W. Norris Clarke’s Relational Metaphysics: Being and Person

A DISSERTATION
Submitted to the Faculty of the
School of Philosophy
Of The Catholic University of America
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Copyright
All Rights Reserved

John J. Winkowitsch
Washington, D.C.
2016
William Norris Clarke firmly placed “person” at the core of his philosophy. He spent much of his career attempting to develop a Thomistic metaphysics that took into account phenomenological insights into the nature of person as relational. His life-long philosophical project was an attempt to articulate a Thomistically-inspired relational metaphysics that united the scholastic notion of person as substance with the phenomenological notion of person as relation. The final result of Clarke’s creative retrieval of Thomas Aquinas was, in his own words, the personalization of being itself from within Thomistic metaphysics, such that the ultimate meaning of existence is person-to-person gift and the ultimate key to the mystery of existence is interpersonal love.

This dissertation traces the development of Clarke’s system of relational metaphysics and considers the extent to which the works of Thomas played a role in that development. The strictly chronological structure of the dissertation is divided into two parts and loosely organized around the main themes that Clarke himself identified as the primary pillars of his Thomistically-inspired relational metaphysics. The first part answers the question: What does it mean to be real? Clarke’s answer involves four principal themes. The unrestricted dynamism of the human spirit is the underlying presupposition of Clarke’s entire system of relational metaphysics, and upon this foundation are built three basic pillars of reality: the participation structure of the universe, existence as a dynamic act of presence, and action as the self-manifestation of inner being. The
second part answers the question: What does it mean to be a human person? Clarke’s answer involves three principal themes. Beginning with persons as the supreme value in the universe, Clarke develops his own Christian philosophy of the person while incorporating the good as goal that draws all existence into act.

In order to help determine the degree to which these various themes were inspired by Thomas, I cataloged every cited reference to Thomas in the published works of Clarke and organized them into Appendix B. This allowed me to identify to an even greater degree how much each particular theme was inspired by Thomas himself.
This dissertation by John J. Winkowitsch fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in the School of Philosophy approved by Gregory T. Doolan, Ph.D., as Director, and by Michael Gorman, Ph.D., and James D. Brent, Ph.D., as Readers.

__________________________________________
Gregory T. Doolan, Ph.D.

__________________________________________
Michael Gorman, Ph.D.

__________________________________________
James D. Brent, Ph.D.
To my dad, my hero

Requiescat In Pace
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations v.

Acknowledgements vi.

Introduction 1.

**PART ONE** What does it mean to be real?

Chapter 1. The Participation Structure of the Universe 5.


Chapter 3. Unrestricted Dynamism of the Mind and Will 95.

Chapter 4. Action as Self-Manifestation of Inner Being 146.

**PART TWO** What does it mean to be a human person?

Chapter 5. Persons as Supreme Value in the Universe 180.


Chapter 7. The Personalization of Being Itself 288.

Conclusion 338.

Appendix A Chronological List of Publications by W. Norris Clarke, S.J. 344.

Appendix B. References to Thomas Aquinas in W. Norris Clarke, S.J. 357.

Bibliography 368.
# ABBREVIATIONS

Thomas Aquinas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comp. theol.</td>
<td>Compendium theologiae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De ente</td>
<td>De ente et essentia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De malo</td>
<td>Quaestiones disputatae de malo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De mix.</td>
<td>De mixtione elementorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De pot.</td>
<td>Quaestiones disputatae de potentia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De prin. nat.</td>
<td>De principiis naturae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De spir. creat.</td>
<td>Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De sub. sep.</td>
<td>De substantiis separatis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De uni. intel.</td>
<td>De unitate intellectus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De unione Verbi</td>
<td>Quaestio disputata de unione Verbi incarnati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De ver.</td>
<td>Quaestiones disputatae de veritate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De virt. in comm.</td>
<td>De virtutibus in communi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In De an.</td>
<td>Sentencia libri De anima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In De caelo</td>
<td>In libros Aristotelis De caelo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In De div. nom.</td>
<td>In librum bead Dionysii De divinis nominibus expositio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In De gen.</td>
<td>In libros De generatione et corruptione</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In De hebd.</td>
<td>Expositio libri Boetti De ebdomadibus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In De Trin.</td>
<td>Super Boedum De Trinitate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Eth.</td>
<td>Sententia libri Ethicorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Lib. de caus.</td>
<td>Sancti Thomae de Aquino Super librum de causis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Meta.</td>
<td>In Metaphysicam Aristotelis commentaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Phys.</td>
<td>In octo libros Phyiscorum Aristotelis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Per.</td>
<td>Expositio libri Peryremenias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Post. an.</td>
<td>Expositio libri Posteriorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Sent.</td>
<td>Scriptum super libros Sententiarum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Symb.</td>
<td>In Symbolum Apostolorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In I Tim.</td>
<td>Super I Epistolam B. Pauli ad Timotheum lectura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In II Cor.</td>
<td>Super II Epistolam B. Pauli ad Corinthians lectura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lect. super Ioann.</td>
<td>Lectura super evangelium Johannis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quaes. disp. de an.</td>
<td>Quaestiones disputatae de anima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quod.</td>
<td>Quaestiones de quolibet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCG</td>
<td>Summa Contra Gentiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Summa theologiae</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is proof that with God, all things are possible. I would like to offer my thanks not only to Him, but also to His many children who helped me along the way.

First and foremost, I extend profound thanks to my director, Dr. Gregory Doolan, for all the hard work and draft edits over the last few years. I would also like to thank Msgr. Robert Sokolowski for encouraging me to pursue the topic of Fr. Norris Clarke, S.J. Also, thanks to my two readers, Dr. Michael Gorman and Fr. James Brent, O.P., for agreeing to be part of my project. Immense thanks to Tyler Dickinson, studying at Louvain, who made chapter one possible by getting me a copy of Clarke’s dissertation. Thanks also to my friends who took the time to proofread my draft and offer corrections: J. John Baer, Joseph Bissex, Matthew Grinder, Michael Hurwitz, Merrill Roberts, Michael Rubin, and Tristan Vick.

Secondly, I would like to thank the religious who have kept me consistently on task throughout the ups and downs of this process. I am eternally grateful to Fr. Hugh Barbour, O.Praem., for all the prayers, Masses, advice, and for never giving up on me. Thanks to Fr. Giles Dimock, O.P., and Fr. Michael McCormack, O.P., for always finding time to call or meet with me to pray and keep me moving forward. I’d like to thank Fr. Christopher Cullen, S.J., and Fr. Joseph Lienhard, S.J., for their cordial hospitality during my stay at Fordham to go through Fr. Clarke’s archives. Thanks to Br. Joseph Britt, C.F.X., for giving me a room to stay during my several trips to Washington, DC. Finally, Fr. John M. McDermott, S.J., deserves the credit for originally suggesting the topic of Fr. Clarke and pointing me towards Person and Being. Thank you.

Third, I would like to thank the friends and communities who supported me during this three year process. The first year, during which most of the research was done, I was part of Sacred
Heart Seminary in Detroit, MI. Particular thanks are due to Archbishop Allen Vigneron for his
excouraging advice, to Msgr. Todd Lajiness, the rector, to my two formators, Fr. Gerard Battersby
and Fr. Stephen Burr, and to Msgr. Robert Sable, who consistently encouraged me in my vocation.
I grew more in virtue that year than perhaps any other year of my life. The second year, during
which the first draft was completed, I was part of the Cathedral Parish in Madison, WI. Particular
thanks are due to Msgr. Kevin Holmes, my pastor, to St. Ambrose Academy, who gave me the joy
of teaching Euclid during the day to clear my mind, and to the entire Diocese of Madison for their
heroically generous prayers and support. The third year, during which the edits and revisions were
completed, I was part of Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD. Particular thanks are
due to Msgr. Andrew Baker, the rector, to Fr. Michael Roach, my spiritual director, and to Fr.
Pietro Rossotti, my formator.

Finally, and most importantly, I must express my heartfelt thanks to Bishop Robert C.
Morlino. After my freshman year of college you gave me an excerpt from your dissertation and
inspired me to pursue philosophy. Your bishop taught you how to support someone writing a
dissertation, and your grandmother taught you how to be there for someone who had lost both
parents. Thank you, your Excellency, for not only inspiring me to pursue philosophy and giving
me the opportunity, but also for always being there to support me.
INTRODUCTION

William Norris Clarke’s transparency is to be commended. He admits forthrightly, “I have been engaged for some time in the experiment of grafting new shoots on my basic Thomistic stock, the question of how much my own resulting synthesis can be called ‘Thomistic’ must remain enveloped to some degree in a question mark.”¹ One of the goals of this dissertation to clarify that question.

According to my research, Clarke published 180 different works over the course of his career, ranging from the simplicity of a poem² to a book summarizing the fruit of his 45 years of experience teaching metaphysics.³ Across all these publications, Clarke explicitly cited at least 578 different passages of Thomas Aquinas.⁴ Most of these passages were cited only once, but many were cited multiple times. A few dozen in particular were cited several times across multiple decades. These were the texts that Clarke relied upon throughout his career. Particular attention will be drawn to them in this dissertation.

One fact that became clear, however, is that Clarke remained a student of Thomas for his entire career. Interspersed throughout his 180 publications are particular publications that are the clear result of a student returning to study at the feet of his master. These publications are filled with dozens of references to Thomas that had never appeared in any of Clarke’s previous work. These are also the writings upon which the pillars of Clarke’s relational metaphysics are built.

⁴ See Appendix B.
The structure of this dissertation is primarily built around a strictly chronological examination of Clarke’s publications that were the most important and influential for the development of his relational metaphysics. Secondarily, this strictly chronological structure is divided into chapters that are loosely bound together by a common theme that served as one of the pillars of Clarke’s relational metaphysics. Throughout this dissertation I will call attention to the articles where Clarke relied the most heavily upon Thomas, as well as all the places where Clarke clearly states that he is going beyond Thomas. The goal is to distill Clarke’s entire body of work down to the most essential primary texts, trace the development of his relational metaphysics through those texts, and consistently call attention to both the influence, and the limits of the influence, of Thomistic metaphysics in Clarke’s relational metaphysics.

The results of my research led to a two-part division of Clarke’s relational metaphysics, and thus a two-part division to this dissertation: being and person. The first part answers the question: What does it mean to be *real*? The answer to this question forms the foundation of Clarke’s relational metaphysics and was his primary focus from his own dissertation in 1949 until his retirement from Fordham in 1985. There are four main themes to Clarke’s answer to this question and they are traced out in the first four chapters of this dissertation. The unrestricted dynamism of the human spirit is the underlying presupposition of Clarke’s entire system of relational metaphysics, and upon this foundation are built three basic pillars of reality: the participation structure of the universe, existence as a dynamic act of presence, and action as the self-manifestation of inner being.

After Clarke retired from Fordham he began to focus his attention on the person. This second part of his relational metaphysics answers the question: What does it mean to be a *human*
person? The answer to this question was the creative and original part Clarke’s relational metaphysics and was his primary focus from his retirement from Fordham in 1985 until he passed away on June 10, 2008. There are three main themes to Clarke’s answer to this question and they are traced out in the last three chapters of this dissertation. Persons as the supreme value in the universe is one of the basic pillars of reality in Clarke’s system of relational metaphysics, but he developed this pillar to include the rather controversial claim that receptivity is a positive perfection of personal being. This claim and Clarke’s resulting Christian philosophy of the human person were clarified through dialogue with other philosophers. One final basic pillar of reality runs as a theme throughout his entire career: the good as goal that draws all existence into act. After a lifetime of contemplating this final basic pillar, Clarke developed his relational metaphysics to provide a beautiful, synoptic vision of reality: the personalization of being itself, such that the ultimate meaning of existence is Person-to-Person Gift and the ultimate key to the mystery of existence is interpersonal love.\(^5\)

\(^5\) “In a word, the ultimate meaning of being is: Person-to-Person Gift!” Clarke, One and the Many, 309. “Thus the ultimate answer, the ultimate key to the mystery of being—why is there a universe of real beings at all?—turns out to be nothing less than interpersonal love!” Ibid., 310.
PART ONE

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE REAL?
CHAPTER 1
THE PARTICIPATION STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSE

Introduction

William Norris Clarke thought that “the whole universe appears as a vast participation system, a *One in many* which is also a *many from One*.”\(^6\) This perspective arose after “about 10 years of steady living with the system of St. Thomas to be able to dominate it enough to see it as a whole and move freely within it.”\(^7\) In pursuit of mastering Thomas as a doctoral student, Clarke decided to write his dissertation on the participation structure of the universe, focusing on one particular principle: *Actus non limitatur nisi per potentiam*. The result of this scholastic endeavor was the first pillar of Clarke’s system of relational metaphysics: participation. Looking back on his career, Clarke later summarized the fruit of his early research with the following definition. “By participation,” Clarke said, “I mean the basic ontological structure of sharing in the universe, by which many beings [\(\textit{ens}\)]\(^8\) share diversely in some one common positive property or ‘perfection’ (as the medievals called it), thus making a unified group or community of some kind. Such a participation structure is a One in many.”\(^9\)

---


\(^8\) Confusion can arise on account of the fact that both *ens* and *esse* are typically translated into English as “being.” *Ens* is *that which is*, or an actually existing thing. *Esse* is *existence*. Clarke is not very careful with the word “being.” In the same sentence he will use “being” simply as a verb and then in a technical sense. I will insert either *ens* or *esse* in brackets in order to help clarify instances where Clarke is particularly confusing.

\(^9\) Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 64.
However, his educational preparation for this undertaking was immensely influential on the rest of his career. Primarily, Clarke’s master’s thesis on “The Nature of Human Liberty According to Suarez” planted two important seeds. First, it opened Clarke’s eyes to how a major philosophical system could be an attempt at a historical synthesis of major philosophical traditions. Second, the focus on liberty resurfaced towards the end of his career when “person” became his major philosophical concern.

This first chapter is divided into three main parts. First, I examine Clarke’s master’s thesis in order to see how the seeds were planted for his understanding of freedom and the good. This theme continued to mature throughout his career into a pillar of his relational metaphysics: the good as goal that draws all being into act. Although references are made to this pillar throughout Clarke’s career, I will return to focus on this pillar in particular during chapter seven of this dissertation. Second, I examine Clarke’s doctoral dissertation, which resulted in an understanding of the participation structure of the universe that became a pillar of his relational metaphysics. Third, I examine the major philosophical articles that Clarke produced in the wake of his educational efforts, which summarize and clarify his early work.

Clarke’s Education

Clarke graduated from Loyola High School in New York City in 1931 before matriculating at Georgetown University. After two years at Georgetown, and inspired by the “brilliant but highly controversial young Jesuit priest-theologian, Father Francis Burke,” Clarke decided to join the

---

Jesuits. His formation began at the Jesuit Seminary of St. Andrew-on-Hudson in Poughkeepsie, NY, and after three years he continued his philosophical studies at College St. Louis in Jersey, England. Returning home to New York City in 1939 to attend Fordham University, Clarke finished his M.A. in philosophy the following year, writing on *The Nature of Human Liberty According to Suarez* under the direction of Anton C. Pegis. He then began his Jesuit theological studies at Woodstock College in Maryland. After four years at Woodstock College, he began doctoral studies in philosophy at the University of Louvain in 1947. Three years later, in 1950, Clarke earned his Ph.D. in philosophy with a dissertation on *The Principle: “Actus non limitatur nisi per potentiam” Its sources and meaning in St. Thomas*, written under the direction of Fernand Van Steenberghen.

**MASTER’S THESIS**

Clarke’s master’s thesis, “The Nature of Human Liberty According to Suarez,” begins with the historical background to the problem of liberty that Suarez inherited when he began thinking about the topic. Clarke analyzes the approach that Suarez took to the problem of liberty before examining how Suarez determines the existence of liberty. Afterward, the nature of liberty is developed according to Suarez’s method and three main works, *The 19th Metaphysical Disputation, The Prolegomenon to De Gratia*, and *The Treatise De Voluntario*. Clarke concludes by identifying the historical sources that Suarez drew upon for his doctrine of liberty.

---

dissertation, page number references will default to the most recently published version of the cited text. Occasionally, however, references to previously published versions will be made explicit in order to point out a change between the various versions.


In the introduction, Clarke emphasizes the importance of historical circumstances in the development of a particular philosophical viewpoint. Just as Parmenides, Heraclitus and Plato were a necessary prerequisite for Aristotle to develop his doctrine of act and potency, and Averroes and Avicenna were necessary for Thomas to develop a precise doctrine on the soul, so also were the historical circumstances of the sixteenth century required for Suarez develop his doctrine of liberty. These sixteenth century circumstances and their contribution to the doctrine of liberty in Suarez are the focus of Clarke’s first chapter.

Born in the wake of Luther and Calvin, and beginning his religious studies soon after the Council of Trent, it is clear that Suarez lived out his theological career during an extremely eventful century in the history of Western Europe. However, Clarke identifies three primary intellectual factors “that combine to leave an unmistakable impress”\(^{13}\) on Suarez’s doctrine of liberty: the Reformation, the Spanish Revival of Scholasticism, and Suarez’s desire to be a faithful disciple of Thomas. The Reformation was promulgating a doctrine of predestination that excluded all real freedom and self-determination. This falsehood was the impetus for Suarez to explain the truth of human liberty with precision and clarity. Also, the Spanish Revival of Scholasticism brought about a return to Thomas after there had been a rather broad, liberal spirit prevailing in the university. This Spanish Revival, on account of the conservative spirit of the Dominican Francisco de Vitoria, elevated the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas alongside the *Liber Sententiarum* of Peter Lombard as the fundamental texts to be commented upon. It is this elevation of the *Summa theologiae* that led to the third primary intellectual factor that left an unmistakable impression on Suarez’s doctrine of

\(^{13}\) Clarke, “Liberty According to Suarez,” 5.
liberty: Suarez took Thomas “as his principal though not exclusive master.”\textsuperscript{14} Thus, the concept of freedom in Suarez is “powerfully influenced by the fact that he is going to seek the inspiration of his solution in St. Thomas’ own teaching.”\textsuperscript{15}

However, there was a three century gulf between Thomas and Suarez, filled with Scotism, nominalism, and skepticism. Thus, while Suarez sought the inspiration for his concept of liberty in Thomas, he also was aware that he had to answer the faulty traditions that lay between him and his master. Clarke’s familiarity with Suarez in his master’s thesis may have been part of the inspiration behind Clarke’s own “creative retrieval” of Thomas. Just as Suarez was trying to “creatively retrieve” Thomas’s doctrine of liberty in response to the previous three centuries of thinkers, so also does Clarke try to “creatively retrieve” Thomas in response to the previous five centuries of modernist philosophy.

With the historical scene set, Clarke lays out Suarez’s doctrine of liberty in the second chapter. Clarke recognizes that after Suarez establishes the fact of liberty, he first safeguards “its exercise in conjunction with the divine concursus”\textsuperscript{16} before going on to analyze the nature of liberty. Clarke notices this order because “Suarez approaches the subject of free will not as an isolated question to be studied merely in itself, but as inseparably bound up with another problem, that of the divine cooperation with each free act.”\textsuperscript{17} Thus, there are two things that must be shown. First, that there is a free power in man. Second, that he is capable of actually exercising that free power without hindrance from any other source, which “is the very ‘hinge’ (cardo) of the whole

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 12.  
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 13.  
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 48.  
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 50.
problem of the concord of grace with free will.”¹⁸ The second originates from Suarez, the “zealous theologian and apostle,”¹⁹ making sure that his theory of free will excluded all the determinism that surrounded him in the historical atmosphere of the Protestant reformation.

The third chapter focuses on how Suarez shows the existence of liberty. The simple fact that free will is a dogma of the faith and must be admitted as an absolute certainty by all Catholics frees Suarez from giving an involved argument from reason that proves the existence of liberty. Thus, the only arguments that Suarez advances are from scripture and tradition, with a brief nod to three rational proofs in the 19th Metaphysical Disputation: from the common consent of mankind, from the testimony of consciousness, and a metaphysical argument.²⁰ Only the last of these three carries real philosophical weight and “links Suarez decisively with the Thomistic as opposed to both the Scotistic and nominalistic traditions.”²¹ This is because he deduces and explains liberty “by the very fact of man’s being a rational being [ens] endowed with a universal mode of cognition.”²² Nevertheless, it is clear that Suarez does not place much importance on the philosophical justification of the existence of liberty, given how little space he dedicates to the topic in the form of a simple summary statement of Thomas’s own proof. Yet it is important that Suarez does explicitly reaffirm the Thomistic principle that liberty is rooted in reason.

In the fourth chapter, which is divided into four parts, Clarke focuses on how Suarez explains the nature of liberty. After introducing the method of treatment that Suarez employs,

---
¹⁸ Ibid., 52.
¹⁹ Ibid.
²⁰ Clarke notes that the first two arguments (from the common consent of mankind and from the testimony of consciousness) are found in Disp. Met. XIX, sect. 2, no. 12; XXV, 696. The third, metaphysical argument is found a little later in Disp. Met. XIX, sect. 2, no. 17, p. 698.
²¹ Ibid., 59-60.
²² Ibid., 60.
Clarke examines the nature of liberty in three primary texts that contain the fullest philosophical development: the *Prolegomenon Primum* of the *De Gratia*, the 19th *Metaphysical Disputation*, and the treatise *De Voluntario*. Regarding the method of treatment, Clarke points out that in each text Suarez argues “from the fact of free will and its exercise to certain necessary *conditions of possibility* for its existence in man.”

A second important point that Clarke draws attention to is that Suarez always “insists that what should be kept in the reference is not merely the existence of a *faculty* of free will, but the actual *use* and free exercise of this faculty.” Both the existence and the exercise of liberty must be shown in its definition.

