somebody else's head'[91] and in this process, the distinction between analysis and interpretation is often unclear. An additional difficulty is the way that he takes on what he has read and makes it his own, intertwining strands from quite different schools of thought that he has come across in his voracious reading.[92] Finally, in his use of others, Schillebeeckx very rarely rejects a view outright. He seems to have an almost personal difficulty saying 'No'. This results in another rhetorical device that he frequently uses: rather then deny the views of his interlocutors, Schillebeeckx tends to affirm those aspects of them that he thinks are true, in order to invite them

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[90] This is the major concern of Schillebeeckx – he wants to engage his readers. When reading his work, it is the drift of his argument that is the important thing to try to catch. (Ted Schoof, conversation with Erik Borgman and Ted Schoof, 16 August 2004, Nijmegen).

[91] A phrase used by Erik Borgman, conversation, 16 August 2004, Nijmegen.

[92] Schoof, conversation, 16 August 2004, Nijmegen.

to move on together with him. The aim is to get them to head with him in the direction he is going.[93]

The Relational Dialectic of Mysticism and Politics

Schillebeeckx also uses praxis to speak of the relational dialectic of mysticism and politics. He admits that 'the harmonising of a contemplative approach with a concern for liberation seems to be an attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable.'[94] This first impression, however, is inaccurate – not surprisingly, given Schillebeeckx's markedly non-polar way of thinking and his Dominican way of life.[95] In fact, as he correlates these two terms, a great deal of structural similarity can be discerned with the relational dialectic of theory and practice.

Correlating Mysticism and Politics

Schillebeeckx is well aware that these terms are extremely slippery in academic discourse,[96] so, somewhat unusually, he defines his terms as he begins.[97] He says that mysticism is 'an intensive form of experience of God or love of God' or 'an intensive form of prayer' and that politics is 'an intensive form of social commitment' or 'socio-political involvement'.[98] He explicitly says that politics is not restricted to 'the political activity of professional politicians *per se*'[99] and also holds that mysticism is not restricted to a small group of extraordinary people called mystics. He thus refuses to separate mysticism and politics from one another, to make them the domain of

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[93] Borgman, conversation, 16 August 2004, Nijmegen.

[94] Schillebeeckx, *II*, p. 806.

[95] Kennedy says that, in his material on mysticism and politics, Schillebeeckx transposes 'two central themes of Dominican spiritual life – contemplation ('*contemplatio*'/mysticism) and action ('*actio*'/politics)' into his writing. (*Schillebeeckx*, p. 5).

[96] Schillebeeckx, 'Jeruzalem of Benares?', p. 272; parallel *JWC*, p. 71.

[97] His account is found in another cluster of parallel texts. The main sources are 'Jeruzalem of Benares', an English translation of part of which can be found in *The Schillebeeckx Reader* (pp. 272-74) and *JWC* (pp. 70-75). This material is also sampled and expanded upon in 'The Role of History' and 'You Cannot Arbitrarily Make Something of the Gospel!' Elements can also be found in *IR* and *GAU*.

[98] In each pair of definitions, the first comes from Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, pp. 71-72; parallel 'Jeruzalem of Benares?', p. 272 and the second from 'The Role of History', p. 318.

[99] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, pp. 71-72; parallel 'Jeruzalem of Benares?', p. 272.

specialists. Both forms of commitment – to God and to the world – are open to all Christians. The form of mysticism that Schillebeeckx has in mind is one 'which goes out to man from and with the experience of God in the heart.' He thus approves of Eckhart's view that 'the model of all mysticism is not Mary, who is preoccupied with mysticism, but Martha, who is urgently concerned with other people.'[100] For Schillebeeckx, the mystic does not have to withdraw into solitude in order to experience God.[101] His is an 'ordinary mysticism':[102] 'experience of God – call it mysticism, without thereby meaning extraordinary things – is the heart of all human salvation'.[103]

In a way that is typical of relational dialectic, he says that mysticism and politics 'are each bound to be at the heart of each other.'[104] This mutual correlation stops both forms of commitment going to extremes: 'Politics without prayer or mysticism quickly becomes grim and barbaric; prayer or mysticism without political love quickly becomes sentimental and irrelevant

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[100] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 122.

[101] A Lonergonian approach to mystical experience would characterize it as a withdrawal into the *ultima solitudo* of contact with God, dropping all the constraints of language and culture. (See Lonergan, *Method*, p. 29, Rende, p. 165, n. 26; cf. Rixon, 'Bernard Lonergan and Mysticism', pp. 491-492). Again, as in Lonergan's epistemology, there is more than a hint of the non-noetic dynamism of the human spirit reaching out to God here. But if the contact is completely non-conceptual, how does the mystic know that this is an experience of *God*? A De Petterian argument seems possible here, too. If the dynamism operates in and through the situated character of the mystic's cultural-linguistic and conceptual world, then, though God cannot be captured in human concepts, it is possible to reach out for God successfully in human experience. Furthermore, in principle, this can happen in any genuinely human experience. For Schillebeeckx, then, the mystic goes out into action with and on behalf of others, especially the poor. (See, for example, Edward Schillebeeckx, 'A Glass of Water for a Fellow Human Being', *GAU*, pp. 59-62). There is a similar idea in the Salesian tradition: Francis de Sales speaks of three kinds of ecstasy or rapture, the third of which he calls 'the crown of the two others, – the ecstasy of act and life.' (see Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, trans. by Henry Benedict Mackey, 2nd edn (London: Burns and Oates, Preface dated 1884), Book 7, Chapters 4, 6 and 7 (pp. 294-95 and 298-303, quote from p. 299)). He also speaks of meditation, contemplation and action as the three stages of mystical theology in *Treatise*, Book 6 (pp. 231-80) and says that good resolutions, put into action, 'are the fruit of meditation, which would be useless without them' (Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, trans. by Michael Day (London: Burns and Oates, 1956), p. 60).

[102] This term is also found in Rahner. Patricia Carroll notes that Rahner said that '"the Christian of the future will be a mystic or will not be a Christian any more." By "mystic", he meant a person who has had a "genuine experience of God emerging from the very heart of our existence".' (Patricia Carroll, 'Moving Mysticism to the Centre: Karl Rahner (1904-1984)', *The Way*, 43.4 (October 2004), 41-52 (p. 41, citing Rahner, *Theological Investigations* 20, p. 149)). She comments on this that Rahner is 'moving mysticism from the margins of Christian life to the centre; this version of mysticism is not a mark of the privileged soul, but rather a feature of people's everyday experience as they struggle to live the Christian way of life.' (Ibid.) See also the treatment of the interchangeability of the languages of mysticism and grace that gives rise to Rahner's notion of 'ordinary mysticism' in Endean, p. 31.

[103] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 122.

[104] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 318.

interiority.'[105] This is not, however, because both *relata* have an inner tendency to pull apart, as in polar dialectic, but because Schillebeeckx is talking about 'an inseparable two-in-oneness' that characterizes Christian faith:[106] politics without mysticism and mysticism without politics may be ways of living (though they are far from ideal, far from fully human, ways) but they are not Christian ways of life.

The Role of Theology

Schillebeeckx says that it is important for theology 'to emphasise that we are confronted with a God who is concerned with man and who also wants us to be concerned with mankind.' This statement is not merely about socio-political action, but 'points at one and the same time to both the mystical and the political implication of following Jesus.' He stresses that the praxis of following Jesus is about striving for social and political liberation, and that it is precisely in and through this struggle that the God who is the source of all liberation is experienced.[107] There is a similar structure here to that which was observed with regard to theory and practice. Whilst it is not the case that the believer must first work out a complete concept of the liberating God or have a mystical experience of God in order to take part in liberating action, some idea or experience of God must be involved – the believer must have faith in God as liberator, faith that motivates his or her action. As the believer participates in liberating action, God is experienced and the concept of God as the source of all genuine liberation develops. Theology, which has a vital role to play in clarifying concepts of God, can help this dynamic interplay.

Accordingly, on the one hand, 'experience of God is [...] the animating aspect of guidance of a concrete praxis of liberation', which means that 'Christian redemption is more than

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[105] Schillebeeckx, 'Jeruzalem of Benares?', p. 272; parallel *JWC*, p. 75.
[106] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 75.
[107] Schillebeeckx, 'You Cannot Arbitrarily Make Something of the Gospel!', p. 18.

emancipatory self-liberation.'[108] There is a depth-dimension to the Christian praxis of liberation that cannot be found in political action in itself, a depth-dimension that arises from the relational dialectic of mysticism and politics. On the other hand, this redemption is not just about the salvation of souls, 'but the healing, making whole, wholeness of the whole person, in a natural world which is not abused.'[109] The depth-dimension of praxis is therefore applicable to both terms, meaning that, in the final analysis, 'Not "Lord, Lord, Alleluia" but praxis is decisive.'[110]

Active and Passive Aspects

This correlation of mysticism and politics is not one of successive passive and active moments, as in Lonergan's description of mystical experience. [111] There is, in fact, no need to restrict mystical encounter with God to a passive receptivity if a De Petterian approach to it is taken. Mysticism is not understood by Schillebeeckx as a unique form of experience, but as 'an intensive form of prayer'.[112] In all prayer, the believer reaches out for God in an analogous way to that in which God is reached out for conceptually. Endean's desire to replace the Maréchalian non-noetic dynamism of the human spirit with a passive Spiritual Touch, inspired by Rahner's early work on Bonaventure, is motivated by his recognition that Rahner needs to be corrected when he says that mystical encounter with God is wordless.[113]

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[108] Schillebeeckx, 'Jeruzalem of Benares?', pp. 273-74; parallel *JWC*, p. 74. Also cf. Schillebeeckx's comment that 'Christian salvation also comprises ecological, social and political aspects, though it is not exhausted by these. Christian salvation is more than that, but it is that, too.' (*GAU*, p. 100).

[109] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 100.

[110] Schillebeeckx, 'Jeruzalem of Benares?', p. 274; parallel *JWC*, p. 274.

[111] In Lonergan, the experience of religious conversion at the heart of mystical experience is the flooding of the *apex animae* with the gift of God's love, received passively and only subsequently actively reflected upon. (Lonergan, *Method*, pp. 106-7, 115, 122, 240 and 277-78). See also Rixon, 'Bernard Lonergan and Mysticism', 'Transforming Mysticism: Adorning Pathways to Self-Transcendence' and 'Bernard Lonergan to Thomas O'Malley, November 8, 1978', for an argument that Lonergan's appreciation and appropriation of mysticism towards the end of his life is of crucial importance for understanding not only his notion of religious conversion, but his whole philosophical theology.

[112] Schillebeeckx, 'Role of History', p. 318.

[113] This is a creative completion of Rahner, and Endean admits as much, but it is one that he claims is Rahnerian in approach, and succeeds in rescuing Rahner from his 'dogmatic slumbers'. (See Endean, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*, esp. pp. 27-31. On Rahner's dogmatic slumbers, see pp. 21 and 54).

If, however, a direction for the noetic reach that is experience of God is established by appropriate concepts of God,[114] then could Robert Browning perhaps be nearer to the mark when he says: 'Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,/ Or what's a heaven for?'[115] Translating Schillebeeckx somewhat loosely, admittedly, it might even be possible to say that 'we grope towards God - and even make it - but we never get a grip on him.'[116] Mystical prayer, like all prayer, is an activity of the believer.[117]

Praxis and Ethics

Schillebeeckx explicitly says that ethics is 'a link between the mystical and the political dimensions of Christian belief in God',[118] so how are ethics and praxis related? As he clarifies his position, he speaks of the 'theologal or mystical dimension in political form',[119] thus bringing to bear on this relation the term *theologaal*, which he often uses to speak of a depth-dimension. He says that it is not a question of which to prioritize: 'Love of humankind and love of God are one and the same theologal virtue in the Christian tradition'.[120]

Theologaal behaviour is more than ethical behaviour, for Schillebeeckx. 'Cohumanity,' he says, 'is, at least in the christian tradition of experience, not only intended as an ethical but,

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[114] See Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 175 and Chapter Five.

[115] Robert Browning, *Andrea del Sarto*, in *Browning: Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Somon Nowell-Smith (London: Hart-Davis, 1950), pp. 327-34, lines 97-98.

[116] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'we grijpen naar God, Hem nochtans niet be-grijpen' (Edward Schillebeeckx, 'Het niet-begrippelijk kenmoment in onze Godskennis volgens Thomas van Aquino', in *Openbaring en Theologie (Theologische Peilingen Deel I)* (Bilthoven: Nelissen, 1964), pp. 201-32 (pp. 211-12) (Henceforth *O&T*).

[117] Again, a Salesian parallel can be drawn here. Pascual Chávez Villanueva points out that, although the primary attitude in prayer is to be silent and to listen to God, this is not something 'without either activity or meaning'. It 'must be a reverent and welcoming silence [...,] an active silence', so the believer is not purely passive in the union with God in prayer. (Pascual Chávez Villanueva, 'The Word of God and Salesian Life Today', *Acts of the General Council of the Salesian Society of St John Bosco*, 386 (Year LXXXV, July-September 2004), 3-52 (p. 23)). To draw the parallel more explicitly: in the silence of contemplative union, the believer reaches out for God on the one hand, whilst on the other hand, God at the same time stirs the very depths of his or her being.

[118] Section heading, Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 65.

[119] Section heading, Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 70.

[120] Ibid. The term 'theologal', often used in published translations of Schillebeeckx, is retained here because it is in the text of *JWC*. As has been indicated previously, in this study, the Dutch term *theologaal* is preferred in order to highlight the particular and unusual meaning that Schillebeeckx intends.

rather, as a *theologaal* aim (the tradition calls it a "virtus theologica")."[121] Because of its basis in this *theologaal* attitude to life, the 'christian tradition thus sees in cohumanity a religious depth-dimension'[122] that need not be present in ethics, which can just as easily be atheistic. Thus, this *theologaal* aspect of ethics, whilst not separate from it, has a surplus that cannot be exhausted by ethical behaviour. As such, *theologaal* behaviour is prior to ethical behaviour, because it cannot be captured by it. This depth-dimension of Christian praxis also reveals the way that the believer's cohumanity is related to God's concern for humanity, in a way that begins to prepare the ground for the next section. 'In the Jewish and Christian tradition of faith', says Schillebeeckx, 'God is always experienced as a God concerned for humanity who also wants 'people of God' who are concerned for humanity.'[123]

In conclusion, ethical praxis, the praxis of liberation, or the praxis of the reign of God that is following Jesus, describes a relational dialectic which has its depth-dimension in *theologaal* behaviour. This behaviour can be seen, on the one hand, in political action and the development of ethical theory. On the other hand, it also, at the same time, helps to develop a particular concept of God (as Pure Positivity) and the *theologaal* relationship of faith that the believer has with God. This analysis makes it possible to see a four term structure to the relational dialectic of mysticism and politics that incorporates the relational dialectic of theory and practice within it.[124] The praxis of the reign of God is thus revealed to be a proportional

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[121] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 121; parallels *GAU*, p. 101 and *III*, p. 233). Dutch text: 'Medemenselijkheid [...] is althans in de christelijke ervaringstraditie niet alleen bedoeld als ethische maar veeleer als *theologale* gerichtheid ("virtus theologica", zei de traditie).' (*TV*, p. 138; exact parallel *EV*, p. 102; parallel *Mensen*, p. 251). Schillebeeckx says elsewhere that 'there was a point in Thomas Aquinas calling love of neighbour a *virtus theologalis*, a 'divine virtue' (and not just ethics).' (*II*, p. 792) See also the structurally similar comment that 'Christian brotherly love is essentially a *religious* event, a religious task, and not simply "morality."' (*G&M*, p. 222).

[122] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 121; parallels *GAU*, p. 101 and *III*, p. 233). Dutch text: 'De christelijke traditie ziet dus in de medemenselijkheid een goddienstige dieptedimensie' (*TV*, p. 138; exact parallel *EV*, p. 102; parallel *Mensen*, p. 251).

[123] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 72; parallel in 'Jeruzalem of Benares?', p. 272.

[124] This portrayal of praxis is not meant to replace the earlier ones suggested here. It is, rather, intended to show that praxis is a complex phenomenon in Schillebeeckx which can be analysed on a number of levels, each of which draws out distinctive characteristics that can be of use in particular situations.

norm – it is in the dialectical correlation of the theory and practice of politics, on the one hand, and of mysticism on the other, that this praxis finds its critical and productive force.

Humanism

Schillebeeckx's praxis of the reign of God consistently expresses a humanistic approach to the Christian way of life. If his own understanding of history is applied here, the relational dialectic that he uses in his later expressions of Christian humanism can be seen to be in structural continuity with its earlier perspectivist manifestations, in and through the conjunctural breaks that distinguish them. Kennedy and Thompson describe Schillebeeckx's early work as a form of perspectivism and Schillebeeckx himself advocates a perspectivist approach to human knowledge.[125] He uses the vocabulary of aspect theory, saying that 'the secular and the sacral [...] form real aspects of human presence with God'[126] and speaks in a similar way of the relation of the body and mind to the human person.[127] Perspectivist theories, in their various forms, can be used to express both realist and anti-realist ontologies.[128] They are also seen to hold promise for the development and expression of critical realist language-rich theology.[129]

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[125] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 8; Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, pp. 84 and 383; Thompson, p. 16 and pp. 168-69, n. 36.

[126] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 226. Also cf. *G&M*, p. 13.

[127] Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 240. This is dual aspect theory in its most common form, a 'theory that mental and physical are two properties of some underlying reality which is intrinsically neither mental nor physical.' (Stephen Priest, *Theories of the Mind* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 150). Two of its best-known proponents are Baruch Spinoza and Peter Strawson (see Jerome A., Shaffer *Philosophy of Mind* (Englewood Cliffs; London: Prentice-Hall, 1968), pp. 51-53).

[128] See the distinctions made between 'hard' and 'soft' perspectivism (James Wm. Jr. McClendon and James M. Smith, *Understanding Religious Convictions* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975) (pp. 6-7)); 'strong' and 'weak' perspectivism (Bernard Reginster, 'Perspectivism, Criticism and Freedom of Spirit', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 8 (2000), 40-62 (p. 40)); and 'relativism' and 'perspectivism' (Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988) (p. 352)). In each case, the latter is compatible with realism, whereas the former is anti-realist. (Schillebeeckx says that his perspectivism is not reductive in *LF*, pp. 59-60).

[129] See Patterson, *Realist Christian Theology*, pp. 13-14, 74 and Janet Soskice, 'Knowledge and Experience in Science and Religion: Can We be Realists?', in *Physics, Philosophy and Theology: A Common Quest for Understanding*, ed. by Robert J. Russell, William R. Stoeger and George V. Coyne (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), pp. 173-183 (pp. 179 and 182-83). This position is not uncontroversial, however, as some infer that any theology supporting 'the "linguisticality of reality"' is thereby anti-realist (see Abdul-Masih, pp. 77, n.

This latter possibility is explored in a lively dialogue between Patterson and Soskice. The shift from naïve realism to critical realism involves, according to both authors, a move away from 'truth as direct correspondence'.[130] Patterson, however, asserts that the need for verification, undertaken by naïve realism to prove correspondence, lingers as a source of embarrassment for the critical realist.[131] In its place, she proposes 'a certainty of practice which is itself ungrounded', the basis of which she finds in Wittgenstein and Polanyi. In this form of realism, 'certainty is [...] a matter of living according to patterns or axioms generated by our communal experience,' which it would make no sense to doubt .[132] This proposal, says Soskice, removes not only the possibility of verification, but of falsification as well. Critical realists need to be able 'to say that some things, like gratuitous inequalities and oppressive structures, "are wrong"'.[133] Even though certainty is never attainable, there may be warning signs 'that we have got things wrong', which can be found in 'the suffering of our fellow men and women and the suffering of creation',[134] which make it clear that there is still progress to be made towards the truth.

Rather than represent this progress towards truth in terms of verification or falsification, Bernard Reginster says that 'perspectivism is a claim about reasons, or justification.'[135] He points out that Nietzsche displays little of the 'modesty and tolerance' that some maintain must

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2 and 82). Critical realism overcomes this problem by emphasising that human knowledge is always mediated by metaphors and models, so that the correspondence of language and reality is not direct, as naïve realism holds. (See Alister E. McGrath, *Science and Religion: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), cited in Brad Shipway, 'Critical Realism and Theological Critical Realism: Opportunities for Dialogue?', *Alethia*, 3.2 (November 2000), 29-33 (p. 29); Janet Martin Soskice, 'The Truth Looks Different From Here, or On Seeking the Unity of Truth From a Diversity of Perspectives', in *Christ and Context: The Confrontation Between Gospel and Culture*, ed. by Hilary D. Regan and Alan J. Torrance (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), pp. 43-59 (p. 50); Sue Patterson, 'Response by Sue Patterson', in *Christ and Context*, pp. 63-72 (p. 63) and also Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, passim.).

[130] Soskice, 'The Truth Looks Different From Here', p. 49. See also Patterson, 'Response', p. 63.

[131] Patterson, 'Response', pp. 65-66.

[132] Ibid., p. 67.

[133] Soskice, 'The Truth Looks Different From Here', pp. 53-54. Her position, that consistency is not the only indicator of truth, sounds similar to Schillebeeckx's distinction between *fides qua* and *fides quae* and his example of the consistent Nazi earlier.

[134] Soskice, 'The Truth Looks Different From Here', p. 58.

[135] Bernard Reginster, 'Perspectivism, Criticism and Freedom of Spirit', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 8 (2000), 40-62 (p. 43).

characterize perspectivist theories,[136] and that this strident character is at the service of challenging the justification of his opponents' theories. In order to do this, a distinction is made between 'showing that a *view* is wrong and showing that an agent is wrong to *hold* it'.[137] The first task progresses by demonstrating that there are reasons why one should not accept the view of one's opponent, whereas the second argues that the justification offered by one's interlocutor for their view is inadequate. In arguing against an opponent's view, the terms used are those by which one would 'establish the rightness or wrongness of any view, namely *those provided by [one's] own perspective*.'[138] In contending that an opponent is wrong to hold their view, it is assessed using the terms of their perspective. The interplay between these two tasks enacts a third, because criticising an opponent is at least sometimes 'part of an effort to *change someone's mind*, for example to bring [them] over to our way of thinking.'[139]

This analysis can be applied to Schillebeeckx's critical realism, in which he is willing to 'bracket out' elements of his own perspective in order to show that his opponents are wrong to hold their view.[140] Such perspectivism is very much akin to that of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, recognized by many as a major influence on the early Schillebeeckx.[141] Merleau-Ponty speaks of the inexhaustibility of physical objects, such that 'that there is always more to discover, always another way in principle in which they can be perceived.'[142] In the phenomenological analysis of human language, 'judgment about reality is suspended and that reality is, as it were, placed in

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[136] Reginster, p. 41, mentioning in particular MacIntyre. John Gilmour also traces perspectivism back to Nietzsche (see John C. Gilmour, 'Perspectivism and Postmodern Criticism', *The Monist*, 73 (1990), 233-46).

[137] Reginster, p. 49.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid., p. 50.

[140] Borgman, for example, says that Schillebeeckx's work, more than that of most thinkers, can be described as a 'conversation' with other authors he has read and with those he is writing for. He points out that the language and concepts that Schillebeeckx uses are those 'of the conversation as it is being carried on at the moment that he is writing.' (Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, p. 13).

[141] Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, p. 48; Hill, 'A Theology in Transition', *PRG*, p. 11, Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, p. 43 and *Schillebeeckx*, p. 66. This openness of theology to contemporary philosophy was encouraged by De Petter, Schillebeeckx's mentor in his philosophical studies (see Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, p. 123; Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, pp. 20 and 40; Thompson, p. 14).

[142] Matthews, *Twentieth-Century French Philosophy*, pp. 90-91.

brackets. [...] All that is involved is the structure of the phenomenon as such.' This could be interpreted as a necessarily anti-realist stance, but Schillebeeckx stresses: 'In itself, this reduction has no metaphysical claims.'[143] As a result, he can use perspectivism in the service of critical realism.

Christian and Atheistic Secular Humanism – Distinct and Related

Humanism can be defined in many ways, some of which are deliberately designed to rule out particular capacities. The point of Schillebeeckx's humanism is precisely to include all human possibilities and it can therefore be defined as 'human experience orientated on full human life',[144] or 'the humanization of the world and of man.'[145] Although for some who call themselves Humanists, human progress is made at the expense of God,[146] in Schillebeeckx's way of thinking, 'it is not necessary to negate the honour of humanity in order to affirm the honour of God.'[147] In fact, he says that 'God's honour lies in the happiness, in the flourishing of the man and woman in the world, who seek their honour in God'.[148]

Schillebeeckx, then, does not see Christian humanism and its atheistic secular counterpart as being fundamentally at odds. The praxis of humanization is an aspect of life that has its own autonomy and value, a process 'in which anyone who is sensitive to general human values can participate. On this level the Christian can claim nothing as his own.'[149] Of course, autonomy is not independence for Schillebeeckx, so he does not agree that the secular aspect of life can be

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[143] Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism (Theological Soundings V)*, trans. by N.D. Smith (London: Sheed and Ward, 1974), pp. 26-27 (Henceforth *UF*).

[144] Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, p. 88.

[145] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 225.

[146] See Schillebeeckx's characterization of the Dutch Humanist Society in *G&M*, pp. 41-84 and his comment that 'nowadays, for every step forward man takes, God has to take a step backwards.' (*G&M*, p. 4).

[147] Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 7.

[148] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 115-16; parallel *GAU*, p. 94). Dutch text: 'Gods eer ligt in het geluk, in het welvaren van de mens in de wereld, die hun eer in God zoeken' (*TV*, p. 131; parallel *EV*, p. 94). This is, in fact, a rendering of an axiom from Irenaeus of Lyons, which will be considered in the last section of this chapter.

[149] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 225.

removed from the absolute presence of the Creator God. Neither does he hold that Christian humanism should attempt to form a separate Christian culture, as seems to be the emphasis of Jacques Maritain's 'heroic humanism'.[150] Schillebeeckx, rather, advocates a humble humanism – humble both in the sight of the world and its possibilities and in the sight of God – a humanism that seeks to 'reconcile man's sense of God with his awareness of himself.'[151]

Thus, Christian humanism and atheistic secular humanism are not opposed, but distinct and related. Schillebeeckx points out that the debate between the two 'does not then consist in a denial by the believers of the possibilities of which the non-believers speak', but arises because believers take into account possibilities that non-believers refuse to entertain, 'the ultimate possibilities implied by a fundamental relationship with God.'[152] In a way that is typical both of his early perspectivism and his later relational dialectic, he says that being a Christian is 'a dimension in depth which includes all the superficial dimensions of being in the world', causing 'the whole of our being to enter a new mystery.'[153]

This means that atheistic secular humanists have expressed some aspects of human life correctly, even though their account is incomplete. He says that their 'concept of man [...] may well be a true concept of man, capable of yielding fundamental insights' for the Christian as well as the atheist.[154] He is willing, then, to adopt their concepts in order to 'find common ground for dialogue',[155] a common ground not found in sameness, but in relation. Atheist secular humanists understand their concepts of humanity in an atheistic context; transferring those concepts into a

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[150] Borgman points out that Schillebeeckx's early expressions of humanism are made partly in response to this idea of Maritain's, put forward in *True Humanism*, trans. by Margot Adamson (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1938), p. xii (Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, pp. 95-97 and p. 396, nn. 74 and 69).

[151] Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 23. See the rest of the article 'Humble Humanism' in *W&C*, pp. 19-31 and the majority of both *W&C* and *G&M*. (Also see references to 'Humble Humanism' and to Edward Schillebeeckx, 'Christelijke situatie' (Parts I to III), *Kultuurleven* 12 (1945), 82-95, 229-242 and 585-611, in the section entitled 'Supernatural exclusivism' in Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, pp. 93-99).

[152] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, pp. 213.

[153] Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 10.

[154] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 212.

[155] Ibid.

context of faith changes them, revealing a depth that is not present in the original setting. This shows both that atheistic secular humanism is less than fully justified and also that Christian humanism is better justified, along lines suggested by Reginster.

Critical Affirmation: The Value of Atheistic Secular Humanism

Schillebeeckx's critical affirmation of atheistic secular humanism has two aspects. On the one hand, he is willing to accept and use some of their terminology and emphases in the desire to find common ground for dialogue, as just outlined. On the other hand, he is also willing to accept elements of their critique of religion. In both these ways, he recognizes that the atheists have got some things right. Theology, he says, 'is a reflection in the light of faith about the content of human experience which has already been made explicit in the natural sphere by philosophy'. Because of this, 'the theologian has constantly to return to the anthropological insights of the philosopher and include them in the totality of faith.'[156] Schillebeeckx is open to insights about the *humanum* and about praxis on its behalf from many sources.

Rosino Gibellini observes that Schillebeeckx draws inspiration from 'what Bloch calls the "threatened *humanum*" and [...] what Ricoeur calls the "desirable *humanum*"'.[157] As a result of his encounter with critical theory and hermeneutics, Schillebeeckx begins to voice the dynamic interplay between the positive and the negative, which was always part of his philosophical theology,[158] in new ways. Making use of Ernst Bloch's '"principle of hope"',[159] which 'expresses itself negatively in resistance to every threat to the *humanum*', [160] he begins to

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[156] Schillebeeckx, *W&C* p. 230.

[157] Rosino Gibellini, 'Introduction: Honest to the World: The Frontier Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx' in Schillebeeckx, *HT*, pp. ix-xiv (p. xiv).

