theodicy today

featured essay

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Some three hundred or so years after Leibniz[1] has coined the word, shall we say that theodicy has already become a science? If we were to confer the name only to those disciplines which are empirical and experimental, then certainly theodicy would not qualify as a science, since its object - God - falls outside the scope of what can be experientially observed and verified. Can anything like that be a scientific object at all? Only if we expand the meaning of science to cover everything for which we can claim some acceptable degree of certitude. In other words, I propose certitude to be what makes and counts for science and on that score I will then advance theodicy as eminently worthy of the royal name, too.[2]

My thesis is, thus, that theodicy deserves to be called a science since we have already arrived at a point where we could claim to have gained certitude over its fundamental claims, so that there is no more need either to turn back or retrace our

[1] "In theology, a theory that asserts God's justice (Greek *dike*) in creating the world. . . . The word was coined in 1710 by Leibniz, who argued that even if there were no specific evils in the created world it would still be imperfect, just because created and not the source of its own existence, as God, the most perfect being, is alleged to be." Anthony Quinton, "Theodicy," in *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, ed. Alan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass (London: Fontana/Collins, 1977), 632.

[2] See also Romualdo Abulad, "Science, Philosophy and Religion," *Diwa*, Divine Word Seminary—Tagaytay City, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, 99-125.

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steps.[3] Having gone this far, we can only move on progressively and see how far yet we can still go from here. It also means that old problems have been sufficiently solved and probably new tasks are now ahead of us, ready to be tackled for a new day.

If I am talking somewhat in riddles, it is because in these days when we are supposed to be no longer in transition and have thus already found certitude in matters of God, we have nevertheless yet to become fully aware of our new experience and are still quite unsure of our steps. Perhaps especially at moments like this the safer course would be to take stock of ourselves and look back a bit, review the path we have taken, clarify our ground and from here figure out whether there are any clear signs of the things we are being destined to do or say.

In undertaking this, allow me to be led by our ever-reliable guide, Immanuel Kant, who, in the brief second part of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, after having effected, as it were, his thoroughgoing analytic that has earned for him the title of an all-destroyer (*der Allzermalmende*), has outlined what appears to be mere sketches of instructions on how to proceed with what he calls the method of transcendentalism, consisting of a discipline, a canon, an architectonic and a history of pure reason, all of which we will here apply to theodicy. I don't intend, though, to follow this scheme strictly, for there is bound to be an interpenetration of these four tasks as I try to engage each one of them separately. For example, I don't see any possibility of discussing clearly the discipline of pure reason without already identifying the landmarks in the history of theodicy. I shall, however, do this without hesitation since, it seems to me, Kant himself was very much conscious of his historical indebtedness as he undertook his critique of pure reason. This is, of course, bound to happen because what else could be the materials we shall be using except those which have already been used by the various thinkers who came before us?

In constructing our theodicy, therefore, we will listen to Kant warning us, in the first place, never to forget the discipline of pure reason, which is none other than the critique of pure reason itself together with the lessons implied by it.[4] In mentioning Locke by

[3] "Whether the treatment of that class of knowledge with which reason is occupied follows the secure method of a science or not, can easily be determined by the result. If, after repeated preparations, it comes to a standstill, as soon as its real goal is approached, or is obliged, in order to reach it, to retrace its steps again and again, and strike into fresh paths; again, if it is impossible to produce unanimity among those who are engaged in the same work, as to the manner in which their common object should be obtained, we may be convinced that such a study is far from having attained to the secure method of a science, but is groping only in the dark." Immanuel Kant, Preface to the Second Edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. F. Max Müller (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1966), xxviii-xxix.