In the fifth chapter Clarke investigates the historical sources of Suarez’s doctrine of liberty in an attempt “to bring to light and make explicit those fundamental postulates and presuppositions often left unformulated or perhaps only imperfectly realized by the author himself.” Clarke asserts that “there is a certain fundamental, though unexpressed, presupposition running through his whole explanation of the nature of liberty,” namely, that there is “a certain opposition or disjunction (separation would perhaps be too strong) between intellect and will that makes it impossible to unite them in the production of one undivided, though composed, human act.” Suarez simply “seems to take it for granted that the way he is considering the relations between intellect and will is the *only* way in which they can be considered.” This assumption is why Suarez never comes into open opposition with Thomas. Clarke does admit that “given such a basic

---

23 Ibid., 67. Italicized words were underlined in the original.
24 Ibid., 68. Italicized words were underlined in the original.
25 Ibid., 116.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 117.
28 Ibid., 120-121.
premise, it is evident that Suarez’s working out of its consequences is impeccable in its logic.”

The premise, however, originated “in the doctrines of Duns Scotus and the nominalists, with their respective traditions. Thus, it is no surprise that the arguments used by Suarez “are, to a surprising extent, almost exactly paralleled by those that Scotus employs” and that it is “incontestable, therefore, that Suarez’s conception of the relations between intellect and will, and his resulting explanation of the nature of liberty, has been taken over from the Scotistic and nominalistic traditions.” There are other, less prominent historical influences as well, such as the thesis of the metaphysical foundation of liberty as rooted in the intellect and flowing into the will. Suarez takes this thesis over from Thomas and uses it in his proofs for the existence of liberty and the necessity of the will’s act in the presence of beatitude. Thus, Suarez attempts to use Thomas to provide a metaphysical foundation to the Scotistic conception of liberty, incorporating the strong points of each and eliminating the respective weaknesses.

Clarke concludes his master’s thesis by summarizing the attempt of Suarez “to combine into one coherent doctrine what seemed to him the strong points of three major philosophical traditions”: Thomas, Scotus, and Ockham. From Thomas, Suarez uses his metaphysical foundation for the origin and existence of liberty. From the Scotistic tradition, Suarez builds his analysis of the nature and operation of liberty. From Ockham and the nominalists, Suarez builds his definition of liberty. These three philosophical traditions are not equally relied upon, but they are nevertheless essential components of Suarez’s complete concept of liberty. Thomas is merely

---

29 Ibid., 121.
30 Ibid., 122.
31 Ibid., 123.
32 Ibid., 125.
33 Ibid., 126.
34 Ibid., 129.
taken as a foundation, with little influence on the rest of the examination. The central inspiration is clearly taken from the traditions of Scotus and Ockham. Since these traditions are not entirely compatible, Clarke ultimately concludes that these differing traditions “do indeed coexist in one theory, but strictly speaking do not interpenetrate or fuse with one another to form a perfectly homogeneous result.” Yet given the historical circumstances, the solution of Suarez was an “immediately effective and vigorously formulated answer for the men of his time to the doctrine of the ‘enslaved will’ taught by the heretics.”

POST MASTER’S THESIS ARTICLES

In the nine years between the completion of his master’s thesis in 1940 and his dissertation in 1949, Clarke published two articles and a book review. The first article, “The Role of Unity in the Philosophy of St. Augustine,” examines Augustine’s understanding of the transcendental of unity. The second article, “The Notion of Human Liberty in Suarez,” flows directly from his master’s thesis and provides a condensed summary of Suarez’s notion of human liberty and particular aspects of his metaphysical system. Clarke begins this article by summarizing the third and fourth chapters of his thesis, and then concludes the article with a streamlined analysis of the seat of liberty and the relation between intellect and will.

Clarke begins the article by summarizing the three proofs for the existence of liberty presented by Suarez, only the third of which is a properly philosophical, metaphysical argument.

35 Ibid., 131. Italicized words were underlined in the original.
36 Ibid., 132.
“derived from the mode and perfection of cognition in an intellectual being [ens].” In short, “a good which has been judged not necessary but indifferent will be loved not necessarily but freely.” This argument links Suarez decisively with Thomas and his metaphysical grounding for liberty, whose characteristic note “is the intimate relation established between intellect and will, so that liberty can be deduced from and explained by the very fact of man’s being a rational creature endowed with a universal mode of cognition.”

Clarke then turns his attention to the nature of liberty as understood by Suarez. Clarke begins with a definition handed down from Peter Lombard, “facultas voluntatis et rationis,” before presenting four progressive steps for deducing the conditions of possibility for liberty in man. First, the power must be active. Second, the indifference required must be an indifferentia dominativa. Third, complete active dominion over its acts is required. Fourth, this active indifference must be both remote and proximate. After these four steps, Suarez concludes to his well-known definition of liberty: “Potestas libera est quae, positis omnibus praerequisitis ad agendum, potest agere et non agere.”

The next part of the article investigates the seat of liberty, i.e. whether liberty resides in the intellect, will, or intellect and will together. Suarez simply reasons that liberty can in no way be attributed to intellect, thus eliminating two of the options and leaving the will alone as the seat of liberty. However, Clarke points out that Suarez’s error is that he is working within only one order

---

39 Ibid., 33.
40 Ibid.
41 Clarke references Peter Lombard, De Gratia, Prolegomenon I, cap. 1, no. 8.
42 Clarke, “Liberty in Suarez,” 34.
of causality. “Suarez does not actually refute the essential point of the Thomistic theory, namely, the mutual influence of intellect and will in different orders of causality.”^{43}

The final part of the article examines the relationship between intellect and will in the work of Suarez. In short, “intellect and will both have a part to play in the production of the free act, but successively, not simultaneously. . . . Thus the intellect prepares and makes possible the election, the will alone elects.”^{44} Suarez made the traditional Thomistic conception his own in his proof for the existence of liberty, but his explanation of the nature and operation of liberty has been taken from the Scotistic and nominalistic conception.

Clarke’s research into Suarez, Thomas, Scotus, and the nominalism of Ockham in his master’s thesis trained him to see how a metaphysical system can be a synthesis of the ideas of previous philosophers. As we shall see in the examination of Clarke’s dissertation to follow, his familiarity with the complex metaphysical system of Suarez, borne of a synthesis of Scotus and Thomas, trained him to see the unique synthesis between Neoplatonic participation and Aristotle’s principle of limitation of act by potency in Thomas’s system of metaphysics.

CLARKE’S DISSERTATION

The goal of Clarke’s dissertation is to provide a detailed reconstruction of “the act-potency doctrine according to the perspective of St. Thomas himself”^{45} by attempting to discover the sources, meaning, and applications of the principle actus non limitatur nisi per potentiam. This endeavor is relevant because there was a major division amongst Scholastics regarding this

^{43} Ibid. Italic in the original.
^{44} Ibid., 35.
principle. At that time, the Thomistic school accepted the principle as its hallmark and foundation stone, as it had been enshrined in the “24 Thomistic Theses approved by the Sacred Congregation of Studies in Rome” in 1914.\textsuperscript{46} Scotus, however, stated that the argument for the infinity of God based on this principle is invalid and Suarez “simply denies the necessity that an act cannot be limited by itself.”\textsuperscript{47} Although many Thomists claim “the doctrine of the limitation of act by a really distinct potency to be a principium per se notum,”\textsuperscript{48} Clarke does not agree.

Clarke attempts his own investigation into a solution of the problem in a much more thorough way. Beginning with a historical survey of the principle from the pre-Socratics to Thomas’s teacher, Albert, Clarke then examines the use of the principle in the works of Thomas.

\textit{Historical Survey}

Clarke begins his dissertation by attempting to trace a history of ideas in order “to bring to light the origins and principal stages in the evolution of the metaphysical notions and principles that have influenced the development of St. Thomas’s doctrine of the limitation of act by potency.”\textsuperscript{49} He identifies the origins in the pre-Socratics and then identifies the principal stages of evolution that follow. The three primary metaphysical notions to be traced are finite-infinite, participation, and act-potency. The dyadic pairs of finite-infinite and act-potency developed in almost complete independence until Thomas brilliantly fused them, as Clarke shows later when he examines Thomas’s works.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 2.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 3.
\item \textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 4. Clarke mentions Gredt and Garrigou-Lagrange as holding that the principle is per se notum.
\item \textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 42.
\end{itemize}
The historical analysis begins with an attempt to isolate the seeds of the three metaphysical notions, i.e. finite-infinite, participation, and act-potency, in the writings of pre-Socratic philosophers. Anaximander introduces the “infinite” into philosophical thought as an indeterminate “divine” ground of all things. The Pythagoreans introduced opposites, and not only did they oppose “infinite” to “limit,” but they also categorize all the opposites into opposing sides, with “good” on the side of “limit” and “evil” on the side of “infinite.” Parmenides introduced “being” and “non-being” into the philosophical discussion. Xenophanes reacted against the quantitative and argued that God is neither limited nor unlimited. Anaxagoras taught a more subtle kind of matter which he called “mind.” In summary, the limited, which is comprehensible and thus rational, becomes associated with the perfect, while the infinite, which is incomprehensible and thus irrational, becomes associated with the imperfect.

The next major evolution in the historical analysis was with the introduction of Plato’s notion of pure form. Two distinctive characteristics of pure form are of vital importance: unicity and plenitude. Both of these play an integral part in “the later Thomistic theory of the illimitation of act, namely, that every pure act is unique of its kind and exhausts the plenitude of perfection of its own order.” Another important contribution of Plato is that the “Platonic forms or ideas are not abstract concepts constructed by the intellect, whose modus in re is different from their modus in se.”

---

52 Ibid., 47.
53 Ibid., 48.
54 Ibid., 51.
55 Ibid., 52.
56 For Plato, Clarke references the English translations of Benjamin Jowett, The Dialogues of Plato, 2nd ed. (London, 1892).
*in intellectu.* They are the real itself, discovered, seen by the mind, not elaborated by it.”⁵⁸

Although the problem of early twentieth century Thomists that Clarke is trying to solve in his dissertation does not exist for Plato, Plato nevertheless made an important step towards a theory of act and potency with the notion of participation. Unfortunately, however, Plato followed in the mold of the pre-Socratics by identifying limit with perfection since the limited is comprehensible and thus rational, while also identifying the infinite with imperfection since the infinite is incomprehensible and thus irrational.

Aristotle provided a highly developed theory of act and potency, which allowed him to work out a coherent metaphysical explanation of becoming for the first time in the ancient world.⁵⁹ Prior to Aristotle, movement and change were basically seen as unintelligible successions of unconnected realities. In order to see becoming as intelligible, Aristotle proposed a distinction between opposing forms that succeed one another and a common substratum during the succession, called matter. The opposing forms are distinguished as “potency, or, more exactly, the state of being ‘in potency’ (best translated in English by potentiality),”⁶⁰ which is the first capable of becoming the second, and as act, which is the second form that remains after the change. Thus, “the notion of potency is inseparable from the possibility of future change within the order of existence,” while the “notion of act can be generalized to signify anything perfect even outside the order of becoming.”⁶¹

---

⁵⁸ Ibid., 67. Italics in the original.
⁶¹ Ibid., 93.
Following in the wake of oriental mystery religions and Judaeo-Christian revelation, Philo presented a revolutionary idea by turning the dyadic correlation between act-potency and finite-infinite upside down. According to Clarke, prior to Philo the limitation of perfect act was correlated with the finite and the indeterminacy of imperfect potency was correlated with the infinite. After exposure to religious insights, Philo courageously flipped the correlation in order to synthesize Greek philosophy with the “revealed message of a transcendent, active Supreme Being” found in the Bible. Thus, Philo proposed the revolutionary idea that perfect act was infinite and imperfect potency was finite.

After Philo, Plotinus came along and presented as a cohesive system the ingenious revolution initiated by his predecessor. In Clarke’s interpretation, the “key to the religio-metaphysical synthesis of Plotinus is the dynamizing of the Idea of Plato,” and the “result is the great double movement which is the law of the universe: emanation from the One and reconversion toward it.”

Plotinus’s metaphysical system depended upon an understanding of infinity as a property of ultimate perfection. When perfection is infinite, then everything particular is a limited essence of that ultimate perfection. Thus, all secondary beings [ens] are participations in this infinite perfection insofar as their perfection is limited by union with matter.

According to Clarke, Proclus’s *Elements of Theology* systematized the participation theory of Plotinus into a rigid dialectical system. Every participation consists of three distinct terms: the original source, the participated term, and participating subjects, e.g. Goodness, goodness in

---

62 For Philo, Clarke references *Opera*, ed. Cohn and Wendland, (Berlin, 1896).
64 Clarke, “The Principle,” 103.
communi, and good things. Like Plotinus, Proclus clearly laid out a separation between the order of being and the order of becoming in his system. Proclus emphasized how an infinity of power must be directly proportional to the degree of unity: “what renders it indivisible makes it also infinite.”

There was an enormous influence on Scholasticism from the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius, which, along with the Liber de Causis, were the primary means by which Neoplatonic themes were transmitted to Thomas. In Clarke’s interpretation, Pseudo-Dionysius took the metaphysical framework of Proclus and adapted it for the creationism of Christianity. The hierarchy of subsistent Being, Life, and Intelligence, which are found in Proclus outside and below God, are placed by Pseudo-Dionysius within God as archetypal principles. Clarke even attributes to Pseudo-Dionysius “one of the most powerful inspirations for his [Thomas’s] doctrine on esse and essence.” The primacy of esse in the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius are clear, and the emphasis on participation is also evident. Other themes that were developed by Pseudo-Dionysius were “participation by limitation, the infinity of the divine perfection, and God as absolutely incomprehensible.”

Bonaventure developed further the analysis of infinity and composition, but his evolutionary originality consisted in his more thorough elaboration of the principle of limitation.

---

66 Proclus, The Elements of Theology, translated by E. Dodds, Prop. 86.
67 For Pseudo-Dionysius, Clarke references the Latin translation of the text commented on by Thomas in Expositio in Dionysium De divinis nominibus (ed. Mandonnet).
69 Clarke quotes the following passage from Expositio in Dionysium De divinis nominibus, c. 5, lect. 1 (ed. Mandonnet, Opusoula Omnia, II, 476-478): “. . . Etenim Deus non quodammodo est existens, sed simpliciter et incircumscripte, totum in seipso esse qui accept et praeaccept . . . et omnia ipso participant . . . et ante alias ipsius participationes, esse propositum est, et est ipsum secundum se esse, senius eo quod est per se vitam esse, et eo quod est per se sapientiam esse . . . Principium enim est existentium, a quo et ipsum esse, et omnia quocumque modo existentia . . . omnis vita . . . omnis sapientia . . . omnis virtus . . . omnis definitio, et alia quaecumque per esse existentia.”
of act by a distinct potency. In particular, he stressed the realism of the principle of limitation of act by a distinct potency and then applied it to a new conception of the relation between essence and existence.

Clarke’s general conclusions from the preceding historical survey can be summarized as follows. The Pre-Socratics introduced limitation as perfection and infinite as imperfection, and this correlation remained until Philo. Plato introduced both forms and participation into the philosophical discussion. Aristotle introduced act and potency as inner principles which enter into the composition of all changeable things. The Neoplatonic movement gave rise to the notion of a positive infinity as inexhaustible power. Peudo-Dionysius emphasized the primacy of esse, the infinity of perfection, participation according to potency, limitation, and composition. Many of the Scholastics before Thomas affirmed the participation of creatures in the divine perfections. Finally, Thomas arrived on the historical scene and it was his great genius to synthesize both these metaphysical strands, Neoplatonic and Aristotelian, into a cohesive metaphysics of his own.

However, in order for Thomas to be successful he needed to give an account of four particular aspects of his metaphysical system: 1. a new conception of perfection in terms of the act of existence, 2. a metaphysics of composition, 3. unity of the composite, and 4. an elevation of act and potency out of the order of change. The rest of Clarke’s dissertation examines Thomas’s account of these four aspects of his metaphysical system.

---

71 For Bonaventure, Clarke references Commentaria in quattuor libros Sententiarum (ed. Quaracchi, 1932).  
Early Works of Thomas

Clarke divides the works of Thomas into early and late in order to see how Thomas applies and develops his philosophical principles. Clarke examines his early works in order to “observe him ‘in the laboratory,’ so to speak.”

Once Thomas’s method and initial attempts at application are worked through in his early works, then it will be possible to treat his mature works in a more systematic order.

Clarke begins by examining the application of Aristotelian act and potency to esse and essence in Thomas’s early works. Clarke points out several facts from his examination of *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* (1252-1256), *De ente et essentia* (1252-1256), *De principiis naturae* (1252-1256), and *Super Boetium De Trinitate* (1257-1259).

First, from *De principiis naturae*, it is clear that “the strictly Aristotelian conception of act and potency as principles of the dynamic order of change was present from the first in the thought of Thomas. It remains unchanged throughout his entire work up to the end.” Thus, Thomas had a clear conception of Aristotle’s understanding of act and potency in the dynamic order of becoming. However, it is also clear from *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* that “Thomas had already worked out in his mind an enlarged

---

73 Ibid., 161.
conception of act and potency to fit his new theory of *esse* and essence.”\(^{76}\) This enlarged conception of act and potency is in a “vertical,” participation sense in the static order of substantial being. With these two examples from Thomas’s early work, it can be seen how the distinction had always been made “between the composition of act and potency in the dynamic order of becoming and in the static order of substantial being.”\(^{77}\)

Next, Clarke examines Thomas’s application of the theory of limitation and infinity to essence and *esse* in his early works. In *Scriptum super Libros Sententiarum*, Thomas presents a general theory of limitation independent of both the act-potency and essence-*esse* distinctions.\(^{78}\) He identifies three analogous types of limitation: 1. of form, 2. of genus, and 3. of matter (cut by form). The first type of limitation is a real limitation in the ontological order. The second type of limitation is a logical contraction of the abstract plenitude of a concept. The third type of limitation is a perfecting of matter by form.

Clarke also examines the application of the theory of limitation and infinity to form and matter in Thomas’s early works. Clarke concludes that “the doctrine is Aristotelian, but expressed

---

\(^{76}\) Clarke, “The Principle,” 165. Clarke refers to the following text: “. . . potentia primo imposita est ad significandum principium actionis; sed secundo translatum est ad hoc ut illud etiam quod recipit actionem agentis, potentiam habere dicatur; et haec est potentia passiva; ut sicut potentiae activae respondet operatio, vel actio, in qua completur potentia activa; ita etiam illud quod respondet potentiae passivae, quasi perfectio et complementum, actus dicatur. Et propter hoc omnia forma actus dicitur, etiam ipsae formae separatae; et illud quod est principium perfectionis totius, quod est Deus, vocatur actus primus et purus . . .” *In I Sent.*, dist. 42, quaest. 1, art. 1, ad 1 (ed. Mandonnet, *Scriptum super Libros Sententiarum*, Paris, 1929, I, 983).

\(^{77}\) Ibid., 167.

\(^{78}\) Ibid., 175. Clarke refers to the following text: “Dicitur alio modo finis quantum ad essentiam rei, sicut ultima differentia constitutiva est ad quam finitur essentia speciei. Unde illud quod significat essentiam rei vocatur definitio vel terminus; et sic dicitur unumquodque finiri per illud quod determinat vel contrahit essentiam suam; sicut natura generis, quae de se est indifferens ad multa, finitur per unam differentiam; et materia prima, quae de se est indifferens ad omnes formas, unde et infinita dicitur, finitur per formam; et simili forma, quae, quantum in se est, potest perificere diversas partes materiae, finitur per materiam in qua recipitur.” *In I Sent.*, d. 43, q. 1, a. 1, sol. (Mand., I, 1003).
in terminology borrowed directly from Neoplatonism.”79 From this conclusion, Clarke summarizes
the metaphysical structure of the universe by means of a hierarchy that can be drawn from
Thomas’s early works. At the top of the hierarchy is ipsum esse purum subsistens, which is not
only unique and infinite, but also contains all perfections in its absolute simplicity. Below ipsum
esse purum subsistens are purely immaterial substances whose esse is received and whose
hierarchies are determined by varying degrees of potency. At the base of the hierarchy of being
are finite matter-form composite substances. This whole metaphysical structure of the universe is
“analyzed chiefly in terms of the dialectic infinity-limitation, simplicity-composition, unity-
multiplicity, which are but aspects of the structure of participation.”80

*Mature Works of Thomas*

With the metaphysical structure of the universe constructed in Thomas’s early works
serving as a foundation, Clarke proceeds to examine the synthesis in the mature works of Thomas,
which begins with the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1259-1264). Clarke dedicates five chapters of his
dissertation to the mature works of Thomas. In chapter 13 Clarke examines esse in relation to act
and perfection. In chapter 14 he clarifies the principle of limitation and multiplication. Clarke then
applies the principle of limitation and multiplication to the essence-esse distinction in chapter 15
and the matter-form distinction in chapter 16. Finally, in chapter 17, Clarke considers the unity of
the act-potency distinction. I will consider each of these in turn.

---
80 Ibid., 207.
Frequently in the mature works of Thomas there is a correlation between \textit{esse} and \textit{actus} or \textit{in actu}.	extsuperscript{81} For “a thing is an act or in act only if and because it has \textit{esse}.”	extsuperscript{82} Thus, by reducing all acts to \textit{esse}, Thomas can give ultimate metaphysical grounding to the Aristotelian notion of act, which must necessarily be existential in Thomas’s system. Regarding the correlation between \textit{esse} and perfection, Clarke makes sure to clarify “perfection,” since it “seems to have undergone an evolution similar to that of act.”	extsuperscript{83} For Aristotle, perfection meant the state of completeness of a reality. For Thomas, however, perfection is correlated with act, and thus “perfection” and “to be in act” are proportional. In short, for Thomas perfection consists “in possessing one’s \textit{esse} completely and in act.”	extsuperscript{84} It follows that perfection is a strictly existential term.

Chapter 14 is the longest and most complex chapter in Clarke’s dissertation, in which he compares the principle of limitation of act by potency in three different complex metaphysical systems: Thomas, Scotus, and Suarez. In short, Clarke insists that if the link with participation is not made explicit in the principle, then “the principle not only loses its universal metaphysical scope but ceases to be Thomistic.”	extsuperscript{85} Clarke argues that this link with participation was lost when

\textsuperscript{81} Clarke gives the following text for an example: “Quia forma facit esse in actu, ideo dicitur quod forma est actus.” \textit{De princ. nat.} (Mand., \textit{Opusc.}, I, 8).