[158] See, for example, the account of the interplay between negative and positive moments in Schillebeeckx's early epistemology in Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, pp. 112-119.

[159] Edward Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man (Theological Soundings 5,1)*, trans. by N.D. Smith (London: Sheed and Ward, 1969), p. 180, citing Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1954) (p. 204, n. 4). (Henceforth *GFM*).

[160] Schillebeeckx, *UF*, p. 95.

speak of the function of faith as 'critical negativity'.[161] In a way that is characteristic of Schillebeeckx, the 'No!' that this negative aspect provokes is, however, not ultimate: 'All our negative experiences cannot brush aside the "nonetheless" of the trust which is revealed in man's critical resistance and which prevents us from simply surrendering man, human society and the world entirely to total meaninglessness.'[162] This transformation of the 'No!' of critical negativity into 'Nevertheless!' is effected by the critical positivity that counterweights it, in an analogous way to the counterweight of the absolute presence of God in Schillebeeckx's critical creation-faith. This critical positivity draws on Ricoeur's account of 'what is "humanly desirable"'.[163] Though this cannot be definitively formulated at the outset, humans have some idea of it, which develops as a result of action, as well as in and through 'situations which are unworthy of man.'[164]

Schillebeeckx's appropriation of these ideas effects a conjunctural break in his account of what is genuinely human, making him less likely to posit a theological definition of man to complement and complete secular ones than he was earlier.[165] In this regard, the influence of existentialism can also be detected, something that is not entirely absent from the earlier material either. In a one-page summary of existentialism's tendency to look 'for its humanism at the zero-point of the free will which itself decides what life is worth', he cites a cluster of texts by its major thinkers.[166] He agrees that 'being man is a *becoming* man [...], a task and not a reality which is already given and finished, as it were, behind our body, even before we make our

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[161] Schillebeeckx, *GFM*, p. 191 (see p. 205, n. 8, where he says that he has 'borrowed' this idea from Theodor Adorno's *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966), one that 'had already indirectly suggested to me by P. Ricoeur, among others, and especially by his perspicacious article "Tâches de l'educateur politique" in *Esprit* 33 (1965), no. 340, pp. 78-93.').

[162] Schillebeeckx, *UF*, pp. 96-97.

[163] Schillebeeckx, *GFM*, p. 191.

[164] Ibid.

[165] See, for example, Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, pp. 216-17.

[166] Schillebeeckx, W&C, p. 3, citing an article by Simone de Beauvoir (W&C, p. 3, n. 5), Sartre's *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* and *L'être et le néant*, Merleau-Ponty's *Sens et non-sens* (Paris : Nagel, 1948) and Albert Camus's *Le mythe de Sisyphe* (Paris : Gallimard, 1943). (W&C, p. 4, nn. 6-9).

appearance actively in the world.'[167] The conjunctural shift to a more critical stance is recognizable in Schillebeeckx's acknowledgment that the 'Christian has as little positive idea [of what is truly worthy of man] as the non-Christian.'[168] It finds its definitive expression, nonetheless, in his insistence that there is no 'pre-existing definition of humanity – indeed for Christians it is not only a future, but an eschatological reality',[169] which serves as a springboard for his proposal of seven 'anthropological constants', which serve 'as a kind of system of coordinates'[170] for the *humanum* in his later philosophical theology.

This presents once again the relational dialectic of praxis and can also be seen as a way that Schillebeeckx appropriates elements of Marxism. He affirms its aim 'to give man the world as a sphere of work', saying that this is a way of emphasizing the 'human dignity of work.'[171] Schillebeeckx can thus be seen to affirm what he calls 'Marx's acid comment'[172] that 'philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it.'[173] He also agrees with the criticism that 'a religion which – no matter how – is in fact actively *dehumanizing*, is either a false religion or a religion which understands itself wrongly.'[174] Speaking merely of the salvation of souls, then, is reductive of Christian salvation, which is

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[167] Schillebeeckx, *W&C* pp. 241.

[168] Schillebeeckx, *GFM*, p. 191.

[169] Schillebeeckx, *II*, p. 731; parallel 'Questions on Christian Salvation', *LF*, p. 110. (This is also a theme in *GFM*, pp. 191-99).

[170] Schillebeeckx, *II*, p. 734; parallel Schillebeeckx, 'Questions on Christian Salvation', *LF*, p. 113.

[171] Schillebeeckx, W*&C*, p. 3.

[172] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 165.

[173] Karl Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach' (original version), in *The German Ideology* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1998), pp. 569-71 (p. 571). For the significance of this approach for Schillebeeckx, also see Schillebeeckx, *UF*, pp. 124-25; *II*, pp. 707-15 and Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 50.

[174] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 105; see also *GAU*, p. 108; parallels *IR*, p. 131; 'I Believe', p. 23). Dutch text: 'een godsdienst die – hoe dan ook – werkelijk *ontmenselijkend* werkzaam is, is ofwel een valse godsdienst ofwel een godsdienst die zichzelf verkeerd verstaat.' (*TV*, p. 121; text of parallel is identical apart from punctuation and stress, see *EV*, p. 109). See also his critique of the 'cultural inertia' of believers and their indifference both to the development of society and to 'man's earthly dwelling place' in *G&M*, pp. 13-14.

much more than that; it is 'the healing, making whole, wholeness, of the whole person, in a natural world which is not abused.'[175]

This critical affirmation of atheistic secular humanism is only one aspect of Schillebeeckx's dialogue with it. It is an important one, however, because it shows that it is not necessary to contradict everything that an opponent holds in order to demonstrate that their perspective is inadequately justified. Or, as Schillebeeckx puts it, although secularity or 'the intramundane [...] has of itself a certain intelligibility, it remains a question whether this secularity [...] can find a complete intelligibility *within its own boundaries*.'[176] This question can, in fact, be answered in the negative, he thinks, and the reason is that wrested out of the 'theologal relationship with God [...] dialogue with the world [...] does not have a *personal* meaning.'[177] He says something similar with regard to science: 'Biologists can [...] never make any statement about the human body as such. They can make statements about man's body, but not about the human body.'[178] What Schillebeeckx is questioning is whether atheistic secular

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[175] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 100. In similar fashion, Schillebeeckx rejects the way in which life in the world is opposed to life in God by some believers, who for that reason call the former 'profane' saying that it has nothing to do with the latter (see *G&M*, pp. 13, 15 and 223-24). If this critical affirmation involves dissent, it is certainly not the kind attributed to Schillebeeckx by Thompson. His presentation makes the positions of critical theologians and the church's magisterium functionally complementary, the former prioritizing theological dissent and the latter magisterial authority. (See especially Thompson, pp. 147-162). He reads Schillebeeckx as proposing that the current task of theologians is '*to act as if the magisterium were [their] critical and dialectical partner [...] and not their absolutely authoritative master.*' (Thompson, p. 159) This is a step forward from seeing the two as intractably divided, but the dialectic proposed is markedly polar. Esteban at least places his polar tendencies in both dialogue partners, in his proposal of the need to 'dissent in the context of loyalty, and be loyal in the context of dissent'. (Rafael Esteban, 'Collaborating in a Polarised Church', *Signum*, 23,5 (May 1995), 2-14 (p. 14)). Esteban's suggestion can be more readily re-expressed in a relational dialectic: The recognition that there is something wrong with the way that the church currently is can be at the service of the church as it is called to be, challenged to become. Theologians are also called to be at the service of the praxis of the reign of God. Insofar as the church is realizing this praxis, they are called to affirm it; insofar as it is falling short, they are challenged to critique it. Thus, loyalty and dissent can exist in a relational dialectic, in which a necessary act of dissent can also be seen as an act of loyalty.

[176] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 224. Cf. *III*, pp. 232-33; parallels, *IR*, p. 121 and *GAU*, p. 101

[177] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 217.

[178] Schillebeeckx, W*&C*, p. 234.

humanism can, in fact, speak about the humanization of man and woman if it rules out the possibility of a relationship with God.[179]

Critical Negativity: The Inadequacy of Atheistic Secular Humanism

The common ground on which the encounter between Schillebeeckx and atheistic secular humanism takes place is that of finitude and contingency. At first sight, it would seem that these terms are used the same way by both, but this is not actually the case. The critically negative aspect of the perspectivist analysis presented here involves demonstrating this, thus opening up the critically positive aspect, that Schillebeeckx's use of the terms is distinct from and related to that of the atheistic secular humanist, speaking of a relational dialectic of finitude and contingency.

Kennedy says that if Schillebeeckx's account of creation is to be understood, 'it is essential to consider what he means by finitude or contingency', declaring that the two terms 'serve as synonyms in his writings and are freely interchanged.'[180] There are certainly sections of the creation parallels that give precisely this impression. For example, when Schillebeeckx examines the common error made by dualism and emanationism, he says that it aligns with 'the so-called Original sin of man [...] that man does not want to accept his finite or contingent condition'.[181] As he goes on to counter these misunderstandings, he first says: 'It is good that man is simply man, the world is simply world, i.e. not-God, contingent: they could just as well not have been there, and yet they are considered worth the trouble and the price.'[182] In the next

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[179] He says that 'exclusively secular or atheistic laicization is an *hairesis*, a tearing away of profane or secular society from the whole into which it fits, the existential relationship of faith with the living God. Only outside this connection is secular reality "profaned."' (Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 224; cf. *G&M*, p. 13).

[180] Kennedy, 'Creation', *PRG*, p. 48.

[181] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 112-13; parallel Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 92). Dutch text: 'de zgn. Oerzonde van de mens [...] dat de mens zijn eindige of contingentie conditie niet wil accepteren'. (*TV*, p. 128; parallel *EV*, p. 92).

[182] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 113). Dutch text: 'Het is goed dat de mens sléchts mens is, de wereld sléchts wereld, d.i. niet-God, contingent: ze hadden er even goed niet kunnen zijn en toch worden ze de

paragraph, he says: 'If God is creator, then, of course, He creates that which is not-divine, that which is wholly other than Himself, in other words, finite things.'[183] This seems to support the idea of interchangeability,[184] but it is worth bearing in mind that these two terms are used in different paragraphs, which will be seen to be significant as the discussion proceeds.

Schillebeeckx acknowledges that the idea 'of radical finitude as such is no longer a religious concept, as it used to be, but is usually a generally recognized reality of human experience.' In fact, he goes so far as to say: 'No one has analysed this radical finitude of being human in this contingent world better than the agnostic who was in fact a militant atheist, Jean-Paul Sartre.'[185] According to Sartre, everything 'in the messy world of existence' is 'merely contingent'. What it is 'has no necessity about it and might equally well have been otherwise'. More strongly still, it 'is not a necessary truth that there should ever have existed someone with the properties which I happen to have.'[186] For Sartre, existence precedes essence,[187] in the sense that 'Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself.'[188] This responsibility lies heavy on every man and woman, who, '"*condemned* to be free"',[189] lives in a continuous state of anguish, subject always to the threat of absurdity and meaninglessness. In their exercise of freedom, each human being becomes limited, since there is no primordial restriction: 'as a free choice of his own project of being, [man] makes himself finite by excluding other possibilities

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moeite en de prijs waard genoemd.' (*TV*, p. 129; parallel *EV*, p. 92. Surprisingly, most of this paragraph in *EV* is missing from the translation in *GAU*).

[183] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 113; parallel *GAU*, p. 92). Dutch text: 'Als God schepper is, dan schept Hij uiteraard het neit-goddeljke, het geheel andere dan Hijself is, m.a.w. eindige dingen.' (*TV*, p. 129; exact parallel *EV*, p. 93).

[184] Also see the way that Schillebeeckx speaks of contingency in Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 114; parallel *GAU*, p. 93 (*TV*, p. 130; exact parallel *EV*, p. 93) and *IR*, p. 113 (*TV*, p. 129; parallel *EV*, p. 92, in the paragraph missing in *GAU*); and of finitude in *IR*, p. 117; parallels *GAU*, p. 95 and *III*, p. 230 (*TV*, p. 133; exact parallels *EV*, p. 95 and *Mensen*, p. 248)., as referred to in Chapter Two.

[185] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 78.

[186] Eric Matthews, *Twentieth-Century French Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 64, in his presentation of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*. See, for example, the account of 'The Facticity of the For-Itself' in Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 103-108.

[187] Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, p. 26.

[188] Ibid., p. 28.

[189] Matthews, p. 67, quoting (but not referencing) Sartre.

each time he chooses the one which he prefers.'[190] For men and women, therefore, contingency is the sense of the abyss of nothingness that is absolute freedom and finitude the ever-increasing sense of limit that free choices impose. Both are thus fundamentally linked to what Schillebeeckx calls 'the basic experience of an absolute limit, of radical finitude and contingency.'[191]

He asks whether the believer's experience of contingency and that of the non-believer are the same, concluding that they are not. This might seem surprising, because the definition of contingency and the sense of being suspended above absolute nothingness are common to both.[192] He points out that this is not at all an easy question to answer, but that it is not the case that believers and non-believers have the same experience of contingency, which they subsequently interpret differently, because 'an atheist's experience of contingency is in fact an interpretative atheistic experience as such.' This makes it 'an empty contingency'[193] – void, meaningless – which is precisely Sartre's position. When he reworks this material in *TT*, Schillebeeckx again begins by saying that it is not that the two have the same experience which they then interpret differently, because this plays into the hands of the atheist, who accuses the believer of erecting 'a superfluous superstructure on top of that same experience.'[194] He says that the atheist's experience of contingency 'is "empty" – an experience of a full-stop, but for this reason boxed in on all sides.'[195]

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[190] See entry for finitude in 'Key to Special Terminology' by Hazel E. Barnes, an appendix to Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 649-656 (p. 652).

[191] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 77.

[192] Cf. Schillebeeckx's description of finitude or contingency as 'the angst' of hanging 'in a vacuum above absolute nothingness' described in Chapter Three. (Schillebeeckx, *TV*, p. 130; parallel *EV*, p. 93. Cf. *IR*, pp. 114; parallel *GAU*, p. 93).

[193] Schillebeeckx, *HT*, p. 48.

[194] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'een overbodige bovenbouw bovenop diezelfde ervaring timmeren.' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 85).

[195] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'Want in het ene geval is de contingentie-ervaring 'leeg' – een ervaring van een eindig-volle, maar hierom aan alle kanten omheinde binnenkamer' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. p. 85-86).

Schillebeeckx uses a crucial pun to make his point, showing that the Christian experience of contingency is fundamentally other to that of the atheist. As well as saying that the atheist's experience is empty, he describes it as an experience of an *eindig-volle*. *Eindig* means finite, but it can also mean limit or stop. So rather than the atheist's experience of contingency being what might be called a 'finite-full' one, it is actually a full stop, a dead end. He drives this home by saying that atheistic philosophy has come 'to accept the experience of contingency – but not so as to deify man and woman, but only to abandon him and her in their finitude'.[196] This also shows that the atheist's experience of finitude and that of the believer are not the same, because, for Schillebeeckx, no creature is ever abandoned. If it were, it would immediately cease to exist.

Atheists, for Schillebeeckx, cannot get from their experience of contingency to a genuine experience of finitude. The atheist's secularity and experience of contingency are closed, boxed in, and, as Schillebeeckx points out much earlier, ''The secular point of view [...] is valid only when it remains open to the higher whole into which it is integrated in God's plan.'[197] There is, as a result, a real distinction between the experience of the world of the atheist and of the believer, but this distinction is only real in that direction. The believer's experience of contingency is open to the ultimate possibilities found in and through belief in God and all that the believer need do to enter into dialogue is bracket out that belief. The distinction between the believer's experience of contingency and that of the atheist is, therefore, a notional one.

The Relational Dialectic of Finitude and Contingency

The interaction between this critically negative aspect of Schillebeeckx's perspectivism and its critically positive aspect is best seen in the creation parallels, where Schillebeeckx proposes a

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[196] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'de moderne filosofie de contingentie-ervaring ging accepteren, zonder zoals voorheen de mens te vergoddelijken, naar hem en haar in zijn eindigheid latend' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 86).

[197] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 224. On the link between finitude and openness to the activity of God, see also Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 146.

relational dialectic of finitude and contingency. When he counters misunderstandings of creation, one counter-argument shows a willingness to use the language of his opponent in order to show that their view is inadequately justified. The other more explicitly uses the vocabulary of his own position to demonstrate that he considers them to be wrong.

One example of this strategy is the way that he speaks of finitude and contingency. Firstly, he asserts that in order to become fully human, there is no need to rise above or flee from contingency or finitude or to treat either as a wound or injury. What matters is simply being men and women in a world that is simply the world.[198] This language might well be used to rule out the need for faith, but Schillebeeckx is, rather, bracketing out his belief in order to enter into dialogue. In the first stage of this dialogue, using the terms interchangeably, he is willing to say that, considering the world and humanity in and of itself (which is all that the atheist is willing to do), finitude and contingency mean living suspended over the gulf of absolute nothingness. The fact that this is not an affirmation but a critically negative move on Schillebeeckx's part is suggested by the fact that there is an implicit question pervading this first paragraph: Does this experience, this conceptualization, of human life ring true, or is there more to life than this *Verfallenheit*?[199]

This question is answered in the next paragraph, where Schillebeeckx speaks of the other side of the coin of creation-faith. The angst of this *Verfallenheit* is more than countered by 'the absolute presence of God in and with the finite.'[200] This is because the absolute nothingness that gives rise to the angst is created – is, in fact, 'the distinction' – and, as Creator, God is not subject to it. So the security that the believer senses in the absolute presence of God is not just equal to this angst, but is infinitely more than it could ever be. Schillebeeckx then goes on to

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[198] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 114-115; parallel *GAU*, p. 93 (cf. *TV*, pp. 130-31; parallel *EV*, pp. 93-94).

[199] For Schillebeeckx's use of this idea, see *G&M*, p. 231.

[200] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 114; parallel *GAU*, p. 93) Dutch text: 'de benauwenis van dit hangen boven het absolute niets tegelijkertijd de absolute presentie van God in en bij het eindigetot tegenwicht heeft.' (*TV*, p. 130; exact parallel *EV*, p. 93).

express what contingency and finitude mean 'from a Christian perspective'. On the one hand, 'the world and mankind are totally-other than God', but 'this other-than-God can never emigrate from the divine creative act,' because if it did so, it would cease to be. Or, 'in other words, God stays near and with the contingent, the other-than-God'. He uses the notion of contingency to refer to that aspect of the world and humanity as not-God, other-than-God. Or, to put it another way still, the Christian notion of contingency draws on 'the distinction' of creation. On the other hand, this other-than-God exists 'within the presence of the Creator God'[201] in and with the finite. In speaking of finitude, then, Schillebeeckx no longer brackets out the active presence of the Creator in creation. This means that both the experience and the Christian concept of finitude have a depth-dimension that contingency does not have, one that depends on 'the relation' of creation.

Schillebeeckx's response to the atheist is not 'No!' but 'Nevertheless!': the atheist's concept of contingency has value, but its value is not complete. This is a typical response and shows that his opposition to atheism is not polar. He also uses it in response to the problem of suffering: 'After Auschwitz and the like, the belief that God trusts man and woman has been seriously put to the test. "And yet!" says the Judaeo-Christian tradition of experience.'[202] Thus, Schillebeeckx's critical encounter with atheism has three aspects – critical affirmation, critical negativity and critical positivity – the latter two of which form a relational dialectic that is fundamentally intertwined with the relational dialectic of finitude and contingency. Critical positivity is therefore decisive, having a depth-dimension that is not present in critical negativity,

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[201] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 114-15; parallel *GAU*, p. 93). Dutch text: 'Christelijk gezien zijn de wereld en de mens het total-andere van God, echter binnen de presentie van de scheppende God.' (*TV*, p. 130; parallel *EV*, p. 93).

[202] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 111). Dutch text: 'Na Auschwitz e.d. wordt het geloof dat God mensen vertrouwt, zwaar op de proef gesteld. En toch! zegt de joods-christelijke ervaringstraditie.' (*TV*, p. 127) In *IR*, this *En toch!* is, in fact, rendered 'Nevertheless!', which makes his response the same as in the example just analysed. It has been translated more literally here to show that there is variation in Schillebeeckx's language within what is a structurally similar response.

made possible by the absolute presence of the Creator God and the *theologaal* relationship of faith that is humanity's response to that presence.

These connections are explicitly made in his response to secularization. He begins by stating his position, using a very strong image: 'The so-called secularization tendency, which I rightly esteem, [when] understood as a gradual universalizing of an originally religious inspiration, seems to me to nevertheless a fatal short-circuit as an all-encompassing thesis, for not less than two fundamental reasons.'[203] The first of these is that what might be called 'pure' secularism misunderstands finitude:

> Finitude, which, strictly speaking, is the definition of all secularity, is itself never fully secularizable, for then, after all, the modern world would have to find a spell in order to neutralize the fundamental finitude of people and world.[204]

This seems a very strange statement to make, since it appears to contradict itself. How can finitude be the definition of all secularity if it is not secularizable? How can 'pure' secularity be based on finitude if it must find a way of neutralising finitude? The key to this puzzling assertion is found in the fact that Schillebeeckx's Christian experience and conceptualization of finitude is really distinct from that of the atheistic secular humanist, the 'pure' secularist.[205] The finitude of the atheist might be called a 'neutered' finitude, finitude deprived of its power and depth by the process of secularization taken to its extreme.[206] True finitude – finitude as experienced and

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[203] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 121; parallels *GAU*, p. 101; *III*, p. 232-33). Dutch text: 'De zgn. secularisatietendens, die ik, verstaan als geleidelijke universalisering ven oorspronkelijk-godsdienstige inspiraties, juist acht, lijkt me echter als totaliteitsthesis een rampzalige kortsluiting, en wel om twee fundamentale redenen.' (*TV*, p. 137; parallels *EV*, p. 102; *Mensen*, p. 250).

[204] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 121; parallels *GAU*, p. 101; *III*, p. 233). Dutch text: 'De *eerste* reden is de eindigheid zelf. De eindigheid, die eigenlijk de definitie is van alle seculariteit, is zelf immers nooit ten volle te seculariseren, want dan zou de moderne wereld toch een tovermiddel moeten vinden om de wezenlijke eindigheid van mens en wereld op te heffen.' (*TV*, p. 137; exact parallel *EV*, p. 102; parallel *Mensen*, pp. 250-51).

[205] Schillebeeckx probably has in mind here the same cluster of existentialist thinkers that he referred to in *W&C*, pp. 3-4, all of whom would agree with Merleau-Ponty's comment that 'Faith in God kills in us the sense of man and his historicity.' (Merleau-Ponty, *Sens et non-sens*, esp. p. 191, cited in *W&C*, p. 4, n. 8).

[206] Thus Schillebeeckx adds, in III, that 'on the one hand the dangerous recollection of the experience of finitude is lulled to sleep, while on the other hand there is experience of the desolate void of this finitude when interpreted in secular terms.' (Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 233).

thought of by the Christian believer – is, indeed, the definition of true secularity and is originally a religious inspiration.[207]

The second reason is that 'pure' secularism misunderstands, and thereby misses, the depth and richness of the Christian understanding of finitude and thereby of humanism. Humanism is more than ethical behaviour, for the Christian; it is a *theologaal* way of life, the praxis of the reign of God. As noted earlier in this chapter, ethics can be completely secularized: ethical praxis is common to the form of life of the believer and the atheist. *Theologaal* life, however, cannot be completely secularized, because the personal relationship of faith with the living God is intrinsic to it. Christian humanism, therefore, contains an inexhaustible surplus. This surplus is connected with the absolute presence of God in creation, which makes possible the response of the *theologaal* relationship of faith: 'And this presence remains an inexhaustible source, which is never secularizable.'[208]

In Schillebeeckx's relational dialectic, contingency is a philosophical term, which he is more than willing to use in common with atheistic philosophers.[209] This does not mean, however, that they share the same experience or concept. Because of the correlation of experience and interpretation already noted in this section, Schillebeeckx is able to say, of the believer's experience of contingency, that it is 'a human experience that is coloured in another way in its inner character.'[210] Contingency, for the believer, is distinct from and related to its purely philosophical use.

In a way that uses his typical response – indicating also something of the relational dialectic in which philosophy and theology stand in his philosophical theology – he says: 'Faith

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[207] Or, finitude is 'for believers [...] *par excellence* the never-failing source of all religion.' (Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 233).

[208] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 121-22; parallels *GAU*, p. 101; *III*, p. 233). Dutch text: 'En deze presentie blijft een onuitputtelijke en nooit te seculariseren bron.' (*TV*, p. 138; parallels *EV*, p. 102; *Mensen*, p. 251).

[209] See, for example, the way in which he speaks of contingency as 'a philosophical technical term' (Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 230).

[210] Author's translation. Dutch text: 'een innerlijk anders gekleurde menselijke ervaring' (Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 86).

nevertheless points out that the contingency of all worldy and human figures (which philosophy also knows) is supported by the absolute saving presence of God in all that is finite.'[211] Finitude, then, is a properly theological concept and *theologaal* experience, which means that it is not only the case 'that the creature does not have a single pre-existent necessary property and that it does not find any explanation in any connection in this world',[212] but also that it 'is there [...] as pure gift.'[213] In Schillebeeckx's realist ontology, a gift requires a giver, thus if finitude implies that existence is a gift, it also implies a giver of that existence, a Creator. The Christian concept of finitude, as a result, cannot bracket out God in the way that the concept of contingency can.

Critical Positivity: The Inexhaustible Surplus of Christian Humanism

The critically positive aspect of Schillebeeckx's dialogue with atheistic secular humanism has already been treated to some extent in the portrayal of the relational dialectic of finitude and contingency. In this section, the limit case will be considered, showing that he believes Christian humanism to be better justified than atheistic secular humanism. Again, this supports his realist epistemology, for without any reference to absolute truth, towards which the human being, as 'a seeking, groping being'[214] attempts to find a way, the view of one's opponent has to be systematically destroyed in order to attempt to change their mind.[215] This limit case is that of

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[211] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 231). Dutch text: 'Het geloof echter wijst erop, dat de contingentie van alle wereldlijke en menselijke gestalten (die ook de wijsbegeerte erkent) gedragen wordt door de absolute heilspresentie van God bij al dit eindige.' (Schillebeeckx, *Mensen*, p. 249).

[212] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 113, missing from *GAU*, p. 92). Dutch text: 'dat het schepsel geen enkele voorafbestaande noodzakelijkheid bezit en geen enkele verklaring findt in einige schakel van deze wereld' (*TV*, p. 129; parallel *EV*, p. 92).

[213] Author's translation of phrase present only in *TV* (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 113). Dutch text: 'het is er, onverklaarbaar, als pure gift.' (*EV*, p. 92).

[214] Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 12.

[215] Compare the fact that Schillebeeckx, in his critical affirmation, is willing to admit that his opponents have got some things right with Nietzsche, who Reginster says 'shows no scruple whatsoever in criticising, in the harshest terms, views emanating from perspectives other than his own.' (Reginster, p. 41). Because Nietzsche's 'considered position' is an anti-realist one, he needs not only to cast the justification of his opponent's position in doubt, but to destroy it. He needs to show that 'there is no coherent notion of justification other than ratification in the terms provided by [his] own perspective.' (Reginster, p. 40).

threatened humanity, which he considers in another series of parallel texts.[216]

He recognizes that in every encounter with another human being, the 'other person is, for me, as I am for him, not only the origin of an ethical appeal, but also very frequently the source of threat and possible violence. Sartre pointed that out.'[217] Schillebeeckx says that in an atheistic setting, in which the only source of meaning is found in human beings, this ambivalent character of interpersonal encounter means that 'there is no guarantee whatsoever that evil will not have the last word on our existence as ethically responsible beings [... and] we therefore find ourselves at an aporia'.[218] His investigation of whether Christian humanism has the same difficulty uses a story of a soldier's martyrdom. This soldier refuses to kill an innocent man, despite the fact that he knows his refusal will not save the man and will result in himself being killed as well.[219] This ethical action of the soldier is therefore ineffective and absurd, not only because it does not save the innocent man, but also because, as a result of the choice, the agent acting in accordance with his conscience is killed. 'Two ethically "honest" solutions to this aporia are possible', one atheistic and one religious. In an atheistic response, the soldier's action is spoken of, as Sartre and Camus would,[220] as 'a gratuitous heroic action for the sake of the *humanum*. On the other hand,' he continues, 'the reply could go in a religious direction, though equally on the basis of human values.'[221]

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[216] See Schillebeeckx, *GNEM*, pp. 106-7; parallels *JWC*, pp. 55-65; Edward Schillebeeckx, *For the Sake of the Gospel*, trans. by John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1989), pp. 98-102 (Henceforth *FSG*); and *III*, pp. 92-99.

[217] Schillebeeckx, *GNEM*, p. 106; cf. Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 58; parallel Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 94.

[218] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 94; parallel *JWC*, p. 58; cf. *GNEM*, p. 106. He draws on Emmanual Levinas, *Totalité et Infini* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1961), esp. pp. 51-9 and 291 (see *FSG*, p. 102, n. 7 and the references to Levinas in *JWC*, pp. 56-58; parallel *III*, pp. 92-94), but remarks that, whilst his account of things goes further than Sartre's, it still leads to the aporia.

[219] Schillebeeckx, *GNEM*, p. 106. The story is expanded in the later parallels, but retains these essential elements (see *JWC*, p. 58; parallels *FSG*, p. 98 and *III*, p. 94).

