THE PERSON: PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY, AND RECEPTIVITY

There is no need for me to repeat the main lines of the argument so ably set forth by Fr. Clarke in his own response to the challenging questions put forward by Professors Long and Blair: regarding receptivity as a perfection, the freedom of God's act of creation, and the relation of philosophy and theology. I may be permitted, however, to take the occasion to add some accents and, in one place at least, to propose what I hope Fr. Clarke himself will regard as a friendly amendment—all of this with the larger intention of bringing into relief some key terms for future discussion between "Thomists" and "Balthasarians."

I. Response to Steven Long

(1) The main question raised by Prof. Long is whether receptivity, in its very *ratio* as receptivity, includes passive potency: that is, such that it entails the notion of dependence on another for actuation. In response, I would, with Fr. Clarke, direct attention to the phenomenon of love as we experience it. As Fr. Clarke points out, love, rightly interpreted, requires mutuality: receiving and letting be are as essential for the concept of love as giving. Consider an authentic love between a husband and wife: each genuinely shares in the joys and sufferings of the other. "Sharing in" entails "affectivity": being affected by the other. Clearly this "sharing in," with its note of affectivity, is in some sense a perfection: we would hardly consider one who remained indifferent to his or her spouse's joys and sufferings a good lover. Nor do we in fact intuitively think of their mutual capacity for being affected as a matter exhaustively of dependence: a kind of emptiness awaiting actualization. Were this the case, it would follow that the more actualized each partner became, the more unaffected by and indifferent to one another each would become; the more perfect the relationship, the less mutual would it become; in a word, the more perfect the person, the more unrelated would he or she become. But we sense instinctively and immediately that this is a perversion of love rather than its perfection.

Of course, this line of argument can be, and on the presuppositions recorded in Long's article must be, set aside as at best a kind of "wishful thinking." However much we might warm to the idea of mutuality as a perfection, this perfection remains "metaphorical" rather than strictly rational in its meaning. The receptivity entailed in mutuality and affectivity remains, for all of its psychological attractiveness, an imperfection when conceived in properly *ontological* terms. The feature of receptivity carried in the notion of mutuality and affectivity of its very *ratio* is expressive of a potency anterior to and distinct from act—from the *acts* of love—proper (154, 157 and passim).

I extend reflection on this issue (already well-developed in the exchange between Long and Clarke) for the purpose of bringing into relief what seems to me one of the most significant elements in Fr. Clarke's proposals with respect to Thomism:

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namely, the centrality he accords the (human) person, and thereby the activities proper to the person—for example, love—in his approach to the study of being (metaphysics).

There is a crucially important question evoked here regarding the very nature of metaphysics and its method: namely, with what do we begin when take up metaphysical reflection (do we begin with what is "lower" or with what is "higher"? Why? In what sense?)? Nonetheless, it seems to me that Long's argument in response to Clarke begs just this question.

Consider the respective methods of Clarke and Long: Clarke's method turns on the supposition that the meaning of being is best gotten at by reflecting on being in its "highest" "instance": namely, on personal being, and hence on the act(ivitie)s that most properly characterize personal being, for example, love. The meaning of act and hence of perfection is gotten at most properly through the acts proper to a person, among which he finds receptivity (the receptivity proper to love). Long's criticism, on the other hand, bypasses what is distinctly personal in being and begins rather by focussing on being precisely in its *limit* (potency): that is, on receptivity precisely as already defined by creaturely essence (154) (by the essence that must yet receive its act of existence: receptivity by its very definition thus entails limitation: "the need to be fecundated and actuated from without" [154]).

Now it may well be that Long can offer arguments for beginning as he does rather than as Clarke does. But the point is that, when and insofar as he would argue in relation to Clarke, he must then *make* this argument. What is it that most properly discloses to us the meaning of being—and thereby of what most primitively is act and thus a perfection? Clarke answers by focussing on being in its distinctly personal act(ivitie)s; Long responds by focussing on being in its distinctly non-personal meaning (i.e., on the essence of the creature generally). But an adequate argument in response to Clarke requires precisely a justification, as distinct from a simple assumption, of such an alternative focus.

In short, Fr. Clarke's procedure, which is to begin with love, forces us *seriously to ask* the very question which much of the philosophical tradition influenced by Aristotle has inclined us in principle to foreclose: namely, whether the *mutuality* entailed in truly being-*with* is most properly accounted for in terms of act(ivity) or of passivity (potency). A proper criticism of Clarke cannot proceed by assuming just the aspects of the method and content of that tradition which Clarke intends to call into question.

Of course, having said this, I do not at all mean to deny the importance of the distinction between *esse* (act) and essence (potency) upon which Prof. Long rightly insists. Even if we are finally to understand receptivity as a distinct mode of what is meant properly by act(ivity), and hence are led finally to inscribe receptivity within the very perfection of act called *esse*, it does not at all follow that receptivity in the case of beings whose *esse* is limited (i.e., beings "composed" of essence and *esse*) will not take on profoundly (i.e., infinitely) different features from receptivity in the case of unlim-

ited *Esse*: that is, will not take on features like emptiness and consequent neediness. My initial concern is simply to insist, with Fr. Clarke, that we must first genuinely ask whether receptivity, even in the case of composite beings, can be most properly accounted for from the side of "essence" (hence potency)—as distinct from act (*esse*).

To summarize this first consideration, then, I would like to point to the more general significance for Thomistic metaphysics of the shift in methodology indicated by Clarke. Rather than understanding being first in terms of what is impersonal or subpersonal, and then being forced to marginalize love as a matter of psychology, of will, or of warm feelings, Clarke on the contrary allows love to tell us what it means to act in the highest and deepest sense—and thereby what it means most fully *to be*. In a word, Clarke directs us toward a metaphysics of love, and thus toward love as the key to metaphysics—to the order of being; he thereby helps liberate us from modernity's characteristic restriction of love to anthropology: from the modern assumption that love assists us, at best, in understanding only *human* being.