\textsuperscript{83} Clarke, “The Principle,” 219.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 220. Clarke refers to the following text of Thomas: “Sciendum tamen est quod perfectio Deo convenienter attribui non potest si nominis significatio quantum ad sui originem attendatur: quod enim \textit{factum} non est, nec \textit{perfectum} posse dici videtur. Sed quia omne quod fit, de potentia in actum deductum est et de non esse in esse quando factum est, tunc recte perfectum esse dicitur, quasi \textit{totaliter factum}, quando potentia totaliter est ad actum reducta ut nihil de non esse retineat, sed habeat esse completum. Per quandam igitur nominis extensionem \textit{perfectum} dicitur non solum quod fiendo pervenit ad actum completum, sed id etiam quod est in actu completo absque omni factione. Et sic Deum perfectum esse dicimus.” \textit{SCG}, I, 28, fin. (Leon. Ed. Vol. 13.86) Clarke also points to \textit{ST}, I, q. 4, a. 1. (Leon. Ed. Vol. 4.50)

\textsuperscript{85} Clarke, “The Principle,” 270.
the principle was employed by Scotus and Suarez. Clarke concludes that “either the principle of the limitation of act by potency implies the doctrine of participation or it is not Thomistic.”

In short, one must link the principle of limitation of act by potency to the entire Thomistic metaphysics of esse and participation in order to have a correct understanding. “It is a synthesis, not a starting point.”

In chapter 15 on essence and esse, Clarke says, “Participation comes from Plato alone and act and potency from Aristotle alone, and that it is St. Thomas who has made the synthesis.” This fusion is possible because of “the common relation found in both: that of perfecting to perfected and received to recipient.” This fusion leads to a revolution wherein esse as Thomas understands it is an indetermination by excess and determination is a limiting function. When viewed through this light, the method of Thomas “appears as exactly the opposite of that followed by the classical modern Thomistic school.” Rather than deducing the real distinction from act, potency, and limitation, Clarke claims that Thomas never appeals to act and potency as the source of the real distinction, but makes an appeal to the doctrine of participation.

In chapter 16, Clarke draws out three insights from the application of the principle of limitation to matter and form in Thomas’s mature works. First, the Neoplatonic themes in his work

---


88 Ibid., 287-288.
89 Ibid., 288.
90 Ibid., 299.
91 Ibid., 300.
are devoid of the ultra-realism present in classical Neoplatonism.\textsuperscript{92} Second, Clarke stresses that the Neoplatonic terminology used by Thomas implies a positive basis of limitation.\textsuperscript{93} Third, the utility of the theory of limitation is laid out: “it is an instrument for expressing the comparative perfection of the material and spiritual grades of being in the hierarchy of the universe.”\textsuperscript{94}

The final chapter of Clarke’s dissertation treats how the concepts of act and potency are connected in the mature works of Thomas. Act and potency are always working at a double level in Thomas. First, act and potency explain change in a strictly Aristotelian manner. Second, Thomas develops the doctrine of act and potency “to signify a relation of reception and perfecting in immaterial beings.”\textsuperscript{95} This distinction relies upon a “distinction between potency with a dynamic tendency toward act . . . , as in natural and especially living beings, and purely passive potency, as the statue of Apollo in potency in the block of marble.”\textsuperscript{96} Clarke also points out a third improper, almost metaphorical, use of act and potency that signifies “merely the comparison of one grade of being with another as more perfect to less perfect.”\textsuperscript{97} Clarke concludes this chapter by admitting that Thomas is rather careless in his use of act and potency, shifting back and forth as required to

\textsuperscript{92} i.e. “The theory that above every series of individuals possessing a similar form there must be one subsistent form of the same type, possessing in unparticipated plenitude what the individuals beneath it possessed only by limited participation.” Clarke, “The Principle,” 307.

\textsuperscript{93} Since “limitation implies participation and participation implies the opposition between a state of plenitude and a state of contraction,” Clarke concludes that limitation of form by matter implies a positive basis. In other words, “the illimitation of a material form to which is opposed its contraction in matter is . . . the negative illimitation of a form existing in an intellect as universal concept, undetermined to any particular individual.” Clarke, “The Principle,” 313.

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 325.

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 332.

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 331. That is, purely passive in the sense of a static limitation.

prove his point, but this shifting nevertheless gives rise to a dialectical unity throughout his entire corpus.

Conclusion

Clarke concludes his dissertation with a summary of the principal moves and results arrived at while tracing the doctrines underpinning Thomas’s theory of the limitation of act by potency. One important conclusion is that “there runs through the work of Thomas a double conception of act and potency: one a dynamic theory of change, purely Aristotelian in origin,” namely the act and potency conception underpinning matter/form, and “the other a static theory of metaphysical structure, a synthesis of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic elements,” namely the act and potency conception underpinning essence/esse.\textsuperscript{98}

The historical analysis in the first part of Clarke’s dissertation revealed that there are three main doctrinal currents out of which Thomas’s principle of limitation of act by potency was synthesized. The first of these doctrinal currents was Plato’s participation theory. The second doctrinal current was Aristotle’s act and potency theory to explain change. The third doctrinal current was contributed by Neoplatonism, namely the revolution of seeing infinity as a property of supreme perfection rather than of imperfection.

Clarke’s conclusion from the analysis of Thomas’s writings was that the principle of the limitation of act by potency is “the résumé” of his great achievement: “a synthesis of the three great doctrinal contributions of participation, infinity-limitation, and act-potency to form a

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., 347.
complex and supple instrument for expressing the metaphysical structure of the universe and its relation to its Creator.”

Finally, after concluding his analysis of the principle of the limitation of act by potency, Clarke makes sure to clarify that it “cannot be reduced to a simple, immediately evident first principle” since it is such a complex synthesis dependent on many constitutive doctrines. So if it is not a first axiomatic principle, how does Clarke conclude that it should be understood? “In a word, the principle of limitation is but the summary of all its principal applications and possesses positive content and validity only in the light of these applications.”

POST-DISSERTATION ARTICLES

In the six years following the completion of his dissertation in 1949, Clarke published six articles, four of which are worth examining in detail, as they shed light upon the pillars of Clarke’s relational metaphysics. “Recent European Trends in Metaphysics” provided a roadmap for where Clarke expected European metaphysics to develop in the following decades. “The Limitation of Act by Potency: Aristotelianism or Neoplatonism?” and “The Meaning of

99 Ibid., 350.
100 Ibid., 354.
101 Ibid., 355.
Participation in St. Thomas" flowed directly from his dissertation. Finally, “What is Really Real?” is a summary of his intellectual project and served as a foundation for the next major phase of his academic life. During this period, Clarke also published reviews of nine books.

Recent Trends in Metaphysics

Clarke’s 1950 article, “Recent European Trends in Metaphysics,” is an attempt to map out the future of metaphysics. This attempt was necessary on account of Thomism “passing through a serious post-war crisis.” In five major sections, Clarke develops a future for Thomistic metaphysics that ends up being a rough roadmap for his own philosophical career.

Clarke begins by looking at the influence of phenomenology and existentialism on metaphysics. Although originally distinct movements, Clarke asserts that “they have now fused to a large extent.” This fusion occurred because the phenomenological method “has been taken up as an instrument of research by most of the contemporary schools of philosophy, especially the Existentialists.” The phenomenological method was originally developed by Edmund Husserl,

\[\text{References}\]


109 Ibid., 49.

110 Ibid., 50.
while existentialism stems from Soren Kierkegaard. According to Clarke, the key to the entire Existentialist school is Kierkegaard’s “violent reaction against the rationalistic panlogism of the Hegelian system,” a reaction which leads to an exclusive focus on the existing, concrete individual. With this view, truth becomes “an objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness.” Thus, rather than seeing existentialism as a cohesive and fully realized philosophy, Clarke thinks the most significant aspect of existentialism is simply its “characteristic attitude and method,” which makes the existing individual self the central object of philosophical reflection. The method can be summed up in three dialectical steps. First, there must be an intense subjective awareness of the “I” as existing. Second, there is a phenomenological description of the self that must “attain its destiny by the unpredictable risk of free choice.” Third, there is a discovery of the nature of this destiny.

Next, Clarke examines the influence of existentialism and phenomenology within scholastic circles. The turn to existentialism and phenomenology was motivated by a widespread feeling in scholastic circles that the traditional metaphysical analyses “must be rooted much more solidly and explicitly in experience.” One of the most influential authors on Clarke, Joseph de Finance, maintained “that the existential metaphysics of St. Thomas demands by its very nature, as centered on the concrete act of existence, that it be prolonged and completed by a phenomenology of concrete existence, and existential wisdom.” Clarke considered the most

111 Ibid., 51.
114 Ibid., 53.
115 Ibid., 57.
116 Ibid., 57, footnote 10.
important and fruitful influence of existentialist thought on scholastic thinkers to be “the new stress being laid everywhere in Thomistic circles on the existential character of St. Thomas’s metaphysics as centered on the act of esse rather than on the order of form and essence.”

Clarke goes on to examine the themes of history and evolution in relation to an existential analysis of being. Once the philosophical interest shifted from an essential to existential analysis, the time-dimension became an important element. Hegel was the first to make history a part of metaphysics, but then history began to influence the natural sciences, and eventually even physics through the work of Einstein. Since “significant changes in the scientific outlook are soon reflected in philosophical thinking,” it was not long before time, history, and evolution were primary themes of philosophical interest throughout Europe. According to Clarke, Thomism has historically been viewed as an attempt to analyze the timeless and static structure of reality, with the advent of existentialism the attempt has been made to grant a more substantial place to the “time-coefficient” or “history-factor” in Thomism.

Next, Clarke looks at the themes of subjectivity and the philosophy of the person. Here we get a glimpse of the seeds that would eventually sprout into Clarke’s life-work: the relational metaphysics of the person. It is clear that modern philosophy has explored “the domain of the ego or the subject as such” in much more detail than scholastic thought. However, although Thomism is accused of being primarily a thing-philosophy by contemporary philosophers of the person, Clarke asserts that, with regard to subjectivity and inter-personal relations, “St. Thomas

---

117 Ibid., 59.
118 Ibid., 62.
119 Ibid., 63.
120 Ibid., 64.
himself opens the door to it by his brief but profound remarks on the knowledge which the human soul has of itself.”\textsuperscript{121} Referring to de Finance, Clarke agrees that “one of the most pressing tasks of contemporary Thomism” is to incorporate “the remarkable conquests of modern philosophy in the analysis of the ego as subject and of its relations with other persons” in order to see “being itself as involving some kind of self-communication and active intentionality at all levels.”\textsuperscript{122}

In the fifth and final part of this article, Clarke mentions two internal developments that have occurred within Thomistic metaphysics itself. The first is Maréchal’s “theory of the activity of the intellect as a dynamism finalized toward the possession of the intensive infinity of being.”\textsuperscript{123} Second, and perhaps the most important trend, is the increasing emphasis “on the doctrine of participation as the central structural principle of St. Thomas’ entire metaphysics.”\textsuperscript{124} Clarke summarizes a key thesis of participation metaphysics in the following way: “\textit{Omnis forma pura seu imparticipata est unica et infinita; omnis forma participata est limitata et multiplicata per receptionem in subjectis participantibus inferioribus et distinctis.”}\textsuperscript{125} According to Clarke, Thomas transposed this Neoplatinic schema into a technical Aristotelian framework in order to remedy the principal defect of the Neoplatonic theory, namely the lack of an intrinsic bond of unity between participated form and participating subject. This system is “perhaps the only successful attempt to construct an original, higher synthesis uniting the key doctrines” of both Plato and

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 65.  
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 66.  
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 67.  
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 68.
Aristotle.\textsuperscript{126} The Thomistic metaphysical system, then, can most accurately be referred to as “a Platonism specified by Aristotelianism.”\textsuperscript{127}

Clarke concludes the article with the “three-point program set down for modern Thomism by Fr. de Finance”\textsuperscript{128} in order for Thomism to have an efficacious philosophical presence. (1) The re-presentation of the essential Thomistic doctrines integrated with (2) subjectivity and (3) history.

\textit{Limitation of Act by Potency}

Clarke condenses the historical evidence for the Neoplatonic foundation of Thomas’s metaphysics in his influential article: “The Limitation of Act by Potency: Aristotelianism or Neoplatonism?” By limiting his focus to the well-known principle of the limitation of act by potency, Clarke is able to precisely trace the historical roots and discover the full meaning of the primary elements of the principle. After laying out the problem, Clarke traces the historical roots through five historical developments: the pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and Thomas. The problem, as Clarke sees it, is the belief that the commonly admitted keystone of the Thomistic metaphysical system, “\textit{Actus non limitatur nisi per potentiam},” was already contained in all its essentials in Aristotle. Clarke, however, reminds us that nowhere in the first two books of Aristotle’s \textit{Physics} “does there occur any mention of the word or the idea of limit in connection with potency.”\textsuperscript{129} After examining all the passages in Aristotle dealing with act and potency, Clarke discovered that there was no Aristotelian text from which one could conclude “that

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 69-70.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 70.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 71.
\textsuperscript{129} Clarke, “Limitation of Act by Potency,” 67.
Aristotle himself ever held the doctrine that potency plays the role of limiting principle with respect to act.”¹³⁰ Not only that, but also “throughout the entire extent of St. Thomas’s own commentaries on Aristotle . . . there is not a single mention of potency as limiting act.”¹³¹ In order to begin understanding the threads that make up Thomas’s doctrine of act and potency, Clarke points out that there are two distinct elements in the doctrine. First, there is the Aristotelian “composition of two correlative metaphysical principles called act and potency.”¹³² Second, there is “the relating of these two principles to each other in terms of a theory of infinity and limitation.”¹³³

The contribution of the pre-Socratics was the concept of infinity, which first appeared in Anaximander in a vague and unanalyzed manner.¹³⁴ However, “the very manner in which they framed their fundamental problem, ‘What is the first principle out of which all things are formed?’ gradually led them . . . to identify the infinite with the indeterminate . . . primeval chaos of matter in itself, as yet unperfected by the limit of form.”¹³⁵ Thus, for the pre-Socratics, the infinite is a principle of imperfection and the finite, or limited, is a principle of perfection.

Plato “takes up the same basic doctrine and makes it one of the central pieces in his metaphysical blueprint of the universe.”¹³⁶ Clarke points out there is an “irresistible tendency of the classical Greek mind . . . to identify perfection with clear-cut limited form” and to identify

---

¹³⁰ Ibid., 68.
¹³¹ Ibid.
¹³² Ibid., 68-9.
¹³³ Ibid., 69.
¹³⁴ Clarke makes the following reference to Anaximander: “1. The Non-Limited is the original material of existing things; further, the source from which existing things derive their existence is also that to which they return at their destruction, according to necessity . . . . 3. This [the Non-Limited] is immortal and indestructible.” Fragments 1-3 in H. Diels, _Fragmentae der Vorsokratiker_ (5 Aufl., ed. W. Kranz, Berlin, 1934), I, 89; K. Freeman, _Ancilla to the Pre-Socratics_ (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), 19.
¹³⁶ Ibid., 70.
intelligibility “with definition by distinct, clearly delimited concepts.” Thus, although “Plato had the genius to discover the doctrine of participation in general and the necessity of some principle of negation or imperfection in reality,” he still concluded that the supreme One was the supreme Limit as such, and the “source of all other limitation and hence of intelligibility and perfection.”

Aristotle, who provided “the most complete analysis of the notion of infinity in ancient thought,” concluded that the essential nature of the infinite is the imperfect. Aristotle’s definition of infinity is “that which always has some part of itself outside of itself,” and he poetically sums up the Greek notion of infinity when he says, “Nature flees from the infinite, for the infinite is unending or imperfect, and nature ever seeks an end.” There is a difference from Plato, however, because Aristotle “insists against Plato that every specific form is received whole, entire, and equally in every individual of the species.” For Aristotle, the act and potency doctrine functions merely as an explanation of the problem of change, and thus he did not hesitate to admit 55 prime movers in his explanation of the motion of heavenly bodies.

137 Ibid., 71. This terminology appears to me to presage Descartes.
138 Ibid.
139 Ibid., 72. Clarke references Plato, Republic, VI, 509b. “Therefore, you should also say that not only do the objects of knowledge owe their being known to the good, but their being is also due to it, although the good is not being, but superior to it in rank and power.” Plato, Complete Works, ed. John Cooper (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Inc., 1997), 1130.
141 Ibid., 73. cf. Aristotle, Physics 207a8. “Our definition then is as follows: A quantity is infinite if it is such that we can always take a part outside what has been already taken.” Aristotle, Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. R. McKeon. (New York, 1941), 266.
144 Aristotle, Metaphysics, XIII, ch. 8, 1074a10. “Therefore the number of all the spheres—both those which move the planets and those which counteract these—will be fifty-five. And if one were not to add to the moon and to the sun the movements we mentioned, the whole set of spheres will be forty-seven in number.” Aristotle, Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. R. McKeon. (New York, 1941), 883.
Plotinus was the first to reverse the relationship in Western thought when he correlated the infinite with the perfect and the finite with the imperfect. Clarke attributes this reversal to Plotinus’s attempt “to integrate the essence of the new religious intuitions from the east with the old rational Platonic metaphysics.” Limited, intelligible essences do not just limit the matter for Plotinus, but rather limit both “what is above it as well as what is below it.” Thus, essences limit both the perfection of the infinite and the indeterminacy of matter. This reversal was transmitted down to Thomas through the work of Boethius in *De Hebdomadibus* and the work of Proclus in *The Elements of Theology*, which was Christianized in the work of Pseudo-Dionysius and compiled in the *Liber de Causis*. This understanding of essences, Clarke claims, was “taken over by St. Thomas but transposed in a highly original stroke of genius, so that the ultimate perfection now becomes the ‘quasi-form’ of *esse*, the act of existence, instead of form-essence, and the latter becomes itself the limiting, participating principle.”

According to Clarke, the genius of Thomas lies in the fact that he combined “the central piece of Aristotelian metaphysics, the doctrine of act and potency,” with “the central piece of the Neoplatonic metaphysical tradition, the participation-limitation framework.” In short, “the achievement of St. Thomas was to recognize that the strength of each doctrine remedied precisely the weakness of the other and to fuse them into a single highly original synthesis.” This synthesis was accomplished in two steps. First, he substituted the supra-formal act of existence for the Neoplatonic content, while still using the Neoplatonic participation-limitation structure. Second,

---

146 Clarke, “Limitation of Act by Potency,” 76.
147 Ibid., 79.
148 Ibid.
149 Ibid., 79-80.
he freed the Aristotelian act and potency theory from its limited context of change by adding a static “vertical” function of participation. What is revealing to Clarke’s mind regarding Thomas’s metaphysics “is the fact that the study of his works in chronological order enables us to observe the synthesis actually being put together, block by block.”¹⁵⁰ Prior to the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Thomas expresses the limitation principle in its traditional Neoplatonic form, i.e. every abstract or separated form is infinite. “It is only from the *Summa contra Gentes* on that he appears to realize the possibility of fusing both the limitation principle and act and potency into a single synthetic principle.”¹⁵¹

Clarke concludes that Thomas was the first thinker “to fuse into one the best elements of the two main streams of western philosophical thought.”¹⁵² Thus, Clarke thinks that the metaphysics of Thomas should not be understood “as a decisive option for Aristotle against Platonism,” but rather as an “Aristotelianism specified by Neoplatonism.”¹⁵³

**Meaning of Participation in St. Thomas**

Clarke clearly lays out the first major pillar of his metaphysics, the participation structure of the universe, in his 1952 article, “The Meaning of Participation in St. Thomas.” The article has four main parts with an introduction and a conclusion. The first part examines participation before Thomas. The second part examines the general meaning of participation in Thomas. The third part explains how Thomas synthesizes participation with the Aristotelian principles of act and potency.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 80.
¹⁵¹ Ibid., 81.
¹⁵² Ibid., 82.
The fourth part explains how participation is applied to the matter-form and essence-existence distinctions.

Before examining participation prior to Thomas in the first part of the article, Clarke points out that Étienne Gilson was “perhaps the single figure to whom we owe most both for the scientific justification and the successful propagandizing”\(^{154}\) of the interpretation of participation in Thomas which places \textit{esse} as the metaphysical core of every being, rather than essence. Nevertheless, Gilson continued to insist that Thomas’ philosophy was “a decisive option for Aristotle and against Platonism.”\(^{155}\) Clarke, on the other hand, insists that “the peculiar genius and historical significance of the Thomistic system lie . . . in that it was a deliberately wrought and highly original synthesis between \textit{both} of these great main streams of Western thought.”\(^{156}\)

The theory of participation began with Plato, who according to Clarke affirmed that “wherever there is a many there must be a one.”\(^{157}\) However, because Plato identified the infinite with imperfection and the finite with perfection, he had two obvious defects in his theory. First, he confused the logical order with the ontological order. Second, he was unable to express the participation structure in terms of the participant’s limiting reception of the infinite source. The second defect was largely remedied when Plotinus reversed the order and identified the infinite with perfection and the finite with imperfection. However, Plotinus still lacked both an intrinsic unifying principle in the composite and a clear distinction between the logical and ontological. He also made the receiver too independent of the source.


\(^{155}\) Ibid., 90.

\(^{156}\) Ibid. Italics in the original.