[4] "The critique of pure reason may really be looked upon as the true tribunal of reason for all disputes of reason; for it is not concerned in these disputes which refer to objects

name, he knew exactly where he was coming from.[5] Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, he said, came as an offshoot of a discussion he had once at his chamber with five or six friends[6] who, possibly under the benign influence of food and wine, found themselves unable to settle particular questions which we could now surmise to belong to that realm which Kant would later describe as the "arena of endless controversies."[7] Locke then realized how wrong might have been their approach of engaging themselves outright in the discussion of the subject without first inquiring into the scope, extent and limits of their own faculty of understanding itself.[8] Kant was coming from there when he undertook his own *Critique of Pure Reason*. The self-critique, which is his own contribution to that most difficult of our duties, that of self-knowledge,[9] is the same that Locke started to undertake in his time. Evidently, this project of Locke did not end up completely satisfactorily for both the general public and the exclusive circle of professionals, for - as noted by Kant - the prevailing culture continued to show a general sense of weariness and indifference, due however not to the laziness and carelessness of the age but to a

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immediately, but is intended to fix and to determine the rights of reason in general, according to the principles of its original institution. Without such a critique, reason may be said to be in a state of nature, and unable to establish and defend its assertions and claims except by war." Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 486.

[5] Locke is the first philosopher mentioned by name in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, xxiii. "Not long ago one might have thought, indeed, that all these quarrels were to have been settled and the legitimacy of her claims decided once for all through a certain physiology of the human understanding, the work of the celebrated *Locke*."

[6] "I should tell thee, that five or six friends meeting at my chamber, and discoursing on a subject very remote from this, found themselves quickly at a stand, by the difficulties that rose on every side. After we had awhile puzzled ourselves, without coming any nearer a resolution of those doubts which perplexed us, it came into my thoughts that we took a wrong course; and that before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what *objects* our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with." John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Vol. 1 (New York: Dover Publications, 1959), 9.

[7] "It is the battle-field of these endless controversies which is called Metaphysic." Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, xxii.

[8] Locke defines the purpose of his *Essay* as follows: "to inquire into the original, certainty, and extent of *human knowledge*, together with the grounds and degrees of *belief, opinion*, and *assent*. . . ." Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Vol. 1, 26.

[9] Kant explains the critique of pure reason as "a powerful appeal to reason to undertake anew the most difficult of its duties, namely, self-knowledge. . . ." Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, xxiv.

spirit of maturity that will no longer be content with merely an appearance of knowledge.[10]

This great age of modernity, which is often referred to as the age of geniuses, has done humanity great service not only in becoming an instrument in the construction of our culture of science and technology, whose benefits we are now more than amply enjoying, but also in having relentlessly and pitilessly examined the sources and nature of our knowledge, if not our pretension to it, the better for us to secure the path of scientific certainty. One still recalls the father of modernity himself, René Descartes, advocating as a first principle what came to be known as the universal doubt, that "in order to examine into the truth, it is necessary once in one's life to doubt of all things, so far as this is possible."[11] It is true that he was coming from the Renaissance, which was itself an age of doubt, facilitating his singular move of starting anew from scratch so as to accept nothing as true anything that allows for even a bit of doubt. This sceptical attitude has never thereafter left us, even as it turns out to be also never complete, as initially intended by Descartes himself. Without imputing blame on this great thinker, inasmuch as such a great achievement as envisioned by him could hardly be undertaken overnight by a single man, we now know that his universal doubt wasn't so universal after all. It took the empiricists, the young Turks of philosophy described intriguingly by Kant as nomads, to detect and demolish after their own fashion items which Descartes, despite his earnestness, failed to notice. It took Locke to explode innate ideas, Berkeley to falsify substance and Hume to deconstruct causality. The young Kant, immersed and nourished in the rationalistic and dogmatic tradition of Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy chose to be awakened from his dogmatic slumber by Hume's academic scepticism.[12]

This attitude of Kant turned out to be historically momentous, for we now know that his critique of pure reason actually stands for the completion of Descartes' universal

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[10] "Nevertheless this indifferentism, showing itself in the very midst of the most flourishing state of all sciences . . . is a phenomenon well worthy of our attention and consideration. It is clearly the result, not of carelessness, but of the matured judgment of our age, which will no longer rest satisfied with the mere appearance of knowledge." Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, xxiii-xxiv.

[11] Principle I of René Descartes, "Principles of Philosophy," in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Vol. 1, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), 219.