(2) But this last suggestion may in fact seem to lead further than Fr. Clarke is willing to go—and thus to the point at which I am led to propose what I hope he will regard as a friendly amendment. Having proposed that love (i.e., person, with its characteristic activities of receiving and giving [self-communication]) represents the highest instance of what it means to be, Clarke nonetheless draws back from affirming love as a feature of being that obtains universally (in some significant sense). Thus, for example, in response to the criticism of Prof. Long, Clarke resists affirming receptivity (the receptivity implied in love) as a transcendental perfection of being, properly speaking: receptivity, on the contrary, is (like intelligence and freedom) an attribute that "belongs to being only from a certain level upward, i.e., from the personal level, an attribute that has a 'floor', so to speak (below which it is not found), but no 'ceiling'" (166).

I confess that I do not see why it is problematic to affirm receptivity (or something truly like receptivity) as a transcendental perfection, *as long as it is rightly qualified in terms of analogy*. Indeed, Clarke's own line of argument seems to me to commit him in this direction (I think Long is correct in his interpretation on this point). Clarke in fact acknowledges activity as a transcendental attribute of being (166). And again, he states that "receiving and especially receptivity can be purified to become analogous concepts transcending all their limited modes of realization" (168). But if receptivity can be said to be capable of transcending *all* of its limited modes of realization, then it must thereby be capable of being inscribed within what we mean by act(ivity)—by act, that is, finally in all of its purity as act: *esse*. But if receptivity is an intrinsic feature of *esse*, then it must be present, in some truly analogous sense, wherever *esse* is "instantiated."

In short, it is not clear to me how Clarke can say that activity is a transcendental attribute of being, and again that receptivity can transcend all of its limited modes of realization—that is, can be purified of the notion of limit and thus potency—,without necessarily implying that receptivity is thereby a mode of activity and hence a transcendental attribute of being. How can something that is truly a transcendental attribute of being not be inscribed in the act which makes being be in all of its "instances": *esse*? How can something whose *ratio* transcends the notion of limit *not* be an intrinsic—proper—feature of *esse*? How can a feature that is intrinsic to *esse* not be present wherever *esse* is "instantiated"—hence in all creatures and not just in human creatures?

Of course, all of this must be placed in the context of analogy: a feature that is intrinsic to *esse*, and thus present wherever *esse* is "instantiated," is present in each instance in a way *proportionate* to the being in question. Thus the receptivity which we encounter most directly in our own experience surely involves the freedom and consciousness which are proper only to spirit: receptivity in this sense does indeed have the "floor" to which Fr. Clarke refers. But it seems to me nonetheless that, by means of a proper notion of analogy, we can (and must) extend receptivity (or something *truly like receptivity*) below this floor—in accord with the principles adduced above. This means, not that sub-human beings are receptive in the sense of possessing intelligence and freedom, but merely that there must be something in sub-human beings which is genuinely analogous to the receptivity, intelligence, and freedom we find in human beings. That "something" I take to consist in some minimum level of immanent activity, order, and transitive activity.[1]

At any rate, that was the burden of what I attempted to argue in my earlier response to Clarke (*Communio*, Fall 1993). That was the import of

[1]Thus for example, Hans Urs von Balthasar, in his philosophy as set forth in the first volume of *Theologik* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1985), says that there is no being without some rudimentary interiority (inwardness, subjectivity: *Innerlichkeit*), and this includes the lowest beings, beings without life (84); and again he says that spontaneity (*Spontaneität*) and receptivity (*Rezeptivität*) are linked, and increase—and decrease—together, in the various stages of being (40). Nonetheless, he says at the same time that receptivity is not found in beings which possess no consciousness—like rocks (37)—that receptivity is properly found rather only in beings which possess consciousness and to the degree they possess consciousness (hence is found most properly in beings who possess self-consciousness) (37). This suffices for the point I want to make. I would only want, further, to make it clear that even rudimentary interiority (rudimentary immanent activity) suffices as truly analogous to what we call receptivity in beings that are conscious (that is, by way of a conception of analogy wherein genuine likeness is consistent with difference, even very great difference: cf. the discussion below on analogy). There seems to me no good reason why Clarke could not accept what I am proposing here: indeed, it seems, again, the very drift of his own argument.

For a properly metaphysical—as distinct from simply anthropological—notion of interiority, cf. Kenneth L. Schmitz, *The Gift: Creation* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1982); and "Immateriality Past and Present" (Presidential Address to the American Catholic Philosophical Association), *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, v. LII (1978), 1-15.

my proposing that *esse*—and not just *esse* in its specifically human "instantiation"—was triadic in structure: being "*from*" (*ab*) is no less an intrinsic feature of *esse* than being "*in*" (*in*) and being "*for*" or "*toward*" (*ad*). *Esse* intrinsically—and thus wherever it is "instantiated"—is characterized by movement *from* and *toward* which comes from "*within*" itself.[2] Such movement indicates the primitive ontological meaning of what we properly call immanent and transitive activity. My proposal thus is that this immanent and transitive activity is present wherever *esse* is "instantiated," and thus in some minimal way even at the level of sub-human beings. In short, this minimal immanence and transitiveness is what corresponds, in a truly *analogous* sense, to receptivity and self-communication as we understand these in their proper meaning at the human-personal level.

It is in this (universal albeit analogical) sense that I take person and love to provide the key to the meaning of being: not just of human being, but of all being, always and everywhere.

(3) But now we encounter the problem of receptivity from the other direction. Having affirmed that there is something truly analogous to receptivity at the lowest stages of being, what then is to be said about receptivity at the highest level of being: God? The heart of Prof. Long's argument on this question consists in the claim that the term "receptivity" becomes equivocal when we attempt to apply it both to God and to finite beings.

Long grants that there is evidence for a kind of "receptivity" in God which we can draw from supernatural revelation (155): thus the Son, in being generated by the Father, is thereby *from* the Father. But, says Long, we must distinguish carefully the sense of receptivity involved here. Following Garrigou-Lagrange, we should recognize that this "receptivity" in God is "terminative" rather than properly receptive: for the Son's "receptivity" in relation to the Father entails no potency and no increase in the Son's perfection. Hence this terminative "receptivity," insofar as it might be seen as a perfection, remains in any case utterly diverse from receptivity in its natural sense (161).