\(^{157}\) Ibid.
The theory of participation in Thomas still has the same general meaning and purpose, but with an added analogical flexibility that adapts the theory to different orders. Thomas gives a formal definition of participation in his early *Expositio libri Boetii De hebdomadibus* (1257–1259): “For to participate is, as it were, to take a part; and therefore when something receives in a particular way that which belongs to another, it is universally said to participate in it.”\(^{158}\) Thus, there are three essential elements in any participation structure. First, there must be a source that perfectly possesses the perfection. Second, there must be a participant subject that partially possesses the perfection. Third, the participant must have received this perfection from the source. According to Clarke, participation “is a condensed technical way of expressing the complexus of relations involved in any structure of dependence of a lower multiplicity on a higher source for similarity of nature.”\(^{159}\) Thus, “the key to the fundamental metaphysical structure of all finite beings in the system of St. Thomas,” is that “every participant subject . . . must be composed and limited in order to be distinguished from its source.”\(^{160}\)

The third part of the article explains how Thomas transposes the whole structure of participation “into the technical Aristotelian framework of metaphysical composition in terms of act and potency.”\(^{161}\) Neoplatonic metaphysics lacked an explanation for the intrinsic unity of compositions resulting from participation. Thomas provided an explanation by transposing the framework into act and potency, which is the only adequate theory of unity in metaphysical composition. Thomas radically altered the Aristotelian notion of potency from its exclusive use as

\(^{158}\) My translation of *In De hebd.*, lect. 2 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 50.270-274). “Est autem participare quasi partem capere; et ideo quando aliquid particulariter recipit id quod ad alterum pertinet, universaliter dicitur participare illud.”

\(^{159}\) Clarke, “Meaning of Participation,” 93.

\(^{160}\) Ibid., 95.

\(^{161}\) Ibid.
a principle of change to “a new, primarily static role as limiting, receiving subject in a Neoplatonic participation structure.”\textsuperscript{162} Thus, Clarke contends that “it is impossible to understand this principle in terms either of pure Aristotelianism or pure Neoplatonism.”\textsuperscript{163} “This synthesis is peculiarly the work of St. Thomas’s own genius, fusing into an organic unity the best of these two main streams of Western philosophy.”\textsuperscript{164}

The final part of the article applies Thomas’s synthesis to matter-form and essence-existence. Clarke claims that “it is only in the order of essence and existence that all the elements in the participation structure take on full ontological value.”\textsuperscript{165} Also, because Thomas argues that the one source may be merely analogous in similarity rather than univocal with all the participants, he manages to “sweep away with a single stroke the vast Neoplatonic superstructure,” reducing it all to dependence on the single ontological perfection of \textit{esse}.

In conclusion, Clarke points out that “the essential characteristics of the Thomistic doctrine of participation” are the Neoplatonic tradition transposed into the Aristotelian terms of act and potency using the one basic analogical perfection of \textit{esse}. Thus, it is no longer accurate to portray Thomistic philosophy as an option for Aristotle against Platonism, but rather it is most accurate in Clarke’s view to see the synthesis of Thomas’s philosophy as a “Platonism specified by Aristotelianism.”\textsuperscript{167} This is a change from his previous article that summarized Thomas’s philosophy as an “Aristotelianism specified by Neoplatonism,”\textsuperscript{168} and seems to indicate a return

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 96.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 97.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., 98.
\textsuperscript{168} Clarke, “Limitation of Act by Potency,” 82.
in Clarke’s thought to a greater sympathy with the Platonism of Thomas that was expressed two
years earlier in his article, “Recent European Trends in Metaphysics.” This view, however, was
expressed in Cornelio Fabro’s dissertation on participation in Thomas thirteen years earlier: “Thus
from different aspects you can say that the Platonism in Thomism is specified by Aristotelianism,
or that its Aristotelianism is specified by Platonism: personally I think that the first formula is more
correct.”

*The Really Real?*

Clarke makes a case for existential Thomism in his 1955 article, “What is Really Real?”
Existential Thomism is for Clarke, “that one luminous center which Bergson speaks of as the key
to every great philosophy, in the light of which alone the total body of St. Thomas’ texts takes on
full intelligibility and coherence.” The main purpose of Clarke’s article is to examine a
traditional Thomistic distinction regarding the object of metaphysics. First, there is the distinction
between beings-of-reason (*entia rationis*) and real beings. Secondly, real beings are distinguished
between actual and possible. Clarke is primarily interested in this second distinction. “The point
at issue is therefore whether or not it is legitimate to characterize ‘real being,’ the object of
metaphysics, as a noun signifying essence prescinding from the actual exercise of existence and

---

169 Clarke, “Recent European Trends in Metaphysics,” 70. Although Clarke tries to be original in “Limitation
of Act By Potency” by summarizing Thomas’s philosophy as “Aristotelianism specified by Neoplatonism,” he
eventually comes back to agreeing with Cornelio Fabro.

170 Cornelio Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo s. Tomaso d’Aquino* (Milano, 1939),
364. “Per questo sotto diversi aspetti si può dire tanto che il Platonismo nel Tomismo viene specificato
dall’Aristotelismo, quanto che l’Aristotelismo viene specificato dal Platonismo: personalmente però io ritengo che la
prima formula sia la più corretta.” Translation mine.

(Milwaukee: Bruce, 1955), 61-62. Clarke also refers to Bergson when he is summarizing the participation pillar of his
relational metaphysics 33 years later in Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 65.
thus including in a proper and intrinsic sense the possibles.” In short, are possible beings real beings? Clarke says no.

First, Clarke lays out the traditional distinction. One traditional camp relies upon the linguistic distinction between being taken as a noun and being taken as a participle. When being is taken as a noun, it can refer to both actual and possible being, and this is taken as the object of metaphysics. Being as a participle is more restricted, and refers only to that which actually exists. Another traditional camp runs through the Dominican tradition and begins on an existential basis, but by means of sudden sleight of hand the same conclusion seems to arise out of nowhere.

In response to the traditional distinction, Clarke tries to uncover some “dubious underlying principles” at play in the tradition. His first point is that the “Latin present participle allows of three uses, one participial and two substantival,” rather than the two presented by the linguistic traditionalists. Also, English does not present the same ambiguity as the Latin, and therefore “Thomists writing in English are forced to commit themselves, and almost universally interpret participial as synonymous with adjectival.” That leaves the two noun uses of being as expressing the possible objects of metaphysics.

Thus, the result of the grammatical investigation leaves us with the following metaphysical problem: which of the possible noun uses of being is “the object of metaphysics, i.e. real being?” Clarke’s criticism of this grammatical investigation result, however, is not that “being” should not be applied to both actual and possible being, but rather that when “being” is applied to both actual

---

172 Ibid., 63.
173 Ibid., 66.
174 Ibid.
175 Ibid., 67.
176 Ibid., 68.
and possible being, it is used in two “radically and intrinsically different senses.” Rather than two categories of the same type of “being,” the possible and actual have only “intelligible essence precisely and exclusively as intelligible,” as the only element common to both.

Clarke admits that the metaphysics worked out by Scotus and Suarez “is quite compatible with the notion of real being as the object of metaphysics,” but Clarke also believes that their “position is dangerously misleading and inconsistent within the perspective of the existence-centered metaphysics which is now so widely accepted by Thomists.” In short, there are two elements to be considered in a thing. Res signifies the intelligible quiddity as such, while ens signifies the thing according to its actual existence. “Being for St. Thomas habitually means essence conjoined with actual existence.” Clarke even makes the astounding observation in support of his argument that “nowhere in St. Thomas have I been able to find a text where he speaks of the possible as ‘beings,’ or even the phrase ‘possible beings.’ Rather he repeatedly speaks of the possible without qualification as ‘nonbeings’ (non-entia).”

Clarke’s interpretation of Thomas is that real being, as an object of metaphysical inquiry, “is to be understood as a substantive and signifies that which is, or essence possessing its own proper act of existence.” After Thomas, however, differing interpretations began to surface.

---

177 Ibid., 69.
178 Ibid.
179 Ibid., 70.
180 Ibid., 71.
181 Ibid., 72.
182 Ibid., 73. cf. John F. Wippel, “The Reality of Nonexisting Possibles According to Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and Godfrey of Fontaines,” The Review of Metaphysics 34 (1981): 740. “Far from identifying a nature considered absolutely with a possible, Thomas rather makes God’s view of such a nature insofar as it exists in his intellect the foundation for any absolute consideration of the same. And this, its divine idea, is really identical with the divine essence itself, even though they are logically distinct. But, as we have already seen, for such a thing to exist as a divine idea is for it to be a possible. Consequently, rather than identify a possible with a nature or essence considered absolutely in the Avicennian sense, Thomas holds that the latter presupposes the former.”
183 Clarke, “Really Real,” 74.
Dominic of Flanders settled on the definition of being as a noun. Cajetan accepts being taken as a participle, not as a noun. Sylvester of Ferrara expounds “the identical existential interpretation of being held by Cajetan but in exactly opposite terminology,”\(^{184}\) yet in a way that according to Clarke “is the most acceptable and closest to St. Thomas of any commentator.”\(^{185}\) Sylvester also introduces another meaning for the sake of contrast which he calls being “taken absolutely,” and despite the fact it was rejected by Sylvester, it nevertheless became “the almost universally accepted meaning of real being as the object of metaphysics.”\(^{186}\) This happened, according to Clarke, because of the influence of the non-Thomistic Scholasticism of Scotus and Suarez, and that “the decisive reason for admitting this interpretation is in order to include the possible as direct inferiors of the notion of being.”\(^{187}\)

Clarke then briefly examines three reasons put forward for including the possible under real being before disposing each in turn. The first reason for including the possible under real being “is based on the Aristotelian conception of science as concerned only with essential predicates.”\(^{188}\) Clarke disposes of this reason rather briefly by insisting that Aristotle’s distinction between essence and accident is not exhaustive of reality, and thus must be enlarged “to make room for the new *sui generis* element of reality brought into focus for the first time by St. Thomas,”\(^{189}\) i.e. the substantial act of existence.

The second reason for including the possible under real being stems from the *philosophia perennis* through the Platonic-Augustinian tradition, which argues that the necessary truths of
metaphysics can only find a foundation in the order of the possible, because actual existence is always contingent. Clarke begins by pointing out two latent principles in this argument. First, there is the principle that since actual existence is contingent, it cannot bear within itself any necessity. Second, there is the principle that only essences can be abstracted. Both of these principles, according to Clarke, “are unsound and inconsistent with an integral Thomism.”

Clarke then lays out what he sees as one of the most significant advances made by Thomas in the history of Christian philosophy: “. . . he swung the balance back from this exaggerated Platonic-Augustinian depreciation of the contingent by pointing out the genuine intrinsic necessities (and he does not hesitate to say absolute necessities, though always participated) that lie hidden within the core of even the frailest and most transitory contingent existent. ‘There is nothing,’ he says, ‘so contingent that it does not contain within it something necessary.’” Clarke points to this higher regard for the intrinsic in Thomas as the source of his “radical optimism and rich, positive, humanism so characteristic of his world outlook.” When one examines Thomas’s analysis of goodness as a transcendental property, it becomes clear that “possible beings can have no goodness for St. Thomas.” This is because there is nothing desirable in possible being as possible, since what we really desire is the actuality of the possibility.

Clarke also makes an important distinction between studying real being formally as existent and studying real being formally as particular. “The achievement of Thomistic epistemology applied to metaphysics,” according to Clarke, is that it has found a way “to disengage and retain

\[190\] Ibid., 81.
\[191\] Ibid. ST 1, q. 86, a. 3 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 5.351).
\[192\] Clarke, “Really Real,” 82.
\[193\] Ibid.
for intellectual analysis . . . the existential aspects of the real beings that are its object.”194 Thus, real beings can be studied as existent without being considered as particular. “The conclusion of the foregoing analysis is that it is quite possible to construct a general metaphysics . . . from the analysis of beings as actually existent, with no need of recourse to the possible to guarantee this certitude.”195

The third reason for including the possibles under real being is “drawn from the direct analysis of the nature of the possible in themselves and their objective foundation in God.”196 In short, since the objective intelligibility of possible beings is not able to be reduced to either nonbeing or to a mere being of reason, then possible beings “must necessarily be identified with real being in some proper and intrinsic sense.”197 Clarke points out, however, that his argument makes an illicit transition from thought to reality. Although it is true a possible being is neither nonbeing nor a being of reason, it does not necessarily follow that the possible being contains any ontological status of its own. Rather, possible being is in the order of pure thought and is separated by “the ultimate abyss” from the ontologically real, and “this abyss cannot be bridged by intellect alone but only by will; only love can call up being out of nonbeing.”198 Thus, a thought—as an object—has no ontological reality. Rather, “the reality resides entirely in the real act of the mind thinking, not in the object of this thought.”199 Rather than ontological reality, the possible being thought has an intelligible relation to the real order, and this is what distinguishes the possible from beings of reason. Clarke concludes, then, that we should first distinguish between real and

194 Ibid., 83.
195 Ibid., 84.
196 Ibid.
197 Ibid., 85.
198 Ibid., 86.
199 Ibid.
intentional being, and that intentional being should be distinguished one step further between possible beings and beings of reason.200

There remains the question of how the possibles can come under the science of metaphysics if they are only intentional beings. Clarke’s answer is simple: the possibles come under metaphysics “in precisely the same way that their intelligibility is related to real being.”201 That means that possible beings enter necessarily, but indirectly, into metaphysics as inseparably linked with existing being by a relation of intelligibility. Clarke’s three conclusions, then, are the following. First, “being as object of metaphysics should mean, and did mean for St. Thomas, being taken as a noun, signifying existing essence precisely as existent.”202 Second, that “real being in its proper sense is strictly convertible with existent being.”203 Third, “the possibles enter into the scope of metaphysics . . . only indirectly through their necessary intelligible connection with . . . existent being, as a projection of the latter’s own intelligibility.”204 Finally, Clarke concludes his article with a stunningly beautiful summation of existential Thomism, worth quoting in its entirety: “In one word, the Supremely Real has as its proper name, ‘He Who is.’ Hence nothing else can be called ‘really real’ unless it, too, bear the family name, ‘that which is.’ ”205

200 For an interpretation of Thomas on the possibles contrary to Clarke, cf. John F. Wippel, “The Reality of Nonexisting Possibles According to Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and Godfrey of Fontaines,” The Review of Metaphysics 34 (1981): 729-758. In this article, Wippel argues that Thomas makes a distinction between possibles that are possible “by reason of some potency” and possibles that are possible “not by reason of any potency.” The former can be possible either “by reason of an active potency” or “by reason of a passive potency,” while the latter are “possible in the absolute sense.” In short, Wippel identifies both passive potency, i.e. matter, and active potency, i.e. in an agent, and these latter active potencies can be “really real” and the object of metaphysics, particularly so in a divine power.
201 Ibid., 89.
202 Ibid., 90.
203 Ibid.
204 Ibid.
205 Ibid.
CONCLUSION

One theme remains consistent throughout Clarke’s early writing: synthesis. Clarke’s master’s thesis examined how Suarez synthesized Thomas, Scotus, and Ockham into a theory of liberty. Clarke’s dissertation examined how Thomas synthesized Aristotle and Neoplatonism into his own metaphysics of participation. Clarke’s early academic articles present these syntheses, and plant the seeds of his own lifelong philosophical project: “the creative retrieval of Saint Thomas,” in which he attempted to synthesize the insights of Thomas and phenomenology into a system of relational metaphysics.

Two pillars of Clarke’s relational metaphysics appeared at this early stage of his career. The first pillar to appear, in rather nebulous form in his master’s thesis, is the good as goal that lures every being act freely. This pillar is slowly developed throughout Clarke’s life, with various aspects emphasized at various times. For now, it is important to recognize the understanding of liberty and freedom that Clarke wrestled with in his thesis on Suarez. This pillar will be returned to and developed more fully in chapter seven. The second pillar to appear, in a very developed form in his dissertation, is the participation structure of the universe.

Clarke’s effort to refine his understanding of the participation metaphysics of Thomas dominated his early career and laid the foundation for his own metaphysical outlook. Rather than trying to solve the metaphysics of Thomas as if it were a dry technical problem, Clarke wanted to make Thomas “come alive in the mind . . . as a synoptic vision of the universe, in which all beings, from the lowest to the highest, come together to form a single great community.” This synoptic

206 Clarke, Creative Retrieval, 230.
207 Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 66.
vision inspired Clarke and his metaphysical quest for the rest of his life, and is a consistent, well-developed pillar of his relational metaphysics. The participation structure of the universe is how Clarke understood the Thomistic doctrine of the real distinction, which Clarke considered “the very center of the whole Thomistic vision of the universe, both philosophically and theologically—and, we might add, mystically. This is for St. Thomas—and for me, too—what Bergson described so beautifully as that single simple center-point of every great philosopher’s thought.”

208 Ibid., 65.
CHAPTER 2
EXISTENCE AS DYNAMIC ACT OF PRESENCE

Introduction

Clarke’s philosophical output from 1956 to 1968 covers a very broad range of material. Overall, it is rather disjointed, making it difficult to find a common theme in his publications during this period. However, to the degree that a theme is there, the most common one that can be discerned under the surface of Clarke’s metaphysical outlook during this period is existence as dynamic act of presence. Looking back on his career from 1988, Clarke says that he sees “the ‘act of existence’—the esse or ‘to be’ of things, as St. Thomas insists on putting it—as the central vantage-point of the entire Thomistic philosophical vision of the universe.”  

It is during this early part of his career that we can see him working from this vantage point across a multitude of topics.

Of all Clarke’s varied philosophical output during this period, five particular articles warrant being examined in detail. In his 1959 article “Infinity in Plotinus: A Reply,” Clarke clarifies his understanding of Plotinus’s revolution regarding the concept of infinity, which is essential to Clarke’s relational metaphysics and provides the core insight necessary to understand existence as a dynamic act of presence. In his 1961 article “Causality and Time,” Clarke presents causality as a single-event theory excluding all temporal sequence, which is necessary to maintain

---


the existence of real relations. Clarke also expresses the importance of seeing existence as a dynamic act of presence.

The next two articles that will be examined are less important to the theme of this chapter, but are nevertheless important in clarifying Clarke’s understanding of relation and setting the foundation for his later focus on the person. In his 1962 article “System: A New Category of Being,” Clarke tries to introduce a new Aristotelian category to account for the single objectively existing pattern of relations forming a whole, and which also occurs in the world of persons. In his 1966 article “The Self in Eastern and Western Thought: The Wooster Conference,” Clarke begins to engage Eastern philosophy, which allows him to develop his theory of substance-relation duality and begin to see how the goal of personal being is self-transcendence.

The theme of this chapter returns to the fore in the 1967 article “The Self as Source of Meaning in Metaphysics,” where Clarke firmly places the conscious life of the self as the central point of reference for giving meaning to his basic metaphysical concepts. He also continues to develop the idea that to exist means to be actively present.

The structure of this chapter is different from the structure of the other chapters in this dissertation, as it alternates between detailed examinations of the most influential publications and short sections that briefly mention his other publications. The time span divisions of these short sections was determined simply by the gap between the influential articles. The short, connecting

---

sections state the date range in the title, while the longer, more detailed sections simply state the influential article in the title.

**CLARKE’S PUBLICATIONS: 1956-1959**

During this four year span, Clarke published a translation of Joseph de Finance’s “Being and Subjectivity,”7 offered comments on theses presented at a colloquium on the idea of creation,8 critiqued a paper by Gerald Phelan,9 published three of his own articles in the Jesuit magazine, America,10 and published twenty book reviews,11 including a very detailed review of Robert Henle’s *St. Thomas and Platonism*.12 I will provide a brief summary of the important ideas

---

presented by Clarke in these various works before presenting a detailed examination of Clarke’s reply to Leo Sweeney’s article, “Infinity in Plotinus,” in the next section of this chapter.13

Throughout this period, Clarke is clear that esse is a dynamic act of presence. “For me, to be (and a being is that which is exercising a ‘to be’) signifies primarily and properly the basic actuality or active presence of anything in the universe, to be in act and ready to flow over into the diffusion of its own actuality.”14 Finance’s article gives glimpses of the inspiration that led to Clarke’s “mystical” metaphysics,15 while also pointing towards the foundation of Clarke’s relational metaphysics, the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will, which will be treated in chapter three.16 Clarke praises Gerald Phelan’s “lucidity, vigor and uncompromising consistency” in expressing the real distinction between essence and existence,17 which Clarke summarizes as follows: “The positive content of perfection in a finite being is . . . located entirely within the very act of existence itself, with the essence playing the role . . . of measure, or mode, or determination, molding the basic perfection of esse from within and not from without.”18 In his review of Henle’s book, *St. Thomas and Platonism*, Clarke shows the weaknesses in the position of “an important group of American Thomists” who have raised doubts about the solidity of the thesis that “Thomas was an original synthesis of the complementary elements in both Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism, recast in the light of his own doctrine of the primacy of the act of existence,” which

---

15 “Mystical” is used in the sense of blending the philosophical with the theological. e.g. Finance, “Being and Subjectivity,” 176. “The absolute Act of Existing, precisely because it precontains within itself all other acts of existence according to all their subjective depth, cannot be conceived save as an absolute Love. ‘God is Love.’ The metaphysics of existence thus rejoins in its own way the spiritual intuition of the apostle of love.”
16 Finance, “Being and Subjectivity,” 177. “No, Thomism is not existentialism. But it is *par excellence* the metaphysics of existence,” and “a metaphysics of existence worthy of the name cannot get started without a plunge into the depths of subjectivity.”
17 Clarke, “Being of Creatures,” 130.
18 Ibid., 129. Italic in the original.
is Clarke’s own thesis. Finally, in the three short articles published in *America*, Clarke provides a good dose of optimism in the face of Romano Guardini’s bleak book, *The End of the Modern World*, he briefly points out some dangers inherent in an increasingly technological world, and he pulls common themes out of “an unusually interesting and thought-provoking exhibition of contemporary sculpture and painting.”