[12] "I openly confess that my remembering David Hume was the very thing which many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave my investigations in the field of speculative philosophy a quite new direction." Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. Paul Carus newly revised by James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1977), 5.

doubt and with that, as Martin Heidegger will later take note of, the actual culmination of the entire project not only of modernity but the whole of Western history, called by Heidegger the first beginning.[13] What is so momentous about this event, we might ask, especially in relation to the topic of theodicy? There are two things of common knowledge which I would like to adduce at this point by way of explanation. Firstly, it is no secret that there was a time when all knowledge was metaphysics and that it is only as recently as in the modern age that the scientific disciplines came to their own. Otherwise, we used to take to heart the Aristotelian definition of metaphysics as a science which inquires into the ultimate reasons, causes and principles of all things in the light of reason alone.[14] This definition is, in fact, the same classical definition we give to philosophy, so that philosophy and metaphysics are, for quite some time, as good as synonymous. When Thales contended that all things are water, or Anaximenes that all are air, or Anaximander that it is αρειρον, etc., they were all actually speculating on the ultimate principle of things, and in this light the diversity in their theories begins to make sense; otherwise, it would sound incredulous, if not downright stupid, say, for any man as intelligent as Thales even to mistake a table for water. It is the Greeks who taught us to theorize, by means of which things cease to *be* what they *seem*. This disconnect between *seeming* and *being* enabled Plato to distinguish between two realities, the ideal and the sensible, the first being the abode of forms or essences *(ειδοι)* and the second being the realm of temporary shadows and reflections. His pupil, Aristotle, famously questioned the ideal world of forms and instead confined his philosophy to this world of earthly and material things; so far as he is concerned, there is no need to invent a separate world of forms because these forms or essences are found in the material things themselves. This theoretical divide between teacher and student, pursued ceaselessly and rigorously through countless generations by their respective adherents, has enormous consequences for all of humanity. Yet, they all came from the same source which Aristotle quite simply refers to as 'reason.' Indeed, it is the Greeks from whom we acquire the definition of man as a rational animal, *animale rationale*. Thinking in this which Heidegger calls the first beginning is, yes, thinking from reason, and it is not surprising that the project of the Greeks which became

[13] "The 'other' beginning of thinking is named thus, not because it is simply shaped differently from any other arbitrarily chosen hitherto existing philosophies, but because it must be the only other beginning according to the relation *to* the one and only first beginning." Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 4.

[14] See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 1, Chapters 1-2.b

the project of the entire West is the cultivation and perfection of thought or reason, which is the same project adopted by the modern enlightenment philosophers.[15]

The second thing that I would like us to notice is what shape this thinking from reason, this rational thinking, actually takes. Aristotle identifies it as the search for the reasons, causes and principles of things.[16] In the *Metaphysics*, after a lengthy and winded discourse, Aristotle finally nailed it down and declared being to be substance.[17] What substance is, is due to four causes, famously known as material, formal, efficient and final causes. There is a series of causes which culminates in one uncaused cause, God.[18] This metaphysics, which is another name for philosophy, the science of wisdom, leads to the first cause, God, which explains Heidegger's insistence that we have here an ontology or metaphysics which is at the same time a theology. Thus, this thinking from reason which is what Heidegger calls the first beginning is ontotheological, that is, it culminates in a being that is also God.[19] It is therefore not a departure from the Greek conception that the West

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[15] One recalls the opening paragraph of Kant's essay, "What is Enlightenment?": "Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. *Sapere aude!* 'Have courage to use your reason!' – that is the motto of enlightenment." In *Kant on History*, ed. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Library of Liberal Arts, 1975), 3.

[16] ". . . all men suppose what is called Wisdom to deal with the first causes and principles of things." Aristotle, *Met* 981b28; in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 691.

[17] "And indeed the question which was raised of old and is raised now and always, and is always the subject of doubt, viz. what being is, is just the question, what is substance?" Aristotle, *Met 1028b2-4*; McKeon, 783-784.