First of all, in response, it seems crucial to note how a certain philosophical assumption is already governing the limits of what Long allows us to find in Scripture. That is, having already assumed that receptivity is essentially tied to potency and thus to what is essentially imperfect, and having done so on the basis of a philosophical analysis of receptivity as found in essence (that is, in the limit that makes finite beings finite), Long can then, *as a matter of principle*, find no genuine receptivity within God: there *cannot* be such, since we know from our philosophical analysis of finite being that receptivity always involves imperfection. What appears to be receptivity *must* be something else.

But a profound irony emerges here. Long in fact accuses Clarke of gnosis (161), because Clarke claims to be able to see a kinship between receptivity as found within the Godhead on the one hand, and the human being on the other: Clarke claims thus to know what is proper to God within the mystery of his own Being. But the irony is that it is Long himself who rather slips into a kind of gnosis: on the basis of his philosophical analysis, which he consciously develops apart from and thus prior (logically, not necessarily temporally) to consideration of revelation, Long *knows in advance* what can and cannot be properly found in God. He *knows in advance* what sort of receptivity God is to be permitted to have within himself.

It is crucial to understand that the criticism introduced here is not in-

[2]This affords me the occasion to clarify somewhat the issue of *esse* and relation, relative to substance. Fr. Clarke, in his reply to me in the Fall 1993 *Communio* (593-98: cf. 593-95), insists (rightly) on the distinction between what Aquinas calls "properties," or "proper accidents," and "contingent accidents"—the difference being that the former, unlike the latter, "flow immediately and necessarily from the substantial essence, so that the being could not actually be what it is and be deprived of them." And he goes on to say that the order of action (*agere*), hence self-communicative relationality, is a proper accident in this sense: the order of action "is a necessary property of an existing substance." Self-communicative relationality thus becomes equally primordial with substance: in the sense that a proper, as distinct from a contingent, accident is necessary for the completion of a substance.

All of this is true, but it does not yet get to the heart of the point I had wanted to make. When I argued that relationality must begin already in *esse*, I meant this in terms of *esse* understood in a significant sense—and however paradoxically—as *both* prior *and* posterior to substance. Indeed, this seems to me the burden of what has been argued so ably by Etienne Gilson and others, as the authentic teaching of Aquinas: namely, that *esse*, as the act of acts (*De Potentia Dei*, VII, 2, ad. 9), is thereby the act which makes substance *be* in the first place (absolutely); and that *esse* at the same time nonetheless does not subsist—which is to say, it in some way itself "depends" for its own existence on the very substance it makes be.

Certainly there is much to sort out here. The point I had wished to make is simply that, if and insofar as we anchor relationality already in *esse*, we are thereby forced beyond the distinction between proper and contingent accident. For "accident," on Clarke's own (correct) reading, remains posterior to substance: always and as a matter of principle it is something that "happens to" or "flows from" substance, even if in some cases it does so necessarily (as in the case of a proper accident). *Esse*, on the other hand, on the above—Gilsonian—reading, must be simultaneously (ontologically) both prior and posterior to substance: it cannot be properly understood in terms simply of a "flowing from" substance, even if this latter is seen as a necessary "flowing from."

To be sure, one might wish to challenge Gilson's notion of *esse*, and an argument in its defense would then have to be developed. For present purposes, my point is simply this: if and insofar as we anchor relationality already in *esse*, we are just so far committed to a notion of relation which (ontologically) "precedes" substance in the way that *esse* "precedes" substance, and which can *just so far* not be "accidental" to substance, either "properly" or "contingently."

Of course, what my proposal here adds to Gilson's *esse* is the triadic dimension of movement from (*ab*), in (*in*), and toward (*ad*). And the proposal leaves us still to consider the distinction between the relationality already begun in *esse* and that actualized in *agere*.

tended to call into question a legitimate distinctness and even a certain priority of philosophy in relation to Christian revelation. The issue raised bears rather on the sense in which a legitimately distinct and prior philosophy must nonetheless and for all that still remain anteriorly open (from its beginning and all along the way) to that revelation.

Three comments thus will help to clarify further what I mean to suggest with respect to Long's procedure here.

(a) First of all, when and insofar as we turn to the revelation of God's Word in Scripture, it seems clear that we should be disposed first to let God be God. That is, we should be prepared *first of all* to listen (*fiat*) to what God has to tell us—about himself and all of creation.[3] Of course, this does not mean that the scriptural text is not in an intrinsic way made up also of human words, and that it does not thereby also require—intrinsically—human reflection (hence philosophy, historical-critical exegesis, and the like). The point is simply that what is revealed in Scripture is first of all *God's Word* (cf. the Second Vatican Council's *Dei Verbum*), normatively interpreted to us in and through the Church's main tradition of worship, creed, and authoritative teaching—more generally, through the *communio sanctorum*. Philosophy thus becomes an authentic interpreter of Scripture only insofar as it has itself been inserted within, and thus purified by, this tradition of worship, creed, and authoritative teaching. In a word, it is not the case that philosophy plays no essential role in the authentic interpretation of Scripture; it is rather that it plays this role only by itself being anteriorly open to Scripture's own "self"-interpretation (i.e., the interpretation guided by the Holy Spirit, in and through the Church).[4]

[3]Indeed, this is the way of love: to be primitively open to the other, allowing the other first to speak and thereby to reveal him or her self on his or her own terms—that is, and not to begin by imposing categories that precede and are (at least possibly) foreign to the other's self-revelation. This does not mean that one will not in significant ways (always-already) bring to the relationship with the other one's own categories; it means simply that those categories, as one enters the relationship and insofar as one enters the relationship, are now opened up from within to be (re-)formed by the surprise of the other. In this way, love seems to me to reveal the right sense of the relation of philosophy to Christian revelation: philosophy for a Christian begins with assumptions and develops notions that nonetheless must remain intrinsically open, in anticipation of God's own self-revelation. On all of this, cf. Balthasar's *Love Alone* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969).