**INFINITY IN PLOTINUS: A REPLY**

Clarke’s next published article merits a detailed examination, as it clarifies the importance of the shift in the understanding of infinity that took place in Neoplatonism and was incorporated by Thomas into his metaphysics of existence. This article was written in reply to a pair of articles written by Leo Sweeney in 1957. Convinced that Sweeney’s conclusion regarding Plotinus was fundamentally incorrect, Clarke attempts to set the record straight since a correct understanding of Plotinus is of central relevance for understanding “both the Fathers of the Church and the medieval Scholastics.” Clarke begins by laying out his position in the introduction of the article: Plotinus is “the first great philosopher in the West to have identified the supremely perfect principle in the universe as positively infinite in its very nature, because, as the ultimate source of all forms, it is itself above and beyond all form and limit.” Clarke is clear to point out that the infinity of the One in Plotinus “is not quantitative but qualitative, and is a function of a participation process...
where the source of perfection is considered a simple and unlimited plenitude above all its limited participations.”  

Sweeney, however, denies that Plotinus held that the nature of the One had an intrinsic qualitative infinity. Rather than attributing an intrinsic qualitative infinity to the One, Sweeney says that Plotinus merely attributed an infinite power to the One, which is called infinite because it is “beyond and above all particular form, determination and limit.” Thus, “infinity belongs properly only to the effects outside the One.”

Clarke thinks Sweeney is wrong to claim that “it is unlikely that the conception of God as infinite nonbeing could have influenced a medieval Christian in affirming that God is infinitely perfect in His being.” Clarke quickly dismisses this claim by pointing out that “being” is a technical term for Plotinus that includes a limit. Thus, although there seems to be a contradiction between the “infinite nonbeing” of Plotinus and the “infinite being” of thirteenth century Christianity, in effect they are both pointing towards the most supremely real and positively perfect of all realities that is beyond all limited beings. Thus, the change between Plotinus and Thomas is not in the meaning of infinite, but rather in the metaphysic of being, which was brought about through the great influence of “negative theology” in the West.

Clarke also thinks Sweeney is wrong to claim that the “infinity of nonbeing tells us nothing as to whether the inner reality of the One is infinite or finite.” Sweeney clearly states “nonbeing” means beyond-being rather than below-being. Clarke spends the remainder of the article

---

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 78. This is Clarke’s summary of Sweeney’s argument.
28 Ibid., 79.
29 Ibid., 79-80.
30 Ibid., 79.
addressing this claim since it is Sweeney’s main thesis. Clarke’s response centers on three different aspects of the infinity of the One: nonbeing, power, and Intelligence/Soul.

Regarding the infinity of nonbeing, Clarke points out that the whole purpose of the negative dialectic Plotinus engages in regarding the One as being “beyond” all determination and limit was “precisely to exclude all determination and limit from the One.” Sweeney claims that Plotinus’s negative dialectic merely excludes form and limit extrinsically from the One, but Clarke points out that the one thing that negative theology professes to do “is to exclude from the reality of the One the modes of being which are here negated.” According to Clarke, the key point that Sweeney overlooks is that the very nature of intelligible beings is constituted of form and determination. However, since this very composition is explicitly excluded from the One, we can most certainly assert that the unique reality of the One must be infinite.

Clarke next turns to the infinity of power. After referencing a few beautiful passages from Plotinus about the infinite power of the One, Clarke points out that “nowhere in these main texts does Plotinus assert or imply that infinity is attributed to the One only by extrinsic denomination.” Sweeney’s main argument, however, is based on a philosophical inference “on what Plotinus’ thought must be on the matter.” By introducing the principle that “inference to the power of an agent from its effect can result only in predication by extrinsic denomination,” Sweeney has inserted his own speculation, and then continues to refer to that principle throughout the rest of his article. However, Clarke shows that “from a metaphysical point of view the principle

31 Ibid., 81. Italics in the original.
32 Ibid., 82-83. Italics in the original.
33 Ibid., 86. Italics in the original.
34 Ibid., 87.
35 Ibid. Italics in the original.
itself is extremely dubious.” Whereas the path to knowledge must move from without to within, what Sweeney has done with that principle is begin from without, but then he refuses to ever move within.

According to Clarke, “all the great Scholastics hastened to repudiate this metaphysical faux pas on the ground of the absolute identity of the divine essence and the divine power,” and “nowhere in any text does he [Plotinus] assert . . . that infinity is attributed to the power of the one . . . only by extrinsic denomination.” For Clarke, Plotinus attributes infinite power to the One “because it is the originative source of, and has power over, all the things which come after it.” Thus, the infinite power of the One is “a purely qualitative one flowing from its concentrated fullness as a source and its consequent superiority to the whole order of its particular effect.” According to Clarke, the power of the One is “infinite precisely because of this all-pregnant unity and simplicity.”

Clarke then concludes that these two infinities, namely the infinity of nonbeing and the infinity of power, are really “two facets of the same dynamic emanation and participation structure of the universe.” Clarke shows that Plotinus combines “in a single sweep infinity of supra-formal nonbeing, of power, and of intrinsic lovableness as infinite Goodness and Super-Beauty.” After making this connection to the lovableness of the One, Clarke moves to the intrinsic nature of the

---

36 Ibid., 88.
37 Ibid., 89. Italics in the original.
38 Ibid., 90. Italics in the original.
39 Ibid., 91.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid. Clarke is referring to Sweeney’s translation of Plotinus, Enneads, VI, 7, 32. “He who is thus capable of making all things, what greatness would He have? He is infinite, and, if so, would have no physical magnitude. . . . The Principle would be great in this sense that nothing is more powerful than He nor even equally so. . . . Love of Him is measureless, for love here is without determination because that which is loved is unlimited and, thus, the love itself is infinite.”
One. “Since love always goes to its object as it is intrinsically in itself, and not to a mere extrinsic
denomination, and infinite love drawn by an infinite object surely presupposes that the infinity of
the beloved resides in its own inner reality as it is in itself.”43 In conclusion, “as to the identity of
the One’s power with its nature there can be no question.”44 However, we must be careful to
understand the nature, or “being,” of the One not in Plotinus’ technical sense, which is a
determinate essence, but rather “in our own later more general sense of the term.”45

In summary, Plotinus sees the infinity of the One’s power like “an inexhaustible spring of
inner life which constantly pours over its life to others without ever diminishing in the least the
inner plenitude of the spring itself.”46 Clarke makes sure to point out that the infinity of power in
the One is not a quantitative infinity. “Plotinus looks on this power as a kind of intense
concentration of inner life which is in the Primary Source first and then pours over to its
participations.”47 It is not difficult to see the seeds of existence as dynamic act of presence in such
an outlook.

In the third and final section of the paper, Clarke treats of the infinity of the Intelligence
and the Soul, which are the second and third divine hypostases in Plotinus’ cosmology. Clarke
points out that it “is a standard gambit in all Neoplatonic participation metaphysics”48 to appeal to
a “relative infinity,” which means that although the infinity is “still limited with reference to what
is above it, it possesses a relative infinity with reference to its own products below it.”49 This kind
of relative infinity “is a strictly qualitative attribute flowing from the position and role of an

43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., 92. Italics in the original.
48 Ibid., 93.
49 Ibid.
originative principle in a participation structure.”

There are always qualifications that must be employed when the infinite is applied to the intelligible world of the Intelligence and the Soul. Plotinus is very careful to always state that this infinity is simple and indivisible. Clarke concludes that “nature all through Plotinus, following Aristotle, is related, indeed, to power and action in a being, but always as its intrinsic principle.”

In the end, Clarke asserts that “the whole point of the negative dialectic by which Plotinus concludes that the One must be both nonbeing and infinite is to exclude completely from the One every trace of form, determination and limit” and that “the power of the One as supreme source of all other beings is to be understood as a simple, concentrated fullness or wellspring of inner life containing supereminently the perfection of all the particular, determinate, and limited participations which emanate from it, and hence remaining superior to all particular determinations and forms.” In short, the reason for the inner infinity is “the superiority of a unique source to all the varied particular determinations in the lower order of its effects.” Clarke believes that Sweeny has made a convincing case that early Scholastic thought “is surprisingly thin and meager in its analysis of the divine infinity,” but Clarke also thinks that Sweeney “would find the story quite different, however, if he explored the Greek patristic tradition stemming from men like Gregory of Nyssa and others who were influenced by the school of Plotinus.” Clarke considers his own

---

50 Ibid., 94.
51 Ibid., 95.
52 Ibid., 96.
53 Ibid., 96.
54 Ibid., 97.
55 Ibid., 97.
56 Ibid.
interpretation of Plotinus, which “is also that of Fr. de Finance and . . . of most Plotinian scholars . . . as most probable, all things considered.”

CLARKE’S PUBLICATIONS: 1960

In 1960, Clarke published “The Possibles Revisited: A Reply,” a response to an article by James Conway, which in turn was a critique of Clarke’s earlier article, “What is Really Real?” In short, Clarke thinks Conway’s defense of the possibles as real beings inevitably leads to conflicts with other key points of Thomas’s metaphysics. For example, Conway argues in his defense of the possibles that God knows both the possibles and futures in themselves, but Clarke shows that Thomas denies that God knows the futures. This dialogue results in Clarke being “more certain than ever” of his own central underlying vision of Thomas’s metaphysics, yet also thankful to Conway for pointing out “the many real defects” of Clarke’s own exposition of his position. During 1960, Clarke also wrote an article reporting on a “recent phase of the linguistic analysis movement” regarding language about God and reviewed four books.

---

57 Ibid., 98.
61 Conway, “Reality of the Possibles,” 337.
63 Clarke, “Possibles Revisited,” 101-102.
CAUSALITY AND TIME

In Clarke’s 1961 article, “Causality and Time,” he discusses “the relation between causality and temporal sequence.”66 His goal is to clarify the concepts in order to arrive at an understanding of causality as dynamic and relational. However, rather than being an artifact of the time it was written, it is clear this article had an overarching importance in Clarke’s metaphysical outlook since this article was one that Clarke himself selected to be reprinted in his final collection of articles, The Creative Retrieval of St. Thomas Aquinas. Only with a clear understanding of causality can existence as a dynamic act of presence be grasped as a pillar of Clarke’s relational metaphysics.67

Clarke begins by referencing several scientists from the 1950’s discussing their understanding of causality. He concludes that the “acceptance of temporal sequence as a property of the causal relation is held almost universally by modern scientists.”68 In order to clarify the concept of causality, Clarke maintains a very precise focus, namely “whether it is possible to hold an ontological realism of causal action, to hold a genuine causal efficacy or influx of being from one thing to another, and still maintain that cause and effect form a temporal sequence.”69 Clarke concludes that “the philosopher must make an option between (1) objective causal efficacy with simultaneity of cause and effect, and (2) temporal sequence of antecedent and consequent without causal efficacy.”70 In order to arrive at these two options and make his case for the most

---

67 The simultaneity of cause and effect remained important to Clarke’s metaphysical system throughout his life, as is made clear by his emphasis on this point in The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics (Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 190-192.
68 Ibid., 28.
69 Ibid. Italics in the original.
70 Ibid.
metaphysically robust of the two, Clarke begins with a brief analysis of what previous philosophers have held regarding causality.

“Aristotle expressly defends the simultaneity of cause and effect,” and Clarke points out that the more solid metaphysical argument is based on the thought “that shows that the categories of action and passion are identical in the real order and distinct only in concept.” Thus, action and passion are “strictly identical in the real order and ontologically located in the subject affected.” This view of causality, i.e. where the cause and effect are a single ontological event, is known as “the single-event theory of causality.”

However, with the advent of Ockham in the fourteenth century, the Nominalist tradition started to deny real relations and began atomizing the created universe to such an extent that causal efficacy was reduced to a sheer affirmation of the fact, devoid of any metaphysical justification. Thus, Ockham frequently, but not always, defines causality in terms of temporal priority and posteriority, which is nothing more than substituting the epistemological for the ontological perspective. In short, Ockham defines causality by temporal succession.

Clarke recognizes that some rationalists, such as Leibniz and Descartes, tried to salvage the metaphysical principle of causality, but because they had inherited the Nominalist tradition

---

71 Ibid. Clarke is referencing Aristotle’s Posterior Analytics, II.12, 95a21: “This sort of cause, then and its effect come to be simultaneously when they are in process of becoming, and exist simultaneously when they actually exist; and the same holds good when they are past and when they are future.” The Basic Works of Aristotle, edited by Richard McKeon, (New York: Random House, 1941), 173.


73 Ibid., 29-30.

74 Ibid., 30.

75 Clarke references William of Ockham, Collectorium circa Quattuor Libros Sententarum, I, d. I, q. 3, N-O (Tübingen, 1501): “Omne illud quo posito sequitur alliud debet esse causa illius. . . . Ex tali ordine semper convenit inferre causaliatem in priori respectu posterioris, maxime si prius potest esse sine posteriori, et non e converso naturaliter.”

76 i.e. “to define the nature of causality by the criterion of its empirical recognition by our minds, namely, temporal succession.” Clarke, “Causality and Time,” 30-31.
they merely transformed the empirical recognition by our minds of temporal succession into a necessary connection of ideas. Others, such as Hume, radically rejected the very existence “of objective causal relations outside the mind,”77 insisting instead on a mere temporal sequence learned through experience. In summary, the problem of causality was shifted “from the order of being to our mode of knowing and ordering being.”78 According to Clarke, even Kant “still conceives the causal situation as two distinct events or phases of a process which need to be linked together by some further law of intelligibility.”79

This two-event, time-linked, process view of causality has even been perpetuated by Einstein’s space-time continuum theory of the physical universe, which according to Clarke insists “that no cause in the physical universe can produce an effect at another point in space without some lapse in time.”80 The tide may be turning on the scientific front, however, with twentieth century advances in quantum physics, which Clarke says “has forced a radical revision of the meaning of regular succession, law, and predictability.”81 Nevertheless, as long as predictability is the scientific goal, the law of temporal succession will remain inviolate because predictability itself requires temporal succession.

After summarizing the historical shift from the single-event theory of causality to the temporal succession theory of causality, Clarke begins to argue his main point: a temporal succession theory of causality “is simply not viable as an ontological theory.”82 In fact, “there is irremediable confusion if one attempts to maintain both the temporal succession of cause and effect

77 Ibid., 31.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid., 32. Italics in the original.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
and the objectivity of truly ontological causal influx or active efficacy of cause on effect.”83 This confusion is because no self-enclosed action can be properly causal. “Causal action is by its very essence relational, outward-focused, ecstatic, the dynamic immanence or presence of one being in another.”84

Here we see the importance of existence as a dynamic act of presence. Since “causal action taken properly and strictly as such is . . . one ontological event linking two beings (or two distinct elements within one being) in an indivisible relational unity,” then “it can be nothing less than the real dynamic union of cause and effect in the order of action.”85 In fact, Clarke strongly denounces the other option of time-linked process causality as destroying intelligibility. “The myth of action as some kind of entity which passes or travels through space and time from the cause to its effect must be exorcised uncompromisingly; it destroys the specific intelligibility of what it is trying to explain.”86

Clarke has two primary reasons in support of the single-event theory of causality. “First, causal action and its effect form a dynamic ontological identity at the moment of action.”87 “Second, such action is through and through relational.”88 Since causality is relational, causality also has the characteristics shared by all relations. The most pertinent characteristic of relations for the present discussion is that both terms of the relation must simultaneously exist in the present.

83 Ibid., 33.
84 Ibid., 33-34. Italics in the original. Clarke goes on to say that “the only type of cause that can overcome this defect of unity, actuality, and total presence to itself and others is one that is completely immaterial or unextended in any way, a spirit, in other words.” Ibid., 36. Thus, the question of immanent action may appear to pose a problem since the action remains in the actor and does not appear to be outward-focused. However, even in immanent action there is an “outward” motion from the principle of action, e.g. the will or intellect, to the action itself, e.g. the choice or contemplation, which is the effect.
85 Ibid., 34.
86 Ibid. Italics in the original.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
If both terms do not exist in the present, then the relation can only be mental rather than real, since “different moments of time can be related to each other directly only by a mental, not a real, relation.” In short, “causal action is either real and simultaneous with its effect, or it is not real at all.”

Clarke is cautious, however, about making too strong of a claim about what is known. Although the cause is present in the effect and both exist simultaneously, it still remains that “the nature of the active ecstatic immanence of the cause in the effect remains mysterious and is a source of wonder.” This mystery and wonder is on account of the nature of action, which is “a pure dynamic ‘overflow’ or ‘gift of being,’ as Gilson has called it, from cause to effect.”

Nevertheless, “if authentic causal action exists at all, it and its effect make up one single indivisible event.” The temporal process cannot exist between the cause and the effect, but if there is a temporal process at all, it must be either within the cause, the effect, or both. The presence of a temporal process is because the cause lacks total, actual self-possession. A spirit would be the only cause that could overcome “this defect of unity, actuality, and total presence to itself and others.”

However, in this world of matter and form, “causes and effects will both move together, locked in ontological embrace at every moment.” It is because of local motion that “time will infiltrate inescapably within both cause and effect, but never between them.”

---

89 Ibid., 34.
90 Ibid. Italics in the original.
91 Ibid. Italics in the original.
92 Ibid., 35. Clarke is referencing Etienne Gilson, *Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy* (New York: C. Scribner and Son, 1936), 95. “As soon as causality is interpreted as a gift of being, we are necessarily led to set up a new relation between effect and cause; the relation, namely, of analogy.”
93 Clarke, “Causality and Time,” 35.
94 Ibid., 36.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid., 36-37. Italics in the original.
Despite the ontological necessity of the single-event theory of causality, there is still the important scientific work of learning to predict events. Clarke calls this a “causal relation,” and defines it as a “regular sequence of antecedent-consequent according to law.” A definition of this type allows a kind of predictability based on lawful sequence that modern science can pursue, while not kicking the metaphysical footing out from under the full meaning of causality.

CLARKE’S PUBLICATIONS: 1961-1962

During this two year span, Clarke published replies to five other philosophers and produced four original articles of his own. After publishing the previously discussed reply to Sweeney’s “Infinity in Plotinus,” Clarke wrote three short replies to papers given by Paul Ziff, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Paul Tillich at the fourth meeting of the New York University Institute of Philosophy in 1960. Clarke also criticized an article by Brent Bozell for claiming a “divinely commissioned authority” of the West over other civilizations. The first of Clarke’s original articles covered the topic of leisure, again giving more insight into his developing concept of person. His second

---

97 Ibid., 37.
98 W. Norris Clarke, S.J., “On Professors Ziff, Niebuhr, and Tillich” in Religious Experience and Truth: A Symposium, ed. Sidney Hook (New York: New York University Press, 1961): 224-30. Of special mention is Clarke’s reply to Tillich, as it sheds some light on how Clarke understands the relation of faith to a person: “It is precisely because such an attitude [i.e. faith] involves the whole person as an existential totality in action that it must include the basic will attitudes of interpersonal trust, confidence, commitment, etc.” Ibid., 226.
100 W. Norris Clarke, S.J., “Cultural Dimensions of the New Leisure” in The Ethical Aftermath of Automation, ed. Francis Quinn, S.J. (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1962), 199-212. “The principle function of leisure will be to restore the balance and give an opportunity for the individual initiative, self-assertion, and self-expression that has little or no outlet during the time of work. His leisure will enable a man to rediscover himself as a person. Yet we are also learning more and more that social or group activity on a truly personal basis is not a stiffer but a marvelous developer and releaser of authentic, personal individuality. No one is fully an ‘I’ save in conscious relation to some ‘Thou.’ There can be no authentic ‘We’ save through the free, personal coming together of authentic ‘I’s.’” Ibid., 211-212.
original article examined the relationship between authority and private judgment.\textsuperscript{101} Expanding on a theme running through the previous few years of his career, Clarke also authored an article on the relationship between technology and man.\textsuperscript{102} Clarke also reviewed five books, including \textit{Our Experience of God} by H.D. Lewis,\textsuperscript{103} which serves as a precursor to the pillar of Clarke’s relational metaphysics covered in chapter three of this dissertation, the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will.\textsuperscript{104} Lastly, Clarke proposes a new Aristotelian category in order to begin developing a metaphysics of order.\textsuperscript{105} This daring article merits an in-depth analysis, as it introduces an important component of his relational metaphysics.

\textbf{SYSTEM: A NEW CATEGORY OF BEING?}

In this article, first published in 1961, Clarke makes his first attempt at moving beyond the metaphysics of Thomas. While this article is only very loosely connected to the theme of this chapter, the article presents both the first seeds of Clarke’s “substance-in-relation” and can be seen as the origins of Clarke’s own philosophical system of relational metaphysics. Thus, it is fitting that Clarke included it among the articles published in \textit{The Creative Retrieval of St. Thomas Aquinas}.

\textsuperscript{104} W. Norris Clarke, S.J., “Our Experience of God,” \textit{International Philosophical Quarterly}, 1 (1960): 168-73. In this review Clarke discusses both the “intellectual leap” from a finite datum to an infinite Source, as well as his understanding of analogy, both of which are integral parts of his first book, \textit{The Philosophical Approach to God}.
Aquinas. What has given rise to this article is what Clarke perceived as “a significant lacuna in Thomistic metaphysics” regarding the metaphysics of order or “system.” Clarke even goes so far as to suggest that “system” should be added to the ten classical categories laid down by Aristotle that identify the ontological features of our universe and were “accepted without change by Saint Thomas and the Scholastic tradition.” Before making his argument, Clarke first spends some time presenting two ways of looking at the universe: the substantialist view and the relational view. Clarke then concludes by summarizing the view of Thomas before moving beyond into uncharted philosophical territory.

According to the substantialist view of the universe, “the center of gravity of the real world lies unqualifiedly and exclusively in real substances.” If this view is taken, then “the only categories of reality are accordingly substance and accident.” In this view, the accident of relation is always said of a single substance. Clarke uses the example of friendship to explain the substantialist view. “Mutual friendship, for example, is two relations, one rooted in me and reaching toward you, the other rooted in you and reaching toward me.” In the substantialist view, there is no single relation linking several substances at once.

The difficulty arises when the substantialist view tries to explain the ontological status of objective order, i.e. “those types of unified immanent order which link together groups of individuals in such a way that they form a single objectively existing and recognizable order, a single intelligible network or pattern of relations forming a whole.” It is this type of immanent

---

106 Ibid., 39.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid., 40.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid., 40-41. Italics in the original.
order that Clarke likes to refer to as a “system,” and he identifies “two main levels of reality on which such systems occur: (1) in the infrapersonal world,” such as ecological and cosmic systems, “and (2) in the world of persons,” such as social groups and nations. Clarke also points out that systems can be either static or dynamically evolving, claiming that the substantialist view is unable to account for such realities.