[220] See Sartre's comment that what counts in a heroic or cowardly life 'is the total commitment' (Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, p. 43). In Camus's novel *The Outsider*, the hero, Merseault, refuses to 'play the game' and 'is driven by a [...] passion for an absolute and for truth.' Because he resolutely refuses to lie, society sees him as a threat it would rather not confront and he is condemned to death. (See Camus's 'Afterword' to Albert Camus, *The Outsider*, trans. by Joseph Laredo (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1982), p. 96).

[221] Schillebeeckx, *FSG*, p. 99; almost exact parallel *III*, p. 95; cf. *JWC*, p. 59.

These human values constitute common ground, allowing the two responses to enter into dialogue. The one that Schillebeeckx focuses on is that of 'the hope of the ultimate victory of good: faith in humanity despite everything.'[222] Does the atheist have any ground for this hope, he asks, or is it 'only a postulatory hope, i.e. a hope against all hope posited in a positivistic way by our free will?' He admits that such a hope can, indeed, be courageous and gallant, but wonders if it not just an exercise in wishful thinking.[223] If so, there would be a fatal flaw in the atheist's position, because 'in that case people would be trying to drag themselves out of the mire by their own hair.'[224] He acknowledges, however, that atheists are not necessarily caught in this trap, because their hope can be founded 'in an autonomous ethical conviction [...] that justice is superior to injustice', which would give grounds for their hope.[225] So the hope expressed by atheists is not completely unjustified, because the conviction that justice is superior to injustice can be assessed independently of it, thereby justifying it. However, as Schillebeeckx points out immediately, Christian humanism shares this justification: 'this human conviction is just as true for believers and forms the mediation of their faith in God.'[226] Thus far, the atheist and the Christian seem to be equally justified.

But, he goes on to ask, is the atheistic position able to offer hope to the fallen, to those who die like the martyred soldier? This question uncovers a flaw in the atheistic response which, whilst not being fatal, reveals that the Christian understanding gives better grounds for hope (and is thereby better justified) because it offers hope to all, even the fallen. In atheism, the 'fallen themselves do not experience any liberation or redemption; they have lived so that in the future

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[222] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, pp. 59-60; exact parallel *FSG*, p. 99 and *III*, p. 95.

[223] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 60; cf. *FSG*, p. 99; *III*, p. 95.

[224] Schillebeeckx, *FSG*, p. 99; exact parallel *III*, p. 95; cf. Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 60, which uses a different image and seems to be mistranslated, because it says that hope in humanity despite everything *can* be simply an act of will.

[225] Schillebeeckx, *FSG*, p. 100; almost exact parallel *III*, p. 96; close parallel *JWC*, pp. 60-61.

[226] Schillebeeckx, *FSG*, p. 100; close parallel *III*, p. 96; cf. *JWC*, p. 61.

perhaps some people should not have to suffer the same fate.'[227] The implication is that this 'perhaps' is not enough, that the absurdity and angst generated by this response are toxic to hope and humanization. The Christian response, importantly, does not seek to remove this absurdity, but says that the experience of it is not 'reality in its absolute limits at the deepest level'. The ultimate depth-dimension of human experience is, in fact, personal: an experience of life 'as supported by God's absolute saving presence which is near to us in situations which he did not want, did not even tolerate, but are in fact absurd.'[228] The real distinction, then, between the atheistic and the Christian response is that this absurdity:

> is not the last word for believers: believers entrust the absurdity to God who is the source of pure positivity and the transcendent foundation of all ethics, the mystical ground of all ethical commitment, as a result of which there is still hope for the victim himself, who outside of the religious perspective is written off for good.[229]

This appeal to God is not a superfluous superstructure erected over the experience of absurdity in order to escape from it. Schillebeeckx stresses that it 'is not that the martyr does his courageous deed in order to obtain an eternal reward.'[230] Rather, for the Christian, the *humanum*, the realization of which is the goal of any authentic humanism, is nevertheless limited. Martyrdom demonstrates the limit of humanization and, thereby, the limit of any atheistic secular humanism. In doing so, it also demonstrates the superior justification of action on behalf of the threatened *humanum* in the Christian tradition of experience, because, in that tradition, this *humanum* is open to more.

The believer's 'faith in the superiority of justice and goodness to all injustice [is] an experience of the [*metahumanum*] (for people clearly cannot produce it in their history)'.[231] This

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[227] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 61; exact parallel *FSG*, p. 100 and *III*, p. 96.

[228] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, pp. 61-62; almost exact parallels *FSG*, p. 100 and *III*, p. 96.

[229] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 62; almost exact parallels *FSG*, p. 100 and *III*, pp. 96-97.

[230] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 62; cf. *FSG*, p. 100; exact parallel *III*, p. 97.

[231] Cf. Schillebeeckx, *FSG*, p. 101 (apart from the term *metahumanum*, introduced here); exact parallel *III*, p. 97; cf. *JWC*, p. 62 (which contains the Latin term); cf. *GNEM*, p. 107.

is the possibility of salvation, which Schillebeeckx calls 'God's creation-for-his-saving-purposes: God's absolute saving presence in what he has called to life.'[232] It is true that salvation speaks of a possibility and offers a hope that is not inherently present in creation. That is why a creation-based praxis on behalf of the *humanum* is not enough, on its own, to constitute praxis of the reign of God. To it must be dialectically added a salvation-based praxis on behalf of the *metahumanum* – added in a relational dialectic, not a polar one. Nature and grace are not separated by Schillebeeckx, not even as notional poles that must be held in tension. Nature, it might be said, is fundamentally ordered to grace, such that there is no 'pure' nature, in the sense of there being even the possibility of ungraced nature. The absolute presence of the Creator God in all that is finite is not yet the absolute saving presence of God in what he has called to life, but it is certainly not opposed to that presence and is, in fact, inwardly directed towards it.

Schillebeeckx's Sequela

This proposal of a relational dialectic of grace and nature is intended to call to mind Aquinas, one of Schillebeeckx's major influences, in a similar way to that in which calling Christian humanism the praxis of the reign of God is intended to call to mind the earthly praxis of Jesus. Connecting creation and salvation in the manner proposed above, also links him with Irenaeus of Lyons. His following in their footsteps is one that takes a very particular form, that of *sequela*.

Sequela Jesu

Schillebeeckx stresses that definitive salvation cannot be experienced here and now, showing that the *metahumanum*, like the *humanum*, is not yet fully realized. But this does not mean that it is not realized at all: thus, the validity of 'the announcement of the ultimate promise of salvation' has, he says, 'its basis in an experiential relation, here and now'. This is a relation 'between Jesus

[232] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 99; cf. *JWC*, p. 65.

and those who "follow after" him in this world, and also between all those who in fact do what Jesus did.'[233] This relation is, as elsewhere in Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology, a critical correlation. The first followers of Jesus 'tried to understand what Jesus had meant for his first disciples and also what he meant and could mean here and now for their own life.' What arises from this is 'a new discipleship of Jesus or walking in his footsteps',[234] in which there is a critical correlation between the praxis of Jesus and his time and place, on the one hand, and that of his followers and their time and place, on the other.[235] This process is a continuous one in the church, 'in which Christians, constantly confronted afresh with other situations and problems in the church and in the world, in faithfulness to the tradition handed down, accept in faith and yet critically what previous generations passed on.'[236]

This means, says Schillebeeckx, that: 'Now as then the church is certainly a *sequela Jesu*, i.e. a community of believers who follow Jesus.'[237] He distinguishes this kind of following from another by saying that Christians become disciples of Jesus 'not through imitating what he has done but, like Jesus, by responding to one's own situations from out of an intense experience of God.'[238] Elsewhere he uses another Latin term to clarify the distinction he is drawing, saying that Christians are called to the 'messianic praxis of "following Jesus" (not the *imitatio*, but the *sequela Jesu*)'.[239] A first hint as to the distinction he is drawing here can be gained by comparing the two Latin terms: *imitatio* means 'The action of imitating an example [...] of producing a copy or imitation, mimicking',[240] whereas *sequella (_ela)* means 'A follower, attendant [...] a

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[233] Author's translation, cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 123. Dutch text: 'in zoverre die beloftevolle aanzegging van heil geldig genoemd kan en mag worden, heft ze toch haar basis in een ervaringssamenhang, hier en nu; van Jezus en van hen, die hem in deze wereld "achterna gaan", ook van allen die feitelijk does wat Jezus deed.' (*TV*, p. 140).

[234] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 35.

[235] Cf. Erik Borgman, '*Gaudium et Spes*: The Forgotten Future of a Revolutionary Document', trans. by Natalie K. Watson, *Concilium* 2005.4, 48-56 (p. 54).

[236] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, pp. 35-36.

[237] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 43.

[238] Schillebeeckx, *II*, p. 641.

[239] Schillebeeckx, 'You Cannot Arbitrarily Make Something of the Gospel!', p. 18.

[240] *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 833.

secondary or accessory condition, situation, [...] consequence, corollary.'[241] This serves to distinguish between the two such that an *imitatio Jesu* could be described as doing the same as Jesus did; whereas in a *sequela Jesu*, the follower does what is appropriate in their own time and place, in distinction from and at the same time in relation to what Jesus did.

This idea is a traditionally Dominican one, according to Kerr, finding its origin in a particular debate taking place around the time of the order's foundation. In their form of mendicant monasticism, the Franciscans sought to distinguish themselves from the established monastic orders – who supported themselves by working the land they owned – by imitating the itinerant life of Jesus, living as beggars. The Dominicans sought to tread a middle ground between these two extremes, such that, whilst the Franciscans could characterize their life as an *imitatio Christi*, the Dominicans used the idea of *sequela Christi* to speak of a way of following Christ without needing to reproduce exact details of his lifestyle.[242] This also relates Schillebeeckx to Aquinas.

Sequela Aquinas

Articulating the relation between the two theologians thus helps avoid two over-simplifying tendencies, which, thereby, are revealed as polar opposites. The first is to associate all or part of Schillebeeckx's oeuvre with Thomism and, as a result, to discard it or declare it to be peripheral.[243] The second is to assert that nothing has really changed throughout Schillebeeckx's career; that he was and remains a Thomist. Both these positions are over-simplifications because they do not allow for the critical correlation of continuity and change proposed earlier in this chapter, to which the idea of *sequela* is eminently suited.

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[241] *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, p. 1740.

[242] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 167. He points out that this theme of *sequela Christi*, used by Aquinas in his account of the life of a friar, was a familiar one since the time of Jerome.

[243] This, as noted in the first section of this chapter, is what Endean appears to do in 'Erik Borgman: *Edward Schillebeeckx*', p. 26.

Even in Schillebeeckx's earliest writings, Borgman points out, 'he had already made a distinction between a Thomistic theology and doing theology on "purely Thomistic principles", favouring the latter.'[244] This was, in effect, a departure from Leonine Neo-Scholasticism, in which the use of concepts that had been developed in the Thomistic tradition was seen as a guarantee in itself of fidelity to that tradition. In such a system, 'the abandonment of Thomistic concepts was seen as a departure from Catholic thought.'[245] Schillebeeckx acknowledges his debt to De Petter in this regard, who helped him appreciate the relative value of concepts and encouraged him to read contemporary philosophy.[246] Also worthy of note is the influence of Chenu in particular during Schillebeeckx's theological studies at *Le Saulchoir*. It was here that Schillebeeckx says he encountered the return to the historical sources (*ressourcement*) and that it was Chenu above all who taught him to read Aquinas in his historical context.[247] It is perhaps somewhat ironic, with the benefit of hindsight, to note that both De Petter and Chenu were disciplined and removed from their posts in 1942, falling victim to exactly the kind of pressure that Borgman draws attention to.[248] Schillebeeckx, too, has not been at all immune to similar accusations, as his three Vatican processes make clear.[249]

What, then, is the distinction that Schillebeeckx – and these other authors – tried to make? In his early theology, says Borgman, Schillebeeckx was a Thomist, but in a typically Dominican way. In this period, he uses Aquinas as a source and tries to address most topics through Aquinas. But he is a very creative reader of Thomas: for him, theologizing after Aquinas

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[244] Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, p. 195.

[245] Ibid., p. 42.

[246] See Schillebeeckx, *GNEM*, p. p. 12-14; also see Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, pp. 40-42 and 108; Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, pp. 41-44 and 95-99.

[247] See Schillebeeckx, *GNEM*, pp. 14 and 16; *HT*, pp. 8-9 and TT, p. 28. See also Kennedy, *Deus Humanissimus*, p. 52; Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, pp. 104-5; Chenu, *Aquinas and His Role in Theology*.

[248] Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, pp. 54 and 108; Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 126 and *Deus Humanissimus*, pp. 44-45.

[249] See *HT*, pp. 32-40; *TT*, pp. 59-66. For the fact that these were not the first times that his views had resulted in somewhat confrontational situations, see also *HT*, pp. 9-10 and 17-18.

is more a way of doing theology than a technical system.[250] Schoof holds a similar opinion, saying that Schillebeeckx's use of Aquinas is always thinking with Thomas, not thinking within any particular theological system that called itself Thomistic.[251]

The concept of *sequela* is unmistakably of significance here. Borgman's portrayal of the sacramental emphasis of the material that Schillebeeckx wrote in Leuven as 'following Thomas'[252] and of the way that he did his theology in Thomas's footsteps certainly suggests it.[253] What the concept of *sequela* allows is that Schillebeeckx's way of following Aquinas is always a creative interpretation, in dialogue with the time and place for which he is writing.[254] As a result, the conjunctural break that took place in his philosophical theology in the 1960s could well be understood as compatible with his continuing to follow Aquinas structurally, whilst, at the same time, discarding particular elements of his earlier articulations of such following as ephemeral.[255] This places his philosophical theology into a relational dialectic with that of Aquinas, such that, as Kennedy notes, his writings on creation can be thought of as 'an extended extemporization on a single maxim of Thomas Aquinas, to wit, each and every created thing stands as a constitutive reference to God (*Summa Theologiae* I, q.1, a.7, ad 1).'[256]

Sequela Irenaeus

Immediately after his comment above about Aquinas, Kennedy says that Schillebeeckx's articulation of creation 'is nothing if not a recapitulation of St Irenaeus's axiom: *Gloria Dei,*

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[250] Borgman, conversation, 16 August 2004, Nijmegen.

[251] Schoof, conversation, 16 August 2004, Nijmegen.

[252] Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, p. 239.

[253] Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, pp. 212 and 281.

[254] Cf. his comment that he is 'not writing for posterity', but 'for people here and now.' (Schillebeeckx, *GNEM*, pp. 120-21).

[255] Cf. Kennedy's comment that Schillebeeckx's writings on creation 'freely and creatively depart from Aquinas even while retaining certain features of his theology.'(Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 93).

[256] Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 93.

vivens homo: vita autem hominis, visio Dei.'[257] *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* text offers this translation: 'For the glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God',[258] suggesting that Irenaeus is speaking about the life of beatitude, of heavenly glory. Julie Canlis points out, however, that Irenaeus, like many writers of his period, speaks of human life as a participation in God's life and therefore is speaking here not merely of beatitude, but also of sanctification and, indeed, creation.[259] This means that the uniqueness of humanity 'is not found in ontological independence from God, but in being enclosed by the Creator who continues to create, nurture and sustain it',[260] sounding very much like Schillebeeckx's interrelated themes of the autonomy of human life and the absolute presence of the Creator God. Canlis says that, for Irenaeus, 'our creaturehood is not creaturehood in truth without full participation in God's life.'[261] Thus, on the basis of this idea of participation, a seamless philosophical theology can be advocated, in which creation, sanctification and beatitude are linked without being confused, distinguished without being separated.[262]

This wider sense of the axiom can also be supported from its context. In *Adversus Haereses*, IV, 20, §5, Irenaeus speaks of three ways of seeing God, a theme introduced in §4 which guides the discussion as far as §7, where the axiom is found. He says that God is seen 'prophetically through the Spirit, and seen, too, adoptively through the Son; and He shall also be seen paternally in the kingdom of heaven.'[263] Explaining this, he says that 'those who see God

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[257] Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 93.

[258] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies (*Adversus Haereses*)* IV, 20, § 7, trans. by A. Roberts and W.H. Rambaut, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (10 vols), *Volume 1: The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1885), pp. 309-567 (p. 490, col. 1).

[259] Julie Canlis, 'Being Made Human: The Significance of Creation for Irenaeus' Doctrine of Participation', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 58 (2005), 434-454. This means, she says, that Irenaeus provides 'coherent discourse for how to talk of the divine and the non-divine in a non-contrastive relation.' (Ibid., p. 437. She refers to Tanner's *God and Creation* on p. 436).

[260] Canlis, p. 441.

[261] Canlis, p. 447.

[262] This proposal will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Six.

[263] Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, IV, 20, §5; *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 1, p. 489, col. 1.

are in God, and receive of His splendour. But [His] splendour vivifies them; those, therefore, who see God, do receive life.'[264] Irenaeus's anthropology, Canlis stresses, is thereby 'always first and foremost a *theological* anthropology', even though it is true that 'humanity can be considered in and of itself from a rhetorical or practical point of view'.[265] Similarly, Schillebeeckx is willing to 'bracket out' his belief in God in order to discuss humanization with those who do not believe in God.

In such a theological anthropology, 'Irenaeus insists upon our incapacity to bear the full weight of the glory of God, although he is equally insistent that that is exactly what we are intended to do.'[266] Is there, then, a human life in which this splendour of God can clearly be seen? In a way that links this *sequela* with the first, this life is that of Jesus: 'Christ fulfils our humanity in that he is the one who bears the full weight of the glory of God', meaning that the adoptive sight of God possible for those who follow Jesus, 'our participation in the Son [...] is our participation in the divine, and thus our "becoming human".'[267] Once again, the seamlessness of theology, anthropology and Christology is vividly apparent. This seamlessness suggests a creative translation of the axiom, akin to those offered by Schillebeeckx: 'The glory of God is the living man and woman; this selfsame human life is the face of God.'[268] The fullness of human life is, indeed, found in the face-to-face beatific vision of God; it is to be

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[264] Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, IV, 20, §5; *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 1, p. 489, col. 1 (material in square brackets supplied by translators to supply a missing pronoun in the Latin).

[265] Canlis, p. 445,

[266] Canlis, p. 450.

[267] Canlis, pp. 450-51.

[268] Author's translation. Cf. Schillebeeckx's versions of the axiom as 'the best definition of what creation amounts to' (Author's translation, cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 115-16; parallel *GAU*, p. 94. Dutch text: 'de beste definitie van wat schepping betekent.' (*TV*, p. 131; parallel *EV*, p. 94)) and as how 'Irenaeus of Lyons rightly summed up the Christian gospel' (*FSG*, p. 58), as well as the way that Schillebeeckx uses it in *IR* to explain the structure of *I* and *II* (*IR*, pp. 142-43). Also see, from his earlier work, the way that he uses the axiom in his Leuven lectures on creation, saying that suffering, and in particular the suffering of Jesus, 'cannot be other than the utmost revelation of God's unlimited life' because '*God's glory itself* is nevertheless identical with his *human life*. "Gloria Dei, vivens homo" (Irenaeus)' (Author's translation). Dutch text: 'Het problem van het lijden, dat zijn spitsproblematiek krijgt in het lijden van de Godmens, kan niet anders zijn als de openbaring van Gods mateloze liefde tot het uiterste: Gods heerlijkheid zelf waarmee echter zijn mensenliefde identiek is. "Gloris Dei, vivens homo" (Ireneüs).' (Schillebeeckx, *Schepping II: Pro manuscripto. '56/7* (Leuven Lecture notes on creation, second volume of hand-typed notes reproduced for students. Title given is handwritten on the cover), p. II 407).

found, too, in and on the face of Jesus who is called the Christ; it is also intended to be found in and on the faces of those who follow Jesus in the church.[269]

This idea of *sequela* can assist the development of a Schillebeeckian approach to philosophical theology, in which relational dialectic plays a key role. The results of such an outlook will not always agree with Schillebeeckx's own writings, but sometimes fidelity to the master is best attained through a creative completion of his ideas. Indeed, this is but another form of the approach to continuity and change that Schillebeeckx himself takes. To use his terms, structural continuity may be best expressed in and through conjunctural breaks.

In the next two chapters, some of the retrospects and prospects for such a project will be explored. Chapter Five investigates the possibility of applying relational dialectic to analogical language about God in Aquinas, seeking to chart a middle way between two rival views. These hold that Aquinas either changed his mind about analogy between *De Veritate* and the *Summa Theologiae*, or that his position remains the same. A Schillebeeckian analysis allows for both continuity and change and also serves as a resource for complexity in the analysis of the account in the *Summa Theologiae*. Chapter Six surveys some of the prospects for Schillebeeckian philosophical theology, beginning with the potential for seamlessness offered by the notion of creaturely existence as participation in God. It goes on to consider the relational dialectic of divine and human action, which has significant implications for the correlation of freedom and commitment and for God's knowledge of creaturely action.

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[269] This suggests that Schillebeeckx's book on ministry in the church, *The Church with a Human Face: A New and Expanded Theology of Ministry* (London: SCM Press, 1985), is also echoing this text and theme-cluster from Irenaeus. Also see his comment about contemporary theologians, who, 'by means of a historical praxis of commitment to mysticism and politics [...] are trying to discover the human face of God, starting from there in order to revive hope in a society, a humanity with a more human face.' (Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 317).

Chapter Five

Schillebeeckian Relational Dialectic I: Aquinas on Analogy

The Schillebeeckian reading of the doctrine of creation offered in this thesis allows for the proposal of a constructive interpretation of one of the more controversial issues in the thought of Thomas Aquinas. Such a retrospective use of relational dialectic also demonstrates how the idea of *sequela* can be of use in Schillebeeckian philosophical theology. The matter of 'Thomas's so-called "doctrine of analogy"'[1] has been – and continues to be – a source of fascination and debate amongst scholars. It has been said, of late, to offer the possibility of tying 'God and the world back together'.[2]

A major part of the basis for this desire is the contention that God and the world have been separated from one another by theology based on the ontological distinction, resulting in a doctrine of an uncaring and distant God who is not the God of Christian faith.[3] An emphasis on the role that the doctrine of creation plays in theology, such as that undertaken in this thesis, helps address this issue, but could there also be another connection involved? If the doctrine of creation and analogical naming are somehow linked, there is no need to appeal to analogy as a way of reconnecting God and the world. In fact, such a desire is revealed to be a misinterpretation of the connection between God and the world: analogy would be seeking to reconnect them from within the world, a possibility denied by the ontological distinction.

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[1] Denys Turner, *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 179.

[2] See Lawrence Paul Hemming, '*Analogia non Entis sed Entitatis*: The Ontological Consequences of the Doctrine of Analogy', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6 (2004), 118-129 (pp. 118-19, making explicit reference to Graham Ward's *Cities of God* (London: Routledge, 2000), although Hemming says that this tendency can be found in a wide range of authors (see p. 118).

[3] This is part of the position put forward, for example, by Anthony J. P. Kenny, in *The God of the Philosophers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

However, God and the world are connected already – before analogy comes on to the scene, so to speak – by God, in creation.

The chapter is divided into three parts, each of which deals with a major component of the discussion: firstly, the views of various scholars on analogy in Aquinas will be surveyed. Secondly, a reading of Aquinas on analogy will be proposed which differs, in important respects, both from the majority and minority views reviewed. Thirdly, the proposal will be defended and the sense in which it can be called Schillebeeckian outlined.

Aquinas and Analogy

What Analogy Is Not

The idea that analogy cannot generate an ontological link between the world and God, but is applied on the basis of one that is already held to exist,[4] is held by a number of commentators on Aquinas. It also serves to distinguish his position from that of many of his later interpreters, the foremost of whom to come under criticism is Thomas de Vio Cajetan.[5] Burrell emphasises that analogy, for Aquinas, is a purely linguistic tool and, appealing to Etienne Gilson, makes a clear distinction not only with Cajetan, but also with Scotus in this regard.[6] Ralph McInerny, to whom Burrell also refers,[7] says that 'Aquinas never used the Latin term *analogia* to refer to what has come to be known as the analogy of being.'[8] Nicholas Healy points out that: 'Although there is indeed some kind of analogy between divine cause and created effects, the analogy flows, so to speak, only one way, from God to

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[4] Cf. Hemming, p. 121.

[5] Hemming presents a sustained critique of Cajetan, especially on pp. 120-121 and 124.

[6] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 121, referring to 'Etienne Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of Saint Thomas* (New York: Random House, 1956), pp. 105-7; *Jean Duns Scot* (Paris: Vrin, 1952), p. 101.' (p. 121, n. 24). Cf. *F&F*, pp. 91-112 and *APL*, pp. 153-54, the latter of which refers to the same passages from Gilson.

[7] See Burrell, *F&F*, p. 121.

[8] Ralph McInerny, *Aquinas and Analogy* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), p. 52.

creatures, but not at all the other way.'[9] All these commentators agree that whatever Aquinas did mean by analogy, it was not what his most influential later commentators took him to mean. That they could have interpreted Aquinas wrongly in something they took to be so central to his project might seem surprising, but that very centrality is also disputed.

Lawrence Hemming holds that analogy 'was not very important for Thomas'[10] and Herbert McCabe agrees, that for Aquinas, 'analogy is not a way of getting to know God, nor is it a theory of the structure of the universe, it is a comment on our use of certain words.'[11] Turner, too, says that 'Thomas's famous teaching that existence is predicated 'analogically' [... is] famously misunderstood.'[12] He asserts that Aquinas uses the term in a 'remarkably off-hand and casual [manner], as if he were throwing in a mere term of art to do a job which logic requires to be done'.[13] Burrell agrees that 'Aquinas is perhaps best known for his theory of analogy. On closer inspection it turns out that he never had one.'[14] He means this in two senses: Aquinas neither used nor worked on the basis of a theory of analogy – 'He did not employ a theory explicitly or implicitly.'[15] Despite this, Burrell sees in Aquinas's use of analogy a consistency and elegance which leads him to the conclusion that 'he was maneuvering better than he knew how to say in neglecting to put together a logic for analogy.'[16] Could this perhaps indicate that, for Burrell, there is no need for a theory of analogy in Aquinas, because the linguistic structure of analogy follows the pattern of another, ontological structure? If so, it is perhaps paradoxical that, once these were separated from one

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[9] Nicholas M. Healy, *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian of the Christian Life* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 61.

[10] Hemming, p. 119.

[11] Herbert McCabe, 'Appendix 4: Analogy', in *Summa Theologiae: Volume Three (Ia. 12-13) Knowing and Naming God*, trans. by Herbert McCabe (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1964), pp. 106-7 (p. 106).

[12] Turner, *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God*, p. 179.

[13] Ibid., pp. 179-80.

[14] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 55.

[15] Ibid., p. 57.

[16] Burrell, *APL*, p. 124.

another in subsequent enquiry, an ontological structure was sought in analogy itself and the *analogia entis* was the result.

What Analogy Is

When commentators turn to characterize analogy more positively, they generally agree that to predicate analogically is to predicate 'neither univocally nor equivocally',[17] that a word used analogically is 'used in a fashion neither univocal nor equivocal, but somewhere in between.'[18] The way that analogical usage is distinguished from equivocity and univocity, however, is not always symmetrical. Healy affirms that when Aquinas uses 'good' of creatures and of God, 'the two uses of 'good' are not at all the same, but neither are they simply equivocations: they are analogous.'[19] Similarly, Brian Davies says that 'terms applied to God and to things in the world are never applied univocally [... and yet] we need not equivocate when we apply a term to God and a creature.'[20]

The two latter descriptions rule out univocal language completely, but do not exclude equivocal language in the same way. Davies develops this further, saying that Aquinas uses words of God and of creatures 'in different but related ways,'[21] such that analogy in Aquinas could be described as limited equivocity. Similar limited equivocity theses are proposed by Jean-Pierre Torrell, Gerard J. Hughes and te Velde. For Torrell, analogy 'designates a certain resemblance within a difference.'[22] Hughes says that, in analogy, 'we can neither say that the

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[17] Turner, *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God*, p. 179.

[18] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 55.

[19] Healy, *Thomas Aquinas*, p. 12.

[20] Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 70.

[21] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, p. 71.

[22] Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Volume 2. Spiritual Master*, trans. by Robert Royal (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), p. 40.

rationes involved are the same nor that they are totally different, since they are related.'[23] Te Velde also says that there is nothing particularly remarkable about analogy, since using terms 'in a different but related sense is a perfectly familiar procedure.'[24] McInerny, too, proposes a limited equivocity thesis,[25] but analyses it in terms of difference and sameness rather than difference and relation. He first distinguishes between 'pure equivocation' and the kind of equivocation involved in analogy,[26] then says that in analogical naming, 'the definitions corresponding with that name are partly the same and partly different, with one of those definitions being prior to the others.'[27]

This opens up the possibility of a dialectical account of analogy. McInerny's suggestion would generate a polar account, in which a sameness pulling towards univocity is put into constructive tension with a difference pulling towards pure equivocity, in a way that would reflect the difference and sameness scheme used by some to speak of the immanence and transcendence of God[28] and the doctrine of creation.[29] But is a dialectic of sameness and difference the best one to use? Or even one of difference and relation, like that which Davies, Hughes, Torrell and te Velde seem to prefer? In this linguistic arena, as in the ontological one, might a dialectic of distinction and relation not be preferable? If so, there would be a clear connection between the philosophical structure of analogy and that of creation, which, according to many of the authors considered above, provides the ontological basis on which analogical naming rests.

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[23] Gerard J. Hughes, 'Aquinas and the Limits of Agnosticism', in *The Philosophical Assessment of Theology: Essays in Honour of Frederick C. Copleston*, ed. by Gerard J. Hughes (Tunbridge Wells: Search Press, 1987), pp. 35-63 (p. 43).