[4]Balthasar's discussion with Karl Barth seems to me indispensable here (*The Theology of Karl Barth* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992]): in terms of showing a means of escaping the dilemma of a "Barthian" sense of a theological *a priori* on the one hand (which finally denies a distinct and integral role for philosophy), and a modern "scholastic" sense of a philosophical *a priori* on the other (which tends to force theology to contour itself—insofar as theology would meet the conditions of intelligibility—to the truths philosophy has already comprehended on its own, logically separate from and prior to theology). (It should be pointed out that Balthasar understands the modern "scholastic" sense of a philosophical *a priori* to be continued, albeit with an importantly different accent, in the "transcendental" turn taken by Rahner.) Balthasar's own way is to affirm a theological *a priori* (in this sense agreeing with Barth), while nonetheless insisting at the same time on a distinct and integral—even "prior"—role for philosophy (in this sense agreeing with "scholasticism"). He does so in accord with a principle of analogy whose meaning I attempt to elaborate further below (that is, an analogy of being interpreted above all in and through an analogy of love).

As this line of argument implies, my presupposition is that an openness to Scripture's own "self"-interpretation as it pertains to the issue at hand will in fact lead us to a conception of divine receptivity that is truly receptive—and not merely "terminative": that is, to a conception of a God who, within his own self, really receives from another. Such a claim seems, for example, to be the burden of the Christology (and implied trinitarian theology) carried in the Gospel of John. What we find throughout this Gospel is the paradox of a God (the Son of God incarnate in Jesus Christ) who, as the *one sent*, receives everything from the Father ("The Son cannot do anything of himself": Jn 5:19), and who nonetheless remains at the same time utterly equal to the Father ("I and the Father are one": Jn 10:30).[5]

Of course, this brief appeal to a certain reading of the Gospel of John does not yet suffice as a refutation of Long's interpretation of divine receptivity as "terminative." My suggestion is simply that another interpretation of divine receptivity is possible, and can be offered precisely on the basis of what is taken to be a faithful openness to Scripture's own "self"-interpretation; and that this other possible interpretation can therefore be truly refuted only on the basis of a careful study of Scripture—that is, and not on the basis of a philosophical *a apriori* derived (logically) apart from Scripture, and thereby always-already *brought to* Scripture.

Thus, in sum, my proposal: the Gospel of John is susceptible of a reading which sees the Son of God as genuinely receptive, in his very being, to God the Father (even as the Son is utterly one with the Father); this genuine receptivity is thereby revealed to be a perfection; and, finally, this genuine receptivity which is a perfection is something that is in some significant sense recognizable also in our own experience (of relation and love).[6]

[5]Clearly, a fuller explanation and argument on behalf of this suggestion (for example, how it avoids the charge of "subordinationism") cannot be mounted in the present forum. For this fuller explanation and argument, I would only refer the reader—*inter alia*—to the brief comments of Joseph Ratzinger in his "Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology," *Communio* 17 (Fall 1990): 439-54, at 445-47; and to Balthasar's development of his mission Christology (which is based most centrally on the Gospel of John) (see, for example, *Theo-Drama* III [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992]).

[6]Indeed, that is just why Ratzinger in-

(b) As already indicated, the disagreement with Long regarding the nature of philosophy which is implied by the above is not over whether philosophy is distinct from theology, whether it has its own distinct methodology relative to theology. That is granted. The question rather is whether "distinct from" is or ever can be synonymous with "neutral toward." It is the latter that I deny. My presupposition rather is that philosophy, in its starting point and all along the way, will always—willy-nilly—bear a *relation* to theology (to what has been revealed) that is intrinsic: that relation can be negative or it can be positive, but in either case it will be a relation. However much we—rightly—grant its methodological distinctness, philosophy will in fact proceed in a way that is from the outset (and indeed as a matter of logical principle: implied or made explicit) either closed or open to the truth that is revealed in Scripture.[7] The main notions with which philosophy must finally occupy itself—notions, for example, of act and potency, of *esse*, of perfection and imperfection, of activity, of

sists in his article that Christ in his radical relativity as affirmed in Johannine Christology ought not to be allowed to remain as "the simply unique ontological exception" ("Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology," 449). Of course, it is crucial to understand that Ratzinger is not speaking univocally here. He is not eliminating the precisely infinite difference of Jesus Christ from the rest of humanity. I will return below to the notion of analogy that seems to me to be operating in Ratzinger's statement.

[7]It is crucial to underscore that the closure (or indeed openness) to revelation referred to here can remain unconscious. Thus the person who, for example, philosophizes prior to Christianity does not for all that remain neutral relative to what is revealed in Christianity. The "pagan" philosopher (e.g., Aristotle) is not an instance of uncontaminated or pure nature (reason). To be sure, "pagan" philosophy can show us how far reason can go without explicit awareness of revelation: but this remains true only as long as we do not take "without explicit awareness" to mean "outside the orders of grace and sin"—and therefore without definite (positive and/or negative) implications, however unwitting, with respect to the God of revelation. Cf. in this connection the statement of Balthasar: "If one goes on to consider also that humanity, although losing the grace of the original state, did not lose its orientation to the goal of grace and thereby a certain inner direction to this in its being, then one will guard against equating the condition that is characterized by this loss with the condition of *natura pura* and against asserting that the "pagans" form the sphere where the 'natural knowledge of God' occurs in a pure form. On the contrary, one must say that three elements alter this 'natural knowledge of God' in the entire historical world (without, of course, dissolving its reality or at least its real possibility): (1) the fact that collective and personal sin distort the clear vision of God as 'the origin and goal of all things' (DS 3004); (2) the movement made by God toward humanity in grace, which is somehow expected (thanks to the original state of being a child of God); finally (3), the gracious salvation that is present for all (thanks to the universal act of redemption by Christ) and is de facto hidden" ("Movement Toward God," in *Explorations in Theology* III [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993], 15-55, at 48).