Clarke then shifts perspectives to the relational view, where the center of intelligibility resides not in the individual substance, but rather in overall patterns of order, relational wholes, and dynamic systems. Although Clarke admits that the ordinary world “gets rather badly out of focus” when “looked at through metaphysical glasses of this type,” it is also true that a whole range of modern thought fits easily and naturally into this perspective. For an example, Clarke mentions that “the whole world of mathematics, which has been called ‘the form of modern thought,’ is dominated by relation and order,” and he goes so far as to claim that “practically all modern disciplines, even recent theology,” is dominated by relation and order. The most important principle of intelligibility in this relation and order is “the system as such,” so that the principle of explanation in most fields is now “explained by the whole, the individual element by the system.”

Clarke then turns to Thomas, who “goes far beyond Aristotle . . . in positing intelligence as the necessary condition of possibility required to set up any finality or order, on the grounds

---

112 Ibid., 41. I am surprised Clarke does not mention juridic persons as an example of a “system,” since it seems to be a perfect example, while at the same time incorporating the idea of “person” on a larger scale.  
113 Ibid., 42.  
114 Ibid.  
115 Ibid.  
116 Ibid., 43.  
117 Ibid. Italics in the original.  
118 Ibid.
that only an intellect can grasp the relation of means to end.” Clarke, however, does not think Thomas “has gone far enough in working out the metaphysical analysis of the immanent ontological status of order within the ordered members themselves, outside of the extrinsic intelligent cause.” The particular inadequacy of Thomas, according to Clarke, is that he has not analyzed explicitly enough the intrinsic formal cause and mode of existence of order within the ordered substances themselves. If the only categories of real being are substance and inhering accident, into which does the unity of order or system fit? Clarke claims that under the Aristotelian-Thomistic set of categories, the only alternative “is to locate the unity of order and system solely in the intentional order.”

After summarizing the previous viewpoints, Clarke proposes a solution to what he considers to be “one of the most urgent and crucial tasks confronting Thomistic metaphysics today.” Clarke extends traditional Thomistic correlative metaphysical principles so that they exist “analogously between each whole substance in a natural system and the immanent intelligible unity and being of the system itself as such.” This is quite a creative solution. The system would be neither a substance nor an accident, yet “its unity would be a true and real one, an authentic new mode of being in its own right, but one that could exist only in mutual correlation or composition with all its constituent member-substances at once.” This creative solution results in a bold claim by Clarke: “Thus the fundamental categories of being would now become substance, individual accident, and system.” Clarke clarifies his proposed solution by referring

\[\text{\textsuperscript{119}}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{120}}\text{Ibid. Italics in the original.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{121}}\text{Ibid., 43-44.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{122}}\text{Ibid., 44.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{123}}\text{Ibid. Italics in the original.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{124}}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{125}}\text{Ibid., 45.}\]
to system as a kind of “superaccident” that inheres in many substances at once, yet cannot be considered an isolated accident inhering in each individual substance.

In opposition to his proposed solution, Clarke examines two alternatives. The first alternative is that “the entire identical order or system is multiplied over and over again in each member, rooted in each of the latter by a relation that is single in its foundation but multiple in its term.”¹²⁶ This alternative is analogous to the individuation of the same specific form by matter, and Clarke is unsure whether it differs essentially from his proposed solution. Is it possible “that a single Aristotelian relation in a noncognitive subject can have as term of reference a whole ordered multitude of other substances and include as well their own mutual relations to each other”?¹²⁷ If possible then the problem would be solved, and the need for a new category of being, i.e. system, would disappear. However, Clarke wants to maintain that the system is “a single existential unity in all.”¹²⁸

The second alternative would be to explain the system in terms of intentional being. Clarke identifies two problems with this alternative. The first is that “it seems to presuppose the point at issue,”¹²⁹ namely, that the only true being is a substance or accident. The second is that “it is not easy to see how this position can take care of organic or natural systems.”¹³⁰ This second difficulty brings to light, according to Clarke, “a variant or extension of a long-standing problem never sufficiently analyzed . . . in Thomistic or Scholastic thought.”¹³¹ This long-standing problem is the problem of “the mode of presence of the final cause in a noncognitive natural agent.”¹³²

---
¹²⁶ Ibid., 45.
¹²⁷ Ibid.
¹²⁸ Ibid. Italics in the original.
¹²⁹ Ibid., 46.
¹³⁰ Ibid.
¹³¹ Ibid.
¹³² Ibid.
end “intentionally present in the noncognitive agent itself or only in its intelligent cause”? Clarke points out that “Thomas remains prudently vague and reserved on the problem, speaking of such natural agents as ‘quasi-instruments of God,’ without further elaboration.” Clarke goes beyond this prudent vagueness and opts “for some mode of real, imperfect, analogous participation of every agent, cognitive or not, in the formal intentional presence of its natural ends in the mind of its maker.” In short, Clarke posits “some kind of participation in the intentional order terminating outside the realm of intellect itself.”

In any case, whether or not a system can be explained as a participation in the intentional order, Clarke nevertheless thinks it would be both necessary and fruitful “to characterize system or a single order-among-many as a new mode of real being, possibly a new type of accident.” So while “system” would be characterized as a new basic category alongside substance and accident for Clarke, each particular system could be either substantial or accidental, depending on the case. This division between substantial and accidental is necessary in order to “do justice to the reality of system and order as a single immanent unity in many substances at once.”

CLARKE’S PUBLICATIONS: 1963-1965

During this three year span, Clarke attended many conferences and workshops, while also helping craft the philosophy curriculum at Jesuit schools. At one workshop Clarke contributed another summary of the state of philosophy, “Current Views on the Intrinsic Nature of

---

133 Ibid. Italics in the original.
134 Ibid. Italics in the original.
135 Ibid., 46-47.
136 Ibid., 47. Italics in the original.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid. Italics in the original.
Philosophy,” similar to his previous “Recent Trends in European Metaphysics” from more than a decade earlier.\textsuperscript{139} At another conference Clarke offered some additional criteria to Keith Gunderson’s presentation, “Are there Criteria for ‘Encountering God’?” and on Alasdair MacIntyre’s presentation, “Is Understanding Religion Compatible with Believing It?”\textsuperscript{140} Clarke also provides some reflections on the thirteenth International Congress of Philosophy, covering a wide variety of topics.\textsuperscript{141} Finally, although a rather surprising theme for a discussion of individuation and the distinction between person and nature, Clarke’s comments on Joseph Margolis’s “Dracula the Man” do indeed provide some additional insight into Clarke’s developing understanding of person.\textsuperscript{142} Clarke began slowing down on book reviews during this period of his career, only publishing a review of Balthasar’s \textit{A Theology of History}.\textsuperscript{143} Although all these commentaries by Clarke on various conferences are interesting, the most interesting and influential was the Wooster Conference of 1966, which is the topic of the following section.

\section*{THE SELF IN EASTERN AND WESTERN THOUGHT}

Clarke examines Eastern metaphysical traditions and phenomenology in his 1966 article, “The Self in Eastern and Western Thought: The Wooster Conference.”\textsuperscript{144} Although this article is

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{minipage}{\textwidth}
\begin{footnotesize}


\end{footnotesize}
\end{minipage}
\end{flushleft}
only very loosely related to the theme of this chapter, the article is worth examining as it was the origin and foundation of many concepts which became foundation stones of Clarke’s understanding of the person. The influence of this conference on Clarke is clear, as he said it “stands out in the memory of this participant as one of the most interesting and fruitful of the vast number of philosophical meetings he has attended.”\textsuperscript{145} Clarke wrote this paper to focus on “the central issue in the dialogue between East and West” emerging from the several conference presentations.\textsuperscript{146} Namely, whether or not the human self, in its ultimate depths, is “finite, determinate, and ontologically distinct from the Absolute Ground of all reality; or whether at its deepest level the human self is really identical (or at least continuous) with the Absolute, hence in its ultimate root indeterminate, infinite, non-multiple.”\textsuperscript{147}

Clarke begins by summarizing presentations on other mystical traditions of the world. A presentation on Buddhism expressed the perspective that “all determinate entities are transitory and that the only permanently abiding reality is the Whole.”\textsuperscript{148} Clarke recounts how several presentations on Islam emphasized the sharp split between “the mystical and the anti-mystical traditions” that exist “in polar tension within the overall unity of Islam.”\textsuperscript{149} A paper contrasting Hinduism with the book of Job was of particular interest to Clarke. Whereas Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gītā pursues God through Jungian introspection to true knowledge of the finite self, Job pursues a trusting, I-Thou personal relation with God through interpersonal dialogue that leads to authentic self-knowledge. Clarke next recounts a presentation on Mahayana Buddhism, “the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 101. \\
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 102. \\
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 102. \\
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 103. \\
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid. \\
\end{flushright}
central principle is that human self-consciousness is not a substance or thing but an activity, an activity of self-expression, whose goal is to attain the Limitless.” Clarke points out how Mahayana Buddhism presents a picture of spiritual maturity that “shares two orders of being at once: infinite and unconditioned in its root, it is at the same time dependent and conditioned in its phenomenal expression. It is a living dynamic relation of rootedness of the conditioned in the unconditioned.” Thus, in Mahayana Buddhism, the “ultimate state of self-realization is one of full freedom, full awareness of relatedness to other persons, yet as ultimately rooted in the Absolute with no clinging to the determinate through which it expresses the Infinite.”

Clarke then concludes with some reflections of his own “on the possibility of further dialogue between East and West on the central problem of the relation of the human self to the Absolute.” Clarke thinks that “the most fruitful meeting ground between Eastern and Western thinkers is the existential plane of spiritual experience,” which should be the starting ground of dialogue between people of mature spiritual experience. In addition, Clarke tells us that we should not settle for a radical, unbridgeable opposition between the impersonal monistic East and the personal dualistic West. Rather, by focusing on the experiences, certain constants will emerge, such as “the sense of a dissolving of the barriers of the human self as particular, limited, set off from all others, as self-identical by exclusion of others. There is a sense rather of being invaded, immersed, drawn out of one’s limited self into the great ocean of pure unlimited consciousness.

---

150 Ibid., 104.
151 Ibid.
152 Ibid.
153 Ibid.
154 Ibid.
that is the Absolute.” Clarke makes sure to clarify his view that this “drawing out” of one’s self is not a “blotting out,” but rather a great intensification of consciousness.

By remaining on the psychological level, philosophers “can legitimately describe this experience of mystical union with the Absolute as a transcending of the determinate, finite, particular, or phenomenal self.” This determinate self is distinguished by the principle of contradiction, insofar as the identity of the self is determined by exclusion. However, the principle of identity can also be a source of distinction, insofar as “all distinction is conceived within a prior more profound unity of being.” Making a distinction using the principle of identity is possible because of the experiences, found in both East and West, “of intense spiritual union with the Absolute,” such that “there exists, at least on the conscious level, a complete standing-out-of-one’s-consciousness-of-self (ecstasy) to be totally absorbed in the object of one’s knowledge and love.” In these experiences, “all determinations, limits, or barriers between the self and the rest of being must vanish when consciousness reaches its full perfection.”

Clarke then presents what he sees as the “crux” of the debate between East and West before making an attempt at reconciliation by offering his own philosophical hypothesis for further consideration. He tells us that the crux of the debate is based on the experience of both the East and West, which indicates that determination and self-identity by exclusion of others is not the highest state of human consciousness. Although many Eastern thinkers conclude that the plurality of selves in the world is a transitory state, the West refuses to agree. In an attempt at reconciling

---

155 Ibid., 105. Italics in the original.
156 Ibid.
157 Ibid., 106.
158 Ibid., 105.
159 Ibid., 106.
160 Ibid.
this difference, Clarke proposes a philosophical hypothesis: distinction through loving affirmation.¹⁶¹

As an example, Clarke presents the theological model of God as a Trinity of Persons, where plurality is “through pure affirmation by knowledge and love,” yet there remains a “simple unity of being.”¹⁶² Relations become the basis for the plurality, rather than exclusion, limits, or barriers. “The plurality derives purely from the irreducible relations of giving and receiving in the context of self-expression.”¹⁶³ Even though Clarke is appealing to the Trinity to enlighten a philosophical concept, he realizes the danger and carefully limits his point. “The point is that a mode of being at its highest perfection is here being positively asserted within the ambit of Western thought which united unity and plurality without contradiction and in which the human self is invited to share at its own ultimate stage of perfection, at least on the level of knowledge and love.”¹⁶⁴ Thus, Clarke thinks there are grounds for significant agreement between Western and Eastern thinkers on the ultimate depth of spiritual consciousness.

Clarke then identifies what he considers to be another important dispute between East and West: the distinction between our conscious spiritual experience and our ontological explanation of that experience. Although there can be a certain agreement on the conscious level as outlined in the preceding paragraph, when it comes to the ontological level there is a clear disagreement. “Oriental” traditions are willing to say that even on the ontological level, the only real truth is the

¹⁶¹ “We suggest as an hypothesis for philosophical exploration that it is possible also to have distinction not merely through determination and exclusion of the other but through affirmation of the other in love. This would be a purely positive plurality through pure affirmation, without implying any determination, limits, barriers, or exclusion between the lover-affirmer and the loved-affirmed, at least within the field of consciousness, if the mutual response were total on both sides.” Ibid.
¹⁶² Ibid.
¹⁶³ Ibid.
¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 107.
unity of all being. Clarke’s explanation for why the oriental traditions are willing to go this far is that they take spiritual experience as their primary source of evidence. “Oriental philosophy is primarily what might be called a phenomenology of spiritual experience, and only secondarily a metaphysical analysis of the ‘objective’ nature or being of reality itself.”165 So for Eastern philosophers, “reality at its ultimate depth is simply identical with, or constituted by, consciousness itself.”166 Assuming this theory, Clarke admits that “if this actually is the case . . . then, of course, phenomenology would be identical with metaphysical explanation.”167

Clarke concludes by returning to the necessity of negation and the perspective of Thomas. Even if one grants that the ultimate ontological structure of reality is identical with consciousness itself, “it seems apodictically impossible to reach anything lower or less perfect than the Absolute except through some kind of negation.”168 Clarke then poetically describes the need for this initial negation: “This initial indispensable ontological negation, however, would only be in view of, ordered towards, the affirmation of the multiple in knowing-love, which, when fully responded to by finite centers of consciousness . . . would tend toward the total interpenetration of the One and the many in a single unitive field of blissful consciousness that transcends without abolishing the opposition of One to many.”169 Finally, Clarke returns to the clarity of Thomas to show the explicitness with which he held “that the power of knowledge and love is given to finite beings precisely in order that they may transcend on this ‘intentional’ level the limits of their essential

---

165 Ibid.
166 Ibid., 107-108.
167 Ibid., 108.
168 Ibid.
being which cannot be overcome on the ontological level itself.” Clarke draws this position from Thomas’s *De veritate*.

**CLARKE’S PUBLICATIONS: 1966-1967**

In addition to the summary of the Wooster Conference in 1966, Clarke also published a preface to William Carlo’s *The Ultimate Reducibility of Essence to Existence in Existential Metaphysics* and one original article, “Analytic Philosophy and Language about God,” in which Clarke begins exploring many aspects of a foundation of his relational metaphysics, the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will. In particular, Clarke focuses on how language can be meaningfully applied to God and various proofs for the existence of God. Clarke’s understanding of analogy is presented, along with his current perspective on proving God’s existence: “All proofs of God are ultimately reducible to this: ‘If being is intelligible, then God is. But being is intelligible. Therefore God is’.” This foundation and the various aspects of it are more fully explored in the next stage of his career, and will be the focal point of chapter three. The following year, in 1967,

---

170 Ibid., 109.
171 *De ver.*, q. 2, a. 2. (Leon. ed., Vol. 22.1.42-47). In particular the section on knowing by abstraction from matter: “Perfectio autem unius rei in altero esse non potest secundum determinatum esse quod habebat in re illa, et ideo ad hoc quod nata sit esse in re altera oportet eam considerari absque his quae nata sunt eam determinare; et quia formae et perfections rerum per materiam determinantur inde est quod secundum hoc aliqua res est cognoscibilis secundum quod a materia separator; unde oportet ut et illud in quo suscipitur talis rei perfectio sit immateriale: si enim esset materiale perfectio recepta esset in eo secundum aliquod esse determinatum et ita non esset in eo secundum quod est cognoscibilis, scilicet ut existens perfectio unius est nata esse in altero.”
174 Ibid., 49.
Clarke published an article on the role of gratitude in religious life,\textsuperscript{175} as well as several articles in the \textit{New Catholic Encyclopedia} on aseity, finite being, limitation, potency, and pure act.\textsuperscript{176}

THE SELF AS SOURCE OF MEANING IN METAPHYSICS

One of the two most important articles on metaphysics that Clarke wrote in 1968 was “The Self as Source of Meaning in Metaphysics.”\textsuperscript{177} This article was based upon Clarke’s Presidential Address delivered at the nineteenth annual meeting of the Metaphysical Society of America. Here we can see Clarke make the transition from focusing on “existence as a dynamic act of presence” to “the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will.” Clarke begins the address by proposing “that one of the most important things the metaphysician is doing, consciously or unconsciously, is drawing constantly on the total conscious life of the self, as a central point of reference for giving meaning to his basic metaphysical concepts.”\textsuperscript{178} Thus, Clarke places the inner life of the self as the foundation for the possibility of metaphysics. He goes on to say: “It is here, I maintain, in the experience of the life of the self as grasped from within, that these concepts find their existential rooting in reality, the primary link with experience from which the positive content of their meaning is accessible to us.”\textsuperscript{179} After presenting this claim at the outset of the address, Clarke then moves directly into an exposition of his position, which he divides into two main sections.

\textsuperscript{178} Clarke, “Self as Source,” 598.
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid.
according to a common division of metaphysics at the time Clarke published the article: descriptive and explanatory.

**Descriptive Metaphysics**

Beginning with “descriptive metaphysics,” the goal of which is linking everything by vast unifying concepts, Clarke asks how it is possible to “gain a truly positive, intrinsic knowledge” of what those unifying concepts mean when applied to the real order.\(^{180}\) In looking for a being that can serve as the foundational knowledge of these unifying concepts, Clarke concludes that “the only being to which we have direct access from within, which we live existentially and subjectively from within . . . is the conscious human self, the life of the embodied person as lit up from within by the act of self-possession that is self-awareness, on all its many levels.”\(^{181}\) If Clarke had stopped here, he would have unsurprisingly been misunderstood by some as advocating a return to Descartes’ philosophical foundations. However, Clarke clarifies that he is talking about “the human self as it actually exists in the concrete, in constant intersubjective openness to other selves in the human community.”\(^{182}\) Thus, Clarke has a very robust concept of the human self drawn from “the best phenomenological analysis.”\(^{183}\) Rather than taking the isolated, thinking human self as a foundation, Clarke draws from the connected, conscious human self that arises from personal relations. “One person has the ability to open himself freely to the other so that they can know each other existentially in a special mode of mediated-immediacy by an inner resonance of affinity

---

\(^{180}\) Ibid., 599.
\(^{181}\) Ibid.
\(^{182}\) Ibid.
\(^{183}\) Ibid., 600.
or connatural affinity.”¹⁸⁴ In support of this inner knowledge of other selves, Clarke mentions the experience of human love and friendship.

What can be drawn from our experience of our human self as it actually exists? Existence can be seen as a dynamic act of presence, a truth that acts as a pillar of Clarke’s relational metaphysics for the rest of his career. It is here that Clarke clearly defines “to be” and “to act” so that they can serve as that pillar. “To exist means to be present, actively present, in some way like me, and like the other selves to whom I am actively present and who are actively present to me in the various modes of our intersubjective communication.”¹⁸⁵ Thus, our very experience of existence must be founded on our active presence to other selves, with whom we experience intersubjective communication. “To act means to be doing something like what I am doing when I enter into contact with the non-self by response or initiative as I communicate with it or transform it in some way.”¹⁸⁶ Thus, an act of presence is not only something done with initiative, but also can be a response. An act of presence is not just a transformative motion, but also a communication.

With this understanding of “to exist” and “to act” serving as a pillar, he explains how the metaphysician begins to “move outwards through a kind of spontaneous prereflective connatural affinity to understand positively, though not quite as directly and intensely, what it means for other human selves to exist, to act, etc.”¹⁸⁷ Here Clarke explains how we can use our experience of existence to have a positive concept of other existences. According to Clarke, we can “reach out by a kind of analogical projection to grasp indirectly but not purely extrinsically, in some positive though very imperfect and vague way, what it means for higher animals to exist on the level of

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.
¹⁸⁵ Ibid.
¹⁸⁶ Ibid.
¹⁸⁷ Ibid.
sense awareness.” Clarke claims that we can use this “analogical projection” all the way down to atoms, molecules, and even the subatomic level, where “the one intrinsic link left is our understanding of what it means to act through the body,” and also in the opposite direction “to entities higher than ourselves.” This “analogical projection” of concepts, such as existence, to higher entities follows a twofold process. First, all the imperfections found in the concept must be negated. Second, “the unlimited fullness of realization that this attribute is capable of on the highest level” must be affirmed.