[24] Rudi A. te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The Divine Science of the Summa Theologiae* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 109.

[25] McInerny, *Aquinas and Analogy*, p. 93.

[26] Ibid., p. 94.

[27] Ibid., p. 96.

[28] See, for example, Ruether, pp. 45-54 and Campbell, pp. 31-42.

[29] See, for example, Astell, pp. 1-5 and Ellen van Wolde, 'Profiling Creation as Grace', *Concilium*, 2000.4 (2000), 17-25.

Hemming makes a link between analogy as a linguistic tool and the ontology of creation, stating that 'the question of analogy is bound up with the question of God's causation of things'[30] and 'depends for its efficacy on a datum of faith – that God created the heavens and the earth.'[31] Turner concurs that the justification for analogy 'depends on our knowing already that God is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible.'[32] Burrell also links the two, saying that 'if we can (indeed must) affirm *that* he is, yet cannot say *what* he is, it is because God is proposed as first cause or principle of all.'[33] Or, as he puts it elsewhere, 'analogy goes with a creator'.[34] The philosophical structure of creation, then, becomes crucial in articulating the structure of analogical predication. If, as has been argued earlier in this thesis, a clear structure of distinction and relation is to be preferred for the former, perhaps such a structure could be developed for the latter as well.

Aquinas's Accounts of Analogy

Aquinas discusses analogy in two places in his oeuvre, in *De Veritate* and in the *Summa Theologiae*. Both sources must be analysed and compared with each other if his account of analogy is to be understood. In most comparisons of the two accounts, the discussion tends to take place in terms of sameness and difference, such that a distinction and relation scheme might be useful here, too. In the remainder of this first section, some of the options will be sketched. A more systematic analysis of the sources will follow, presenting and defending a Schillebeeckian proposal that there is both continuity and change in Aquinas on this topic.

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[30] Hemming, p. 121.

[31] Ibid., p. 126.

[32] Turner, *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God*, p. 206. Also see Healy, *Thomas Aquinas*, p. 61 for a somewhat similar statement.

[33] Burrell, *APL*, p. 132. Cf. *F&F*, p. 118.

[34] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 202, n. 22.

Hemming suggests that light is shed on Aquinas's use of analogy by considering the way that the ancient Greeks used it to speak of mathematical relations, in two ways: Proportion meant 'the proportion of one number to another', whereas proportionality referred to 'that ratio which pertains between two proportions'.[35] In the first, the two numbers are directly related to each other; in the second, they stand in the same proportion to two other numbers, such that 'proportionality is a similarity of proportions.'[36] In *De Veritate*, Hemming avers, Aquinas shows a marked preference for the second account when speaking analogically of creatures and of God.[37]As a result, terms can be used analogously of finite creatures and of the infinite God without adverting to the relation between them. It is not clear whether Hemming considers this to be an advantage because the character of that relation may be unclear, or because Aquinas wants to steer the reader away from the kind of relation involved in a proportion.

Turner, characteristically, states that Aquinas's preference for proportionality in *De Veritate* is intended to make the negative point: proportionality does not involve a relation between the analogates like that involved in proportion. 'Hence, there can be *no* calculation, whether in terms of sameness or of distinction, of the "gap" between God and creatures.'[38] In other words, it is not possible to speak of God and creatures as standing on the same measurable scale of perfection. God, in this sense, is not even infinitely greater than creatures, because that language could be taken to indicate that they are on the same scale, even if God is infinitely distant on it. God's perfections are off the scale compared to those of creatures.

The majority of interpreters are of the opinion that, in the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas comes to favour a two term structure for analogical language of God. Here, rather than the

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[35] Hemming, pp. 121-22.
[36] Aquinas, *De Veritate* Q. 2, art. 3, resp. ad 4, as cited by Hemming, p. 122.
[37] Hemming, p. 122.
[38] Turner, *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God*, p. 213.

four terms of proportionality and the two terms of proportion, as found in *De Veritate*, Aquinas presents the options as involving either three terms or two. Hughes says that he distinguishes between analogous predication when 'several things are related to one thing' and when 'one thing is related to another' and that it 'is the second of these cases which is relevant to our analogous descriptions of God.'[39] Hughes does not, however, offer a reason for this preference,[40] whereas other commentators do.

McCabe, although acknowledging that the interpretation of Aquinas in this regard is difficult, agrees that Aquinas uses the two-term structure for God and creatures because 'they are not both related to any third thing.'[41] McInerny presents a similar argument: 'There is no third thing to which God and creature could be referred in receiving a common name, for whatever is not a creature is God and whatever is not God is a creature.'[42] Thus, for both McCabe and McInerny, the two uses of analogical naming mark a division of analogies between God and creatures from analogies between two creatures, in which the former involve two terms and the latter three.[43] According to this reading, Aquinas changed his mind on the structure of analogical language about God, favouring a four term structure in *De Veritate* and a two term structure in the *Summa Theologiae*.

Hemming, however, believes that reading to be mistaken. Rather than treat the two accounts of analogy in *De Veritate* and in the *Summa Theologiae* separately, he asks: 'is the proportionality named in the *De Veritate* the same as the proportion named in the *Summa Theologiae*?'[44] He begins by remarking on the use of the term *ratio* by Aquinas in the *Summa*

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[39] Hughes, 'Aquinas and the Limits of Agnosticism', p. 43.

[40] Another commentator who offers a similar position to that of Hughes, affirming that the three-term analogy 'is explicitly rejected' by Aquinas, but not clearly stating why, is te Velde (see te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, pp. 113 and 121, n. 46).

[41] McCabe, 'Appendix 4: Analogy', p. 106.

[42] McInerny, *Aquinas and Analogy*, p. 111.

[43] This is also the position held by Hughes. (Conversation, 14 October 2005, Oxford).

[44] Hemming, p. 122.

Theologiae, which he takes to indicate links to mathematical relations, similar to those made in *De Veritate*.[45] He points out that in a key text in *ST* Ia, Q. 13, art. 5, resp., Aquinas uses the plural term, *proportiones*, which he interprets thus: 'we are not speaking here of *that kind of proportion* which is a direct proportion, a single ratio [...], but of *that kind of proportion* which is in fact the *common* proportion or ratio of multiple proportions: *proportionalitas*.'[46] Hemming's presentation is clearly at odds with what has been referred to earlier as the majority view. However, it is at odds with it in a way that shares a certain structural similarity: both options presume that the presentations in *De Veritate* and in the *Summa Theologiae* are either different or the same.

A third possibility reveals itself, however, as a consequence of a comment made by McInerny, who asks if the presentation in *De Veritate* is necessarily incompatible with the majority view of the *Summa Theologiae*. He concludes that it need not be, because the 'division of 'proportion' into proportion in a narrow sense and proportionality is effectively a subdivision of analogy *unius ad alterum*.' In the first case, urine is related to animal 'insofar as both are called "healthy",' in the second, sight is related to intellect 'insofar as both are called "seeing".'[47] This implies that analogy uses a term of two analogates because of some kind of connection between them. How they are connected determines how the analogy functions. Perhaps Aquinas's preference for proportionality in *De Veritate* serves to restrict the kind of connection that can be said to exist between God and creatures, a restriction presumed in the *Summa Theologiae*, offering resources for complexity in describing analogous predication. In that case, it may be necessary neither to subject the presentation in the *Summa Theologiae* to terms defined in *De Veritate*, as Hemming does; nor vice versa,

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[45] Hemming, p. 123.
[46] Ibid., p. 123.
[47] McInerny, *Aquinas and Analogy*, p. 113-14.

which is what the majority, including McInerny, seem to do. Perhaps the two accounts are distinct and related.

A Proposed Reading of Aquinas on Analogy

Another problem that needs to be addressed at the outset is that of the nomenclature of analogy. Both Turner and Burrell offer a way of mitigating an either/or reading by referring to two types of analogy. Turner speaks of an 'ordering of logical dependencies', in which the four-term, three-relation structure, which he calls 'proportional analogy' is justified with reference to its dependence on the two-term, one-relation structure, which he calls 'analogy of attribution'. This, in turn, is justified by the 'causal link between God and creatures' in creation.[48] Burrell, in a not altogether unrelated manner, says that Aquinas offers two ways to find the median between univocity and equivocity: '(1) by reference to one focal meaning (attribution), and (2) by an ordered relationship among different uses (proportionately).'[49]

The problem with these interpretations is highlighted by McInerny, who points out that the division of analogous naming owes its origin to Cajetan and is based on a misunderstanding of a text in Aquinas's *Sentences*: 'So radical is the misunderstanding that there can be no question of trying to salvage features of it, e.g. retaining the distinction between analogy of attribution and analogy of proportionality.'[50] Unfortunately, McInerny notes, 'both friend and foe of Cajetan continue to use this terminology'[51] and are thereby forced into the subdividing tendency that he displayed. In order to avoid this, it is best to attempt an account of analogy in Aquinas that avoids this terminology altogether: 'Cajetan's

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[48] Turner, *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God*, p. 206.
[49] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 55.
[50] McInerny, *Aquinas and Analogy*, p. 17.
[51] Ibid., p. 52.

interpretation must be set aside in its totality and the texts of Thomas read afresh if we are to discover his authentic teaching.'[52]

Summa Theologiae Ia, 13, 5

The best place to begin this fresh reading is *Summa Theologiae* Ia, 13, 5, recognized as a key text by all the commentators. First, a difficulty with Hemming's reading must be registered. He translates its pivotal sentence as saying that a name applied analogously is '"a name which thus is said multiply [and so which] signifies diverse proportions to some one [proportion]"'[53] and comments: '*Proportiones* is here clearly plural, so it is more than one proportion or ratio, signifying a common proportion',[54] an interpretation which supports his position that the *Summa Theologiae* account of analogy is the same as that found in *De Veritate*.

The first problem with this reading is that Aquinas immediately follows it with a celebrated example, that of 'healthy' said of urine, medicine and an animal. These are diverse proportions to some one, but the structure of the analogy is not four terms in three relations, which Hemming needs to substantiate his proposal, but three terms in two relations. Why, then, is *proportiones* plural here, since both the relations involved are causal? Although both are causal relations, Aquinas explicitly says that 'healthy', said of urine, signifies the sign (*signum*) of animal health, whereas, said of medicine, it signifies the cause (*causam*) of the same animal health.[55] *Proportiones* is plural because the relations involved are directionally sensitive and are named differently because of this.

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[52] McInerny, *Aquinas and Analogy*, p. 17.

[53] The inserts in square brackets are in Hemming's text (Hemming, p. 123). The Latin text in question reads: 'sed nomen quod sic multipliciter dicitur, significant diversas proportiones ad aliquid unum'. (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Textum Leoninum Romae 1888, ed. by Roberto Busa, in *Corpus Thomisticum* <http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/> [accessed 20 May 2005], [28826] I[a] q. 13 a. 5 co. (Latin references are given as found in the respective source).

[54] Hemming, p. 123.

[55] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, in *InteLex Past Masters* <http://library.nlx.com/> [accessed 20 May 2005], FP Q 13 A 5 Body Para 1/3. (Latin source as cited in n. 309 above).

The Latin text also strongly suggests that the *unum* to which the two terms are related is not a proportion, but another term ('health' as applied to the animal). *Aliquid unum* has to be neuter, as this is the only combination of the indefinite substantive pronoun *aliquis (-a, -id)* and the preposition *unus (-a, -um)* that, in the accusative (because it follows the preposition *ad*) yields *aliquid unum*. *Proportio* is a feminine noun, so if Aquinas were meaning to infer diverse proportions to some one proportion, the sentence would end differently. He would either have to leave out the indefinite pronoun – as he would presumably be referring to some particular proportion – in which case the sentence would end *ad unam* (because *unus* would now have to be feminine, not neuter); or, the sentence would end, with the indefinite pronoun still present, *ad aliquam unam*.

Three Terms or Two?

Speaking of three terms in two relations works well for the example of 'health' as applied to medicine and urine, but there seems to be a problem if this structure is posited for analogical language of God. It is highlighted by the issue of how to understand 'thing' in the *Past Masters* translation: 'various proportions to some one thing.'[56] Burrell warns of a problem here, because the only way that God and creatures could be related to a third thing would be for them to participate in a shared feature or Platonic form. As he forcefully states: 'The presence of such a common feature would effectively deny "the distinction" of creator from creature [... and] treat the creator as an item in the universe'.[57] He concludes, as do the other proponents of the majority position, that the three-term structure can be used to speak of two creatures, but only the two-term structure seems applicable to language about God.

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[56] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, *InteLex Past Masters* , FP Q 13 A 5 Body Para 1/3.
[57] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 119.

However, there is a problem with this reading, which McCabe refers to as 'a quite famous difficulty:'[58]

> having first distinguished two kinds of analogical usage – illustrated respectively by the way 'healthy' is used of [medicine] and [urine] and of [medicine] and [animal] – [Aquinas] seems to say that it is in the latter way that words are used of God and creatures. Then at the end of the article he seems to return to the first way.[59]

If Aquinas is expressing a preference for the two-term analysis, why does he not give the two-term example at the end of the *Responsio*?[60] McCabe is forced to conclude:

> In our view this indicates that St Thomas did not attach very great importance to the distinction he had made. He probably introduced it merely to show that analogy need not be confined to the [medicine]-[urine] kind of case, for of course the case of God-creatures is not of this kind at all since they are not both related to any third thing.'[61]

But, what if Aquinas meant that both understandings of analogy might work to speak of creatures and of God? If this were the case, 'in this way some things are said of God and creatures analogically' might apply equally well to a three-term, two-relation structure, on the one hand, and a two-term, one-relation structure, on the other.[62]

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[58] McCabe, 'Appendix 4: Analogy', p. 106.

[59] Ibid. The terms 'medicine', 'animal' and 'urine' have been inserted into this quotation in order to maintain consistency. McCabe changes the text here, explaining that: 'since we do not usually speak in English of healthy medicine or urine, I have said instead that we use 'healthy' of a man, a diet and a complexion'. (McCabe, 'Editorial Notes' to *Summa Theologiae: Volume Three*, pp. xvii-xviii (p. xvii)).

[60] The text of the *Blackfriars* translation is subdivided so as to support the majority view. It contains six paragraphs: the fourth contains the explanation of the two 'kinds of analogical or "proportional" uses of language' (see Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume Three*, p. 65); the fifth contains the material that McCabe and others take to express a preference for the two-term structure when speaking analogically of creatures and God; the sixth and final paragraph contains what McCabe calls the 'quite famous difficulty'. Thus, the majority reading can consistently read as far as the last paragraph, which must be interpreted as either inconsistent or not particularly important. However, the possibility that these three paragraphs belong together, as in the Past Masters translation, should be considered. (See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, *InteLex Past Masters* , FP Q 13 A 5 Body Para 3/3). It is also worth noting that the *Corpus Thomisticum* Latin text does not subdivide the *Responsio* at all, which, again, supports the possibility that this section of Aquinas might be all of a piece.

[61] McCabe, 'Appendix 4: Analogy', p. 106.

[62] Of course, this does lead to a certain difficulty in reading the text of 13,5, but, as has been noted above, so does the majority reading. In the reading being proposed here, both of the ways of understanding analogical expressions used of creatures and of God share a common feature – the reference to the causal relation of creation between God and creaturely perfections. The difficulty in reading 13,5 thus is that the Latin for 'And in this way' that follows the twofold distinction made by Aquinas - *Et hoc modo* - is usually the way that he expresses a preference for the latter of two ways (for Latin text, see Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume Three*, p. 64, beginning of paragraph five; cf. *Summa Theologiae*, *Corpus Thomisticum*, [28826] I^{a} q. 13 a. 5 co.). The majority reading's difficulty is with the next part of the *Responsio*, in which Aquinas usually gives an example

13, 5 in Context – What is the *Unum*?

McCabe's 'quite famous difficulty' is compounded if the next article is considered, since the language Aquinas uses in the *Responsio* to 13, 6 strongly calls to mind the three-term structure. He speaks of names used analogically of many, saying that the name is used of each of them '*per respectum ad unum*',[63] suggesting that the *unum* issue of 13, 5 will not easily go away. The *Past Masters* translation renders it as 'one thing' in both places.[64] The *Blackfriars* translation is more specific still: 'Whenever a word is used analogically of many things, it is used of them because of some order or relation they have to some central thing.'[65] What might this *unum* be?

Hughes offers a way forward, proposing that 'we must bear in mind that God is shown to exist by "proof that", which employs a nominal definition of the middle term; and we must also keep in mind Aquinas's remarks about the analogical use of "healthy".'[66] He suggests a thought experiment, in which a chemist who has never seen an animal must come up with a nominal definition of a healthy animal in order to account for the 'health' (or otherwise) of a urine sample received from a vet. Hughes supplies a nominal definition to suit the purpose: '"health-A" is that property in virtue of which an animal produces specimens which are healthy-U'.[67] Thus the middle term, of which a nominal definition must be given, seems to be a property. So, in the analogy is 'God is wise, Socrates is wise', the middle term, the central thing to use McCabe's terminology, of which only a nominal definition can be given, would

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of the preferred way. This is introduced in Latin by *Et iste modus*, which usually refers back to the previous statement (see Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume Three*, p. 64, beginning of paragraph six; cf. *Summa Theologiae*, *Corpus Thomisticum*, [28826] I[a] q. 13 a. 5 co.). However, the example he gives is of the three-term, two-relation structure, not the two-term, one-relation structure that the majority reading thinks he prefers. Both readings, then, find the *Responsio* to 13,5 difficult, indicating that the reading being proposed here is worth investigating further.

[63] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, *Corpus Thomisticum*, [28835] I[a] q. 13 a. 6 co.

[64] See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, *InteLex Past Masters*, FP Q 13 A 5 Body Para 3/3 and FP Q 13 A 6 Body.

[65] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume Three*, p. 69.

[66] Hughes, 'Aquinas and the Limits of Agnosticism', p. 44.

[67] Ibid., p. 45.

seemingly be the property of wisdom in God. To investigate this possibility, it is important to understand the character of the two types of proof in Aquinas, as Hughes points out.

He elucidates as follows: 'An "explanation why" starts from a cause, i.e. from what is prior without qualification. A "proof that" starts from an effect, i.e. from what is prior from our point of view'.[68] The chemist in the thought experiment cannot understand what a healthy animal could be like, since he has never seen one, so he is unable to give a proper definition of 'health-A'. It is this that prevents him from giving an 'explanation why' and restricts him to offering a 'proof that' there is such a thing as a healthy animal. Hughes says that the relevant passage on this topic is *Summa Theologiae* Ia, 2, 2, reply to objection 2, in which Aquinas says that, in a proof proceeding from effect to cause, 'we must take as the middle term the meaning of a word rather than a strict definition of the thing' and adds that 'the words we use of God are derived from his effects, as will be shown later'.[69]

This argument, as Hughes's mention of it here suggests, applies to all perfection terms used of God. Returning, then, to the example of the wisdom of God and of Socrates, the impression given is still that the nominal definition offered is that of God's wisdom, since it is the effect – wisdom in Socrates – that must be used in place of the definition of the cause. However, if this is the case, this reply in 2, 2 ends puzzlingly, for, in Hughes's translation, it continues: 'hence in proving that God exists we can take as our middle term the meaning of the word 'God'.'[70] If this argument is, as seems to be the case, applicable to all perfection terms, then the middle term appears not to be the nominal definition of the perfection, after all, but the nominal definition of God. Of course, it could be argued that Aquinas mentions the nominal definition of God in 2, 2 because he is considering there the existence of God, and

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[68] Hughes, 'Aquinas and the Limits of Agnosticism', p. 40.

[69] Translation given by Hughes in 'Aquinas and the Limits of Agnosticism', p. 40. According to the *Blackfriars* translation, this last comment is the forward reference to Question 13. (See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume Two*, p. 10, n. 6).

[70] Translation given by Hughes in 'Aquinas and the Limits of Agnosticism', p. 40.

God's essence is God's existence. But the possibility that the middle term is God, rather than the relevant divine perfection, in all such analogical expressions merits further investigation, as well as safeguarding the insistence that the middle term cannot be a shared perfection, as noted earlier.

What is the Middle Term?

Returning to 13, 6, Hughes recognizes that his agnostic rendering of 'health-A' might well provoke opposition, because it may be taken to imply that the human enquirer cannot know God. Whilst he insists that it is not possible 'to replace our working definition of God or his attributes with a more adequate one',[71] he also means to maintain the richness of Aquinas's position, that 'What we call goodness in creatures pre-exists in God in a higher way'.[72] This can be done by combining the conceptual agnosticism that Hughes insists upon with two further assertions: 'that 'God is good' *does not* simply mean 'God is the cause of goodness in creatures'; and [...] that the goodness of creatures represents the goodness of God, hence resembles the goodness of God.'[73]

In order to uphold resemblance, which he admits 'is of central importance for the richer account of the sense of the terms used analogously of God',[74] he follows a link in Aquinas's text from 13, 6 to 13, 2, translating the relevant part thus: 'We have already shown that God has in himself all the perfections of creatures, but not distinct from one another, and universally.'[75] As a result, the nominal definition of any of God's attributes and that of God

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[71] Hughes, 'Aquinas and the Limits of Agnosticism', p. 46.
[72] Ibid., pp. 46-47.
[73] Ibid., pp. 45-46.
[74] Hughes, 'Aquinas and the Limits of Agnosticism', p. 46.
[75] Translation given by Hughes in 'Aquinas and the Limits of Agnosticism', p. 46.

(God's essence) have one referent for Aquinas because of divine simplicity, so the puzzling end to 13, 6 is of little moment.[76]

In order to investigate this resemblance further, another link must be followed, from 13, 2 to 4, 2.[77] Aquinas asks whether God's perfection is all-embracing of other (and therefore creaturely) perfections, arguing with respect to causation that 'any perfection found in an effect must be found also in the cause of that effect.'[78] He considers various cause and effect relations, moving gradually towards the relation involved in creation: in his penultimate step, he says that if the 'cause and the effect are not of the same sort', then the perfection is found in the cause 'in a more perfect manner.' He concludes: 'Since God is the primary operative cause of all things, the perfections of everything must pre-exist in him in a higher manner.'[79] Perhaps this higher manner, this pre-eminent way in which the perfections exist in God, is that they are not distinct from one another, as noted earlier. In his Reply to Objection 3, he says that the divine perfections can be 'considerentur secundum quod distinguuntur ratione'.[80] The Blackfriars translation renders this as 'considered as notionally separate'[81] and the Past Masters translation as 'considered as distinguished in idea'.[82] So, although the divine perfections are not distinct in God, they can nevertheless be conceptually distinguished by the human enquirer.

In order to clarify this, the next article is important, in which Aquinas asks 'Can creatures be said to resemble God?'[83] Again, he proceeds by way of causation: 'since every

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[76] Burrell offers a broadly similar argument, drawing on Aquinas's distinction between *modus significandi* and *res significata*, in Burrell, *AGA*, p. 66.

[77] This link is supplied by the Blackfriars edition, Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume Three*, p. 54, n. 6.

[78] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume Two*, p. 53.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, *Corpus Thomisticum*, [28397] Iª q. 4 a. 2 ad 3.

[81] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume Two*, p. 55.

[82] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, *InteLex Past Masters* , FP Q 4 A 2 Rp 3.

[83] This is the translation of the title of *Summa Theologiae* Ia, 4,3 given in Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume Two*, p. 57.

agent reproduces itself in so far as it is an agent, and everything acts according to the manner of its form, the effects must in some way resemble the form of the agent.'[84] As in the previous article, he proceeds stepwise, ultimately considering causation in which the agent is outside of all genera. In this case, he says, the effect does not 'participate in the likeness of the agent's form according to some specific or generic formality, but only according to some sort of analogy.'[85] His Reply to Objection 3 drives the point home: 'Likeness of creatures to God is not affirmed on account of agreement in form according to the formality of the same genus or species, but solely according to analogy.'[86] It is worth stressing that, in the *Responsio*, he says that the creature reproduces the form of the divine agent cause according to some sort of analogy. Perhaps this allows for a degree of multiplicity in the explanation of analogy later, in Question 13. In his Reply to Objection 4, Aquinas introduces a directional sensitivity into his talk of resemblance that is also important: 'as Dionysius points out, "mutual likeness obtains between things of the same order, but not between cause and effect" [...]. Similarly we can say that creatures resemble God, but not that God resembles creatures.'[87]

Taking this material back to the discussion of Question 13, a particular pattern of language begins to take shape: There is no distinction in God between God's essence and the divine perfections. Nevertheless, it is possible to talk about God's wisdom without talking about God's justice, to speak of the divine perfections without speaking of God's essence. All human talk of God proceeds according to some sort of analogy. It is also important to recognize the directional sensitivity of such statements: statements made about God and creatures cannot always properly be made of creatures and God. Aquinas investigates this further in 13, 7, where he considers the language of relations.

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[84] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, *InteLex Past Masters* , FP Q 4 A 3 Body.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid., FP Q 4 A 3 Rp 3.
[87] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume Two*, p. 59.

Analogical Relations

In 13, 7, Aquinas asks whether relations are realities or only ideas and his directional sensitivity leads him to note that there are three possibilities. The relations between two *relata* can be a reality from both extremes, an idea from both, or, thirdly, 'sometimes a relation in one extreme may be a reality, while in the other extreme it is an idea only; and this happens whenever two extremes are not of one order.'[88] It is this last case, he says, that applies to God and creatures:

> Since therefore God is outside the whole order of creation, and all creatures are ordered to Him, and not conversely, it is manifest that creatures are really related to God Himself; whereas in God there is no real relation to creatures, but a relation only in idea, inasmuch as creatures are referred to Him.'[89]

This language of the real and notional relations of creation makes possible a completion of the earlier characterisation of the pattern of analogical language of creatures and God made in distinction terminology. This, in turn, makes the connections between analogical language and the philosophical structure of creation more perspicuous.

In creatures, there is a real relation to God – 'the relation' of creation, which holds not only for the essence of the creature, but also for any perfection it may have. Speaking of this in terms of distinction, there is a real distinction between creatures and God (the ontological distinction); again, not only between their essence and God, but also any perfection they have and God. There is also a real distinction (and relation) between the creature's essence and its perfections, and vice versa. This is not a causal relation, since the causal relation is to God, the Creator. Rather, it is because the perfections of creatures are accidental, not necessary, i.e. it is possible to be a creature without being perfect.

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[88] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, *InteLex Past Masters* , FP Q 13 A 7 Body Para 4/5.
[89] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, *InteLex Past Masters* , FP Q 13 A 7 Body Para 5/5.

When it comes to speaking of divine and creaturely perfections, the structure of the analogical predication follows a similar pattern of interlocking relations and distinctions. Thus, the middle term in talk of divine and creaturely perfections is the nominal definition, not of the relevant divine perfection, but of God. The relation that links God and any creaturely perfection is that of creation, a causal relation. In God, however, there is no distinction between God's essence and the divine perfections, because of divine simplicity. But, does this mean that there is no relation, either? Not necessarily. In God, there is substantial identity between God's essence and all the divine perfections, because all the divine perfections are necessary, as God is perfect and simple. So, the relation between God and the divine perfections (and vice versa) could be designated the relation of substantial identity. This unique relation is needed to speak of God at all, because the divine perfections are not-other than God (God's essence). In the case of creaturely perfections, as well of the essences of creatures, these are other than God, and this is spoken of by saying that, in creatures, there is a real relation to God, that of creation.

This means that a three-term, two-relation structure can be offered for the analogy 'God is wise', having a similar structure to the medicine-urine example in 13, 5. The word 'wise' is used of God and of Socrates because Socrates' wisdom and God's wisdom are both related to God, the first by the causal relation of creation, and the second by the relation of substantial identity. It could be objected that in 13, 5 both relations are causal, whereas in this proposal they are not. However, the directional sensitivity that Aquinas displays can be of assistance here, too, because he points out that '"healthy" applied to urine signifies the sign of animal health, and applied to medicine signifies the cause of the same health.'[90] Thus, although both relations are, in fact, causal, the relation of 'healthy' medicine to the healthy

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[90] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, *InteLex Past Masters* , FP Q 13 A 5 Body Para 3/3. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume Three*, p. 65, which says that 'healthy', used of urine, 'means a symptom of health'.

animal is that of cause, whereas that of 'healthy' urine is that of sign or symptom. Perhaps, then, there must be some sort of causal link involved in analogical predication, but it might not be necessary for both relations to be that of causation. In the example of medicine and urine, one of the relations is that of signification; in the case of God and creatures, one is the unique relation of substantial identity found in the simple God.

Analogy in *De Veritate* and the *Summa Theologiae*

The reading proposed here has thus far been defended using the text of the *Summa Theologiae*, but it is important to consider *De Veritate* as well. In the mathematical example that Aquinas offers there, 'six and eight are proportionate because, just as six is the double of three, so eight is the double of four'.[91] In this structure, there is no direct proportion (or relation) between the analogates, so 'their relation to each other is not considered'.[92] Six and eight are not related directly by the proportion of two, but are related indirectly, since both are divisible by that number. Another way of putting this might be that they are related via the mediation of two. On the reading of the *Summa Theologiae* offered above, a similar pattern can be discerned. If analogical predication of creatures and God is structured as three terms in two relations, there is no direct relation between 'wise' applied to God and 'wise' applied to Socrates. However, there is an indirect relation between them, in that they are both related to God, since there is a relation of substantial identity between God's wisdom and God (God's essence) and a real (causal) relation between God and the wisdom of Socrates (as the latter is created). Another way to put this might be that 'wise' used of Socrates and of God are related via the mediation of God.