[18] ". . . neither the matter nor the form comes to be – and I mean the last matter and form. For everything that changes is something and is changed by something and into something. That by which it is changed is the immediate mover; that which is changed, the matter; that into which it is changed, the form. The process, then, will go on to infinity, if not only the bronze comes to be round but also the round or the bronze comes to be; therefore there must be a sto " Aristotle, *Met 1069b35-1070a1-4;* McKeon, 873. "The first mover, then, exists of necessity; and in so far as it exists by necessity, its mode of being is good, and it is in this sense a first principle. . . . We say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God; for this *is* God." Aristotle, *Met 1072b10-29*; McKeon, 880.

[19] "We should begin by saying that metaphysics is theology, a statement about God, because God enters philosophy. In this way the problem becomes more acute as a problem regarding the onto-theo-logical character of metaphysics. . . ." Martin Heidegger, "The Onto-

had been diverted into a theocentric medieval culture, which proved to be somewhat detrimental to the cause of reason itself inasmuch as its diversion into faith turned out to be the organization of an authoritative institution called the Church eventually asserting its claim over not only what is true but also what is right.

Thankfully, history has a self-correcting mechanism, which is probably what Hegel means by the cunning of reason.[20] This reason, in the case of the West, bifurcated into physics or cosmology and metaphysics or theology. By Kant's time physics was already a science, while metaphysics was still an arena of endless of controversies. With Kant's critique of pure reason, however, science has been shown to be no better than a type of a knowledge of phenomena while metaphysics, which in the past claimed to possess knowledge of the noumenon, or the thing in itself, for which it was called ontology, was exposed as a pretentious discourse that could easily degenerate into dogmatism.[21] To avoid such a dogmatism, we should understand that all our knowledge is no more than *human* knowledge, that is to say, knowledge only of things as they appear to us, never of things as they are in themselves, or, in other words, knowledge only of phenomena, never of the noumena. The reason is because, as succinctly expressed in the summary of his theory of knowledge, "thoughts without contents are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind."[22] Since intuitions have to do with space and time, mathematics and physics, together with the other natural sciences which deal with spatio-temporal things, have been sustained in their scientific claims, but without assuming to anything more than *human*, that is, phenomenal or, in the language of Michael Polanyi, personal knowledge.[23] In fact, it is this realization of the sheer phenomenality of scientific knowledge which has released cosmology from Aristotle, geometry from Euclid, astronomy from Ptolemy, and so on. This is, in other words, what constitutes the so-called epistemological Copernican revolution of Kant which has since proved fruitful for the sciences.

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theo-logical Nature of Metaphysics," in *Essays in Metaphysics: Identity and Difference*, trans. Kurt F. Leidecker (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), 48.

[20] "It remains in the background, untouched and uninjured. This may be called the *cunning of reason* – that it sets the passions to work for itself, while that which develops its existence through such impulsion pays the penalty, and suffers loss." G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), 33.

[21] ". . . [The] proud name of Ontology, which presumes to supply in a systematic form different kinds of synthetical knowledge *a priori* of things by themselves (for instance the principle of causality), must be replaced by the more modest name of a mere Analytic of the pure understanding." Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 193.

[22] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 45.

[23] Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973).

I don't think I have heard of any serious objection to this view of knowledge. Both continental and Anglo-American writers, such as phenomenology on the side of the former and analytic philosophy on the side of the latter, have in fact used it to bolster their respective positions. Indeed, when Hegel somehow forgot the discipline and attempted to provide a closure to his system, he was duly attacked harshly by the young philosophers that were soon to follow him. It was Husserl who eventually came to the rescue of phenomenology and provided the essential remedy by breaking its walls open and giving it an aura of a perpetual beginner. This makes for a vindication of Kant's conclusion about the phenomenality of all knowledge and the envisioned science is thereby in no way brought nearer to the gate of the noumenon. The reference to the 'thing itself' in the famous battlecry of phenomenology, "*Zu den Sachen selbst!*", is to the essence (*Wesen)* that is not to be confused with the ontological thing itself of the past scholastic philosophy, for it is an essence that is as much a phenomenon as anything else, thus appropriately called the *Wesensschau*, the essence or *ειδος* as it appears to consciousness. There is thus always a tinge of humanity in all of our knowledge, even of the most philosophical kind, and we certainly need to heed Kant's suggestion that we avoid the proud name of Ontology and be content with an analytic of the pure understanding. Thus, before we do any philosophy today, including theodicy, we should first check our predilection toward any form of dogmatism, the kind of certitude, or pretense to certitude, that we do not mean to display when we speak of the newly acquired science of theodicy.