As an example of how this foundation can be applied in the particular for insight into the main descriptive concepts of metaphysics, Clarke focuses on the concept of substance. If substance is “taken in a purely formal literal way without existential interpretation and control in terms of the lived experience of the self,” then it “gives rise to the classic difficulties of modern philosophy against applying it to any real entity of our experience.” However, if substance is grounded “on the lived experience of the identity of the self as agent through time,” then we are able “to control the concept and prevent it from becoming an unrelated absolute.” Of course, the requirements Clarke lays out for this grounding and control are rather steep: “This we can do by keeping in focus the full complexus of subtle and flexible reciprocal relations it bears, in the concrete, with the changing aspects within the individual and with the entire evolving world system in which it is immersed.” However, this is possible when we view it in relation to our own personal experience of our own agency in the world. As human selves, we manifest ourselves as agents with “a constant

---

188 Ibid.  
189 Ibid., 600-601.  
190 Ibid., 601.  
191 Ibid., 602.  
192 Ibid.  
193 Ibid.
inner activity of active-receptive integrative assimilation of the world around. The human self remains self-identical only by constantly integrating into itself the multifarious other that surrounds it and that is in constant dynamic interaction with it. “It is this integrative activity—which is a type of change—that Clarke identifies as a genuine self-identity. Thus, it is essential is to realize that self-identical is not equivalent to unchanging.

Clarke next applies his concept of analogy by describing how this integrative activity can be applied to the whole range of experience. “This active self-identity shades off in intensity, mode of manifestation, and clarity of distinction from the environment, as we project the concept analogically down to the levels of the molecule, the atoms, and below.” Clarke then goes in the other direction and shows how this active, self-identical understanding of substance can be applied to God. “Similarly, too, the concept of substance and self-identity shades off—for us—into the higher obscurity of infinite intensity when applied to God.”

Clarke gives two reasons for applying this concept of substance across the entire scale of reality. The first is the fundamental principle “that whenever two entities, no matter how diverse, can come together into an active encounter of any kind, or can even be positively related to each other in any way, there must be some underlying bond of unity between them.” This principle is true because all differences and distinctions “are possible only in terms of a deeper unity transcending the differences.” The second reason is that metaphysics itself, because it strives to provide a unified vision of the real, “is committed to some use of all-embracing concepts.”

---

194 Ibid.
195 Ibid., 603.
196 Ibid.
197 Ibid., 604.
198 Ibid.
199 Ibid.
Clarke’s example of analogically projecting the concept of substance, down to atoms and up to God, shows us his main point: the self must serve as the source of descriptive metaphysics. In short, every conceptual tool must be rooted in some inner direct experience that is able to be analogically projected both up and down the scale of existence.\textsuperscript{200}

Clarke then responds to two objections to this viewpoint. The first is that if all concepts receive their positive reference to the real order though our own self, how do the concepts truly refer to anything outside our subjective experience? Clarke’s response is that because the intent of metaphysical concepts “is to join diversity into unity, their meanings must transcend all polarities of self and other, subject and object.”\textsuperscript{201} Thus, it is the self-conscious integration of the object and subject that gives rise to the metaphysical concept. The second objection, or rather “inevitable consequence,” is that Clarke’s hypothesis “renders all metaphysics done by man radically perspectival.”\textsuperscript{202} Clarke’s response to this objection is to readily admit that “this is indeed a fundamental weakness and built-in limitation of any metaphysics done by man.”\textsuperscript{203} However, in order to mitigate against this weakness, Clarke advocates for a clear distinction between concept and judgment. This distinction is necessary because “we can construct open analogical concepts and extend them by reasoned judgment far beyond the range of our immediate experience.”\textsuperscript{204} For Clarke, the range of judgment is “co-extensive with the limitless field of the dynamism of the intelligence itself towards all being, and thus allows us to affirm with good reason beyond what

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{200} “. . . no matter how wide-ranging his conceptual tools, every one of them which contains a positive reference to the real order must be rooted in the existential order at some point through some direct experience of it as lived from within. . . . And the one privileged—in fact, unique—locus where all concepts open out into the existential order as known from within is the human self as existentially lived and possessed from within by self-consciousness.” Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{201} Ibid., 604-605.
\item \textsuperscript{202} Ibid., 605.
\item \textsuperscript{203} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{204} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\end{itemize}
we can directly experience or clearly represent in concepts.”\textsuperscript{205} Thus, although all metaphysics done by man is radically perspectival, this does not mean that we are limited to what we can experience. Judgment allows our concepts to reach beyond our direct experience, even when “the self is the primary source of meaning for the basic concepts of descriptive metaphysics.”\textsuperscript{206} This foundation for descriptive metaphysics allows Clarke to avoid the extremes of rationalism and empiricism.

\textit{Explanatory Metaphysics}

Clarke then turns to “explanatory metaphysics,” which “seeks to probe beyond the world as directly experienced to discover these ultimate causes or conditions of possibility which . . . must be affirmed to be real in order that the world of experience may be rendered adequately intelligible.”\textsuperscript{207} Although Clarke makes the claim that the self must again be the primary source of meaning in explanatory metaphysics, how the self functions as the primary source of meaning is quite different. Whereas in descriptive metaphysics the self is the experiential instance of a universal concept, in explanatory metaphysics the self functions “as a springboard from which we can take off to posit a legitimate affirmation beyond our experience.”\textsuperscript{208} In particular, this springboard “is the profound innate dynamism of the mind itself towards the total intelligibility of total being.”\textsuperscript{209} Here Clarke begins making the transition from the second pillar of his relational metaphysics, existence as a dynamic act of presence, to the foundation of his relational

\begin{enumerate}
\item[205] Ibid.
\item[206] Ibid.
\item[207] Ibid., 606.
\item[208] Ibid.
\item[209] Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
metaphysics, the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will. This foundation, which is a necessary prerequisite to building the other pillars of Clarke’s relational metaphysics, will be thoroughly treated in the next chapter of this dissertation. However, it is worthwhile to examine Clarke’s preliminary arguments presented in the second half of this article in order to introduce the meaning and importance of the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will.

Clarke credits the philosophers Maurice Blondel and Joseph Maréchal, as well as his own teacher André Marc, for building a metaphysical tradition around the dynamism of the intellect and will. Clarke also mentions the work of the Transcendental Thomist theologians Bernard Lonergan, Karl Rahner, Johannes Baptist Lotz, and Emerich Coreth with inspiring him to build the pillars of his relational metaphysics on this foundational dynamism. What Clarke does here, however, is present an outline for how the process actually works of moving from the dynamism of the intellect and will to making metaphysical affirmations beyond our experience.

The principle of sufficient reason must first be accepted, which Clarke formulates as “whatever exists in any way must have a sufficient reason (or adequate intelligible ground) for its existence, either in itself or in some other real being(s).” This principle, however, is not self-evident and cannot be proven. Rather, Clarke insists that the acceptance of the principle of sufficient reason “rests on a profound commitment, by what might be called an act of natural faith in our intellectual nature as a gift, to the profound dynamism of the mind towards being and its exigency for total intelligibility.” Clarke proposes the principle of sufficient reason not only as the necessary starting point for his relational metaphysics, but Clarke also claims that “any intellectual inquirer in any area, must be at least implicitly committed to such a principle, whether

\[\text{Ibid., 607.}\]
\[\text{Ibid.}\]
he will consciously admit or can formulate it or not, under pain of severing from the start the vital nerve energizing his whole inquiry.”\textsuperscript{212}

Once the principle of sufficient reason has been accepted, it must be brought “to bear on the experiential data before us to be explained or rendered intelligible.”\textsuperscript{213} In other words, the cause is sought, which Clarke defines as “\textit{whatever in the real order is responsible for event or situation X, which has been shown to be unintelligible by itself.”}\textsuperscript{214} Clarke admits that this definition is rather broad, open, and flexible. “Like intelligibility itself and all analogical concepts, its exact meaning cannot be defined once and for all ahead of time, but only in function of the context of inquiry in which it functions at any one time.”\textsuperscript{215} Thus, cause must be understood in the context of the particular inquiry in which it functions.

The important point for Clarke is that when the mind applies the principle of sufficient reason to particular empirical data, we are compelled “to affirm by postulate the existence of an adequate cause,” even without knowing “exactly what the inner nature of this cause may be.”\textsuperscript{216} Nevertheless, “one of the essential sources for giving meaning to the notion of cause thus affirmed beyond the reach of our experience is the appeal to the radical exigency of the intellect for the total intelligibility of all being.”\textsuperscript{217} Clarke then points out that “the implications of this process are especially crucial when applied to the supreme test case of explanatory metaphysics: the affirmation of an ultimate infinite Source of all being, God.”\textsuperscript{218} By simplifying this test case to pure philosophical roots, Clarke claims that what philosophers are doing “is going all the way to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[212] Ibid., 608.
\item[213] Ibid.
\item[214] Ibid. Italics in the original.
\item[215] Ibid., 608-609.
\item[216] Ibid., 609.
\item[217] Ibid.
\item[218] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
the limit in committing ourselves to the intellect’s radical drive toward intelligibility, and asserting that there must be a completely self-sufficient, and therefore infinitely perfect, single (because infinite) ultimate cause or existential explanatory principle for all finite being.”²¹⁹ Thus, because the infinite is being asserted, the assertion must spring from “the innate drive of our minds . . . to affirm as necessary . . . what is completely veiled in itself from my direct grasp in any way.”²²⁰

If it is granted that God is asserted on account of the principle of sufficient reason, how can it be possible to affirm any further attributes of a “completely veiled” hidden cause? We can “proceed at once along the negative path” and deny all limitation, contingency, and imperfection.²²¹ We can also ascribe positive characteristics by identifying what is limited, imperfect, and deficient in our own experience of reality. In order to identify these characteristics as deficient, “we must somehow know in some dim, implicit, indirect way this ideal we are existentially reaching out for.”²²² Here Clarke makes reference to Thomas and Pascal in order to shed some more light onto this indirect knowledge. “It is a knowledge by natural affinity or ‘connaturality’ as Thomas Aquinas puts it, by the very longing and drive of love itself, a knowledge through the dynamic orientation of tendency itself.”²²³ According to Clarke, Pascal is a little more intuitive and simple. “It is the ‘knowledge of the heart’ that Pascal speaks about, when he says, ‘He who seeks God has already found him’. ”²²⁴

²¹⁹ Ibid. Italics in the original.
²²⁰ Ibid., 609-610.
²²¹ Ibid., 610.
²²² Ibid., 610.
²²³ Ibid., 610-611.
Clarke defends this indirect, obscure knowledge as “nonetheless an authentic and in some way positive form of human knowledge.” Clarke goes on to connect this type of knowledge to analogical concepts. “It is this kind of knowledge which fills in and gives existential guts and thrust to the so-called analogical concepts of the unconditional values and perfections we find ourselves obliged to affirm of God.” Clarke then conveniently sums up these pure perfections that we are obliged to affirm of God in the following list: “existence (active presence), goodness, knowledge, love, power (or will).” The main point Clarke wishes to stress is that “this positive content is supplied by the dialectic between our present experience as judged imperfect and the unlimited inner existential thrust of our spirit (intellect and will intertwined together) toward the plenitude of being, as both intelligible and good (lovable).”

Clarke finishes by creatively branching out toward Hinduism and Buddhism, having recently returned from a seven-week stay in India and Japan. In particular, he tries to utilize insights gained from his exposure to Eastern metaphysical traditions in order to address “the age-old problem how to reconcile and relate properly together the one and the many, in the order of being and beings, of consciousness and consciousnesses, of consciousness and being.” By reflecting on “ecstatic experiences” in both the Western and Eastern tradition, Clarke begins to dimly see the existential possibility “of total mutual interiority between two selves, at least between the divine and the human and perhaps also between two human selves.” This insight gives Clarke hope to someday defend the possibility of “plurality without limitation or negation, at least

---

225 Clarke, “Self as Source,” 611.
226 Ibid.
227 Ibid.
228 Ibid.
229 Ibid., 612.
230 Ibid., 613.
on the level of consciousness and love.” Clarke’s eventual emphasis on the person. In fact, Clarke is so bold as to predict that this project “will form the content of the next great chapter in the intellectual and spiritual history of mankind.”

Clarke concludes the article by forcefully trying to avoid a misunderstanding. He is not asserting that the self is the sole and sufficient source of meaning for metaphysical concepts. Rather, by “self” Clarke is referring to “the total encounter of the self with the other (other selves and the world) that is the adequate matrix out of which the full meaning of metaphysical concepts and theories is generated.” Thus, although it would be easy to misunderstand the title of the article, “The Self as Source of Meaning in Metaphysics,” as advocating a Cartesian introspection, what Clarke is actually arguing for is a relational metaphysics.

CONCLUSION

In my attempt to organize Clarke’s career, the theme that remains consistent throughout this rather scattered stage (1956-1968) of Clarke’s published work is an understanding of existence as dynamic act of presence. His early reply to “Infinity in Plotinus” makes it clear that Plotinus planted the seed of seeing existence as a dynamic act of presence. Clarke presents the single-event theory of causality and insists on its dynamic and relational qualities in his article, “Causality and Time.” The single-event theory is necessary to his relational metaphysics so that cause and effect are understood as “nothing less than the real dynamic union of cause and effect in the order of

231 Ibid.
232 “It is only along this path of the self, explored and reflected on at all its levels of experience, that any significant bridge can be built between Eastern and Western thought.” Ibid.
233 Ibid.
234 Ibid., 614.
235 Nevertheless, Clarke still appears open to misinterpretation on account of the final sentence of the article: “The ultimate root of all objectivity is thus subjectivity.” Ibid., 614.
action.” With his introduction of “system” as a new category of being, Clarke attempts to provide a metaphysical foundation for relational systems, such as the Church and juridic persons. At the Wooster Conference, more seeds were planted for Clarke’s developing understanding of person, and he also presented the possibility of distinction through affirmation of the other in love. Finally, in the article “The Self as the Source of Meaning in Metaphysics,” Clarke transitions from existence as dynamic act of presence to the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will, which becomes his primary focus for the following stage of his career and the theme of chapter three of this dissertation.

The early stage of Clarke’s career is filled with a vast array of topics and the seeds of nearly all of the major pillars of his relational metaphysics begin to sprout. There are discussions of the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will, along with the importance of seeing action as the manifestation of inner being. Person is an idea that Clarke returns to intermittently during this stage of his career, and only becomes more pronounced as his relational metaphysics matures. There are even seeds for receptivity as a positive perfection of personal being that are planted during this early stage of his career. However, despite the numerous number of seeds, the only pillar that is well-developed and consistently operating in the background is existence as a dynamic act of presence, which Clarke tells us is “the great central pillar of St. Thomas’ and of my own metaphysical vision of the universe.”

Within the next few years, Clarke discovers two primary texts of Thomas that will crystalize his understanding of this second pillar: “Omnis enim res propter suam operationem esse

---

236 Clarke, “Causality and Time,” 34.
237 Although Clarke mentions the Church, he never explicitly mentions juridic persons. Nevertheless, juridic persons seems as though it could be an extremely fruitful example of what Clarke means by a relational system.
238 Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 64.
videtur: operatio enim est ultima perfectio rei,”⁴³⁹ and “. . . cum omnis res sit propter suam operationem.”⁴⁴⁰ Once Clarke discovers these texts in 1974, as we shall see in the next chapter, he will continue to rely upon them to defend this second pillar of his relational metaphysics—existence as the dynamic act of presence—throughout the rest of his career.⁴⁴¹

---


⁴⁴¹ See Appendix B for all subsequent references to these two texts in Clarke’s publications.
CHAPTER 3
UNRESTRICTED DYNAMISM OF THE MIND AND WILL

Introduction

The next phase of Clarke’s philosophical career was absolutely foundational to his system of relational metaphysics. The scattered nature of his philosophical publications seen in the previous chapter begins to consolidate, and by the end of this current phase Clarke’s system of relational metaphysics will have a foundation upon which to build the rest of his career. Thus, although the theme of this chapter comes primarily from the conclusion of this phase, the first few articles discussed provide many of the raw materials that Clarke will use build his relational metaphysics once his foundation of the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will is set in 1979.

First of all, Clarke’s publication of “The Future of Thomism”\(^1\) in 1968 gave him a newfound focus for the rest of his career. In a sense, Clarke built the skeleton of his relational metaphysics with this article and then spent the rest of his career adding the various pillars to it. The vital foundation, and the one Clarke spent the next decade developing, was the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will. This theme was of such importance in his system of relational metaphysics that, when speaking on this theme in 1988, he referred to it as the “underlying presupposition in the metaphysician himself for engaging in the metaphysical enterprise at all.”\(^2\)

Every other theme of his relational metaphysics, and thus the theme of every other chapter of this

---
dissertation except six, Clarke simply referred to as “the basic pillars of reality itself.”3 The unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will, however, was the underlying presupposition supporting all the other pillars of his relational metaphysics.

I will begin by examining “The Future of Thomism,” to lay the floorplan for this period of Clarke’s career. Next I will look at Clarke’s 1973 article, “A New Look at the Immutability of God.”4 Although this article rather remote from the theme of this chapter, it nevertheless sheds light on Clarke’s understanding of personal relations within Thomas’s metaphysical system, which is an important starting point for Clarke’s own relational metaphysics. His 1974 article, “What Cannot Be Said in St. Thomas’ Essence-Existence Doctrine,”5 develops his participation theory by arguing that the ultimate reason and ground of both intelligibility and being for the universe is the power of intentional consciousness. In the same year Clarke also published “What Is Most and Least Relevant in the Metaphysics of St. Thomas Today,”6 where he refines his earlier article from 1968 and lays out what he considers the most fruitful themes in Thomas. Clarke clearly returned to Thomas and spent a significant amount of time thinking and researching this refinement of “The Future of Thomism,” as nearly all the citations from Thomas in this article not only appear for the first time in his career, but also remain as constant citations throughout the rest it. Finally, in 1979 Clarke published his first book, The Philosophical Approach to God: A Contemporary Neo-

---

3 Ibid.
Thomist Perspective, in which he presents a complete treatment of the starting point of his relational metaphysics: the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will.

THE FUTURE OF THOMISM

“The Future of Thomism” is a landmark article from 1968 in which Clarke sets an excellent waypoint for his career. Not only does he begin by clearly laying out “what kind of Thomist” he claims to be, but he also lists philosophical lacunae in Thomas, the reasons for the decline in Thomism, the doctrines of Thomas most fruitful today, and the procedure a philosopher should follow in order to build his own “Thomistically inspired philosophy.” Thus, this article shows where Clarke has been, where he is at that point in time, and where he is headed as he continues to develop his own Thomistically inspired relational metaphysics.

Clarke begins by dividing the development of his Thomism into three primary periods. First, Clarke was introduced to Thomism during his philosophical studies from 1936 to 1939 by André Marc, who presented it as “a profoundly exciting doctrine.” During this time “there was a kind of triumphal spirit in the air,” and Clarke “saw few real defects or weaknesses in Thomism, only insufficiently developed riches and some lacunae.” Second, during the next decade Clarke saw his “knowledge of Thomism growing in two ways”: uncovering “the natural dynamism inherent in the human intellect and will toward the infinite” and a rediscovery of the philosophical riches in Thomas, in particular the importance of participation, that had been obscured “by an

---

9 Ibid., 203. Italics in the original.
10 Ibid., 187.
11 Ibid.
excessively Aristotelian school tradition.” Third, during the fifteen years leading up to 1968, Clarke began to recognize “the limitations of what St. Thomas has handed down to us.” He gives seven examples which cover a very broad range of topics: subjectivity, self as creative free agent, relational epistemology, evolution, modern science, relation over substance, and linguistic analysis.

After this summary of his career, Clarke makes it very clear that he is now moving into his own as a philosopher, and that he intends to move beyond the system of historical Thomism. Thus, rather than a calling himself a Thomist, Clarke says he is a “Thomistically inspired contemporary philosopher.” In short, Clarke has “gained a certain critical distance form historical Thomism” in order to “speak as an authentic contemporary philosopher.”

In recounting the grafts that he has incorporated into his Thomism, Clarke feels obligated to mention one in particular, namely his “reinterpretation of substance as the focal points of relation, action, and interaction in a system . . . so that to be (at least for finite beings) is to be a substance-in-a-system.” This reinterpretation of substance first appeared in Clarke’s Presidential Address to the Jesuit Philosophical Association of America in 1961, titled “System: A New Category of Being?” Despite the criticism he received for this interpretation, Clarke continued to

\[12\] Ibid., 188.
\[13\] Ibid.
\[14\] “As a result of all this evolution in my own thinking, my present stance as a philosopher is that of one who is profoundly and predominantly inspired by Thomistic thought, who believes that the fundamental insights and principles of Thomistic metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, and ethics are still the deepest, richest, and most fruitful he knows, but who also believes that it is no longer sufficient—or even possible—simply to assimilate the key insights of later thought into the preexisting framework of historical Thomism as a system and a method.” Ibid., 189.
\[15\] “I would like to call myself a ‘Thomistically inspired contemporary philosopher’ in the sense that the basic insights and principles of St. Thomas, as I see them, from the predominant but not exclusive inspiration and foundation of my philosophical thought; and whatever else I have taken in from later thought has always so far been such that to my mind it has a secret affinity and harmony with the already present Thomistic foundation.” Ibid., 189-190.
\[16\] Ibid., 190.
\[17\] Ibid.
hold to this position as an important waypoint in his development of his relational metaphysics. This is clear from the fact that Clarke decided to include the originally published 1961 article in his final collection, *The Creative Retrieval of St. Thomas Aquinas*, which was published in 2009. Although he continued to refine his understanding of substance throughout his career, the core of his understanding was present in the 1961 article and he never refrained from defending his position.

Clarke’s recounting of the four decades leading up to 1968 paint a picture of the decline of Thomism. Although in the 1930’s “there was a strong neo-Thomist movement still in full swing in Europe,” Clarke points out that “half or more of the philosophically inclined young Jesuit seminarians studying with me were already no longer ‘buying’ neo-Thomism (let alone any older version) as the basic framework of their philosophical thought.” Nevertheless, in the United States and Canada there was a “somewhat totalitarian spirit of the high-riding Thomism” that pervaded the American Catholic Philosophical Association and was inspired by the Thomism of Maritain and Gilson. This spirit dominated American Catholic philosophy until roughly 1959. However, new philosophical movements, such as phenomenology, existentialism, personalism, and linguistic analysis, began to capture the attention of young Catholic philosophers.