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[91] Aquinas, Thomas, *Disputed Questions on Truth: Volume One*, trans. from the definitive Leonine text by Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952), in *InteLex Past Masters* <http://library.nlx.com/> [accessed 26 May 2005], Vol 1 Q 2 A 3 Rp 4 p 73.

[92] Ibid.

In both accounts, there seems to be a preference for mediated or indirect relations. However, an important change also takes place. In *De Veritate*, the analogates do not stand in an immediate relation to the middle term. Rather, the middle term is an expression of the immediate relation in which they stand to two other terms. Therefore, in this early expression, an immediate relation between the analogates is ruled out by the mediated character of the connection. In the *Summa Theologiae*, although the relation between God's wisdom and that of Socrates is indirect, there is an immediate relation between God and Socrates' wisdom, so this later account can be said to be one of mediated immediacy. This once again mirrors the language of creation, in which Schillebeeckx calls access to God a mediated immediacy.[93]

Mediated immediacy can serve to unite the two options for the explanation of analogy that Aquinas speaks of in 13, 5. Burrell notes that human enquirers must use 'both abstract and concrete terms of God, since neither alone is adequate to the task'. As a result, 'we can say 'God is wise' properly only when we are prepared to say 'God is wisdom' as well, and vice versa.'[94] In the case of 'God is wise', the three-term, two-relation structure of mediated immediacy outlined above works best. This is because there is no direct relation between God's wisdom and the wisdom of Socrates on this model. However, if 'God is wisdom' is considered, where the burden of the statement is that God is Wisdom itself, then there would be an immediate, direct (real and causal) relation between Wisdom and the wisdom of Socrates, because of creation.

So, in the *Summa Theologiae*, both structures are actually needed. On the one hand, the three-term, two-relation structure works best as an explanation of analogies of the form 'God is x', where x is an abstract expression of a perfection, such as 'wise'. On the other hand, the two-term, one relation structure works best as an explanation of analogies of the

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[93] See, for example, Hill, 'A Theology in Transition', *PRG*, pp. 2, 7; Kennedy, 'God and Creation', *PRG*, p. 52; O' Meara, 'Salvation', *PRG*, p. 109.

[94] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 61, referring to Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, 3, 3, 1.

form 'God is *X* (itself)', where *X* is a concrete expression of a perfection, such as 'Wisdom'.[95] Perhaps this is what Aquinas means in the disputed section of 13, 5. When he introduces his *Responsio* by saying that 'words are used of God and creatures in an analogical way',[96] his intention is not to subdivide analogy into two types, only one of which will work. Rather, it is to show that both are forms of analogical speech. Thus, the crucial '*Et hoc modo*' refers back, not to the second of two 'kinds of analogical or "proportional" uses of language',[97] but to both of two explanations of how to speak analogically of God and creatures.

A Schillebeeckian Reading

This reading of Aquinas on analogy can accurately be termed Schillebeeckian for a number of reasons. Two have been introduced above, in the use of mediated immediacy and of the 'on the one hand ... on the other hand' of relational dialectic. The philosophical structure of analogical predication has been shown to mirror that of creation. It has also been shown to be subsequent to, and dependent upon, the philosophical structure of the distinction and relation of creation, allowing a link to be made that avoids the error of tying God and world together from within the world. Analogical language about God relies, rather, on recognizing that God and the world are not strangers, since God is Creator of all that has being.

The analysis offered above of the continuity and change in Aquinas's two presentations of analogical predication is also a Schillebeeckian one. As has been shown earlier in the thesis, the analysis of history and of continuity and change that Schillebeeckx offers speaks of ephemeral, conjunctural and structural aspects.[98] The preference for an indirect understanding of analogy common to both of Aquinas's accounts could be said to be

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[95] The 'on the one hand ... on the other hand' presentation used here is deliberately chosen to echo the pattern of language of relational dialectic, providing another link between the pattern of talk of creation and that of talk of creatures and God.

[96] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume Three*, p. 65.

[97] Ibid.

[98] See Schillebeeckx, *I*, pp. 577-79 and 'The Role of History'.

a structural element of his explanation of analogical predication. Nevertheless, this structural element is not unchanging – he expresses it in *De Veritate* in a four-term, three-relation structure and in the *Summa Theologiae* in a three-term, two-relation structure. Thus, the conjunctural expression of the structural preference for analogy as indirect changes with time.

The change in Aquinas's attitude towards how, if at all, analogical predication has a direct element is more striking, and could even be called a break in his thinking. It is, however, not a complete change, departing from everything that his previous understanding of analogy held. Aquinas still thinks, in the later account, that the relation between God and creatures is not measurable and is causal – these structural elements of his earlier account are still present, although their character has changed somewhat. The break is in the conjunctural aspects. In the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas uses a direct method to understand analogies of the form 'God is Wisdom'. His earlier presentation seems not to have distinguished between the two ways that analogical predicates can be understood, so it refuses a direct understanding, because this seems to entail a measurable relation. This means that two elements or aspects of the early account become seen as ephemeral later. The first is his absolute opposition to any direct understanding of analogical predication, which he discards in the later account: there, the direct relation of creation is incorporated into both explanations, although the way that it functions depends on the way the analogy is expressed. The second is, not surprisingly, his insistence that analogical predication must be understood indirectly. In the *Summa Theologiae*, he moves beyond – or, more accurately, between – this pair of opposites, recognizing the possibility of mediated immediacy.

In this proposed reading of Aquinas on analogy, there is both continuity and change – the two are, in fact, ordered to one another and mutually enrich one another in a relational dialectic. It may not be too much of an exaggeration to say that here, as in many areas of philosophical theology, the continuity in Aquinas's analysis of analogical predication is, in

fact, only assured because of the breaks he has made with his earlier understanding.[99]

An *Analogia Entis*?

Before moving on to defend the reading, the issue of the *analogia entis* merits brief attention. If there is a connection between the structure of analogical predication and that of creation, is there an analogy of being in Aquinas, and if not, why not? Burrell, emphasizing that analogy is a logical and linguistic tool, notes that this does not mean 'that attention to analogical uses of language has no metaphysical payoff; it is simply to note that conflating the two risks harming both.'[100] Thus, while analogy is not completely unrelated to ontology, the two are, nevertheless, distinct.

Burrell refers to McInerny, who criticizes those 'Thomists who either confused these two orders or presumed a ready parallel between them', speaking of an analogy of being which they then projected back into Aquinas.[101] He says that this critique means both that 'analogy is at the very heart of doing philosophy,' especially creation-centred philosophy; and 'that the order of logic and of reality are indeed isomorphic'.[102] His suggestion seems to be that the practice of speaking analogically is at the heart of creation-centred philosophical theology. If so, the structure of the account of creation will find an echo in the structure of the account of analogical predication. The connection between the ontological order of creation and the logical order of analogy is not made by an analogy of being, but it cannot be so made, since it is created by God.

Although it may seem tempting to posit an analogy of being as a bridge between the two orders, if the structure of analogical predication proposed in this chapter is used, 'being'

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[99] Schillebeeckx says that continuity can come 'only through breaks'. (Portier, 'Interpretation and Method', *PRG*, p. 27, referring to Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 69).

[100] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 113.

[101] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 114.

[102] Ibid., pp. 114-15.

does not fit the model. In the case of perfection terms like 'wise', it is possible (and necessary) to say both 'God is wise' and 'God is Wisdom'. When it comes to 'being', however, the structure breaks down: it is only possible to say 'God is Being'. In fact, saying that God is Being itself is crucial for Aquinas's philosophical theology,[103] as this avers that God's essence is God's existence. But, whereas there is a sense in which 'God is wise' can be thought of as saying something like 'God has wisdom' (as long as this is understood as meaning perfect wisdom) 'being' cannot be understood this way. This is because, as Burrell rightly puts it, 'the distinction' of creation speaks of 'what *has* existence by contrast to what *is* existence'.[104] If God had being, God would be created – would be a being, a thing.

Defending the Reading

The reading proposed above is offered as a Schillebeeckian retrospect. In this section, that Schillebeeckian character will be defended, using two complementary approaches. On the one hand, Schillebeeckx's material on analogy in Aquinas will be considered, concentrating in particular on 'The Non-Conceptual Intellectual Dimension in our Knowledge of God according to Aquinas', first published in 1952.[105] Hemming accuses Schillebeeckx of defending the *analogia entis* in this article, a charge that will be refuted, but, in doing so, Schillebeeckx's position will be modified somewhat. This shows that, sometimes, the best way to assure fidelity to and continuity with the master is to make a change to his view – a correction and creative completion – indicating that this proposal is made *sequela* Schillebeeckx.

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[103] See, for example, Burrell's somewhat dense formulation that 'to be God is to be to-be', Burrell, *AGA*, p. 42 and his explanation of it, p. 179, n. I; cf. also *AGA*, pp. 24, 37-8; *KUG*, pp. 22 and 43; *F&C*, p. 122; *F&F*, p. 53.

[104] Burrell, *KUG*, p. 46. Cf. Schillebeeckx's comment on causation as a single act in two subjects, involving, on the one hand, '*being* the act and, as far as the effect is concerned, *having* or deriving the act.' (Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 164).

[105] This article is published in English as an Appendix to *R&T II*, pp. 155-206, and will henceforth be referred to as NCID. (For original publication details, see *R&T II*, p. 207).

Hemming on Schillebeeckx

Hemming's critique of Schillebeeckx begins by attributing to him the majority position that Aquinas changed his mind on the explanation of analogy, only briefly entertaining 'a difference between proportion and proportionality which he subsequently drops, in favour of the analogical relationship being a real proportion and not a proportionality.'[106] As his critique continues, it becomes much more polemical in tone:

> The vogue for tracing changes in opinion in scholar's thinking is on the wane, and rightly so. It is a nasty shadow falling from the towers of speculation of the biblical historical-critical method over the work of dogmatic theologians, and we should exercise extreme caution into admitting arguments of this kind into our deliberations.[107]

The polemical tone and the either/or of sameness or difference should serve as a warning, for two reasons. Firstly, a discussion in a polemical setting can miss or dismiss nuances in the opponent's thinking which do not easily fit into the polemical either/or scheme. Secondly, Schillebeeckx himself does not favour a polemical setting; his comments on the weakness of the Kuhnian understanding of change in this regard make that clear.[108]

Hemming goes on to say that 'Schillebeeckx is anxious to demonstrate that for St Thomas analogy does constitute a measurable relation between God and the creature',[109] a proportion rather than a proportionality. He then suggests a reason why Schillebeeckx takes this view: 'we know already that proportionality is insufficient for the full claims of the *analogia entis*, else why would Schillebeeckx have been so concerned to eliminate

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[106] Hemming, p. 122, referring to Schillebeeckx, *O&T*, p. 222.
[107] Hemming, pp. 122-23.
[108] See Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 308.
[109] Hemming, p. 123.

proportionality from the discussion of analogy in favour of proportion?'[110] But is this what Schillebeeckx is trying to do?

Schillebeeckx's Project

Schillebeeckx's project in NCID can be compared with what McCabe calls Aquinas's real concern in analogy, 'that we can use words to "try to mean" what God is like, that we can reach out to God with our words even though they do not circumscribe what he is.'[111] But how can this be done? Burrell presents one possibility: 'Perfection expressions are peculiar in being able to mean beyond the manners in which we employ them.'[112] They do mean something when applied to God, because 'the terms are used *absolutely*' in these reaches, but it is not possible for human beings to know what they mean. 'So the proper use of appropriate expressions turns not on acquaintance with divinity, but rather on a keen appreciation of the peculiar ways we must fracture logic to constitute a domain of discourse about God.'[113] This need to fracture logic arises because God, for Burrell, is beyond both the conceptual grasp and intellectual reach of human beings. This is why he employs a conscious intentionality analysis, which draws the transcendent dynamism of the human spirit into the picture of reaching out to God; enabling the intellect and will to reach out together.

This, however, is not the only possible solution; after all, Aquinas thinks that 'we can reach out to God with our words', according to McCabe. So, although the dynamism that reaches out successfully is not a conceptual dynamism, if it is a reaching out with words, it is nevertheless a noetic dynamism of some kind. This is the possibility Schillebeeckx is exploring in NCID.

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[110] Hemming, p. 124.
[111] McCabe, 'Appendix 4: Analogy', p. 106.
[112] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 65.
[113] Ibid.

If his analysis of analogy is placed into the context of this overall project, it becomes clear that his motivation is not to support an *analogia entis*. His discussion of analogy takes up just over half of the article, it is true, but it is the second half. The first half is explicitly dedicated to an investigation and critique of the proposal put forward by Maréchal that the dynamism in the human knower which attains the mystery of God without grasping it is not only non-conceptual, but non-noetic.[114] Maréchal, he says, 'considered his thesis to be based on Aquinas's works,' so Schillebeeckx carries forward his study by investigating 'to what extent Aquinas himself accepted an aspect in our knowledge of God that transcends our concepts.'[115]

He begins by stressing the place of creation in knowledge of God, noting that 'Aquinas shows in ST I, q. 12, a.12 how creatures are always the basis of human knowledge of God, so that all we can attain of God is what creatures tell us about him.'[116] He speaks of this in his next breath as a 'theophany' and then as 'theophany or creatureliness'[117] and notes: 'In this chapter I am concerned, not to argue the proof of God, but with the already established proof of God.'[118] This footnote stresses that he is not trying to prove the existence of God by, for example, positing an *analogia entis*, because it is already established by the time the question of the knowledge of God arises in his philosophical theology. His comments also show that his enquiry into the knowledge of God depends on creation, in just the way Hemming and others have demonstrated.

Schillebeeckx agrees with Maréchal that it is not possible to grasp God conceptually. Yet, in typical fashion, he balances this negative statement with a more positive one,

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[114] See Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 161, referring to Joseph Maréchal, *Le point de départ de la métaphysique: leçons sur le développement historique et théorique du problème de la connaîssance*, 5 vols (Louvain: Museum Lessianum; Paris: Alcan, 1922-26), especially Vol. V: *Le Thomisme devant la philosophie critique* (1926).

[115] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, pp. 161-62.

[116] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 162.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid. p. 162, n. 9.

affirming both that 'we possess no real ideas of God' and that 'our intellectual knowledge of God is not possible apart from the conceptual aspect'.[119] Using another typical expression, he says that 'although Aquinas on the one hand affirms that our knowledge of God includes conceptual aspects, he is, on the other hand, quite conscious of the fact that knowledge cannot be purely conceptual thought.'[120] According to Schillebeeckx, Aquinas puts these two assertions together in a similar way: 'The *act of signifying* goes further than the *ratio nominis*, but it exceeds this *ratio* in the direction indicated by its content itself, in such a way that the reality is really envisaged, but not conceptually grasped.'[121]

Schillebeeckx's own expression of this interplay has a distinctively De Petterian air:

> The typically noetic value of our knowledge of God is therefore situated in a projective act, in which we *reach out* for God, but do not grasp him in understanding, although we are well aware that he is to be found in the precise *direction* in which we are reaching. By this we mean that our knowledge of God is not simply a blind shot in the dark.[122]

The dynamic element that Schillebeeckx posits is active, not passive, reflecting a similarity between his epistemology and his understanding of mystical union. He also distinguishes between reaching out for God and grasping God, suggesting a distinction between two aspects of noetic access to God, in which a definite direction is established for the non-conceptual aspect by the conceptual aspect, such that they are related as well as distinct. His reference to 'a blind shot in the dark' is a De Petterian critique of the Maréchalian position. Since Maréchal's dynamism is non-noetic as well as non-conceptual, Schillebeeckx holds that it falls onto one of the horns of the Kantian dilemma: 'Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.'[123] This is the philosophical heart of Schillebeeckx's

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[119] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 166.
[120] Ibid., p. 167.
[121] Ibid., p. 171.
[122] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 175.
[123] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1933), p. 93 (A51/B75).

criticism of Maréchal. Because Maréchal's dynamism is that of the human spirit, or, to use the 'faculty psychology' of Aquinas,[124] is found in the *voluntas* which bears up the *intellectus*, it is not in the *intellectus* itself. It is not that, for Maréchal, the *intellectus* and *voluntas* can go only so far together, and then *voluntas* must kick *intellectus* away in order to enter into full union with God; this is a Bonaventurian approach.[125] Nevertheless, the dynamism is not found in the *intellectus* itself, but in the *voluntas* that accompanies it. Schillebeeckx argues that in order to avoid the Kantian dilemma, a non-conceptual, yet still noetic, dynamism must be posited, or, in Aquinas's terms, a dynamism that is not found in the *ratio*, but is still found in the *intellectus*.[126]

He sums up this section of NCID by speaking of three aspects of knowledge of God which are unmistakably intended to correspond to Aquinas's three *viae*:

> Our proper-but-negative [the *via negationis*] and our positive-but-improper knowledge of God [the *via affirmationis*] is therefore borne up by a proper-and-positive knowledge of him [the *via eminentiae*] which, however, remains unexpressed, but does form the matrix of the conceptual aspects in our knowledge of God.[127]

The proper-but-negative and the positive-but-improper knowledge of God that Schillebeeckx speaks of here are both conceptual, whereas the proper-and-positive knowledge is non-conceptual, yet still noetic. In that case, it cannot be the *analogia entis*, because that is conceptual. At the end of the section, he says that the critique he has presented 'is even more clearly confirmed by Thomas's doctrine of the so-called analogy of God',[128] showing that the second half of the article serves the same purpose.

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[124] Cf. Bernard Lonergan, 'Insight Revisited', in *Second Collection*, pp. 263-78 (p. 277), cited in Rende, *Lonergan on Conversion*, p. 96.

[125] See the account offered in Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, trans. by Ewert Cousins (New York: Paulist Press, 1978); also see Paul Rout, *Francis and Bonaventure* (London: Fount, 1996), pp. 38-39 and 57-58.

[126] Schillebeeckx makes this distinction in *R&T II*, p. 206, n. 124.

[127] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 176.

[128] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 178.

Schillebeeckx on Analogy in Aquinas

Schillebeeckx says that Aquinas 'used the word analogy in a double sense', speaking of an 'objective and real analogy' (such as 'found in I, q. 4, a. 3') and of 'an "analogical predication" in the logical and verbal or the grammatical and philosophical sense, as described in I, q. 13, a. 5', the first being the basis of the second.[129] This could raise suspicions, since it sounds somewhat like positing two types of analogy, the first of which sounds akin to an *analogia entis*.[130] It is true, as Hemming indicates, that Schillebeeckx offers a reading of Aquinas's thought on this 'real analogy' that divides it up into three sequential stages, which may be more complex than is needed. But, the only alternative to such a change-dominated account is not one involving no change at all. Rather, an interpretation based on a more Schillebeeckian understanding of continuity and change seems possible.

In the *Sentences*, according to Schillebeeckx, Aquinas says that the 'real basis' for knowledge of God is 'the *analogia creaturae ad Creatorem*'. This is 'a *similitudo imitationis* or a *proportio unius ad alterum*, in which the *similitudo* is thus not reciprocal', and can be contrasted with '"analogical predication on a real basis," [...] in which the subjects referred to display a reciprocal likeness.'[131] Schillebeeckx thus makes a distinction between analogical language used of creatures and God – the basis of which is the asymmetrical 'relation' of creation – and that used of two creatures – in which the relation is reciprocal and therefore symmetrical. Towards the end of the *Sentences* and in much of *De Veritate*, Schillebeeckx notes 'a sudden change, at least in Aquinas's terminology' in which he began, and 'just as

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[129] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, pp. 180-81.

[130] An indication that this is not the case comes from the Dutch text, in which the term translated as 'real analogy' is 'een zakelijke verhouding' (Schillebeeckx, *O&T*, p. 215). The fact that the term he uses is the one he typically uses to speak of 'the relation' of creation indicates that it is more likely that he intends to indicate the link between the real relation of creation and the analogical relation of language about God than to posit an *analogia entis*.

[131] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 182.

suddenly ceased to use the term *proportionalitas* in connection with the analogy of God.'[132] Although he indicates that Cajetanian interpreters 'had recourse to these texts',[133] he is not himself moving in that direction, but continuing his De Petterian argument. He says that Aquinas's motivation in using *proportionalitas* rather than *proportio* is to make it clear that, in the case of analogical language about God, 'the act of predication was directed towards a *non finitum*, a reality that cannot be grasped conceptually.' Thus, although it is only possible to talk of God conceptually, and therefore in a creaturely way, this 'does not, however, mean that we attribute the concept as such to God, but that we know that God is, as it were, situated in the extension of this concept.'[134]

He says that Aquinas does not use *proportio* in *De Veritate* because, here, he means by this term 'a *measurable* relationship: "*proportio determinata*"',[135] involving 'a "*distantia determinata*" between the two terms' such that the relation between them is reciprocal.[136] Thus, *proportio* in the strict sense applies to analogates that are reciprocally related in a measurable way, which is not how creatures and God are related. It is this, Schillebeeckx says, that led Aquinas to have temporary recourse to *proportionalitas*, because it 'wholly abstracted from the variants, and was thus able to take non-measurable relationships into account.'[137] Nevertheless, he maintains, 'Thomas admitted that *proportio* could certainly also have a wider meaning, and could denote unmeasurable relationships as well.'[138]

The fact that *proportionalitas* makes no reference to any direct relation between the analogates became a problem when Aquinas came to write the *Summa Theologiae*, because, whilst it is true that there is no measurable, reciprocal relation between God and creatures,

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[132] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 184.
[133] Ibid., p. 184.
[134] Ibid., p. 188.
[135] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 188.
[136] Ibid., p. 189.
[137] Ibid., p. 191.
[138] Ibid., p. 188.

there is some kind of relation – that of creation. It is this characteristic of *proportionalitas*, coupled with the sense that *proportio* could be understood as having the wider sense outlined above, which led Aquinas to return 'to his first formulations.'[139] Thus, according to Schillebeeckx, once it is appreciated that the *proportio* between God and creatures is not reciprocal and not measurable, 'we have no more to learn about God from Thomas's *proportionalitas* than we had already learned from his *proportio*.'[140] Aquinas therefore returns to the language of *proportio* in order to maintain a reference in analogy to the relation of creation.

However, it is worth asking whether such a complex account is needed when a simpler one might do just as well. If the thread of continuity, as Schillebeeckx suggests, is that analogical language about God must on the one hand be thought of neither as reciprocal nor measurable, but on the other hand must maintain a reference to the relation of creation, it seems simpler to offer the reading presented earlier in this chapter, that Aquinas's understanding of analogy is one of mediated immediacy. His account has various conjunctural and ephemeral aspects which come and go, but the mediated aspect provides the structural continuity needed to avoid polarizing continuity and change. Furthermore, it may also be possible to dispense with Schillebeeckx's 'real analogy' altogether, referring instead directly to the relation of creation that plays a part in the explication of analogy as a linguistic phenomenon. Again, this would simplify things and would also remove the suspicion of an *analogia entis*.

The analysis that Schillebeeckx offers of the material in the *Summa Theologiae* is certainly conducive to such an aim. He speaks of Aquinas's 'nominal analogy', which 'is purely grammatical, although it has a metaphysical basis.'[141] He begins by reiterating his anti-

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[139] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 192.
[140] Ibid., p. 193.
[141] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 194.

Cajetanian and De Petterian position and then says that nominal analogy 'involves a *transference of name* from one subject to other subjects, just because these bear some relationship to this one subject and are for this reason called by the name of this first subject.'[142] This definition can be applied both to three-term and two-term understandings of analogical predication, which is promising. Unfortunately, Schillebeeckx tends to subdivide nominal analogy along these lines, saying that Aquinas 'always distinguished two types of analogical predication, according to whether its basis was either a *proportio* (or *analogia*) *unius ad alterum* or a *proportio duorum* (*vel plurium*) *ad aliquid unum.*'[143]

If, instead of positing different kinds of analogy, the three-term and two-term structures are seen as different ways of explaining how analogous predication of God and creatures works, there is no need to posit real analogy as a third type, on which these two others rest. Rather, two explanations are given, depending on whether 'the relation' of creation pertains between the analogates themselves or not. In the case of expressions like 'God is Wisdom', the relation of creation pertains between 'the so-called *analogata* themselves, in which case it is a question of a *proportio unius ad alterum*'. In the case of analogies of the form 'God is wise', it does not pertain between the *analogata* themselves, since these are God's wisdom and the wisdom of the creature, and in this case 'it is a question of an *analogia duorom* (*plurium*) *ad aliquid unum* (*tertium*).'[144] Thus, the structural arrangement of the proposal defended in this section is similar to that of Schillebeeckx, but not the same. Moreover, it is similar to it in the form of a *sequela*, making it a Schillebeeckian proposal.

The connection with creation can support this reading in a way that also points forward to the next chapter. Schillebeeckx says that 'the *unum aliquid* with which we are

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[142] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 195.
[143] Ibid., p. 196.
[144] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 197.

always concerned here is not a *ratio abstracta communis*',[145] i.e. it is not a common concept, as would be needed to support an *analogia entis*, but a cause. Therefore, the 'things stand in a particular relation to a real something, which, *because of this relation*, communicates its own name to the subjects concerned.'[146] In the case of God and creatures, this is 'the relation' of creation and the *unum aliquid* is God. 'Analogical predications of God mean, *in linea analogiae*, therefore, simply that we transfer the *name* of the one to the other *for the sake of* the creatures' real participation in God.'[147] This means, firstly, that the name 'wise' is transferred not just because of (*omdat*) 'the relation' of creation, but in order to support how that relation is expressed (overtones suggested by *omwille*). The linguistic structure of analogy and the ontological structure of creation are thus not only compatible, but mutually supportive.

Secondly, Schillebeeckx does not simply talk of the creature's relation (*verhouding*) to God, but uses a term that has overtones of participation (*betrokkenheid*). As Schillebeeckx says near the beginning of NCID, causation 'means a single act in two subjects. In the fullest sense this means *being* the act and, as far as the effect is concerned, *having* or *deriving* the act.'[148] Thus, in a way that is similar to the formulation of Burrell, mentioned earlier, 'the distinction' is between what has being and what is being.[149] Participation offers a structurally isomorphic complementary expression: 'the relation' is between what participates in being and what is being. Since no creature can stand outside of the world, God is found in and through that which participates in God: God is the depth-dimension of the world. Thus, that

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[145] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 198. Cf. his opposition to the '*universale proportionale*' on p. 200.

[146] Author's translation (cf. *R&T II*, p. 198). Dutch text: 'De dingen staan in een bepaalde verhouding tot een reëel iets, dat, *om die verhouding* zijn eigen naam mededeelt aan die betrokken subjecten.' (Schillebeeckx, *O&T*, p. 226).

[147] Author's translation (cf. *R&T II*, p. 199). Dutch text: 'Analoge uitzeggingen van God betekenen, „in linia analogiae", derhalve louter dat we de *naam* van het ene op het andere overdragen *omwille* van de reëele betrokkenheid op God van de schepselen.' (Schillebeeckx, *O&T*, p. 227).

[148] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 164.

[149] Cf. Burrell, *KUG*, p. 46.

creature most like God, a creature made in God's image, can accurately be called the face of God in the world, by virtue of the fact and to the extent that it participates in God. As this creature is perfected by the action of God, it could even be said that this creature becomes God, although it must be stressed that this becoming is one of participation. God alone is self-identical, but all else that is, to the extent that it is, participates in God. The next chapter will examine this idea of participation at greater length and apply it to the distinction and relation between human action and God's action.

Chapter Six

Schillebeeckian Relational Dialectic II: Prospects for Philosophical Theology

The potential of the category of participation for seamless philosophical theology has already been commented on earlier in this thesis, especially in the sub-section of chapter four dealing with Irenaeus. The idea can also be shown, in a way that further supports the structure outlined there, to be *sequela* Aquinas. The seamlessness it makes possible helps defuse a controversy in the secondary literature about the place of creation in Schillebeeckx's oeuvre. It also offers a Schillebeeckian means of linking God's action in the world and that of human beings in such a way that an account of them can be given which reflects the structure of creation-faith, in a similar way to the correlation between language and ontology presented in the previous chapter.

Participation and Creation in Aquinas

Kerr finds support for the mind-world identity epistemology that he attributes to Aquinas in his citation of Aristotle's maxim, 'the soul, in a way, is everything', which he calls 'a neat paraphrase [...] of the doctrine of creation and, specifically of the human being as created in the image and likeness of God (*De veritate*, 1).'[1] If the 'is' of the expression can also express participation, the soul is, in a way, everything because everything is, in a way, God – making exactly the link that Kerr notes between creation and human knowledge of the world. There seems to be a promising link between 'the relation' of creation and participation that can be of

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[1] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 31.

assistance here, though there is a need to avoid understanding participation and substance as polar terms held together in tension, as Williams and Burrell seem to do.[2] Kerr says:

> Being created, Thomas thinks, means that there is nothing in the creature other than a relationship to the creator; and since the divine creative act is nothing other than God with a relationship to the created, the God-creature relationship is not a real relationship in God, whereas the creature-God relationship is a real relationship in the creature.[3]

This characterization is a useful one, despite the fact that it conflates 'relation to' and 'relationship with' in its general term 'relationship to'. It underscores the possibilities afforded by thinking of creation as a divine act that establishes a relation between God and the creature. It also emphasizes the absolute dependence of the creature on God and the asymmetry of 'the relation': the divine creative act is God with a particular relation to the creature, whereas the creature's very being is the creature in relation to God. Thus, the being of the creature is participation in God. Schillebeeckx makes a similar set of connections, saying that in the causality of creation, 'the effect is no different from the act itself of the cause in the other, so that the effect as such is *participativē* the act of the cause itself.'[4]

Kerr speaks of participation when he considers human knowledge of God, noting that '[a]gain and again we return to the doctrine of creation.' Aquinas, he says, holds that humans 'can participate in God's beatitude by knowledge and love, anticipating here and now what will only be fulfilled eschatologically.'[5] This link between sanctification and beatitude also links participation with deification. Referring to Williams's 'simple and brilliant reading' of Aquinas in this regard,[6] Kerr notes that Aquinas's 'rich conception of the effect of divine

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[2] See Williams, *The Ground of Union*, p. 81 and 'Deification', p. 221; Burrell, '*Participation and Substantiality*', p. 101.