receptivity and communicativity, of freedom and intelligence, of unity and difference, and so on—cannot avoid definite implications regarding the *ultimate* meaning of these, and thus regarding what is revealed in Scripture about ultimacy: about God and about all of creation in relation to God. Indeed, as I have already indicated, Long's own argument illustrates this for us: the philosophical meaning he accords his central terms hardly leaves him in a neutral position when he turns to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

My problem thus is with a philosophy, not that would insist on a distinctness for its method in relation to theology, but that would interpret this distinctness to imply a (methodological) closure. My problem is with a philosophy that would wish to *separate* itself from theology. The consequences of such a separated philosophy, when its findings are (eventually) compared with revelation, seem to me two. On the one hand, insofar as such a separated philosophy finds that the discoveries it has made on its own terms conflict with revelation, it is forced in the direction of a kind of double truth theory—of a dualism between philosophy and theology: there are strictly natural-rational truths that we know comprehensively, and strictly supernatural-suprarational truths that are simply beyond what we can know. On the other hand, insofar as this philosophy seeks to overcome such a dualism—seeks, that is, to effect a unity between the truths discovered on its own and the truths revealed in Scripture—, it is now inclined toward a unity conceived first in terms of the truth that it has already discovered on its own—toward a reduction of theology to philosophy. A separated philosophy, in short, leads at once in the direction of gnosticism and fideism.

However much one might otherwise want to challenge the truth of this claim, I simply must say that I believe in any event that that truth is testified to by Long's own way of proceeding: this is why he must assert that receptivity as found in God and receptivity as found in man are completely equivocal (161). On the one hand, believers are permitted no conception of receptivity which differs from that which it is possible to derive from a notion of (ontological) perfection as conceived within a philosophy that is logically prior to and separate from theology (and thus receptivity within the Godhead can signify only imperfection) (158, and passim); on the other hand, and at the same time, insofar as believers, notwithstanding, continue to insist that they are indeed able to conceive receptivity within the Godhead as a perfection, that is, on the basis of revelation, they are now told that they are claiming a knowledge of a positive content within the Godhead that is accessible only to God himself: as a supernatural mystery, that content is simply beyond what finite beings can know (161, and passim).

As an alternative to Long, then—as a way of escaping (what I take to be) the dilemma of either gnosticism or fideism, or of both simultaneously—, I propose that what I have called a separated philosophy be replaced by a philosophy which sees its relation to theology as one of distinctness, analogously conceived. What I mean by this is, first, that a

philosopher proceeding on the basis of such an understanding would—from the beginning and all along the way—remain open to and aware of the truth revealed in Scripture. Secondly, I mean that the philosopher who was thus always open to and aware of the truth revealed in Scripture would nonetheless not be empowered thereby to argue *deductively* or *simply inferentially* from that truth. He or she would not be empowered to permit the truth revealed in Scripture—that is, in its formal character as revealed—to function as a premise for argument.

All of this can be put concretely in terms of my response to Long. At no point in my argument have I not been aware of divine receptivity as a perfection: in the way revealed above all by the Christology and trinitarian theology of John's Gospel. At no point have I not been convinced that John's Gospel reveals receptivity to us as a perfection proper to divine love. But this has not at all preempted the possibility of a distinctly philosophical argument on behalf of receptivity as a perfection. To be sure, my faith has led me to *anticipate* that the truth of receptivity as a(n) (ontological) perfection can be argued (also) philosophically.[8] But the neuralgic point is that I recognize that such truth, insofar as it would legitimately be claimed philosophically, needs yet to be *shown*, precisely in terms of the evidences and structures of the world as these *concretely* manifest themselves to us.[9] The contours of such a demonstration (i.e., literally, "showing") I take to be provided in my (and Fr. Clarke's) appeal to the human experience of love.

(c) I have used the term analogy to characterize the relation of the truths proper to philosophy and to theology respectively. In using this term, I intend to characterize the relation between those truths as one simultaneously of unity and difference: as a relation, in other words, whose common sharing of truths nonetheless and for all that does not signify univocity, and whose difference of truths for all that does not signify equivocity. A further comment on the more general meaning of analogy presupposed here is in order.

Above all, what my presupposition regarding analogy is meant to rule out is the widespread notion that real unity or commonness and real difference are, or need be, opposed to each other: that these are best conceived as inversely rather than directly related. Again, I may be permitted to refer to love to clarify my meaning. In a relationship of love, it is not the case that a growing unity—and hence deeper knowledge—between the partners entails a (proportionate) lessening of the difference—hence mystery—between the two. On the contrary: the deeper the love between them, the more respectful each becomes of the otherness of the other; even as the growing otherness makes possible an ever-new and deeper unity between them. Our experience of love thus reveals to us—paradoxically—that unity and distance, and hence knowledge and mystery, are not, or need not be, antithetical; that on the contrary they are simultaneous with each other. In short, the analogy of being, and of knowing, can thus be best understood in terms of the analogy (unity and difference) proper to love.

This highly schematic statement of the meaning of analogy can now be put more directly in terms of what Long discusses as the proper knowledge of God, as distinct from the mystery of God. Simply, on the reading of analogy proposed here, proper knowledge of God does not entail that what is affirmed as "common" to God and man is thereby to be conceived univocally; even as recognition of the mystery of God does not entail that what is affirmed as a difference between God and man is thereby to be conceived equivocally. On the contrary, what is common (*scil.* intelligible) and what is different (*scil.* mysterious) should *both* be conceived analogically: the mutual internality of intelligibility and mystery is what permits each its proper meaning. (Hence genuine analogy does not exclude, but on the contrary precisely allows, even the infinite difference [*maior dissimilitudo*] between God and man of which the Fourth Lateran Council speaks: cf. *Catéchisme de L'Église catholique*, pars. 41-43.) But let us look more closely at what this implies relative to Long's argument.