When, recently, I was asked to offer a course in theodicy to a group of seminarians, I still thought it wise to begin with the usual question about the existence of God. I felt obliged to start by making sure that their grasp of the proof for God's existence was adequately strong because, in all honesty, I could not bear seeing them confined to the usual argument yet illiterate on the prevailing secular mentality. I told them that, although I would no longer go back to the typewriter of my days and would rather keep the convenience of today's technology, this by no means imply that we should all together forget the lessons of the past, especially those that have in fact brought us to where we are now in the present. I saw to it they got the cosmological argument of St. Thomas Aquinas right, but immediately after that I tried to educate them also on the ontological argument of St. Anselm. And then I needed to tell them that these are not two arguments because, despite appearances, the cosmological argument is still only a proof of reason, therefore actually also only an ontological argument.[24] This was nothing new, of course,

[24] ". . . [The] physico-theological proof rests on the cosmological, and the cosmological on the ontological proof of the existence of one original Being as the Supreme Being; and, as besides these three, there is no other path open to speculative reason, the

but the result of Kant's own critique of pure reason, in the section of his book called "Ideal of Pure Reason." Not only that; I also had to tell the students that, according to Kant, this one and only proof for the existence of God, the ontological argument, is actually impossible,[25] that it does not amount to any extension of our knowledge, precisely because in this proof we are merely groping among concepts and, as we've been told already, concepts or thoughts without contents or intuitions are blind. In the end, despite the fact that he would have wanted to be able to proclaim to the world that here, once and for all, we could ascertain ourselves beyond any doubt that God exists, the honesty of the philosopher whose rigorously focused work had led him to this conclusion had to confess that knowledge must give way to faith.[26] To one who has faith, anyway, no proof is necessary, but our students need also to know that no proof is possible.

I think there is certainty in this conclusion of Kant. I'm not sure that I've heard of anyone seriously arguing still in an attempt to prove God's existence after this momentous achievement of Kant's critical philosophy. We have already designed the best arguments in the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas and the *Proslogium* of St. Anselm; nothing could be better yet than these. But, as Nicholas of Cusa would be telling us not long afterwards, even our best efforts could not be good enough because we are using our reason for purposes of reaching an object actually beyond our ken. Our logic, no matter how good, is meant for finite things and is wholly inadequate when extended to the infinite. "*Finiti et infiniti nulla proportio*," he famously said.[27] Kant, in fact, tried to mediate between the dogmatism of the rationalists and the scepticism of the empiricists, hoping (I imagine) to give weight to the theistic position, but the thorough work he gave to his project led him instead to the Socratic knowledge of self that justifies not so much the certainty of the sophists but Socrates' own self-confessed ignorance. The wisest of men, said the Delphic oracle, knows that he does not know. Even St. Thomas Aquinas himself seems to have reached this *docta ignorantia* when, despite the urging of his friend, Reginald of Piperno, he refused to finish the great *Summa* since all that was mere straw compared to what had

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ontological proof, based exclusively on pure concepts of reason, is the only possible one. . . ." Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 418.

[25] Section IV of the Ideal of Pure Reason is entitled "Of the Impossibility of an Ontological Proof of the Existence of God." Kant says, "The concept of a Supreme Being is, in many respects, a very useful idea, but, being an idea only, it is quite incapable of increasing, by itself alone, our knowledge with regard to what exists." *Critique of Pure Reason*, 403.

[26] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, xxxix.