[3] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 43.

[4] Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 163, Schillebeeckx uses the term in italics to stand for a number of Latin references in Aquinas (see p. 163, n. 14).

[5] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 131.

[6] Ibid., p. 160.

grace on the individual believer [...] clearly amounts to the traditional patristic doctrine of deification.'[7] Williams reads the *Summa Theologiae*, he observes, as being 'wholly shaped by Thomas's relentless portrayal of God as the God who is insistent on union with humanity'.[8]

This cluster of themes is also very much present in Schillebeeckx's work. He says that Christians 'believe that in the personal loneliness in which we exercise our freedom we are securely held in the embrace of God'.[9] In the context of such a faith, he asks: 'Can there be any other humanism than the humanism of God himself, a God concerned for humanity, who wants people to be concerned for humanity as well?'[10] God, he says, 'is inwardly concerned with human progress, of which he, the creator, is the great inspirer and promoter and in which we, the creatures, are the humble collaborators.'[11] A similar idea can be expressed with reference to his idea of God as 'pure Positivity'.[12] To the extent that people are good – that they are what might be called active positivity – they participate in God, who is pure Positivity. God's action as Creator and that of human beings as creatures are not the same, but related; not different, but distinct.

Therefore, the 'is' of identity and the suggested 'is' of participation might well be expressible together in a relational dialectic, one that, once again, depends on 'the distinction' and 'the relation' of creation. On the one hand, in a way that draws on 'the distinction', the world is not-God, in the sense of being totally other-than-God but not in the sense of being separate from God or outside of God.[13] Creation is autonomous but not independent; it exists

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[7] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 149.

[8] Ibid., p. 157.

[9] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 233.

[10] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 316; parallel 'You Cannot Arbitrarily Make Something of the Gospel!', p. 18.

[11] Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 24.

[12] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 317; cf. *IR*, p. 120, parallel *GAU*, p. 99.

[13] In this latter sense, the world would then be external to God and therefore beyond God's absolute presence, meaning that God would have to intervene in the world in order to be present in it. This also shows that the conception of some contemporary thinkers, such as Stephen Hawking, that if there is no gap in atheistic scientific theories there is nothing left for a Creator to do is based on a false understanding of creation. See

in solitude but is never alone. On the other hand, in a way that draws on 'the relation', the world is within the presence of God, who stays near and with created beings, supporting them in being, bearing witness to himself in them. In this spirit, it might even be possible to go as far as saying: on the one hand, the world is not-God and yet, on the other hand, the world is God. Here, the 'is' in the first of the paired statements is an 'is' of identity: what is being denied is that God and the world are identical. In the second statement, the 'is' expresses participation: what is being affirmed is not that God and world are in any sense the same, since that has already been denied by the first statement; rather, this statement avers that the world participates in God, that it is God participatively.

The Possibilities of Participation

This balancing of language, and the seamlessness that it facilitates in philosophical theology, can help defuse the contentious debate in the secondary literature on Schillebeeckx as to whether creation or salvation is at the centre of his oeuvre. Some commentators, like Hilkert, speak of the growing significance of creation in his later works.[14] Others, including O'Meara, Steele, Abdul-Masih, and, perhaps most strongly of all, Kennedy, support a stronger thesis, that creation is central to Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology.[15] Kennedy refers to the idea of creation as 'the oxygen and lifeblood' of Schillebeeckx's theology.[16] Others maintain that

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Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes*, rev. edn (London: Bantam Press, 1996), pp. 160-61 and Stephen Hawking, Interview in *Dialogues with Scientists and Sages: the search for unity*, ed. by Renée Weber, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), pp. 201-214 (p. 209).

[14] See Hilkert, 'Introduction', *PRG*, p. xxi. In private communication, Hilkert has committed herself more strongly, saying that the doctrine of creation is foundational in Schillebeeckx's thought, adding that Schillebeeckx himself has said that it is, and has been, such. (Private communication, 2002). Also see Hilkert's assertion that 'in sections of *Church*, particularly the epilogue, Schillebeeckx's long-term commitment to a theology of creation and his concern for the well-being of the entire cosmos are also evident.' (Hilkert, 'Introduction', *PRG*, p. xxx).

[15] See O'Meara, 'Salvation', *PRG*, pp. 102 and 109-110; Steele, pp. 6 and 13; Abdul-Masih, pp. 69-70; Kennedy, 'God and Creation', *PRG*, pp. 37, 38 and 57.

[16] Kennedy, 'God and Creation', *PRG*, p. 37.

the key to his thought is to be found in Christology or soteriology.[17] The most strongly worded exponent of this position is Schreiter, who speaks somewhat dismissively of 'scattered references to creation throughout the oeuvre' and holds that this does not change 'Schillebeeckx's fundamental commitment to the soteriological', since soteriology is linked to creation.[18] Thompson asserts that Kennedy 'overemphasises one doctrine as the key', saying that the structure of Schillebeeckx's thought, as 'nonantithetical and dialectical', means that creation can itself be seen as a doctrine of salvation.[19]

A link between creation and salvation is also recognized by Kennedy, who says that 'God's creative bringing into existence of all non-godly reality is simultaneously the beginning of a history of salvation.'[20] But, as in other debates assessed in this thesis, need the priority be an either/or issue, resulting in functionally complementary positions? Might a weaker thesis be easier to defend, that the relational dialectic present in Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology of creation can serve as a tool for understanding the way in which aspects of his philosophical theology are both related to and distinct from each other? If so, relational dialectic, clearly present in his account of creation, can be applied throughout his oeuvre, resulting in a seamless philosophical theology.[21]

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[17] See Miller, pp. 9-11 on Christology and Goergen, 'Spirituality', *PRG*, pp. 120-21 on salvation. It is worth noting, however, that the material that Goergen refers to from *III* on p. 121 to support his argument that the theme of creation develops in Schillebeeckx's thought from the late 1980s on is from one of the creation parallels. As such, it draws on material written by Schillebeeckx in the late 1970s (*IR* and *GAU*) and, as this thesis has shown, is in broad structural continuity with much earlier material.

[18] Robert J. Schreiter, 'Edward Schillebeeckx: His Continuing Significance', in *PRG*, pp. 185-194 (p. 193).

[19] Thompson, pp. 168-69, n. 3.

[20] Kennedy, 'God and Creation', *PRG*, p. 50.

[21] Given the context of this thesis, it would also have advantages for inter-faith dialogue in a Schillebeeckian mode after the example of David Burrell. The Christian understanding of creation is, in an important sense, more 'original' than the Christian understanding of salvation or Christology. Perhaps, then, the relational dialectic of creation could serve as a starting point for inter-faith dialogue with the other Abrahamic faiths in a way that it would be more difficult to start with what might be called a more explicitly Christian doctrine. (For example, salvation or Christology, as advocated as central by Georgen, Miller and Schreiter).

Linking Philosophy and Theology

Williams says that the theme of participation 'has received extensive treatment' in the secondary Thomistic literature, referring to Cornelio Fabro, Francis J. Klauder and M^{c}Inerny.[22] However, she notes that this treatment has generally been of participation 'as a philosophical concept' to do with creaturely existence, rather than 'in its patristic sense, as a form of sanctification'.[23] Kerr, too, observes that the 'theme of deified creaturehood [...] warrants some further study',[24] mentioning Aelred Squire, R.J. Hennessy, Cornelius Ernst and Robert W. Jenson as helpful in this regard.[25] He also points out that the theme was pursued by various French authors, for example, Garrigou-Lagrange, noting that the connection between Aquinas's approach to grace and sanctification and the theme of divinisation in Greek patristic sources was recognized by Thomists at Le Saulchoir in the middle years of the twentieth century.[26] This provides a link with Schillebeeckx, who studied at Le Saulchoir from 1946 to 1947.[27] It also indicates that the lineage he is drawing on can be traced back not only to his immediate philosophical and theological predecessors, but also, through them, to Aquinas and Irenaeus.

Such a suggestion links philosophy and theology as distinct and related disciplines. Relational dialectic can play an important role here, delineating a philosophical theology in which neither discipline is subsumed under the other, but both are understood as aspects of a single process of enquiry. Its use of aspect theory allows the two disciplines to retain their integrity whilst at the same time working co-operatively.

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[22] Williams, 'Deification', p. 225, n.6.

[23] Ibid., p. 225, n.6.

[24] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 149.

[25] Ibid., pp. 150, 153 and 152.

[26] Ibid., p. 151.

[27] See, for example, Bowden, pp. 29-30; Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, pp. 21-23 and *Deus Humanissimus*, pp. 52-53; Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, pp. 103-117.

Linking Beatitude and Sanctification

Williams suggests that one way to pursue participation more theologically is to explicitly link sanctification and beatitude, noting that one of the distinguishing marks of the doctrine of deification 'is the implication of seamlessness between this life and the next.'[28] She remarks that there is a characteristic pattern in Aquinas which pictures 'sanctification as growth from the likeness of nature, through grace, to glory.'[29] This pattern, she says, 'far from dividing nature and grace dialectically, as it has sometimes been claimed to do, takes sanctification precisely as part of that kind of seamless growth into God' spoken of in deification.[30]

A relational dialectic, however, does not divide but, rather, unites. It says that nature exists in autonomy and yet is completely dependent on the gracious presence of the living God for its existence and flourishing – a flourishing that can be understood, depending on the aspect under consideration, as natural, gracious or glorious. Such a dialectical unification also provides a way of uniting salvation with creation, speaking of 'the absolute presence of the creator God' [31] when the natural aspect of human life is under consideration and of 'the absolute saving presence of God in all that is finite'[32] when the graced aspect is considered. Creating and saving are thus not two different ways in which God is present in human life, much less two separate actions of God, but two total aspects of the absolute presence of the living God in the world and in humankind.[33]

Another way of linking sanctification and beatitude, used by both Williams and Kerr, is more epistemological in character. Kerr points out that, for Aquinas: 'The divine reality

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[28] Williams, 'Deification', p. 221. Also cf. 'Mystical Theology Redux', p. 71.

[29] Williams, 'Deification', p. 234, commenting on *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 33, a. 3.

[30] Ibid., pp. 234-35.

[31] See Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 114; parallel *GAU*, p. 93.

[32] See Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 231.

[33] Cf. the way that Schillebeeckx uses the language of presence with respect to the living God in *G&M*, pp. 231-33 and that of 'total aspects' in his account of creative causation, in *R&T II*, p. 164.

occupies the minds of the blessed in such a way as to be the condition as well as the object of knowledge', such that, in beatitude, 'the human mind may even be said to become "deiform" (12.5)'.[34] A relational dialectic could easily be used to explicate Williams's expression of this: 'On the one hand, our happiness is not less than God *ipse* (I.II.2, 8 ad 2). On the other hand, this happiness is a share in the divine happiness and something God creates in us (I.II.3, 1 resp.)'.[35] It could also help to explain why Schillebeeckx says that the 'only thing that is lacking' in Kennedy's book about him 'is a separate chapter on eschatology, which [...] is one of the fundamental focal points of my theological quest'.[36]

What, then, of earthly knowledge of God? A clue to the distinction and relation between heavenly and earthly knowledge of God is Kerr's comment as to the reason why the human mind can be said to be deiform in beatitude. This is that the sight of God face-to-face is 'immediate – unmediated'.[37] The De Petterian approach taken by Schillebeeckx proposes that epistemological access to God on earth is mediated immediacy: human knowledge of God has a mediated aspect, which is conceptual, and an immediate aspect, which is non-conceptual yet still noetic. Knowledge of God in beatitude does not need the conceptual aspect, yet the light of faith, which shines on and in the blessed, also shines on those who come to know God on earth. This non-conceptual, noetic aspect of knowledge of God, which Schillebeeckx recognizes in Aquinas's '*instinctus fidei*' is experienced as grace on earth and beatitude in heaven.[38]

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[34] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 79.

[35] Williams, 'Mystical Theology Redux', p. 61. Kerr offers a summary of Williams's position in *After Aquinas*, p. 158.

[36] Schillebeeckx, 'Foreword' to Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. x.

[37] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 79.

[38] See Mary Ann Fatula, 'Dogmatic Pluralism and the Noetic Dimension of Unity of Faith', *The Thomist*, 48 (1984), 409-432 (p. 422).

Linking Beatitude and Sanctification with Creation

In a manner that can be characterized as a *sequela*, Williams notes that whilst Aquinas follows the patristic lead in connecting sanctification and beatitude, his 'understanding of participation in divine life radically exceeds' theirs, in that it extrapolates back to the very existence of the creature.[39] In a similar spirit, it seems possible in principle to widen the portrayal above of the specifically human activity of knowing God. Thus, any genuinely human activity can be understood as participation in divinity, in that it contributes to the happiness, flourishing or realization of the creature. This participation in God is an aspect of the creaturely action that does not compete with the specifically creaturely aspect of it, but, rather, goes along with it harmoniously, in a relational dialectic.

Accordingly, an understanding of humanization and deification seems possible that would be applicable to Schillebeeckx's philosophical theology. Any activity that can properly be termed humanization could also be termed divinization. To name it as a humanizing action is to name the aspect of the action that derives from 'the distinction', to name it ontologically as human and therefore as created. To name it as divinizing is to name the aspect rooted in 'the relation', to name it as participation in divinity. Interestingly, since this is participation in the uncreated, rather than identity with it, this aspect also names it as creaturely, because it is rooted in 'the relation', which is only real in the creature. Deification, as a result, is seen as the depth-dimension of humanization.

In this way of thinking, eschatology is not a separate topic for philosophical theology, but is distinct from and related to a cluster of others. Thus, even as Schillebeeckx observes that a chapter on eschatology would complete Kennedy's survey, he adds, in parenthesis, that

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[39] Williams, 'Deification', pp. 241-42, quote from p. 241.

it is a focus of his quest 'together with theology and its epistemological implications – creation, Christology and the sacraments'.[40]

Seamlessness in Theological Themes

This interlinking in Aquinas is a general trend in his thinking, according to Williams, who describes the project that he undertakes in different parts of the *Summa Theologiae* thus:

> the *De Deo uno* and the *De Trinitate* are portraits of the same God viewed from different perspectives. Within the *De Deo uno* the knowing and willing, simple Being has one mien, within the *De Trinitate* it has another, one in which knowing and willing take the form of persons.[41]

Williams speaks here of the perspectives as different rather than distinct, indicating that her use of the term 'perspective' is interchangeable with 'point of view' rather than intended technically, as an expression of aspect theory.[42] However, her position is certainly open to a reading based on relational dialectic, in which the two perspectives are distinguishable, conceptually mediated aspects of the one God. She adds that in the *Tertia Pars*, the portrait is 'overlaid with a third image, drawn from a differing perspective yet, in which the activities of knowing and loving take on a human form that imitates God's.'[43] Aquinas's philosophical theology can thus be interpreted as being all of a piece; the different parts of the *Summa Theologiae* present images of God that are distinct from and related to one another. A similar seamlessness can be found in Schillebeeckx's understanding of Aquinas, indicating, again, the sense in which his philosophical theology can be considered as *sequela* Aquinas. Borgman says that, during his theological training, Schillebeeckx came to the opinion 'that Thomas's

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[40] Schillebeeckx, 'Foreword' to Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. x.

[41] Williams, 'Deification', p. 232.

[42] Further support for Williams's non-technical use of perspective language can be obtained from the fact that she uses the term to speak of the happiness of the blessed in heaven in 'Mystical Theology Redux', yet in the fuller *The Ground of Union*, published two years later, does not use it. (See 'Mystical Theology Redux', p. 61 and *The Ground of Union*, pp. 94-95).

[43] Williams, 'Deification', p. 232.

whole oeuvre was held together by the conviction that the intellect is at depth a feeling for the real, and as a feeling for the real is a feeling for the divine.'[44]

Williams identifies a number of what she calls 'marks' of deification, the first of which is 'that it refers the question of human holiness in the first instance to the doctrine of God.' There is, in such accounts, an 'integral connection between theology and anthropology',[45] which means that 'we must look to God to see our truest self.' She continues:

> In God we find not only divine perfection, but also the perfect model of humanity. To look at God is therefore to understand both what we are and what we are meant to be, both our origin and our destiny.[46]

This connection can be detected in Schillebeeckx, explaining a number of otherwise puzzling comments he makes about humanization. He says that 'Enjoying and loving what is worldly in the world, what is human in man and woman, is to enjoy and love what is godly in God.'[47] At first glance, this seems to collapse God into the world, to stress 'the relation' so much that pantheism, or at least panentheism, seems inevitable. But, if the dialectic between 'the relation' and 'the distinction' is relational rather than polar, this statement can be made in the context of a theistic argument, expressing a philosophical theology that emphasizes participation and deification.

This link between humanization and deification, and thereby between human nature and the nature of God, allows Schillebeeckx to make a number of startling comments, which have caused consternation to some of his readers:[48]

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[44] Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, p. 54.

[45] Williams, 'Deification', p. 220.

[46] Williams, 'Deification', p. 252.

[47] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 115; parallel *GAU*, p. 94). Dutch text: 'Genietend van en liefhebbend wat er wereldlijk is in de wereld, wat er menselijk is in de mens, is genieten van en liefhebben wat er goddelijk is aan God.' (*TV*, p. 131; exact parallel *EV*, p. 94).

[48] Indeed, these comments may well have been some of those which resulted in the three Vatican investigations of his writings. The fact that participation as a theme in philosophical theology lay very much neglected, at least in the West, from at least the time of Aquinas, may well have contributed to this.

> In their creation-faith, christians bear witness to their belief that God's inmost being, in absolute freedom, *is* loving men and women, saving: salvation, happiness, indeed delight in and for men and women. Taking pleasure in God.[49]

This statement is made from God's point of view, so to speak.[50] But, saying that God's inmost being is love-of-men-and-women (the term stressed in Dutch) seems to make God dependent on the world. For Schillebeeckx, however, it is actually the other side of the coin to the statement analysed in the previous paragraph. Since delighting in what is truly human is delighting in God, then God's being, from one perspective, can be said to be delighting in what is truly human. The fact that the first quotation is found in the material more explicitly on creation and the second at the beginning of the more Christological material in the next chapter of *IR* also helps to understand how they can be seen as two sides of a coin.[51]

Perhaps the most startling comment that Schillebeeckx makes is that 'God is more human than any human being.'[52] If, however, true humanity is participation in God, this

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[49] Author's translation, cf. Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 104; parallel 'I Believe in Jesus of Nazareth' p. 19 and *IR*, p. 127. Dutch text: 'In hun scheppingsgeloof getuigen christenen van hun geloof dat Gods eigenste wezen, in absolute vrijheid, *menslievend* is, redden: heil, geluk, ja zelfs genot van en voor mensen. Plezies aan God beleven.' (*EV*, p. 105).

[50] This is, of course, not literal language, because God does not, strictly speaking, have a point of view, since God is not a situated being. However, because human beings strive to speak of what occurs in God, using the rhetorical device of speaking from God's point of view is the only way of doing so.

[51] The fact that this more Christological material is called 'Christology: Concentrated Creation' also helps to show that Schillebeeckx is looking at the other side of the coin. (Schillebeeckx, 'I Believe in Jesus of Nazareth', p. 18; parallel *IR*, p. 126. The section headings are omitted in *GAU*).

[52] This statement appears twice in *GAU*. The first is in Chapter Ten, a previously unpublished homily from 1979, called 'A Glass of Water for a Fellow Human Being: (Matt.25.31-46)' (Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, pp. 59-62 (p. 61)). This homily provides a parallel for Section III of 'I Believe in Jesus of Nazareth' (see 'Biblical Counter-Verification', pp. 29-32, the quote is found on p. 31). Schillebeeckx adds this parallel to the main body of 'I Believe in Jesus of Nazareth', probably drawn from the article 'Ik geloof in Jezus van Nazareth', published in *Tijdschrift voor Geestelijk Leven* in 1979 (*Tijdschrift voor Geestelijk Leven* 35 (1979) 451-473). Thus, the text of 'I Believe in Jesus of Nazareth' published in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* is a parallel for that found in Chapter Seventeen of *GAU* as far as half way down p. 114, and then concludes with a text that is paralleled in Chapter Ten of *GAU*. (The Dutch version of this, in *EV*, then serves as source for Chapter Seven of *IR*, which is not present in *TV*.) So, although the Introduction to the special issue of *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* in which 'I Believe in Jesus of Nazareth' appears says that 'it sees here the first light of day' (see Leonard Swidler, 'Introduction. Dialogue: The Way Toward Consensus', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 17 (1980), iii-viii (p. iii)) it would seem that it is, in fact, made up of two articles that had previously been published in Dutch. Interestingly, Swidler's Introduction also says that Schillebeeckx submitted his article in French, so it may well be that he had, as Swidler conjectures, put this text together as a way of preparing for the Vatican investigation that took place from December 13th to 15th 1979 (Swidler, p. iii). The statement also appears in Chapter Twenty-Six of *GAU*, 'The "Gospel of the Poor" for Prosperous People: (Luke 6.17,20-26)' (Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, pp. 175-179 (p. 177)), a homily that had previously been published in *Tijdschrift voor Geestelijk Leven* in 1980. This

statement does not reduce God to the level of a creature at all. Schillebeeckx is not stressing 'the relation' so much that 'the distinction' is elided. Rather, he is presenting the true possibilities that are open to men and women – to be and to become more and more like God, as they were created to be. It is appropriate, then, in this context of participation and deification, to speak of God as 'Deus Humanissimus'.[53]

Not surprisingly, given the connection between creation-faith and Christology mentioned above, Schillebeeckx also says: 'Ultimately, Jesus, who we may call the only beloved Son, is also human like you and me; only: *more* human.'[54] Schillebeeckx is not advocating a degree Christology here, but is, rather, connecting creation, anthropology and Christology in a way that shows his philosophical theology to be not only *sequela* Aquinas but also *sequela* Irenaeus. If the best expression of creation-faith is that God's glory is the human being fully alive,[55] then God's glory is most fully seen on the face of Jesus. As a result:

> 'Christology' – the second article of faith [in the Creed]: salvation from God in Jesus – can therefore be understood as nothing other than the concrete specification of creation-faith. A specification or concrete completion arising out of our human history and the historical appearing therein of Jesus of Nazareth. Creation-faith, in christian terms, says: for the non-godly or the vulnerable, God's being is liberating love in Jesus the Christ. [...] 'Christology' is therefore *condensed* concentrated creation: faith in creation as God wants it.[56]

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is not so clearly a parallel text, although the immediate surrounding text to the statement bears a remarkable similarity to the other sources, which serves in all three places as a bridge into Schillebeeckx's concluding remarks.

[53] See the title of Kennedy's book *Deus Humanissimus* and also Borgman, p. 238.

[54] Author's translation, cf. Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 115; parallel *IR*, p. 139 from the creation parallels, which also contain this, right at the end of the chapter, indicating that the conclusion that Schillebeeckx replaces the end of 'Ik geloof in Jezus van Nazareth' with in order to form 'I Believe in Jesus of Nazareth' is not entirely unrelated to it. Dutch text: 'Tenslotte is ook Jezus, die we zijn einig geliefde Zoon mogen noemen, mens zoals jij en ik; alleen: menselijker.' (Schillebeeckx, *EV*, p. 115) The statement is also found in GAU, p. 62; parallel 'I Believe in Jesus of Nazareth', p. 32 and in *GAU*, p. 177.

[55] See Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 115-16; parallel *GAU*, p. 94; *FSG*, p. 58; *Schepping II*, p. II 407.

[56] Author's translation, cf. Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 105; parallel 'I Believe in Jesus of Nazareth', p. 20 and *IR*, pp. 127-28. Dutch text: ''Christologie' – het tweede geloofsartikel: heil in Jezus van Godswege – kan daarom niet anders worden verstaan dan als concrete preciesering van het scheppingsgeloof. Een preciesering of concrete invulling vanuit onze menselijke geschiedenis en de historische verschijning daarin Jezus van Nazaret. Scheppingsgeloof luidt dan in christelijke termen: voor het neit-goddelijke of het kwetsbare is Gods wezen

In Christology, Schillebeeckx says here, the story of creation-faith, that God's inmost being is loving men and women, is condensed, concentrated and specified in the story of a man, the Son of Man. In him, the Christian sees what creation can be, how men and women can become truly human, how they can participate in God, in a particular way. The Story of a Living One – Jesus of Nazareth – thus sheds light on how human life can be understood as the Story of God.[57]

This seamlessness is not only present in Schillebeeckx's later philosophical theology, but is structurally present throughout his oeuvre, linking creation and salvation, anthropology and Christology, as demonstrated in the following text:

> Man's face is the visible appearance of a spiritual interiority. It is, in fact, this interiority itself insofar as this is visible to us and insofar as it realises itself visibly in the world. [...] In the sacramental sphere, the body is not only the active presence of a human spirit – it is also the active presence of a supernatural religious reality. The consequence of God's incarnation in Christ is that a body becomes the visible appearance among us of the living reality of God. The Catholic faith thus implies a glorification of matter.[58]

This account finds its expression in a particular conjunctural form of its day, containing some elements that Schillebeeckx later discards as ephemeral and replaces with others. However, the connections it advocates are in broad structural continuity with later expressions. This characteristic of Schillebeeckx's thought helps substantiate the weaker thesis about creation and salvation being advocated in this chapter. The relational dialectic observable in his critical creation-faith helps both to distinguish and to relate creation and salvation – as well as other elements of his philosophical theology – such that they are not related competitively. This

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bevrijdende liefde in Jezus de Christus. [...] 'Christologie' is daarom *verdichte* geconcentreerde schepping: geloof in de schepping zoals God hem wil.' (Schillebeeckx, *EV*, p. 106).

[57] This makes an explicit link between the first and last volumes of Schillebeeckx's Trilogy, which, in their original Dutch titles, are called *Jesus, the Story of a Living One* (*Jezus, het verhaal van een levende*) and *Humanity as the Story of God* (*Mensen als verhaal van God*).

[58] Schillebeeckx, 'Man and His Bodily World', *W&C*, pp. 252-53.

helps to defuse, if not to dissolve altogether, the disagreement amongst Schillebeeckx scholars about which of the two is primary.

However, at the same time, the stronger thesis might be of more help in dialogue with others – particularly with philosophical theologians from the other Abrahamic faiths. Admittedly, it could be said that the most typically Christian story of God is that which is called Christology by Schillebeeckx: God's being is liberating love for that which is not-God, particularly for the vulnerable, in Jesus the Christ.[59] The fact that he calls this a specification of creation-faith – a completion of it in a Christian context – does not mean that expressing it in a more general manner is necessarily watering it down. It may, rather, be seen as a willingness to 'bracket out' what is more specifically Christian in order to be able to talk about the story of God and the world with others who also believe in creation. Schillebeeckx's expression of creation-faith as saying that God's inmost being is loving men and women can be useful here,[60] facilitating dialogue about the distinction and relation between the world and its Creator and about the possibilities for humanization and divinization that the Creator reveals.

In the remainder of this chapter, the distinction and relation between God's action and human action will be explored, along with some of its implications for freedom and commitment and for God's knowledge of creaturely action. Williams says that Aquinas takes the mission of the Trinity 'to be inseparable from the soul's likening to God, portraying the Trinitarian mission as itself an inherently deifying work.'[61] A Schillebeeckian relational dialectic could express this, using aspect theory, as one reality in two subjects. On the one hand, it is the act of the soul's likening to God, the activity seen from the point of view of the human person, the process as it occurs in men and women who are becoming more fully

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[59] Cf. author's translation of Schillebeeckx, *EV*, p. 106 above.
[60] Cf. author's translation of Schillebeeckx, *EV*, p. 105 above.
[61] Williams, 'Deification', p. 237.

human. This is having, deriving, or participating in the act. On the other hand, it is an act of the mission of the Trinity, the activity as it is in God, as seen from God's point of view, so to speak. This is being the act, or, equally well, being-in-act.[62]

Divine and human action

In speaking of divine and human action, it is important to stress that the term is not used univocally, but analogically. As a result, divine and human action are not different but distinct, not the same but related. Thus, they do not compete with one another,[63] indicating the need for a non-contrastive account, in order to avoid speaking of God as 'one being among others in a single order.'[64] Two key components of such an account are avoiding speaking of 'divine agency in terms appropriate for a finite'[65] agent and recommending talk of human agency as a response 'to the generosity of creation and to the still greater generosity of the incarnation and redemption.'[66]

Patterson speaks of human action as creative, contending, on the basis of Polanyi, Stephen Need, Colin Gunton and Thomas Torrance, that the genuinely human activity of knowing allows a link to be forged between acting and being.[67] Since such creative action is not intended as a competitor to divine creation but as a response to it, she goes on to speak of the 'Underdeterminedness' of the world,[68] such that 'the creation of new language-world links in

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[62] Cf. Schillebeeckx, 'The Non-Conceptual Intellectual Dimension', *R&T II,* p. 164.
[63] See Kerr's contrast between Catholic and Protestant accounts in this regard in *After Aquinas*, p. 234, n. 25.
[64] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 45.
[65] Ibid., p. 46.
[66] Sokolowski, *God of Faith and Reason*, p. 70.
[67] Patterson, *Realist Christian Theology*, pp. 105-6.
[68] Ibid., p. 106.

an underdetermined creation [...] contributes to and extends creation's structure and order.'[69] In a way that is perhaps intended to echo participation, she says that metaphor-making is particularly significant in this regard: 'If the aspect-dawning of a new metaphor is not only revelatory but also creative, it is not only a human action, but may be seen as part of God's continuing creative agency.'[70] However, as she progresses, the sense of competitiveness increases. She says that, because creaturely power is created as potential, 'the finished product of creation is left open or underdetermined [...] to allow room for the exercise of a free human creativity.'[71] God leaves a certain '"slack in the system"' so that 'human beings are free creatively to develop', which can be spoken of 'as part and parcel of the continuing creation of the world'.[72] These latter comments give the impression that creation is mainly about what happens at the beginning, that what happens once humans come onto the scene is fundamentally different to what occurred before then.