If what I have argued above is accurate, Long is—ironically, in view of his criticism of Clarke—caught swinging back and forth between univocity and equivocity: on the one hand, he presupposes that receptivity in God could (as a matter of principle) mean only what it means in finite beings (considered first in what makes them finite: in the potency that limits); on the other hand, and at the same time, he presupposes that therefore receptivity in God must be simply different from receptivity as found in finite beings (i.e., divine receptivity is thus "terminative" rather than really receptive, or, better still,

[8]That the anticipation of a particular truth does not undermine the "critical" or "objective" character of knowledge, but on the contrary is a "necessary" concrete condition therefor, I think is conclusively shown (in philosophical-cognitional terms) by Michael Polanyi. See above all his *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962): Polanyi insists, for example, that "we must now go back to St. Augustine to restore the balance of our cognitive powers" ("nisi credideritis, non intelligitis") (266). See also Polanyi's "Faith and Reason," *The Journal of Religion* XLI (October, 1961) which, interestingly, he wrote in enthusiastic response to Joseph Pieper's *Scholastik* (sent to him by Pieper).

[9]The sense of "concrete" intended here is that indicated by the statement of Balthasar, in his own description of how he intends to proceed as a philosopher (in the first volume of *Theologik*): "The description of worldly truth attempted here will therefore endeavor to present what appears to be this kind of truth, without wishing to decide (since such a distinction seems inherently impossible) the question of which—natural or supernatural—light falls on it" ("ohne entscheiden zu wollen [denn eine solche Unterscheidung scheint innerlich unmöglich], von welchem natürlichen oder übernatürlichen sie getroffen wird") ("On the Work as a Whole," [Balthasar's introduction to *Theologik*] translated in *Communio* 20 [Winter 1993]: 623-37, at 629). Thus "concrete" refers simply to the world as it appears to us, without pretending that such a world must—or can—be first drained cleanly of all traces of the supernatural (grace, sin, etc.).

is something that we cannot properly know at all). And thus, consistent with all of this, Long employs a distinction between "quidditative" and "circumscriptive" knowledge: that is, between knowledge which is essentially comprehensive of something and knowledge which consists in knowing only "around" something (our philosophical knowledge of the transcendentals being an example of the former, and our theological knowledge of the Trinity of the latter [160]).

My proposal is that the notion of analogy as I have conceived it enables us to cut through—indeed, demands that we cut through—the alternatives indicated here. This notion of analogy permits us to say—demands that we say—that our theological knowledge of God (as Trinity) is not merely knowledge "around" God in his inner being, even as our philosophical knowledge of creatures is not comprehensive of creatures (either collectively or in any given instance). The essential and indeed precisely infinite mystery characteristic of God's being does not preclude knowledge of God that is intrinsic and thus proper, even as the essential knowability of finite beings does not preclude the fact that these beings are also and intrinsically mysterious, indeed from their very depths.

To be sure, there is a theological *a priori* operating in my argument here: namely, I believe that God has in fact revealed himself in Jesus Christ and that he remains truly present in the Church. I accept what Christ says when he says: "So long a time have I been with you, and you have not known [*égnōkás*] me, Philip? Whoever sees me sees the Father" (Jn 14:9). In a word, I believe in what I take to be the Catholic sense of God's incarnational and sacramental presence in Christ and the Church. I take this sense of God's presence in Christ and the Church to make possible a knowledge of God that is intrinsic—while not attenuating in the slightest degree the infinite mystery proper to God.

Likewise operative in my argument is a philosophical presupposition—about the meaning of *esse* in its relation to what may be called essence or substance: I hold, namely, that *esse* penetrates to the depths of all the beings of which it is the act (act of acts: Aquinas, *De Potentia Dei*, VII, 2, ad. 9), and that *esse* is not exhaustively conceptualizable. I take this sense of *esse* to imply that our knowledge of creatures is never, collectively or in any given instance, comprehensive—while not at all denying thereby that that knowledge remains in some significant sense direct and "quidditative."

Of course, these respective presuppositions need further arguments on their own merits. Indeed, that is in a sense just the point of the considerations I have introduced: namely, to bring into relief how Long's own presuppositions have served, already and as a matter of principle, to exclude a conception of the philosophy-theology relation which is truly analogous in the way indicated. His way of proceeding forces him from the outset to dualize the meaning of knowledge and mystery, while simultaneously reducing the meaning and scope of each. My proposal is simply that there is available to us a different way of conceiving the philosophy-theology relation, and indeed the distinction between knowledge and mystery. This different way does not at all deny the distinction between philosophy and theology, or again between knowledge and mystery. On the contrary it insists that this distinction be conceived genuinely analogously: in a way that can recognize the mutual presence of each in the other without thereby entailing a reduction in either direction.[10] At any rate, my proposal is that such a conception of analogy can be legitimately rejected by Long only by mounting an argument that addresses the distinctly theological and philosophical claims (regarding the nature of revelation and *esse* respectively) noted above—and this he has not yet done.

(4) There remains the question of childlikeness. Although Long makes only passing reference to this issue, its importance is such that it should not go unmentioned. Not surprisingly, his only reference to the child is to its ignorance and neediness and lack of self-possession, and thus again to its ontological imperfection (159). Much that I have said regarding receptivity already responds to aspects of Long's presuppositions here. I would only direct attention further now to how we all, as Christians and as human beings, can see features in the child which, despite their being defects (features which we hope will be overcome as the child becomes an adult), nonetheless and for all that seem also to be perfections (features which we hope will remain as the child becomes an adult). That this is true seems indeed to be implied on theological grounds by the words of Scripture: "Unless you become like this child . . ." (Mt 18:1-5; cf. Mk 10:15)—and by the fact that the Son of God incarnate in Jesus always remains a child, from all eternity. Of course, we need to show that the meaning of Sonship and thus childlikeness in the case of Jesus Christ is not simply equivocal to sonship in our own case; and we need to show that Christ's words here are not merely positivistic or moralistic or rhetorical in meaning. In short, we need both to develop a Christology, and to provide a distinct philosophical argument on behalf of childlikeness as truly (ontologically) a perfection. It will suffice here, once again, to point in the direction of these needed arguments.[11]

For the christological argument I would simply refer again to the Johannine theology noted earlier, especially as that theology is developed in the works of Ratzinger and Balthasar. For the philosophical argument, I would point again to what has already been said above about love: about how this experience, properly understood, reveals receptivity as a perfection. For as Long

[10]Cf. Balthasar's discussion of the relation of *pistis* and *gnosis*, in *The Glory of the Lord I: Seeing the Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 131-41.