[27] Cf. Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, trans. Mario Domandi (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), 11.

been revealed to him.[28] That revelation, I imagine, produced in St. Thomas the certitude which no intellectual argument could possibly replace, making it even more emphatically correct to say that no proof is indeed possible, that even the most formidable argument is straw compared to that revelation which is a sheer gift, not anything acquired naturally by, albeit coming as a result of, man's effort. Not until after her death did we get to know that, for the length of time that she was devoting herself to her work in Calcutta, Mother Teresa was in great darkness of the soul and that God was absent in life; she was living in sheer constancy of faith. She knew what the death of God meant.[29]

I would like to think that Nietzsche would not have been able to declare that God is dead if Kant had not first offered the profound philosophical justification for it. Many great thinkers and intellectuals of our time are not averse to the idea of a religionless culture. Count among them Ricoeur's masters of suspicion: Marx, Freud and Nietzsche; call them atheists, if you will, but they will remain dauntless and unmoved, sure of where they stand. Add to their number the popular atheists of today, such as Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and Sam Harris. Perhaps the best of the new breed is Stephen Hawking, an eminent theoretical physicist to boot; his work is, I think, worthy of the classics. I encourage my students in the seminary not to avoid these intelligent contemporaries but to read and listen well to what they are trying to say; the best of them display not only objectivity but also originality, as well as their expertise in their respective fields of interest. And, yes, they are not necessarily evil men. How is it possible for one to be an atheist and a good man at the same time?

Now, in postmodernity, we know why. If you agree with me that Kant is the father of postmodernity, you'll most likely agree also with me that we can find in his antinomy of pure reason the key to this dilemma, not only that atheists can be good men but that theists can turn out to be bad men too. About a century earlier than Kant, we already find in Pascal the sort of thinking that has no qualms admitting the impossibility of any proof for the existence of God, thus reducing belief to a sort of practical gamble. Although I am

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[28] "Reginald, I can write no more. All that I have hitherto written seems to me nothing but straw . . . compared to what I have seen and what has been revealed to me." Josef Pieper, *The Silence of Saint Thomas*, trans. John Murray and Daniel O'Connor (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1965), 39-40.

[29] "Darkness is such that I really do not see – neither with my mind nor with my reason. – The place of God in my soul is blank. – There is no God in me. When the pain of longing is so great – I just long and long for God – and then it is that I feel – He does not want me – He is not there." Mother Teresa, *Come Be My Light* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 210. "Pray for me that in this darkness I do not light my own light – nor fill this emptiness with my self. . . . Father, I wanted to tell you – how my soul longs for God – for Him alone, how painful it is to be without Him. . . ." Mother Teresa, *Come Be My Light*, 257.

not very sure I agree with those who think of Kant as espousing a compartmentalized position in relation to the dichotomy he makes between phenomenon and noumenon, he certainly unequivocally shows why such a split-level existence is more than a possibility. The Scripture even tells us that not all who say 'Lord, Lord' will merit the kingdom of God. I remember Dr. Quito once telling us in class how, for a typical Westerner, it is very well to say one thing and do quite another thing. Duplicity of this nature is what makes the biblical Jesus boil and expose hypocrisy at its core. The divide between the intellectual and the practical is quite a possibility and even the best of modernity has not been averse to it.

However, postmodern thinking, one of whose watchwords is authenticity, is not likely to imitate this smart duplicity of, say, a Machiavelli, to mention one notable name. This is precisely what Heidegger might have meant by his ceaseless advocacy for ontological veracity. It's about time we recover from our forgetfulness of being resulting from the first beginning that commenced in Greece two thousand years ago through Plato and Aristotle.[30] It's about time we cross over into a new beginning through a radical paradigm shift inaugurated by the transformation of the human reality from rational animal to Dasein.[31] For as long as man remains merely a rational animal, he can very well imitate the fox and the lion while smartly holding on to power and amassing property and wealth. Logic and ethics could very well be learnt in school and then conveniently thrashed into the dustbin in actual life. And religion? It could very well stay on the surface, while the true state of one's heart remains masked and hidden. That sort of political public life should now gradually be relegated to the past, supported no longer by the logic of reason but by that heart which, according to the little prince, has a reason which reason itself does not understand.