Schillebeeckx can seem to speak in a similar way, when he says that creation 'is a sort of "divine yielding"', but it is important to look at the phrase in context:

> To be created is, on the one hand, to be taken up into God's absolute gratuitousness and saving nearness, but on the other hand, seen from God's side, it is a sort of 'divine yielding', making room for the other.[73]

He is, in fact, expressing a relational dialectic, in which the statement made 'on the one hand' speaks about the presence of God from the creature's point of view, emphasizing 'the relation' of creation. The statement made 'on the other hand' speaks of the autonomy of the creature, articulating it from God's point of view, so to speak, in a way that stresses 'the distinction'. The fact that this autonomy is not independence, for Schillebeeckx, is clear from

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[69] Ibid., p. 108.

[70] Patterson, *Realist Christian Theology*, p. 109.

[71] Ibid., referring to an article by Daniel Hardy.

[72] Ibid., p. 112.

[73] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 90; parallel *FSG*, p. 93. (Also see *G&M*, p. 226.)

the many examples of how not to speak of human and divine power preceding this characterization, all of which are competitive in one way or another.[74]

The Underdetermination of God

Tanner uses a similar construction to express her non-contrastive account, in which she stresses the need 'to maintain a direct rather than inverse proportion between what the creature has, on the one hand, and the extent and influence of God's agency, on the other.'[75] She says that denying the efficacy of creaturely action on the basis of the belief that God causes all things amounts to 'denying the existence of an effect because of the existence of a cause.'[76] The mirror image position, which affirms creaturely efficacy whilst holding that God's creative activity must be excluded from those actions, proclaims 'the existence of an effect whilst denying its cause'.[77] The first denies that God is Creator, the second that creatures are creatures, with regard to creaturely action. It is here, she says, that Aquinas can be of help, speaking of 'two total subordinating causes', such that the 'whole of a created effect must be said, therefore, to depend both on divine agency and its created cause.'[78]

Although Tanner thus rules out any independence of creaturely action from the creative action of God, she says that this does not 'exclude talk of an influence on God in a weak sense', as long as this presumes 'the prior extension of God's creative agency for that influence.'[79] Because of what she calls its indefinite or infinite extendability and its referential

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[74] See Schillebeeckx, *FSG*, pp. 88-93; parallel *III*, pp. 85-90. It is also clear from the way in which he speaks of 'mankind in its autonomous but finite humanity', showing that autonomy, which emphasizes 'the distinction' is spoken of in relational dialectic with finitude, which, because of its fundamental link with the absolute presence of God, stresses 'the relation'. Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 115; parallel *GAU*, p. 93). Dutch text: 'de mens in zijn autonome maar eindige menselijkheid.' (*TV*, p. 131; exact parallel *EV*, p. 94).

[75] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 85.

[76] Ibid., p. 86.

[77] Ibid., p. 87.

[78] Ibid., p. 92.

[79] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 96.

opacity,[80] the intentional language used in theological discourse about creation allows talk of God's intention for creation as involving an 'influence of the creature on God. By its own creative intention, divinity would be determining itself to be determined by the creature in certain respects.'[81] This way of speaking, she says, prohibits talk of God's agency or creative will as being affected by the creature's actions or their effects, but, in a weaker sense, 'God's creative intention may be said to include "himself" as genuinely affected by creatures.'[82]

Tanner does not specify any further how God is affected by creatures, but even this much leaves 'room' for creaturely action in God in a manner that seems functionally complementary to Patterson's leaving 'room' in creation. Schillebeeckx, again, might be read as advocating a similar thesis, when he says: 'By giving creative space to human beings, God makes himself vulnerable. It is an adventure full of risks',[83] which might seem to suggest that human action can endanger God's plan for creation, but this is not what he means. After all, he also says that 'God's trust in man will ultimately not be put to shame',[84] that God's act of creation 'is a vote of confidence' in men and women, 'a blank cheque for which God himself and God alone stands surety.'[85] The 'ultimate strength of the goodness of God's creation [...] is not checkmated by the risk involved in human freedom.'[86]

His conjunctural expression of this relational dialectic evolves between the earlier creation parallels and the later material. In the earlier texts, he speaks of the fact that God does not save men and women from finitude, from their creaturely state, and that 'it is precisely at

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[80] Tanner, *God and Creation*, pp. 69-71.

[81] Ibid., p. 96.

[82] Ibid., pp. 97-98, quote from p. 98.

[83] Schillebeeckx, *FSG*, p. 93; exact parallel *III*, p. 90. Also see *IR*, pp. 108-9, 126 and *W&C*, p. 12.

[84] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 109 (Section Heading).

[85] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 126; parallels *GAU*, p. 104; 'I Believe', p. 19. See also *GAU*, p. 98. Schillebeeckx parallels this material in *FSG*, p. 93 and *III*, p. 90.

[86] Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 28; cf. *G&M*, p. 232.

this point that God's impotence is to be found'.[87] Later, he rephrases this, saying: 'I would prefer to speak, not of the impotence or powerlessness of God, but of his defencelessness, because power and powerlessness contradict one another, whereas defencelessness need not *per se* contradict God's power.'[88] In this later text, the conjunctural form of the expression makes it clearer that Schillebeeckx intends a relational dialectic, whereas the earlier expression could be taken to imply a polar structure.

Schillebeeckx's relational dialectic offers a way between the functionally complementary alternatives proposed by Patterson and Tanner. In a Schillebeeckian account of divine and human action, aspect theory plays a key role, in that what God does and what the creature does can be spoken of as two total aspects of one event,[89] such that the event in itself, so to speak, is not directly available to human enquiry. This provides a way of articulating what Kerr says is Aquinas's point of view, that God does everything that the creature does, but 'in such a way that the autonomy and reality of created agents is respected.'[90] It can also reconcile the Creator's freedom with that of the creature, because if the two free actions are thought of using aspect theory, they are complementary, rather than competitive.

Divine and Human Freedom

In a similar way to that in which Kerr, Tanner and Sokolowski spoke of the need to avoid a competitive account of divine and human action, Burrell bemoans 'the tendency of the modern West' to pit the freedom of the Creator and human creatures against one another 'in a

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[87] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 93; parallel *IR*, p. 115. This material is not found in *III*, perhaps because of the change that has taken place.

[88] Schillebeeckx, FSG, p. 93; exact parallel III, p. 90. In *FSG*, he says that he derives the expression 'the "defenceless superior power" of God' from Henricus Berkhof (see p. 88 and p. 102, n. 1). In *III*, he adds references to Piet Schoonenberg, Hermann Häring and Nico Schreurs, as well as to his own FSG article (*III*, p. 85 and p. 252, n. 17).

[89] Cf. Schillebeeckx, *R&T II*, p. 164.

[90] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 45.

"zero-sum game," in which one party's gain [is] inevitably the other's loss, and vice-versa.' Reference to 'the distinction' of creation is, he says, a corrective to this tendency, because it constantly reminds the enquirer that 'the creator can hardly be considered as simply another "person" on the scene'.[91] He speaks of God's eternity as unchangeableness, which, in the context of creation, assures not only the initiation of all creatures, but also 'the continuance in existence of everything which is not God'.[92]

Thus, the creative action of God, which is done freely, can also be thought of as a commitment to the creature and the created order as a whole. No matter what the creature does, God does not withdraw from it, because to do so would mean its annihilation. The free commitment of God to every creature is unchanging – it is the surety, the guarantee, of the blank cheque of creation – God never withdraws his absolute presence from all that is finite.[93] Freedom and commitment, then, do not operate in a zero-sum game either. Eileen Burke-Sullivan notes the prevailing tendency to oppose these two realities, stating that 'the relationship between freedom and commitment is more complex and reciprocal' than the zero-sum game allows. Her proposal, however, uses polar rather than relational dialectic, speaking of 'a sustained polar tension',[94] although she does also speak of a deeper level of commitment in which the two could be mutually reinforcing.[95]

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[91] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 2.

[92] Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 103-4.

[93] This proposal is voiced in Schillebeeckian language, but can also be shown to be *sequela* Aquinas, as Margaret Farley points out. She says that there are fragments in Aquinas that can form the basis for an understanding of commitment as something that seals a desire in a lover for an abiding relation to the beloved. The commitment gives to the beloved the power to claim from the lover exactly what it is that the lover wants to give. It is, therefore, both a yielding to the beloved – involving something akin to Schillebeeckx's defencelessness – and also, at the same time, an action and a self-possession. See Margaret Farley, 'Fragments for an Ethic of Commitment in Thomas Aquinas', in *Celebrating the Medieval Heritage: A Colloquy on the Thought of Aquinas and Bonaventure*, *Journal of Religion*, 58 (1978), Supplement, ed. by David Tracy, S135-S155 (esp. pp. S142 and S146-7).

[94] Eileen C. Burke-Sullivan, 'Maintaining the Tension: Freedom, Commitment and Discernment', *The Way*, 43.4 (October 2004), 7-18 (p. 9).

[95] She cites the example of Ignatius of Loyola, whose 'spiritual experience of freedom was also grounded in his commitments', such that 'the more committed he became to specific human relationships in relationship with God, the greater was his ultimate freedom to make choices leading to a lifetime of joy and peace.' (Burke-Sullivan, p. 10).

This latter goal, more readily attainable in the context of relational dialectic, seems to be what Kerr and Burrell are striving towards in their articulation of Aquinas in this regard. Kerr says that the importance of the doctrine of creation for Aquinas means that the world is neither 'the result of some external pressure on the creator [nor] some compensatory expression of the creator's need.' It is, rather, 'an expression of divine bounty: freely shared, entirely unforced'[96] and, it might be added, given gladly and consistently in an unchanging commitment to what God creates. Burrell, in a way that shows, once again, his Lonergonian influences, is extremely wary of understanding freedom in terms of choice. He prefers to define the freedom of a creature as 'the power to accept or reject what it itself is: its ontological status, if you will.'[97] He is also wary of understanding creaturely freedom as autonomy, which, for him, has overtones of indeterminacy and independence.[98] In a Schillebeeckian relational dialectic, however, autonomy could perhaps be characterized as 'relational autonomy',[99] stressing that it is not only compatible with, but correlates with the absolute dependence of the creature on the Creator. Commitment to self-realization, then, becomes a way of expressing a commitment to the Creator, who, after all, is the end, the goal, of that self-realization, as is made clear by the idea of participation.

The Relational Dialectic of Freedom and Commitment

The relational dialectic of the free committed action of the Creator and the free, committed response that the human creature is invited to give also has implications for God's knowledge

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[96] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 39.

[97] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 101; cf. the distinction he makes about the choice of ends and means in *F&C*, p. 87 and Burrell and Malits, p. 34. See Tekippe, p. 132, for the Lonergonian roots of this wariness about choosing and *Method*, pp. 40-41 and 237 for his distinction between horizontal and vertical freedom.

[98] See Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 75-76; *F&F*, pp. vii and 144; *FWT*, p. 82 and Burrell and Malits, p. 20.

[99] This term is drawn, in a Schillebeeckian manner, from Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar, 'Introduction: Autonomy Refigured', in *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*, ed. by Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 3-31 (p. 4). They, in turn, credit the first use of the term to Jennifer Nedelsky (pp. 26-27, n. 1).

of the world. Burrell's articulation of this can serve as a useful starting point, in that he says, succinctly, that the priority of practical knowing in God means 'that whatever God brings about, God knows, for God must know what God is doing.'[100] When it comes to speaking of the actions of creatures, Burrell says that it is important first to stress that 'act' is an analogous term;[101] then it becomes possible to say that what makes creatures' actions their own 'would simply be that we performed them, that is, *did* them.'[102] This implies that, however God knows the actions of creatures, it is not as practical knowledge, since God is not the agent of the creature's action (or, to put it in the language used earlier, the creaturely aspect of the action is not performed by God, but by the creature).[103]

Another foundational presupposition to make is a clear distinction between the action of creatures and that of God – a distinction that is directionally sensitive in just the way that 'the distinction' of creation is. Tanner rightly avers that creatures cannot create, that this action is one that God alone can do. She says that it is important for the theologian to 'talk of created efficacy as immediately and entirely grounded in the creative agency of God'[104] and to emphasize that 'Secondary causes never intervene in the creative operation'.[105] Similarly, especially once the link between life as a creature and the *theologaal* life of faith is made, no human action, 'no matter how virtuous or generous, can bring about our life with God.'[106] God alone creates and saves. Men and women cannot do these things.

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[100] Burrell, *F&C*, pp. 72-73.

[101] Ibid., p. 69.

[102] Ibid., p. 82.

[103] It is important to stress that this is a Schillebeeckian approach, not that which Burrell himself takes. He proposes a dialectical solution, it is true, but, not surprisingly, his dialectic is a polar one, in which one pole is negative and the other positive. He says that two elements need to be held together, in some tension. The first is the negative character of grammar *in divinis*, such that it is not possible to know what divine action consists in. The second is the affirmative character of the analogy of act (*actus*), made possible by its connection with and dependence upon the connection between creature and Creator. (See the statement of the position in Burrell, *F&C*, p. 101 and p. 200, n. 2, as well as *F&C*, pp. 97-98 and 113-114. For a structurally similar argument, see also *F&F*, pp. 169-75).

[104] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 91.

[105] Ibid., p. 99.

[106] Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason*, p. 73.

Thirdly, creation is not a kind of making; the latter is what creatures do.[107] Thus, everything that is done in the world has an aspect of creating and one of making, which are the actions of God and the creature respectively. This distinction, between making and creating, marks a real distinction between the agency of creatures and that of God and is expressed by Aquinas when he says that creation is not a change.[108] Thus, the term 'cause', used of creatures and of God, is used analogically: on the one hand, therefore, creatures can 'be true, autonomous causes', such that they 'are the true causes of whatever comes to be either through motion or generation'[109] and, on the other hand, God is the cause of whatever comes to be *simpliciter*, since 'God's causation is efficient causation of being'.[110]

The two aspects can, as a result, be described as the creating and the creaturely aspects of one event. God performs the creating aspect of the event and, since God knows what God is doing, God's knowledge of this aspect can be described as practical knowledge. Without this creating aspect, the creaturely aspect of the event could not be, could not exist, since creaturely action is created, by definition. Furthermore, if being and doing are linked, as Aquinas's characterization of God as *actus essendi* implies,[111] then, on the one hand, God can just as accurately be said to be the creator of creaturely action as of creaturely being. If doing is a way of expressing being, of realizing oneself,[112] then, on the other hand, the action of the

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[107] Schillebeeckx expresses this by saying that God creates and human beings act within contingent situations (Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 117; parallels *GAU*, p. 95; *III*, pp. 230-31. Cf. *IR*, p. 118; parallel *GAU*, p. 96). This distinction and relation can also be seen in Schillebeeckx's use of Pure Positivity to speak of God and the suggestion that creatures could be described as situated positivity (see *IR*, p. 120; parallel *GAU*, p. 99); his talk of divine absolute freedom and human situated freedom (see *IR*, p. 127; *GAU*, p. 95; *HT*, p. 55; *R&T II*, p. 126; *G&M*, p. 170; *GFM* pp. 95-96 and Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 35); and his comment that 'the divine possibility absolutely transcends all human possibilities (*W&C*, pp. 27-28). (Also see Burrell, *F&C*, p. 105).

[108] See Baldner and Carroll, pp. 44-45.

[109] Ibid., p. 49.

[110] James F. Ross, 'Creation II', in *The Existence and Nature of God*, ed. by Alfred J. Freddoso, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983) pp. 115-141 (p. 127).

[111] Burrell, *APL*, pp. 148-50, *KUG*, pp. 59-60, *F&C*, p. 32. (Also see *F&C*, pp. 42 and 101).

[112] Schillebeeckx seems to use realization as a metaphor for creaturely action, in two senses. On the one hand, it means making the *humanum* a reality (see *IR*, p. 117; parallels *GAU*, p. 95; *III*, p. 231, also *GAU*, p. 100, *GAU*, p. 102; parallel *III*, p. 233 and *G&M*, p. 233). On the other hand, it also means coming to a deeper knowledge of the *humanum* (see *IR*, p. 120; parallels *GAU*, p. 99; *III*, p. 240).

creature in accordance with its nature can be said to be a way of participating in God's life. This creation of the creaturely action by God does not mean, however, that God performs it. The relation between the creature's action and God's is not identity, but participation – there is both a relation and a distinction between the creaturely action and the creating action. Since these are aspects of one event, not parts of a single act, they are both total aspects;[113] it is not possible to speak of the two under one rubric, for to do so would remove the analogous character of the discourse and result the terms 'action' and 'cause' being used univocally of God and the creature. This would, in turn, elide 'the distinction' and speak of God as a creature.[114]

The Causal Connection and God's Knowledge

If the Schillebeeckian structure of analogy proposed in Chapter Five is used here, it helps to ascertain where the causal connection is in creating and creaturely action. As with other analogous statements with a similar form, the causal connection of creation is between God and the creaturely action, not between God's knowledge and that action. It is God's *actus essendi* that is the cause of *esse* in the creature, not God's knowledge. However, God's practical knowledge of this creating action can appropriately be said to go along with it, because God knows what God is doing.

So, if there is no causal link from God's knowledge to creaturely action, is there a causal link the other way round? Hughes thinks that there is. He says that the occurrence of

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[113] Cf. Schillebeeckx, *R&T II,* p. 164. Ian Barbour also says that 'the whole effect is produced by both divine and natural causes, but under completely different aspects', which, although it might better use the term 'distinct', captures the import of aspect theory well. (Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues (Newly Revised and Expanded Edition of* Religion in an Age of Science*)* (London: SCM Press, 1998), p. 310).

[114] Burrell says that this is the mistake made by the expression 'concurrence', which was used in the late medieval period to speak of 'created agents operating by virtue of the creator's power' (Burrell, *F&C*, p. 128). The tendency here is to treat the term 'act' as univocal, which results in 'a background picture of partitioning the action itself', as would happen if two created agents were to co-operate in a single action. (*F&C*, p. 153. Also see *F&F*, pp. 171 and 176-89).

contingent events 'is logically and epistemologically prior to God's knowledge of them',[115] because otherwise the creature would not truly perform the action, God would. Therefore, God's 'knowledge of contingent events within creation must derive from those events themselves', which means that 'God to that extent must be regarded as being acted upon by creation'. He admits that this final 'conclusion could indeed be avoided were it possible to show that none of the ways in which creation interacts with God in accounting for God's knowledge, involved *causal* interactions,' but does not think that this can be done. [116]

A first clue as to how Hughes's conclusion might be avoided comes from noting that creating action 'must effect its results immediately, yet not in such a way as to replace the created agents at work.'[117] Creaturely action, then, cannot be called God's action *per se*, yet it can appropriately be called an effect of God's action, as James Ross points out:

> Those motions of which you are *agent* [...] are *your* motions; whereas those motions you produce but are not the agent of are still your effects. God does not move the sun; he makes the *moving sun to be*. So the movements of the sun are God's effects, even though he does not move it. Similarly, God does not make the person act; he makes the acting person *be*.[118]

Perhaps, then, God's creating action can be said to produce the effects of creaturely action by mediated immediacy. The immediate aspect of God's creating action is to cause the being of the creature, as well as any growth in being, any flourishing, that goes along with the creaturely action. Its mediated aspect is the creaturely action itself – which the creature performs, not God – as well as the effects of this creaturely action, which can therefore be called the mediated effects of God's action.

Burrell points out that if the way that God's creating action works is probed, 'if we persist in asking *how* this is done, we will be asking for a response in terms of created causes,

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[115] Gerard J. Hughes, *The Nature of God* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 112.
[116] Ibid., p. 107.
[117] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 122.
[118] Ross, 'Creation II', p. 130.

which can only assure their results by necessitating them.'[119] This cannot be how God's creating action assures its results, because the created order is contingent. Therefore, causation and necessitation appear to be separable. If God's action can cause without necessitating, could it be that creaturely action can necessitate without causing? If so, a link could be made between creaturely action and God's knowledge of that action that necessitates the latter without causing it, such that one of the effects of creaturely action would be God's knowledge of that action, yet the creature would not perform God's knowledge.

Such a combination can be supported with respect to Aristotle, who draws a distinction between intrinsic and coincidental causation, such that, in a lucky event, the event as such has an intrinsic cause, yet the event *qua* lucky has only a coincidental cause.[120] Richard Sorabji adds that coincidental causation is not properly causation at all. He calls it 'accidental conjunction'[121] and stresses that it is to do with explanation, not causation as the latter now tends to be understood.[122] Each creaturely action, then, fixes an event in the history of the universe, which can be said to be accidentally necessary as a result.[123] One effect of the action is also to accidentally necessitate God's knowledge of that event *qua* creaturely. God's creating action causes the being of that event, so the creaturely action cannot accidentally necessitate God's practical knowledge of it, but it could be said to accidentally necessitate God's speculative knowledge. This cannot be a causal connection, because, if it were,

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[119] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 122.

[120] Terence H. Irwin, *Aristotle's First Principles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,1988), p. 521, n. 15.

[121] Richard Sorabji, *Necessity, Cause and Blame: Perspectives on Aristotle's Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1980), p. 4.

[122] Sorabji, p. 40.

[123] As Hughes points out: 'What I and other undetermined agents collectively bring about is the actual history of the cosmos.' Since each creaturely action fixes an event in this history, in 'a slightly extended use of the term, the entire history of the cosmos is, from God's point of view, accidentally necessary.' In other words, there is only one actual history of the universe. This does not mean that it is necessary, strictly speaking – that it could not be otherwise – but simply that an actual universe has only one actual history. (Hughes, The Nature of God, pp. 104-5).

creaturely agency would be able to reach across 'the distinction' of creation, which would no longer be an absolute boundary for the creature.

Therefore, God's speculative knowledge of creaturely action can be said to be an effect of that action, without thereby being caused by it. In a slightly more extended manner, it could also be said to be an effect of the creating agency of God. The agency of the creature, as well as all its effects, are effects of God's action, as Ross outlined earlier. Since one of the effects of creaturely action is God's speculative knowledge of that action, this immediate effect of creaturely action is also a mediated effect of God's creating action. God's speculative knowledge, as a result, is not caused at all, but is accidentally necessitated in a mediated immediacy.

Making a Better Future and Creating the World

This connection between God's action of creating the world and the creature's action of fixing the actual history of the world can be expressed in a relational dialectic of freedom and commitment. It can also be seen as a Schillebeeckian expression of something that a number of authors are searching for in their investigation of human freedom. Burrell articulates the need for a view of freedom as more than free choice, in a way that has been shown to draw on Lonerganian emphases. He points out that once it is recognized that 'freedom is more than choosing, then the goal will be ingredient to our exercising our freedom.'[124] In turn, this goal can be expressed with reference to God's goal for creation – union with God – such that human action is seen as a response to divine action,[125] a recognition of God by human creatures 'as source of their being and well-being.'[126] Since God is not constrained by nature to create, creation can be seen as an act of love; similarly, the response invited from creatures

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[124] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 149.
[125] Ibid., pp. 150 and 154; see also *F&C*, pp. 165-66.
[126] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 153.

is one of love: 'The original "trust" was offered by God as a sign of love, while those who set out wholeheartedly to fulfil it will be responding to love, rather than acting out of duty or constraint.'[127]

The relational dialectic of freedom and commitment also responds to what Pinckaers proposes as 'Freedom for Excellence'[128] and what Judith Merkle calls 'freedom to', as distinct from 'freedom from'. She says that the former is more positive, more dynamic than the latter, which defines itself in isolation and struggle: 'When we form a value system, seek meaning, devise a life plan and act in love, we express our freedom as "freedom to".'[129] Such freedom, she says, 'only comes to fulfilment within community'[130] and is best expressed in a context of commitment. Speaking of such commitment in terms of consecrated life, yet in a manner that seems much more widely applicable, she says: 'One sign of readiness for a vowed commitment is the capacity for uniqueness, for it implies a willingness to accept limitation.'[131] This is because 'fidelity to a commitment is key to becoming a person' and one of the things that becoming a person involves is an acceptance of the fact that 'becoming *someone* requires that one cannot become everyone.'[132] This portrayal of commitment harmonizes well with Schillebeeckx's emphasis on the contingent, finite character of human life[133] and his stress that humanization is not an individual task,[134] but involves striving for a better future for the whole of humanity,[135] particularly the weak and vulnerable,[136] in a natural

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[127] Burrell and Malits, p. 70

[128] Pinckaers, p. 375.

[129] Judith A. Merkle, *Committed by Choice: Religious Life Today* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 91.

[130] Ibid., p. 73.

[131] Ibid., p. 37.

[132] Ibid., pp. 30 and 38 respectively.

[133] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 120-21; parallel *GAU*, p. 99, *IR*, pp. 121-22; parallels *GAU*, p. 101, *III*, p. 233.

[134] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 102, *III*, p. 235.

[135] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 122; parallels *GAU*, p. 102; *III*, p. 233. See also *III*, pp. 239-40; 'The Role of History', p. 316, 'You Cannot Arbitrarily Make Something of the Gospel!', p. 16, *GAU*, p. 100, *G&M*, p. 227, *W&C*, p. 259.

[136] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 106, *GAU*, p. 102, 'The Role of History', p. 318, *III*, p. 234.

world which is not abused.[137] It also helps both relate and distinguish the human commitment to the making of the actual history of the world, on the one hand, and God's commitment to the world God creates, on the other.

God's free commitment to the world can be described, in terms drawn from Margaret Farley, as a sealing of God's desire for an abiding relation to the world God lovingly creates. God's commitment gives creaturely agents the power to act, claiming from God being and well-being[138] – exactly what God wants to give to creatures.[139] God invites human creatures to respond by committing themselves to making a better future, to 'the humanization of the world and man.'[140] God entrusts the world to humanity,[141] whose '"history-making freedom"'[142] means that it is up to human beings to decide what kind of humanity they strive for,[143] whether they will act for humanization or for dehumanization. The relational dialectic of the action of God and of human creatures is summarized when Schillebeeckx says:

> God creates human beings as the principle of their own human lives, so that human action has to develop and effectuate the world and its future in human solidarity, within contingent situations and given boundaries, and therefore with respect for both inanimate and animate nature.[144]

In this context, it becomes easier to understand why Schillebeeckx says that the history of the world lies in the hands of men and women, why they 'cannot expect God to solve their problems.'[145] In fact, the reason that he gives for this can now be seen to be pivotal

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[137] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 100, *III*, pp. 231, 232, 244-45, *W&C*, pp. 11 and 258.

[138] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 153.

[139] Cf. the account of commitment in Farley, pp. S142 and S146-7.

[140] Schillebeeckx, *W&C*, p. 259. Cf. *G&M*, p. 227.

[141] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 109.

[142] Schillebeeckx, *G&M*, p. 217.

[143] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 120; parallels *GAU*, p. 99; *III*, p. 240.

[144] Schillebeeckx, *III*, pp. 230-31; parallels *IR*, p. 117; *GAU*, p. 95. Also see *IR*, p. 118; parallel *GAU*, p. 96 and *IR*, p. 113.

[145] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 231; parallels *IR*, p. 118; *GAU*, p. 96.

in the argument: it is 'on the basis of a proper creation faith'[146] that 'we cannot foist off onto God what is our task in the world,'[147] 'given the unsurpassable boundary (on our side) between the finite and the infinite.'[148] The absolute distinction between the world and God reminds humanity that its task is to make the actual history of the world, whereas God's task is to create the world.

The relational dialectic of creation also reminds humanity that this distinction is not the end of the story, because creation-faith also speaks of 'the relation'. Thus, whilst humanity's task and God's task are distinct, they are not different. Or, as Schillebeeckx puts it, humanity's cause 'is not God's cause, except that this task of ours is [performed] in the absolute presence of God and is therefore a human concern which is also close to God's heart.'[149] God reveals himself to men and women as 'a God concerned for humanity', for its humanization and deification, and, as such, as a God 'who wants people to be concerned for humanity as well'.[150] As Schillebeeckx ends the final volume of his trilogy: 'The challenging call from God is thus: "Come, my dear people, you are not alone."'[151]

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[146] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 96.

[147] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 118.

[148] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 231.