[11]Cf. here, *inter alia*: Gustav Siewerth, *Metaphysik der Kindheit* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1957); Ferdinand Ulrich, *Der Mensch als Anfang* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1970); Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991); and Karol Wojtyla, "The Radiation of Fatherhood," in his *Collected Plays and Writings on Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 323-68.

himself indicates in his counter notion of receptivity, the meaning of childlikeness is in any case tied to this notion. Thus, assuming what I have already proposed on behalf of receptivity as a perfection, my argument would take the form now of showing how a proper notion of childlikeness as we experience it includes features like wonder, thanksgiving, a sense of existence as play—in a word, a sense of being as gift—; and then of showing how each of these features presupposes, and is itself already inscribed within, what we mean by receptivity, thereby itself participating in the perfection proper to the latter. This does not mean that the needy and dependent ways in which these features are embodied in the child do not need to be overcome. Certainly, growth into adulthood entails taking deeper possession, consciously and volitionally, of the wonder, thanksgiving, and sense of existence as play we find already (mostly unconsciously) in the child. The point nonetheless is that, insofar as such features can be claimed as already present in the child precisely as a child, and, again, assuming these features to be perfections, it follows that what characterizes the child precisely *in its childlikeness* becomes something to be retained throughout one's life.[12]

Again, this does not imply a denial that maturity requires growth into self-possession. I would only point out in this connection that a self-possession which is not ordered from within by the wonder and thanksgiving and sense of existence as play—the spontaneous sense of being as gift—that is characteristic of childlikeness invariably drifts toward a self-possession synonymous with power, control, and domination, with all the instrumentalism attendant upon these. Anyone who has not been sleep-walking through the twentieth-century knows how widespread this sort of self-possession is in the liberal culture of America.

Again, the distinct-but-related christological and philosophical arguments presupposed here need to be developed more fully. It suffices for the present merely to underscore once again that Long's argument presupposes a Christology and a philosophy that themselves still require their fuller statement vis-á-vis what has been proposed.

II. Response to George Blair

The main principles of my response to Professor Blair have already been indicated, so here I can be brief. First, his questions with respect to Thomism:

[12]Thus Karol Wojtyla says: "Being the father of many, many people, I must be a child: the more I am a father, the more I become a child" ("The Radiation of Fatherhood," 368); "One must choose to give birth even more than to create. In this consists the radiation of fatherhood" (341); "And you too, like me, must be liberated from freedom through love" (355). Of course, one must see the intrinsic link among these statements: the creative act (e.g., the act of self-possession of the adult) must become anteriorly receptive (hence childlike—and indeed feminine), in order to be truly liberated (and liberating: authentically creative).

(1) The issue regarding arguing from the Trinity (thus: from the fact that the Trinity is intellectual, we cannot infer that *esse* as such is intellectual) has been responded to in my remarks regarding analogy and the philosophy-theology relation.

(2) I believe that the highest activity, which is the trinitarian activity of the three persons in the one God, in fact involves both immanent and transitive activity (each person goes out of himself to the other: God is not a "mono-unity" but a "tri-unity"). It is difficult for me to see how Prof. Blair's presupposition, which requires being to become more exclusively immanent in its activity the higher its stage—thus in the highest case excluding "self-communication" altogether—can remain open finally to the reality of God as a Trinity. To be sure, the sense of one divine Person's going out of himself to another divine Person is infinitely different from a human person's going out of himself to another person—because the former "going out" remains within the unity of the one God—, but this does not mean that the notion of "going out of oneself" cannot thereby be truly affirmed of God, that is, as necessary to secure the simultaneous distinctness proper to each person. There is no good reason why this infinite difference of God which is simultaneous with genuine likeness to us cannot be understood in terms of analogy, as we outlined its meaning above.

(3) The shift from "intra-psychic" processes to a community of persons in our efforts to find analogies which assist in understanding the Trinity lies at the very center of the theology and philosophy proposed by Joseph Ratzinger and Hans Urs von Balthasar.[13] Indeed, it is precisely this shift that accounts for Pope John Paul's emphasis on the family as a *communio personarum* that images the divine *communio* (and indeed thereby provides the deepest meaning for Vatican II's sense of the family as the "domestic Church": the domestic *communio*). The point is not to suggest that the two different lines of analogy—"intra-psychic" (cf., e.g., Augustine) and interpersonal (cf., e.g., Richard of St. Victor)—are opposed; on the contrary, they can complement one another. The point rather is that the interpersonal analogy has remained underdeveloped in the tradition.

(4) This is answered in (2) above.

Secondly, then, there are Blair's questions regarding the Christian meaning of creation:

(1) The charge that a notion of *esse* as inherently "self-communicative" and thus relational leads to a view of creation as necessary has been answered by Clarke as well as by my brief comments above on the meaning of transitive activity already within the Trinity.

(2) The charge that a genuine "receptivity" in God entails a passivity and hence change on the part of God as he relates to creatures is of course of crucial significance for a Christian; for, if true, the very transcendence of God (as an infinite being) would seem to be called into question. I have responded to this charge already in my earlier comments, at least in terms of how receptivity *qua*

[13]See, for example, Ratzinger, "Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology," 447 and passim.

receptivity might be seen to be properly a matter of act(ivity) and not simply of passive potency. But this leaves much yet to be argued. Precisely *how* can God be said to be genuinely affected by creatures without positing the kind of dependence in God which would overturn the traditional (and rightful) insistence on God's unchangingness? For the present context, I can, once again, only point in the direction of the argument that needs to be developed.