Two thousand years of cultivation has made man's rationality the fount of the sort of science and technology definitive of today's culture and industry. That's not a bad achievement at all, one for which this evolving humanity must be eternally grateful. But it has brought rationality to the brink and demonstrated to all and sundry that there are limits to growth. We have finally crossed the borders into the new beginning, and have we left the church behind? Is God still a meaningful postulate in a post-rational and post-enlightenment age? Would the gospel of ethics and morality not be enough to sustain us in this new age *sans* church, *sans* revelation, *sans* dogma, *sans* God?

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[30] "This question (of being) has today been forgotten. . . . Yet the question we are touching upon is not just any question. It is one which provided a stimulus for the researches of Plato and Aristotle, only to subside from then on *as a theme for actual investigation*." Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: HarperPerennial, 2008), 21; H's italics.

[31] "This amounts to an essential transformation of the human from 'rational animal' (*animal rationale)* to Da-sein." Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, 3.

Theodicy used to be one of the three great themes of philosophy, the other two being cosmology and psychology. This, you will see, is also why there are three, and only three, transcendental ideas in Kant's dialectic of pure reason. But psychology, having been released from the question of the soul's immortality, can very well thrive even more bountifully without its metaphysical postulate. And physics is doing even more marvellously apart from philosophy. By way of contrast, theology whose handmaid is philosophy limps without it. For as long as it relies on the classical means of proving the existence and nature of God, theology will find it difficult to gain a wide audience. It is no wonder that bookstores today are thin on theological matters, and my suspicion is that much of theology is still banking on the old metaphysics for support. However, this old metaphysics is dead. The ontology that finds its rest in the first uncaused cause has been superseded by what to all appearances is a godless Christianity. One can very well add to Whitehead's list of contrasts that, on the one hand, only God exists and the world does not and that, on the other hand, only the world exists and God does not.[32] However, if one listens to this contrast more keenly, one will actually find a deeply primordial voice that sounds almost like an Oriental collapsing Atman and Brahman into one or, as in Spinoza, taking the *natura naturans* and the *natura naturata* as indistinguishable; that would be like saying that creator and creature are synonymous. That sort of event is happening in our time; the dualities of old are breaking up in a coincidence of opposites begging for a language that we are still in the process of inventing. The reason is because old concepts are stultifying, petrifying if you wish, struggling to melt into new meanings amidst a culture that is as explosive as the latest Marvel movie.

Philosophy, you see, continues to be theology's handmaid. But theology (and I do not here make a difference between theology and theodicy) has to notice that philosophy is no longer as before. Signs of this paradigm shift include the fact that Bertrand Russell could no longer understand the *Philosophical Investigations* of Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose first book, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, he (Russell) managed to get published. The continental counterpart is Heidegger's two books, especially the second which continues the movement of the first, consciously moving among new concepts; this is a book which has to be read and analyze more than a few times because it bears a language whose form and style have also radically shifted, including in the way it speaks about god. Then there is Whitehead whom you cannot read without adjusting your own consciousness to a new perception of things that are, yes, always in process; you seem to

[32] Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Macmillan Free Press, 1969), 410.

get transported back into some of Leibniz's monads each of which reflects the whole universe, which betrays the interconnnectedness of all things.[33]

That leads us, finally, to Pope Francis in whom we have a person of faith, more attuned perhaps to theology than to philosophy, whose *Laudato Si* is a statement precisely of how all things are interrelated, for which he gives the name integral ecology.[34] That word, integral ecology, is only another name for philosophy, or for what philosophers of all ages, both East and West, have been trying to do with much effort and struggle. As another name for philosophy, it is an idea whose time has finally come. More than a century before him, the Jewish philosopher, Benedict de Spinoza, called it "ethics."[35] It is also what, in the twentieth century, the Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin refers to as the Omega Point, the Cosmic Christ, the integration or synthesis of everything in what he calls their 'within'.[36] This attainment is what, about two thousand years ago, Hinduism in general and Yoga in particular might have really meant when they spoke of the nondualism of Atman and Brahman,[37] that mystical point which, to me, seems to be what Henri Bergson refers to as the ultimate trajectory of creative evolution.[38] The ecological consciousness being espoused now by Francis is, according to the Filipino Jesuit Fr. Albert Alejo, not only an activist but also a mystical consciousness, whose contemporary advocacy is a concrete, not an abstract, response to the challenges of today's situation of unreason and injustice.[39]