[149] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx *IR*, p. 118; parallels *GAU*, p. 96; *III*, p. 231). Dutch text: 'geen zaak van God, zij het dat dit onze taak is binnen de absolute presentie van God en daarom een menselijke aangelegenheid die ook God ter harte gaat.' (*TV*, p. 134; exact parallel *EV*, p. 96; parallel *Mensen*, p. 249).

[150] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 316. Cf. 'You Cannot Arbitrarily Make Something of the Gospel!', p. 18.

[151] Schillebeeckx, *III*, p. 246.

Conclusion

The focus of the investigation carried out in this study has been the development of a distinctive structure of discourse about creatures and the Creator that can be applied more widely in philosophical theology. It has proceeded not so much by formulating 'rules for discourse, proposals about what should and should not be said',[1] but by clarifying how what is said is structured. This clarification allows a preference to be expressed for the language of distinction and relation over that of difference and sameness, as a way of overcoming what might be called an oppositional drift in philosophical theology.[2] It uses a concept of functional complementarity not altogether dissimilar to Tanner's, which she puts to use in polemical situations, such as the debate between cultural-linguistic and correlational theologians.[3] These two schools need not necessarily be opposed, she says, as they are doing the same thing in different ways.[4]

Offering such an account of debates like these is deliberately anti-polemical and designed to foster a mutually enriching community of argument.[5] It also applies Tanner's

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[1] Tanner, *God and Creation*, pp. 11-12.

[2] This term can be applied in two ways. It describes the manner in which modern theologians have shown a tendency to 'separately reify and serially order conceptual distinctions' (Tanner, *God and Creation*, pp. 143-44 and 138), the effect of which has been to oppose God and the world to one another, resulting in a contrastive mode of discourse about them (Ibid., p. 45). It also expresses how theological schools often define themselves in opposition to one another, or to what has gone before them.

[3] The polemical and oppositional character of this debate can be seen in some of the ways it has been summarized, as a debate 'between "foundationalism" and "antifoundationalism," "correlational" and "anticorrelational" theology'. (M.A. Higton, 'Hans Frei and David Tracy on the Ordinary and the Extraordinary in Christianity', *Journal of Religion*, 79 (1999), 566-591 (p. 566)). Also see Tracy's comment that a fruitful and critical discussion between Lindbeck's "cultural-linguistic" model and a "hermeneutical-political" model has not yet been posed sharply by anyone' See David Tracy, 'Lindbeck's New Program for Theology: A Reflection', *The Thomist*, 49 (1985), 460-472 (p. 467). Tanner's proposal of functional complementarity provides a key tool for such a critical discussion, which she undertakes in *Theories of Culture*.

[4] See Tanner's *Theories of Culture*, especially pp. 104-16 and her description of functionally equivalent theologies as doing 'the same job while using different tools' (Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 30). Cf. Turner's characterization of the apophatic and kataphatic traditions as different kinds of negative theology (Turner, 'Apophatism', pp. 16-18).

[5] Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, p. 123.

recommendation for 'non-contrastive' language not only to talk of God and the world,[6] but also to debate between rival theological groups. However, the fact that her functional complementarity uses the language of sameness and difference implies that it is not as non-contrastive as it at first appears. Although it fosters the de-polemicization of theological debate and successfully challenges the 'naturalistic features' of theological discourse,[7] it is, nevertheless, contrastive in at least two significant ways. Firstly, it defines itself in opposition, as can be seen from the way that it marks a difference between contrastive and non-contrastive modes of discourse, condemning the former and recommending the latter. Secondly, in its use of the categories of sameness and difference, it uses a contrastive structure of thinking, since sameness and difference are opposites. A structure of thought based on distinction and relation need not have this oppositional character. This thesis has investigated the possibilities of using such a structure in philosophical theology with reference to the subject-matter in which it is most commonly used – that of creation.

The Linguistic Structure of Distinction and Relation

Burrell defines the terms he uses in his philosophical theology of creation with some care, stressing that the making of distinctions and the marking of relations are crucial not only to philosophy in general, but to the philosophical theology of creation in particular.[8] He correctly avers that 'the distinction' of creation is unlike any distinction within creation and that this is easily forgotten, thereby eliding 'the distinction' and speaking of God as a creature.[9] He articulates the directional sensitivity of 'the relation' well, explaining why it is that, though the creature has a real relation to the Creator, this does not imply that the Creator must have a

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[6] Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 45.

[7] See Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, pp. 95, 123 and *God and Creation*, pp. 138, 143-44 respectively. (For the first, also see Burrell, *F&C*, p. 3).

[8] Burrell, *AGA*, pp. 10-11 and *F&F*, pp. 87-89.

[9] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 119; *FWT*, pp. 92-93.

real relation to the creature.[10] However, he displays a tendency to use prepositions without adequate sensitivity to their directional implications, especially with regard to 'the distinction'.[11]

Burrell also tends to use the terms distinction and difference interchangeably, both in his discourse about creation and in his account of analogical language about God.[12] He says that the logic of analogy marks 'a difference between the source of all things and the things themselves'[13] and that Aquinas employs a pattern of language about creatures and God which uses terms in different but related senses.[14] This interchangeability results in his dialectic, which he uses to correlate both 'the distinction' and 'the relation' of creation and the distinction and relation involved in analogical discourse, having a polar structure.[15] Dialectic, for Burrell, involves 'tension and rapport',[16] in which the component of distinction/difference tends to pull the *relata* apart, whilst the relational component tends to collapse them together.[17] In a Lonergonian move, Burrell sublates this tension by inviting his reader to a conversion brought about by the analogous term *actus*, which, whilst not removing the tension, seeks to render it constructive rather than destructive.[18]

Although Schillebeeckx does not define his terms with anything like the clarity of Burrell, he uses them with more care, offering the possibility of a more consistent linguistic

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[10] Burrell, AGA, pp. 84-86; *KUG*, p. 34.

[11] His use of the preposition 'between' is particularly significant in this regard, since the nature of the distinction between God and the world is fundamentally other to that of the distinction between the world and God. (Compare Burrell, *F&F*, p. 146 with *FWT*, p. 6; *F&F*, p. 33 and Burrell and Malits, p. 68).

[12] For interchangeability with regard to creation, see Burrell, *KUG*, pp. 25-27; *F&F*, pp. 116-118.

[13] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 66.

[14] Burrell, *AGA*, p. 55; F&F, p. 118.

[15] Burrell, *F&C*, p. 101 and p. 200, n. 12; '*Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas*', p. 101; *F&F*, p. 118.

[16] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 234.

[17] Burrell, *F&F*, p. 77; *AGA*, p. 76; Burrell and Malits, p. 68.

[18] Burrell, AGA, p. 174. (For the Lonergonian roots of this understanding of dialectic, see Lonergan, *Method*, p. 241).

pattern and structure.[19] Unlike Burrell's, his dialectic does not have a polar character. This thesis describes Schillebeeckx's dialectic as relational, not because his account of creation privileges 'the relation' over 'the distinction', but because, in correlating 'the distinction' and 'the relation', Schillebeeckx stresses their mutual interrelation. The two components interact in a mutually enriching manner – not only are they not competitive, but understanding one can help the enquirer to understand the other. In his critical philosophical theology, positive and negative elements do not pull apart, resulting in the tension of polar dialectic, but shed light on one another, in the 'mutually critical correlation'[20] of relational dialectic.

Relational dialectic transforms the way that debate about the language of creation functions and, as a result, offers a linguistic structure that can shape philosophical theology. It transfigures both functional complementarity and the common ground that it involves. In order to find common ground, two interlocutors need not search for a term or a basic presupposition that they both understand the same way, but, rather, search for something that is comprehensible to both of them.[21] This involves a willingness to 'bracket out' aspects of their positions so that they can see things from their interlocutor's point of view.[22] The two perspectives are thus understood to be distinct and related, rather than having a component that is the same in the midst of difference. This structure of thinking draws on aspect theory to understand both the perspectives of the interlocutors and also the aspects of each of their positions. Because of this, the interaction between them involves three stages, not just two.

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[19] See the way that he uses the term *verhouding* and, more significantly, the prepositions *tot* and *met* to draw a distinction between the relation of creation (to God) and the relationship of faith (with God). (See *TV*, p. 130; exact parallel *EV*, p. 93 and *TV*, p. 132; parallel *EV*, p. 91, on the one hand, and *Mensen*, pp. 256-57, on the other).

[20] Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 51; 'Erfahrung und Glaube', *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, p. 83.

[21] Both Patterson and Tanner observe that the impossibility of mutual comprehension is a product of the presupposition that cultural or academic groups are tightly bounded, coherent wholes, with no possibility of overlap. (Patterson, p. 7; Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, pp. 53, 57, 95). Both authors aver that the boundaries between groups are not watertight (Patterson, p. 7), that 'while there are boundaries between Christian and non-Christian ways of life, those boundaries are fluid and permeable.' (Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, p. 152). Because of this, the 'distinctiveness of a Christian way of life is not so much formed *by* the boundary as *at* it' (Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, p. 115) and mutual comprehensibility becomes a real possibility.

[22] See Schillebeeckx, *UF*, pp. 26-27.

The encounter involves a critically negative component – in which the aim is to show why one's interlocutor is wrong to hold to their position – and a critically positive element – which argues that their position is wrong.[23] However, it also involves critical affirmation, which recognizes that the interlocutor has articulated some things correctly.[24]

Relational Dialectic

Relational dialectic can thus be seen to be a resource for complexity in philosophical theology, not only between cultural and academic groups but also within an approach to philosophical theology that this study has called Schillebeeckian.[25] It offers a way between the polemical either/or of the priority of 'the distinction' and 'the relation' in creation,[26] of creation and salvation in philosophical theology,[27] of continuity and change in Schillebeeckx's oeuvre [28] and of the mediated and immediate aspects of human knowledge of God and of God's knowledge of the world.[29] It does so by suggesting a multivalent approach to the structure of philosophical theology, which this thesis has explored in Schillebeeckx

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[23] Cf. Reginster's account of perspectivism as involving two goals, of ''showing that a *view* is wrong and showing that an agent is wrong to *hold* it' which together effect the third, to change an opponent's mind (Reginster, pp. 49-50).

[24] See Schillebeeckx's agreement with the atheistic perspective in Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, p. 108; parallels *IR*, p. 131; 'I Believe', p. 23. Also see *IR*, p. 105 and *G&M*, pp. 13-14.

[25] Cf. Tanner's proposal of a 'body of rules', which can become 'resources for complexity in Christian theology.' (Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 83). This thesis proposes a structure of discourse – that of relational dialectic – rather than a body of rules. This makes it both a somewhat more limited proposal, because it is more specific, and also a response to the need 'for first-order theological construction.' (Tanner, *God and Creation*, p. 169). Rather than seeking to account for the complexity in philosophical theology more generally, as Tanner does, it proposes a way of doing philosophical theology along lines she recommends.

[26] Rather than needing to move beyond all difference and sameness into silence or babble, as Turner says of the apophatic and kataphatic traditions respectively (Turner, 'Apophatism', p. 18).

[27] See the positions taken by O'Meara, 'Salvation', *PRG*, pp. 102 and 109-110; Steele, pp. 6 and 13; Abdul-Masih, pp. 69-70; Kennedy, 'God and Creation', *PRG*, pp. 37, 38 and 57, on the one hand and Miller, pp. 9-11, Goergen, 'Spirituality', *PRG*, pp. 120-21 and Schreiter, 'Edward Schillebeeckx: His Continuing Significance', *PRG*, p. 193, on the other.

[28] See the debate in Miller, pp. 13-14, Portier, 'Interpretation and Method', *PRG*, pp. 27-34, Thompson, pp. 22-46, McManus, *Unbroken Communion*, pp. 15-39, Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, pp. 8, 13-14, Hill, 'A Theology in Transition', *PRG*, p. 16; Ross, 'Church and Sacraments', *PRG*, p. 134 and Kennedy, 'God and Creation', *PRG*, p. 52; *Deus Humanissimus*, pp. 200-217 and 'Continuity Underlying Discontinuity'.

[29] Using Schillebeeckx's notion of 'mediated immediacy' (see, for example, Schillebeeckx, *II*, p. 809).

with regard to praxis and humanism. Rather than seeking to identify a single structure that can be applied throughout, Schillebeeckx's relational dialectic allows for multiple readings of the correlation of aspects of philosophical theology. These can involve two terms in one relation, as long as that relation is not understood in a polar fashion.[30] It can also involve three terms in two relations,[31] or four terms in three relations.[32]

This multivalency allows for a degree of complexity in which many complementary explanations of a phenomenon like praxis can be given. It can equally well be thought of as the relational dialectic of theory and practice and of mysticism and politics.[33] It also offers the possibility of correlating past and present praxis, in order to elucidate a contemporary praxis of the reign of God that stands in continuity with that of Jesus of Nazareth who is called Christ.[34] Thinking about continuity in this way highlights the importance of the idea of *sequela*,[35] which also plays a crucial role in relational dialectic. It shows that imitation is not the only way to follow faithfully in the footsteps of another, distinguishing between the structural, conjunctural and ephemeral aspects of what someone thought, said and did, in order to identify those that are most important in the correlation.[36] Thus, it becomes possible to be in continuity with another whilst breaking with aspects of their theory and practice,[37] since some of those aspects can be identified as ephemeral and discarded, or as conjunctural and take another culturally relevant form.[38]

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[30] Schillebeeckx, 'The Role of History', p. 318. Cf. Denis Carroll's way of speaking about praxis as the 'critical interplay of theory/practice' (Carroll, 'An Essay in the Theology of Creation', p. 25).

[31] Schillebeeckx, *LF*, pp. 55, 60.

[32] Schillebeeckx, *LF*, p. 60; 'Erfahrung und Glaube', *Schillebeeckx Reader*, p. 85.

[33] See Hill, 'A Theology in Transition', *PRG*, p. 3 and Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. 5 respectively.

[34] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, pp. 35-36. Also see Borgman, '*Gaudium et Spes*', p. 54.

[35] Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 43, 'You Cannot Arbitrarily Make Something of the Gospel!', p. 18.

[36] See Schillebeeckx, *I*, pp. 577-82 and 'The Role of History'.

[37] Portier, 'Interpretation and Method', *PRG*, pp. 27, 33; Schillebeeckx, *TT*, p. 69.

[38] Taking an example from the early history of Christianity, it is not necessary to be a Jew in order to follow in the footsteps of Christ. The early church made the decision that this aspect of Jesus's earthly life was conjunctural, rather than structural, so, when Greeks and Romans became Christ's followers, it was decided that they need not be circumcised. (See Acts of the Apostles, 15:1-29).

The identification of the place of relational dialectic in the structure of Schillebeeckx's work facilitates the development of a philosophical theology *sequela* Schillebeeckx. This thesis has articulated some of the retrospects and prospects of such a Schillebeeckian philosophical theology, concentrating on analogous discourse, participation, and divine and human action. These by no means exhaust the potential of this way of doing philosophical theology, intimating ways in which this treatise might be further developed.

Schillebeeckian Philosophical Theology

The potential for seamlessness that the relational dialectic of humanization and divinization in particular reveals in philosophical theology can also help to defuse many of the polemical disputes referred to above. It shows that an emphasis on creation need not be at the expense of soteriology or eschatology,[39] because the integral connection between the realization of the *humanum* and the *metahumanum* does not conflate one into the other, but recognizes that they are distinct and related.[40] This seamlessness can make a contribution to the contemporary debate how best to do theology in the academy, displaying the role that philosophical theology can play in the wider purposes of theological enquiry. It can also play a part in the discussion of the need for a more relational approach in theology, in a way that is distinct from that which seems to be the most commonly advocated. These two areas are ways in which this study could be further developed, though they would constitute more ambitious projects than the one undertaken here.

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[39] See Schillebeeckx's insistence that the criterion of humanizing is not a reduction of Christianity, that his emphasis on social, political and ecological matters is not 'a horizontalizing of religion.' (Schillebeeckx, *IR*, p. 105, *IR*, p. 131; parallel *GAU*, p. 108, and *III*, pp. 235, 238. Quote from *III*, p. 241). Also see his comments on the place of eschatology in his work, 'which (together with theology and its epistemological implications – creation, Christology and the sacraments) is one of the fundamental focal points of my theological quest' (Schillebeeckx, 'Foreword' to Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, p. x).

[40] See Schillebeeckx's insistence, in the debate with atheistic secular humanism, that the realization of the *humanum* is not exhaustive of Christian faith, because the believer also has an experience of the *metahumanum* (Schillebeeckx, *FSG*, p. 101; exact parallel *III*, p. 97; parallel *JWC*, p. 62; cf. *GNEM*, p. 107).

A Relationally-Based Theology

Stephen Stell develops his proposal for a relationally-based theology against the backdrop of the cultural-linguistic – correlational debate, which he aims to go beyond.[41] He says that the problem within each of these schools, one that also prevents their dialogue from moving beyond diametrical opposition,[42] is that both positions are based on a dichotomous structure of thinking. He highlights Lindbeck's 'assumed dichotomous split in the relations between experience and tradition'[43] and points out the structural similarity between it and Tracy's understanding of these not only as 'two sources for theology, but two *polar* sources'.[44] He asserts that neither school considers 'the possibility that there is an inherent relationality of experience and tradition which actually constitutes their individual identities.'[45]

In a manner that might well seem to employ relational dialectic, he stresses that the integrity of each source 'is a relational integrity. There is no tradition, but an *experienced* tradition. And there is no experience, but a *traditioned* experience.'[46] However, when he clarifies how his proposal operates, it becomes clear that he is using a trinitarian structure, 'determined by the internal perichoretic relationships which compose tradition, experience and the creative imagination.'[47] His conclusion makes the link explicitly, saying that 'the distinctions and interrelationships of human religious understanding correspond to the distinctions and interrelationships of the divine life as it has been stretched out to humanity.'[48]

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[41] Stephen L. Stell, 'Hermeneutics in Theology and the Theology of Hermeneutics: Beyond Lindbeck and Tracy', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 61 (1993), 679-703.

[42] Ibid., p. 679.

[43] Ibid., p. 681.

[44] Ibid., p. 684.

[45] Ibid., p. 687. This might seem a strange statement to make about correlational theology in particular, but Stell's critique is also supported by Tanner's, in *Theories of Culture*, which shows that, despite appearances, polar dialectic does result in a separation of the *relata* (see Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, pp. pp. 104-16).

[46] Stell, p. 687.

[47] Ibid., p. 697.

[48] Ibid., p. 698.

Patterson's project has a trinitarian cast to it from the beginning, proposing to combine the strengths of realist, correlational and cultural-linguistic theologies,[49] speaking of taking cuttings from each to graft onto a new stem.[50] Her aim is to outline a theology 'whose logic [... is] both incarnational and trinitarian and its dynamic [...] co-inherent or perichoretic.'[51] This approach builds on the insights of Gunton and Torrance that persons are basically relational and social,[52] that human personhood is founded on the relational life of the Trinity of persons in God.[53] However, her proposal tends to flatten out the term person, generating a suspicion that she is using it univocally rather than analogically.

Despite the intent of both these authors to provide a non-contrastive account of God and the world, Soskice's comment that relational metaphysics has often been proposed as a counter to substance metaphysics seems applicable,[54] such that Stell and Patterson are haunted by the very polar quality they are seeking to move beyond. Soskice also criticizes the way that Trinitarian relationships in the Godhead provide a basis for the intrinsic relationality of human persons,[55] saying that it is better demonstrated anthropologically. She challenges her opponents to 'name the person who didn't have any parents' and points out: 'As infants we are entirely dependent on others for our existence. These others teach us language, values, stories – in short – a world.'[56] Her relational account of human personhood is founded, it is

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[49] Patterson, pp. 2-3.

[50] Ibid., p. 6.

[51] Ibid., p. 73.

[52] See her reference to Colin E. Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and Alan Torrance, *Persons in Communion: Trinitarian Description and Human Participation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), pp. 307 ff. (Patterson, p. 115) and Colin E. Gunton, 'Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology: Towards a renewal of the Doctrine of the Imago Dei', in *Persons, Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), pp. 47-61 (p. 55) (Patterson, p. 129).

[53] Patterson, p. 114.

[54] Janet Martin Soskice, 'The Gift of the Name: Moses and the Burning Bush', *Gregorianum*, 79 (1998), 231-246 (pp. 231-33).

[55] Janet Martin Soskice, 'The Christian Rhetoric of God and Human Relational Experience', in *The Christian Understanding of God Today*, ed. by James M. Byrne (Dublin: Columba Press, 1993), pp. 112-118 (p. 115).

[56] Ibid.

true, on human relationships, but she does not use that term to express it: 'We are constituted as selves, not despite others, but because of and by others. The more we are 'in relation' the more we *are* our selves.'[57]

This characterization of human personhood brings to mind that the very being of the creature is nothing other than a relation to the Creator,[58] such that the account of creation outlined in this study could play a role in the development of a relationally-based theology. Humans are relational beings not because God is, but because God creates them that way. It is important, however, not to give the impression that a relationally-based theology can be developed simply on the basis of 'the relation' of creation, because such a proposal would be contrastive in exactly the manner criticized in Stell above. It is, rather, relational dialectic that can serve as the basis, speaking in another way not only about how distinct and related *relata* are connected, but also of the seamlessness of the resulting discourse. The way that creation, anthropology and eschatology are connected in such a theology allows for a relational emphasis that draws on 'the relation' of creation, participation in God and the relational dialectic of humanization and divinization to show that the realization of the *humanum* and the *metahumanum* in men and women makes them more like God, who 'is more human than any human being.'[59]

How to Do Theology

This final topic is a perennial one in theology and is very much part of the subject matter of philosophical theology.[60] It has a particular significance, however, in the contemporary discussion about the place of theology and religious studies in the academy and how to relate

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[57] Soskice, 'The Christian Rhetoric of God', p. 115.
[58] Cf. Kerr, *After Aquinas*, p. 43.
[59] Schillebeeckx, *GAU*, pp. 31, 177.
[60] See, for example, Lonergan's *Method* and Rahner's *Foundations*.

doing theology and studying religion to one another. Burrell, not surprisingly, given the place of the analogy of act in his oeuvre, emphasizes the need to do philosophical theology. He says that the salt of philosophy 'quickly loses its savor when we are told about it',[61] drawing a distinction between doing philosophy and reporting on it. In the former, which he recommends, philosophy 'takes on the character of an apprenticeship: learning how to do it',[62] or, as he puts it elsewhere, 'watching a master do what I want to do myself.'[63]

John Webster puts forward a not altogether dissimilar proposal in his recommendation of 'Theological Theology'.[64] He argues that theology must 'break free of one of the grandest myths of modernity',[65] which maintains that the most important discoveries of intellectual endeavour 'can be isolated from any contingent, secondary characteristics' like 'the specificities of background, custom, or training, or [...] the habits of mind and spirit which are acquired from participation in a particular tradition'.[66] However, his response seems to invert the position he opposes, asserting that 'reflective activity is best understood, not by exquisite analysis of modes of consciousness, but by observing the practices of a cultural world.'[67]

The cultural-linguistic sympathies intimated in Webster's account are affirmed wholeheartedly by Gavin D'Costa, who draws a parallel between the state that theology is in generally and the position of theology in the academy today. In the pre-modern era, he says, 'the epistemological precondition for theology was the community of the Church' and

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[61] Burrell, *APL*, p. 1.

[62] Ibid., p. 2.

[63] Burrell, *FWT*, p. 25.

[64] John Webster, *Theological Theology: An Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 27 October 1997* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[65] Ibid., p. 8.

[66] Ibid., pp. 4-5. He speaks of the history of modern theology, in a manner that draws on Jüngel, as 'the decline of the theological culture' and speaks of Barth's 'great epistemological caveat' that theology is only 'secure in the reality of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit', in a manner not altogether unlike the cultural-linguistic theologians (see pp. 10 and 20 respectively).

[67] Ibid., p. 22.

theology's 'relation to what is currently called "praxis" was assumed, and only in fact became detached in the process of the Enlightenment.'[68] In the contemporary academy, he says, 'it is difficult to find a theology syllabus that claims to produce good theologians,'[69] since what exists now is 'the neutral study of religion.'[70] He notes with approval Hans Frei's characterization of this shift as 'the "great reversal"',[71] drawing a parallel between Friedrich Schleiermacher as 'the father of liberal theology' and as 'the pioneer of instigating a type of institutional theology at the University of Berlin which heralded the modern period.'[72] Not surprisingly, therefore, D'Costa's proffered solution is a polemical one, aiming to reverse the reversal. He advocates overturning 'the inverted Oedipal configuration that has been institutionally established' by 'Reading the world into the text' in a confessionally specific manner.[73] D'Costa's suggestion, despite its tantalising hint as to the role that praxis might play in resolving the dispute, nevertheless falls victim to the polemical character of the debate.

Turner offers a way beyond the endless to and fro by seeking to relate theology as it is done in the academy to that done in a 'credally and ecclesially interested spirit' outside it.[74] He draws a distinction between studying theology, the primary sense of which 'is to do theology' and undertaking the study of religion, which, he says, 'is a second-order discipline', a distinction he explains by saying: 'you don't practise religion by studying it, as you practise Islam by doing Islamic theology, or practise Christianity by doing Christian theology.'[75] But,

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[68] Gavin D'Costa, 'The End of 'Theology' and 'Religious Studies'', *Theology*, 99 (1996), 338-351 (p. 341).

[69] Ibid., p. 342.

[70] Ibid., p. 339.

[71] Ibid., p. 130, citing Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 130.

[72] Ibid., p. 130.

[73] Ibid., p. 348.

[74] Denys Turner, 'Doing Theology in the University', in *Fields of Faith: Theology and Religious Studies for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by David F. Ford, Ben Quash and Janet Martin Soskice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 25-38 (p. 25).

[75] Ibid., p. 26.

is the link he is making perhaps a little too strong? It gives the impression that the theoretical exploration of faith that is theology is the practice of that faith, *simpliciter*. But, does not this approach risk assuming that praxis and practice are the same thing?

The sameness and difference structure of thinking that Turner uses is evident here too, and is transparently displayed in the way that he speaks of scholarly interaction between people from different faith communities. He says that 'with faiths, pursuing disagreements is as productive a way as any' of finding both common ground and diversity, 'difference of a kind such that nothing is gained from trying to settle the matter'.[76] The impression given is that, whilst the discipline of religious studies tries to find a lowest common denominator, academic theology respects the differences that exist between confessional communities. This priority of difference applies, not surprisingly, only to theology: 'Our grip on the theological as a human discourse lies therefore in the questions we can ask; but what count as the answers must lie unsayably beyond those limits: theology is, as it were, our appropriation of this final loss of hold on language.'[77]

Turner's position is not one of diametrical opposition, but places the two *relata* in a sameness and difference structure of discourse, in which the object of that discourse – God (for theology, at least) – lies beyond that very structure. This is reminiscent of his articulation of the structure of the discourse of creation and paves the way for a Schillebeeckian proposal. Here, theology and religious studies are distinct and related, such that the theologian can, on the one hand, bracket out the practical implications of the theory being examined in order to enter into discussion with those pursuing religious studies, who are not be concerned with the practical implications of theological theory, except where those implications make it more or

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[76] Turner, 'Doing Theology in the University', pp. 33-34.

[77] Ibid., p. 38.

less convincing as a theory.[78] Theology as something that theologians do, on the other hand, implies that they have confessional responsibilities, that Christian theologians have an ecclesial vocation. In this sense, Borgman is correct when he says: "Amidst all the pressures which are put on to theology to become the study of religion, it has to hold on to the fact that the contribution it makes to the Church is an indispensable part of its task.'[79]

Relational dialectic avers that the theoretical and practical goals of theology are not contradictory, nor need they be competitive. They can and should exist alongside one another, in what could be called praxical philosophical theology. In this setting, the theory pursued and developed by theologians has implications for their praxis of the reign of God, in which they seek to make the *humanum* and the *metahumanum* real practically.[80] This practice, in turn, exerts an influence on the development of theory, such that the mutually critical correlation of the two is crucial to theology as something that is done.[81] The realization that praxical philosophical theology calls for is thus both practical and theoretical. Its praxis follows in the footsteps of other praxical philosophical theologians as an apprenticeship in the form of *sequela*, rather than *imitatio*. The aim is to be faithful both to the example of those who have gone before and to the needs of the particular situation in which the theologian finds him- or herself. In and through this way of life, the theologian becomes ever more fully alive with a human life that is the face of God in the world.[82] This is 'the best definition of what creation amounts to.'[83]

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[78] This bracketing out also allows the theologian to enter into dialogue with theologians from other faith traditions, for whom the theory under consideration would have other practical implications.

[79] Borgman, '*Gaudium et Spes*', p. 55.

[80] Cf. Borgman's comment that, in the final analysis, theology serves neither the Church nor society, but God (Borgman, '*Gaudium et Spes*', p. 55).

[81] Or, to put it another way, 'praxis is decisive' (Schillebeeckx, *JWC*, p. 75; parallel 'Jeruzalem of Benares? Nicaragua of de Berg Athos?', *Schillebeeckx Reader*, p. 274).

[82] Cf. Irenaeus's maxim, 'The glory of God is the living man and woman; this selfsame human life is the face of God.' Author's translation (cf. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 1, p. 490, col. 1.) Latin text: '*Gloria Dei, vivens homo: vita autem hominis, visio Dei.*' (Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, IV, 20, § 7).

[83] Author's translation (cf. Schillebeeckx, *IR*, pp. 115-16; parallel *GAU*, p. 94). Dutch text: 'de beste definitie van wat schepping betekent.' (*TV*, p. 131; parallel *EV*, p. 94).

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