Briefly, on the view of the Trinity presupposed throughout these remarks, God's trinitarian act(ivity) includes perfect receptivity (in the Son and the Holy Spirit). What this receptivity, as simply perfect or perfectly infinite, implies is thus not that God is *un*affected within his inner being, but on the contrary that he has rather—again, within his inner being—, always-already been affected to infinity. Hence it is not so much the case that God is *un*changing as that he has always-already "changed-all-the-way-through."

Thus any change in God entailed by the utterly free act of creation—that is, by the fact of creation and by all the various activities and events that make up creation—has "already" been "contained" within the infinite change that has always-already occurred within God himself. This argument, which emphasizes an element (the notion of receptivity) that has been left underdeveloped in the tradition, is nonetheless consistent—or so it seems to me—with traditional arguments regarding the relation of time and eternity. God's "time"—that is, eternity—is not so much a time*less*ness as an utter time*ful*ness. Eternity, in other words, always-already "contains" all of time, and thus all of the discrete, successive moments of created history, but this does not mean that eternity undergoes each of these moments in their discrete, successive character. Rather, eternity undergoes them "all at once." Why cannot a notion of God's infinite receptivity be developed in the light of this: that is, such that immutability in God would indicate his absolute containment of all change (and thus God's always-already "complete" receptivity of—and to—all that has happened, is happening, and will happen in the cosmos), as eternity indicates not the absence but his absolute containment of all time; or again, such that immutability in God would signify the perfection of change, as eternity signifies the perfection of time.[14]

III. Conclusion

It is clear from the foregoing exchanges that the issues of person, receptivity and relation, and the philosophy-theology distinction, raise questions of fundamental importance for anyone who takes seriously the main tradition of Christianity. It is clear how important these issues are in a particular way for thinkers

[14]Clarke's efforts above, which show how receptivity can be detached from any connotation of temporal change, are very helpful in this context. Also, Gerard O'Hanlon's *The Immutability of God According to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* provides a careful and nuanced statement of Balthasar's views on this matter (cf. my review in the April, 1994 issue of *The Thomist*).

standing in the traditions associated with either Thomas Aquinas or Hans Urs von Balthasar. One might say that the discussions serve to direct our attention to a kind of "fault line" of fundamental presuppositions which dispose "Thomistic" and "Balthasarian" traditions to move in different directions all along the way in their understandings of God and of the created order. Nonetheless—and this is the point I would like to emphasize in conclusion—, to say only this would be to remain content with what is at best a half-truth: for the exchanges seem to me, notwithstanding the differences they reveal, to serve equally importantly to identify areas where profoundly positive engagement between these two traditions can and should continue. How is this so?

Mainly, my proposal is that the issue of the relation of what may be called "Balthasarian" theology and philosophy to Thomism is badly put—i.e., it instantiates a *petitio principii*—insofar as it is does not make thematic the (prior) issue of who best represents an authentic development of St. Thomas, and thereby the issue of which elements in St. Thomas are to be lifted up as primary—as the chief integrating principles of his theology and metaphysics.[15] These prior issues surely cannot be settled here. Nonetheless, I may be permitted in conclusion to propose at least this much: namely, that, in the light of the foregoing exchanges, and against the background of the two authors whose thought was ultimately most in play throughout the exchanges—Aquinas and Balthasar—, these prior issues might best be framed in terms of the work of Etienne Gilson and Norris Clarke. Central to Gilson's work, that is, relative to our concerns here, are three distinct features: an emphasis on the concrete-historical order in the doing of metaphysics; an emphasis on the primacy of *esse* in relation to essence or substance; and a positive view of the notion of Christian philosophy—of the role of revelation in philosophy. The crucial element now added to Gilson by Fr. Clarke, in my opinion, lies in the

[15]It is instructive, in the light of what I wish to propose here, to reflect on Joseph Ratzinger's procedure in *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989), where he takes up the question of the relation between Bonaventure and Aristotle. What he makes clear in this study is that one must carefully distinguish at least three elements in Bonaventure's "anti-Aristotelianism": although Bonaventure did criticize Aristotle himself (e.g., on the matter of the eternity of the world), and although Bonaventure did in the latter stage of his life strongly affirm the limits of speculative philosophy and theology (e.g., in the *Hexaemeron*), in anticipation of a kind of prophetic-mystical way of life, he nonetheless held Aristotle in high regard as a philosopher; and directed much of his criticism rather to Aristotelianism in the form then current: namely, Aristotelianism as a self-sufficient philosophy (cf. 159-63, and passim). My point in the present context, then, similarly, is that we should (or at least possibly can: cf. the historical arguments of Gilson) distinguish scholasticism in much of its modern history from Aquinas himself: the dialogue with Balthasar then takes on a much different character.

central place Clarke accords person and love in metaphysical reflection. What would result were these four elements now developed together in the construction of a (re-)new(ed) Thomistic synthesis? Could it be seen as an authentic development of St. Thomas—in keeping with his fundamental intentions as a theologian and with his deepest metaphysical principles?

My purpose in raising this question is not to suggest that the respective views of Aquinas (as represented by Gilson and Clarke) and Balthasar might be reduced to identity with respect to any or all of these features: in fact it seems to me that these views cannot be so reduced, at least in terms of the current explicit form and content of their philosophies. I mean to suggest rather that their respective views, that is, at the level of their deepest Christian intentionality and their deepest metaphysical meaning, can be brought into harmony—indeed into genuine complementarity—thereby rendering fruitful any remaining tension and disagreement.

Of course, and once again, whether and to what extent this complementarity, assuming it is there to be developed, could, from the side of Aquinas, still legitimately be called Thomistic is a large question. Clearly the foregoing exchanges, if they have disclosed anything, have disclosed that "Thomism" is hardly of a single mind with respect to the four features noted in the name of Gilson and Clarke. But in a sense, that is just the point I wish to make in conclusion: these features identify crucially important issues that need to be clarified within Thomism itself, as an integral part of the ongoing discussion that now—especially in view of developments in the present pontificate—needs to take place. The discussion needs to take place, of course, not only for the sake of clarifying the relation between the traditions tied to Aquinas and Balthasar, but, much more importantly, for the sake of clarifying the very meaning of our faith and life as Christians.

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