This, I dare say, is the key to the meaning of Pope Francis' call for mercy and compassion, not to be equated with those old virtues extolled by the weak-willed Christians mercilessly denounced by Friedrich Nietzsche. Francis' brand of mercy and compassion is intolerant of that injustice inflicted on both the human and ecological environment. He calls corruption the scourge of the earth. Mercy and compassion is

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[33] ". . . [Every] monad is in its way a mirror of the universe." Leibniz, "Monadology, 63," in *Leibniz Selections*, ed. Philip Wiener (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 546.

[34] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father on care for our common home* (Philippines: Paulines, 2015), Chapter IV: Integral Ecology, 92-107.

[35] Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. William Hale White as revised by Amelia Hutchinson Stirling (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1949).

[36] Teilhard de Chardin, *Phenomenon of Man*, specifically Book IV: Survival, 237ff.

[37] The Hindu school of Vedanta, especially that of Shankara's Advaita Vedanta, specializes on this philosophy based on the nondualism of Atman and Brahman.

[38] Bergson unequivocably identifies mysticism as the future of religion in his last work, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956).

[39] This was mentioned by Fr. Albert Alejo, SJ at the retreat he recently gave to the SVDs in October 2015.

therefore not unintelligent because justice, says Joseph Fletcher, is love using its head.[40] The work before us is not going to be easy, but, as Spinoza famously said in his great work, all things noble are as difficult as they are rare.[41] This new consciousness, this consciousness-in-the-making, is also a political consciousness, but now of a sort different from Machiavellianism, which is at best modern, not postmodern. The postmodern political consciousness is probably what Nietzsche prophetically referred to when, in the *Will to Power*, he said, "Enough: the time is coming when politics will have a different meaning."[42]

Theodicy today is, from the standpoint of integral ecology, interconnected with ethics and politics. It is therefore not merely an ivory-tower intellectual exercise apart from the human, all-too-human situation of ordinary men and women. Yet, it also connects with all the disciplines of both the sciences and the humanities. This is exactly a postmodern version of St. Thomas' *Summa Theologica* which, in its time, was a radical monument of holistic thinking which he, however, wisely refused to bring to a closure thus avoiding the dogmatic end of Hegel's phenomenology of Spirit as an encyclopedia of all philosophical sciences. What saved Hegel for postmodernity is actually the refusal of the young philosophers to take the great system at its face value. Husserl's pure phenomenology came to Hegel's rescue on this point and restored to it its freshness as a philosophy of beginnings.[43]

Such a philosophy is perennially inclusive, never exclusive. It welcomes rather than closes doors. This integral philosophy is also a theology, which makes St. Thomas' *Summa* come to life again, whose silence makes for mercy and compassion, whose name is God.

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[40] "Justice is Christian love using its head, calculating its duties, obligations, opportunities, resources." Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), 95.

[41] "But all noble things are as difficult as they are rare." This is the very last statement in Spinoza, *Ethics*, 280.

[42] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 960, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 504.

[43] Speaking of himself, Husserl says that "he has at least in his old age reached for himself the complete certainty that he should thus call himself a beginner." Author's Preface to the English Edition (1931), *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 20-21. His last published work, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* is subtitled "An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy," trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1978).

God, or whatever other name we give to something like it, is thereby justified in our time, which justification in history is what is meant by theodicy.[44]

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[44] "That the History of the World, with all the changing scenes which its annals present, is this process of development and the realization of Spirit – this is the true *Theodicea*, the justification of God in history. Only *this* insight can reconcile Spirit with the History of the World – viz., that what has happened, and is happening every day, is not only not 'without God,' but is essentially His Work." Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 457.

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