The confrontation between “high-riding Thomism” and newer philosophical movements led to the point where Clarke found himself in 1968, when there was “a massive flight from Thomism all over the country.” Generally speaking, the young philosophers were hesitant to dedicate themselves to the effort and work required to truly understand Thomas. Thus, the classes

---

18 Ibid., 191.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., 192
that greenhorn philosophers were forced to teach during their early career tended to be more of a criticism of Thomas than of quality exposition. Clarke astutely points out that it is “not so much rejection of the contents of the system that has occurred; it is rather that confidence in the enterprise itself . . . has rather suddenly seemed to ebb away.”21 Without any confidence in the contents of Thomas, it is not surprising that Catholic colleges, universities, and seminaries began cutting Thomistic courses in order to increase the number of courses on other philosophies.

Where does this leave Thomism going forward? Clarke still hopes that despite the rather sudden collapse, “this does not mean that Thomistic doctrine will not have an important influence.”22 Although Clarke thinks the technical method of Thomas will disappear,23 he rather accurately predicts that “the dominant form or vehicle of philosophical formation will be either historical—which has the most chances—or phenomenological in some broad sense, with increasing injections of linguistic analysis as a method.”24 Clarke gives two main reasons for the decline in the commitment to the Thomistic system.

The first reason for the decline in Thomism is the perspectival view of truth. This leads to a widespread recognition “that Thomism is not and cannot be some absolute point of view on reality”25 because all knowledge, Thomism included, is just a perspective that has been conditioned by the historical situation. “There can never be in any one [society] a single, adequate, all-embracing human vision of the universe, or even of any significant part of it.”26 This result of the

21 Ibid., 192.
22 Ibid., 193. However, the sentence that immediately follows could be seen as a sadly accurate prognostication: “Unless we lose our heads entirely, it certainly will have and should have.”
23 “What will disappear in large part under these new approaches are the technical Aristotelian-inspired structure, divisions, and logical method characteristic of traditional Thomistic philosophy.” Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., 194.
26 Ibid.
perspectival view of truth flies in the face of the traditional sense of truth as understood by Aristotle and Thomas. Whereas the traditional sense of truth was understood as constantly growing in completeness throughout history, the perspectival view understands that “the whole perspective itself can be replaced by another richer and more inclusive one.” Clarke identifies two essential traits of the contemporary mind that lead to the perspectival view of truth: historicity and pluralism. With these two traits anchored in the contemporary mind, the impression Thomas gives “of communicating a definitive vision (though not necessarily complete) from some timeless peak” is not taken seriously. Clarke himself accepts this perspectival view of truth, albeit “with certain important qualifications.” The first qualification is that “no proposition expressing what is positive . . . can ever be negated as false or untrue by any later perspectival view.” The second is that Clarke believes that “it is possible even from one limited point of view in history to gain a valid perspective on the whole of history and to make true statements about this whole.”

The second reason Clarke gives for the decline in Thomism is that Catholic philosophers are hesitant to commit themselves to the system. Clarke identifies three key points that shed light on why Catholic philosophers at this time see Thomism “as significantly limited and incomplete.” The first is that Thomism presents itself as “one great objective system completely structured and determined in itself independently of man’s encounter with it and knowledge of it,” but at this time there was a newfound awareness of “the relativity of all human knowledge to the free human subject asking the questions about the world and to the kind of questions he decides to

27 Ibid., 194.
28 Ibid., 195.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., 196.
ask.”33 In short, Thomism apparently does not take into account subjectivity and relativity. Clarke, however, believes Thomas does take these into account, at least implicitly. He says, “I myself believe that it is latent and implicit in the fundamental relational structure of knowledge through action and receptivity which to my mind is one of the pillars of Aristotelian-Thomistic epistemology as distinguished from the Platonic.”34 Thus, Clarke tries to develop his relational metaphysics to draw out the importance of relation and the subjective in Thomas.

The second key point that makes contemporary philosophers hesitant to commit themselves to the Thomistic system “is the whole technical apparatus of methodology.”35 There is no denying that it is time consuming to master all the categories, terms, and methods of not only Thomas, but also the corpus of Western civilization that he draws upon in his thought. “It demands of a contemporary thinker a steadily increasing amount of sheer technical effort and time to enter adequately into this complex universe of thought and discourse.”36 This hesitancy springs from pride and fear that the investment will not pay dividends. However, when “most competent Thomists admit that it takes an average of about ten years of steady living with the system of St. Thomas to be able to dominate it enough to see it as a whole and move freely within it,”37 it can be understandable why a young philosopher would hesitate to invest an entire decade of his life. “This, rightly or wrongly, seems too massive a commitment of their intellectual energies and too rigorous a restraint on their own creativity.”38

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid., 197.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., 198.
38 Ibid.
The third key point that makes contemporary philosophers hesitant to commit themselves to the system “is their dissatisfaction at the presence of certain particular doctrines in it and the absence . . . of certain other insights and methods brought in by modern philosophy.”39 The presence of prime matter, the theory of abstraction, the substance-accident distinction, and the objective causal approach to God are all causes of dissatisfaction to contemporary Christian philosophers. On the other hand, the lack of personalism, phenomenology, the historical-evolutionary dimension, the modern scientific method, and linguistic analysis makes Thomism seem so outdated as to be not worth a decade of study.

Clarke sees the positive future of Thomism “along two main axes. The first is historical, the second speculative. With respect to Thomism as the subject of scholarly historical study, it has without question a rich and permanent future.”40 The historical axis has two main tasks. The first is the effort to determine exactly “what St. Thomas said, meant, and actually held as his own doctrine.”41 The second is separating out “those elements which he merely took over . . . from those elements which were his own truly original and distinctive contribution.”42 Clarke then enumerates five of the truly original and distinctive elements of Thomas that have the greatest chance of proving fruitful going forward: (1) The act of existence as fundamental perfection of all things; (2) the relation of being as first principle to the dynamism of intellect and will; (3) the role of judgment in knowledge; (4) the unity of man and his nature as the lowest of the spirits destined

---

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 199.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 200.
to seek its fulfillment as person by union with the body and dialogue with the material universe; (5) his fundamental moral ideal of self-guidance through prudence toward the final end.\(^{43}\)

Next, regarding the speculative axis, Clarke recommends a procedure that a philosopher could follow in order to give Thomism a significant voice in the present philosophical conversation. As he provides the details of his three-step procedure, it becomes clear that Clarke is describing what will become his own personal trajectory in his philosophical career.

The first step is to “disengage the great central insights that command the distinctive Thomistic vision of the world from the technical Aristotelian methodology and terminology in which they are embedded, and also from the theological order.”\(^{44}\) Clarke has a very unusual understanding of what “disengagement from the theological order” means, maintaining that even doctrines having primarily religious roots can be expounded from a philosophical order.\(^{45}\) Thus, Clarke admits he is “recommending a procedure just the opposite of what has been insisted on by Gilson and the Toronto school for some years.”\(^{46}\) Here we see the seeds for Clarke’s Trinitarian references in his philosophical works and eventual development of his Christian philosophy.\(^{47}\)

The second step in giving Thomism a significant voice in the philosophical conversation is testing out Thomas’s insights and principles against the great central problems proposed by contemporary philosophy. “In a word, the Thomist who wishes to speak meaningfully to his contemporaries must first live through the high points of the history of philosophy since Thomas by confronting his Thomistic positions in creative encounter with each of the significantly new

---

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 200.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., 201.

\(^{45}\) “I would maintain that even where a doctrine has primarily religious roots, in Christian revelation for St. Thomas, it is still not the same thing to expound it from a theological order as from a philosophical.” Ibid., 201-202.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., 202.

\(^{47}\) Once Clarke retires from Fordham in 1985, he spends more time developing and clarifying what he means by Christian philosophy. This is covered in more detail in part two of this dissertation.
problems and types of solutions, above all with the basic constellation of problems which map out the distinctive horizon, or set of horizons, of the contemporary philosophical world.”

The third step in giving Thomism a significant voice in the philosophical conversation is for a philosopher to rebuild Thomas’s basic insights “into a newly ordered, evidenced, and formulated philosophy that is his own creation and put forward on his own responsibility, not that of Thomas. This will be indeed a Thomistically inspired philosophy.”

This is Clarke’s goal with his system of relational metaphysics. The future of Thomism, to Clarke’s mind, lies “in its playing the role of inspiration or seedbed for newly constructed philosophies put forward on the responsibility of individual contemporary thinkers or schools who have assimilated the fundamental insights of St. Thomas into new contemporary frameworks of problems, methods, language.”

Thus, from this point forward, Clarke does not hesitate to take responsibility for his own philosophical ideas. While clearly inspired by Thomas, Clarke strives to go beyond Thomas. One of the primary benefits to this approach, according to Clarke, is that it dispels the “deadly aura of authoritarianism.”

Clarke concludes his article by giving a few samples of what seem to him to be the most fruitful Thomistic ideas that could play a seminal role in a new, Thomistically inspired philosophy. The first insight that pervades the work of Thomas which Clarke identifies “is the general attitude of St. Thomas toward created reality in relation to God.” This “theologically grounded worldliness” is a fruitful seed that is ripe for being transplanted into a new soil. Clarke thinks that

---

48 Ibid., 202-203.
49 Ibid., 203. Italics in the original.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., 204.
“among the classic Christian thinkers up to the present time (perhaps till Teilhard de Chardin),” no one other than Thomas “has given such a high evaluation to the created universe, especially to the world of matter.”

The second Thomistic idea that is capable of playing a seminal role in contemporary philosophy is the “metaphysical doctrine of intrinsic participation of the finite in the Infinite.” After spending the early part of his career bringing out the importance of participation in Thomas, Clarke is fully convinced that “no Christian—or other—doctrine of participation is more intrinsic or links the perfection of the creature more intimately to the inner essence of God himself” than the Thomistic doctrine of participation, and the truly essential insight to be held onto is “the notion of limited but intrinsic participation in the act of existence as the central energy and perfection of the universe.”

The third central insight is understanding human nature as a true spirit and matter unity. In support of this insight into the conception of man as a fruitful idea in the contemporary philosophical landscape, Clarke mentions Pegis, who “singled out the Thomistic philosophy of man as one prime example” of a Thomistically inspired philosophy from which one could “build everything around the central notion of the essence of man as the dynamic proportion of soul to body, forming an intrinsic natural unity of being and action.”

---

53 Ibid., 204.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., 205.
57 “The third central insight is the conception of the nature of man as an extremely intimate natural unity of spirit and matter, a spirit in need of a body as a mediating link with the material world in which alone it can find the connatural arena in which to work out its self-realization as a person, so that matter and the body are the necessary natural mediation linking the human spirit to all other reality, even to God himself.” Ibid.
58 Ibid., 206. Italics in the original.
The fourth central insight is centered around the epistemology of Thomas, and the cluster of ideas that contribute to that area, such as “the fundamental relational conception of knowledge through action, receptivity, and intentional union, the key role of judgment as distinct from concept, and the intimate synthesis of sense and intellect in every act of knowing.”

The fifth and final central insight in Thomas is centered on his ethics, and “the fundamental conception of the moral life as responsible self-guidance through prudence toward the final end.”

A NEW LOOK AT THE IMmutABILITY OF GOD

Between 1968 and 1972, Clarke published seven articles and four book reviews.

However, his next major article worth examining in detail was written in 1973, “A New Look at

---

59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
the Immutability of God,” where he tries to respond to a radical challenge to the Thomistic position regarding the immutability of God.63 This challenge has arisen from two sources: process philosophy and existential religious consciousness. “If God is one who enters into deep personal relations of love with his creatures,” and “an authentic interpersonal relation of love necessarily involves . . . genuine mutuality and reciprocity of love,”64 then how are we to understand God’s immutability? In responding to this challenge, Clarke attempts “to explore the resources of the Thomistic metaphysical system to see how far it is capable of making a place for a God who can enter into truly personal relations with his creatures.”65 Clarke focuses on two particular resources of the Thomistic metaphysical system. First, he tries to develop the distinction between real and intentional being. Second, he tries to adapt the notion of immutability to fit the perfection appropriate to personal being. All the while, Clarke is very straightforward in presenting his paper “as an essay in creative Thomistic metaphysics.”66 “I must take full responsibility upon myself for this ‘Thomistic adaptation’,” Clarke says, “even though I believe it to be authentically and coherently Thomistic in its inspiration.”67

Whenever one is working with God’s attributes, “the central notion which must remain constant and command all the rest,” according to Clarke, “is that of absolute or infinite perfection.”68 Because mutability implies imperfection, Thomas must attribute immutability to God. However, Clarke points out that it is imperative to remember two things. First, that the whole

64 Clarke, “Immutability of God,” 183.
65 Ibid., 184.
66 Ibid., 185.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 186.
context of Thomas’s treatment of immutability is real change, i.e. “a passage from imperfection to greater perfection”\(^69\) in the intrinsic real being of something. Second, that “in St. Thomas’s theory of real relations every real relation must be founded in something in the intrinsic real or absolute being of that which is related.”\(^70\) Clarke, however, does not think Thomas should call relations “in the purely static dimension of quantity or similitude” real relations since only one term need vary.\(^71\)

Thus, when change is taken in this strict Aristotelian sense, God must be immutable because He does not change into a higher or more perfect mode of being. However, we do not expect God’s actual love for us to become more perfect, only that “the expression of this love for us should be constantly growing and developing,” and that “the field of his loving consciousness should be contingently other because of his personal relations to us.”\(^72\) Just because God’s loving consciousness gains a “numerically new item of knowledge” does not mean that God passes “to a higher or richer level of knowledge than that attained in knowing himself.”\(^73\) Instead, Clarke argues that “to add the finite to the infinite can only be in the mode of a sharing.”\(^74\)

Clarke claims that the novelty is not in the real being of God, but rather “in the real being God communicates to creatures and in the intentional content of the divine consciousness determinately knowing and willing them.”\(^75\) Therefore, according to Clarke, “the only change is in the field of intentional consciousness,” and “this is precisely what the realm of interpersonal

---

\(^{69}\) Ibid., 186.  
\(^{70}\) Ibid., 186-187.  
\(^{71}\) Ibid., 187.  
\(^{72}\) Ibid. Italics in the original.  
\(^{73}\) Ibid., 187-188.  
\(^{74}\) “... to add a new finite content of knowledge and love to an already infinite plenitude of knowledge and love is not to pass from potency to act in the order of real being, to acquire a new higher mode of intrinsic perfection of being not possessed before.” Ibid., 188.  
\(^{75}\) Ibid. Italics added.
relations is all about in its pure essence.” Interpersonal relations are “concerned with the way in which the mutually interrelated persons focus on each other in their intentional consciousness, reaching out to each other, not physically but spiritually, in the immanent ecstasy of mutual inherence in each other’s consciousness by knowing-love.”

He next draws out the implications of Thomas’s distinction between intentional and real being. Real being (esse naturale, esse in re, in rerum natura) is the “existence of a thing in its own right,” while intentional being (esse intentionale, esse cognitum, esse volitum) is the mode of being which a thing “has as an object of knowledge (or love) existing or present in the consciousness of a knower (or lover).” This intentional mode of being “is required for any act of knowledge where what is known is other in its real being than the knower itself; hence it holds even in the case of God, as knowing and loving a real world other than himself.” Thus, “the only being of an object of knowledge” is “its being-known.”

Clarke then applies this distinction to God and tries to “draw out the implications of the fact—which all must admit—of the intentional presence of all creatures in the divine consciousness as determinate objects of his knowledge and love.” He has two main implications. First, “God’s intentional ‘field of consciousness’ . . . necessarily contains the whole multiplicity of all creatures in their unique individuality and distinctness.” Second, God’s “field of intentional consciousness must be determinately and contingently other than it would and could have been

---

76 Ibid., 189.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid., 191.
79 Ibid., 192.
80 “. . . esse eius consistit in ipso intelligi (its to-be is its to-be-thought-about)” Ibid.
81 Ibid., 194. Italics in the original.
82 Ibid.
had he decided in some other way.” 83 It is because of these two implications that Clarke insists that “we must admit at least this much about God: that the divine consciousness, in its intentional content, is *distinctly*, *determinately*, and *contingently differentiated or other* with respect to creatures because God has freely chosen this world, than it would and could have been had he chosen a different world or none at all.” 84

In this section, Clarke makes the transition from “real” to “truly” when speaking of how God is related to creatures. “God is truly related through intentional consciousness to us whom he has freely created and freely loves.” 85 This is a relation in the intentional order, but this is the order of personal relations, and it is in this order that we truly do make a difference to God. Thus, it is not a “real relation” in Thomas’s strict terminology, but it is rather a true, personal relation of intentional consciousness. According to Clarke, “God is truly related to creatures by a relation of personal consciousness.” 86

In support of his position, Clarke mentions another philosopher, Anthony Kelly, who has come forward with the same suggestion. 87 When a person is discussing their relationship with God they are signifying a relation of personal consciousness. Although they may describe it as a “real” relationship, they are not using “real” in the technical sense of Thomas. Rather, according to Clarke, “‘Truly related’ seems to me to verify enough what the ordinary person means by ‘really

---

83 Ibid. Italics in the original.
84 Ibid. Italics in the original.
85 Ibid., 195.
86 Ibid.
87 Hence it is with great satisfaction that I note that another philosopher speaking from within the Thomistic perspective has already come forward with the same suggestion as the one I have made. In fact I have borrowed his exact—and to my mind very felicitous—terminology in expressing my own independently-arrived-at conclusion: there is in God ‘a relation of personal consciousness’ to the world (*relatio conscientiae personalis*).” Clarke, “Immutability of God,” 195-196. Cf. Anthony J. Kelly, C.S.S.R., “God: How Near a Relation?” *Thomist* 34 (1970): 191-229.
related’. “Perhaps all that people finally mean when they ask whether God is ‘really related’ to them is whether God is truly related to them. And the answer in terms of my own exposition above would be a resounding ‘Yes’.”

Next, Clarke attempts to “come to grips with this difficult problem of the timelessness or in-time-ness of God.” The key metaphysical point that Clarke mentions is that “causality is the ecstasy of the agent present by its power in the effect.” Keeping this point in mind invalidates much of the uncritical “common-sense” criticism, but it is still necessary to consider the content of the divine intentional consciousness, of which Clarke affirms three things. First, “we must affirm that for every knowable item in our world of process there is a corresponding cognitive content in the divine intentional consciousness.” Second, “the content of the divine consciousness must contain or represent this internal time-sequence of the items as related to each other,” and “therefore, one can speak of a ‘cognitive or intentional sequence’ in God.” Third, “this cognitive sequence can be correlated with a real time-sequence by extrinsic intentional reference to the latter, but is itself of a different order (intentional and not real being).” The result of these three points gives us an understanding of how to understand temporal succession in God, and Clarke sees “no serious difficulty for a Thomist to admit such a ‘process’ or sequence in the intentional order in God with its correlate of ‘intentional time’.”

---

88 Ibid., 196.
89 Ibid., 197.
90 Ibid., 198.
91 Ibid. Italics in the original.
92 Ibid., 199.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid. Italics in the original.
95 Ibid., 201.
Clarke concludes by proposing two different conceptual models of the divine eternity. The first is the classical Scholastic model presented by Thomas and summarized by Clarke as “an absolutely durationless eternity, durationless even in the intentional order, where the whole history is seen to be simultaneous, in a single simultaneous vision where all points of the temporal process are equally simultaneous to God as outside the whole temporal order, with no privileged ongoing ‘now’ in God’s knowledge matching the ongoing ‘now’ of history itself.”

The second is a model where “the intentional contents of the divine consciousness as directed towards the world of creation . . . is constantly expanding to match the ongoing evolution of temporal history, in exact contemporaneity with the latter’s ongoing ‘now’.” At the time of the original publication of this article in 1973, Clarke found himself leaning somewhat towards the second model. However, upon his revisions of this article for inclusion in the 1994 collection, Explorations in Metaphysics, Clarke had “moved back again toward St. Thomas’s position, that God acts and knows from an eternal Now entirely outside anything like successive duration.”

Next, Clarke tries to answer the objection of process philosophers who insist “that if God knows our free actions without determining them, he must be learning from us, receiving knowledge from us.” According to Clarke, Thomas argues that “God knows the actions of creatures by ‘moving them’ to their actions,” but “the precise how he leaves a mystery.”

---

96 Ibid., 202. Here we can catch a glimpse of how Clarke changed his position between 1973 and 1996, when the article was revised. The following line appeared in the original at this point in the article but was cut from the revision: “This is certainly St. Thomas’ view, and there is much to recommend it, although the ‘how’ remains a total mystery. There is no decisive way of ruling it out, though I myself am beginning to lean toward the view of many contemporary Christian thinkers that there is an implicit incoherence hidden somewhere within it.” W. Norris Clarke, S.J., “A New Look at the Immutability of God,” in God Knowable and Unknowable, edited by Robert J. Roth, S.J., (New York: Fordham University Press, 1973) 65.


98 Ibid., 203.

99 Ibid., 204.

100 Ibid. Italics in the original.
attempts to shed some light on this mystery with his own answer to the process philosophers, which he presents in three steps. First, “one must resolutely affirm that God’s knowledge of our free actions is determined by us in some significant sense.” Although the classical Dominican Thomist school rejects this affirmation because of God’s self-sufficiency, Clarke overcomes this dilemma by making a distinction between two ways in which one’s knowledge can be determined by another. This distinction is Clarke’s second step. The first way one’s knowledge can be determined by another is when the object known acts causally on the knower. This is obviously excluded in the case of God. However, there is a second way, and that is when “a superior agent freely offers its indeterminate abundance of power to a lower agent, allowing the latter to channel, or determine . . . the flow of the former’s power along lines determined by the lesser agent.” In this sense, the lower agent only limits the higher plenitude. Thus, God knows our actions by acting, not by being acted on, while we determine the limits of God’s action in ourselves. The third and final step of Clarke’s argument is to clarify that “there is nothing we can do which God does not do with us.” While it may appear that we act by limiting God’s action, “the crucial moment in free decision is not a doing at all. It is precisely the moment of negation or exclusion of all possible avenues of choice save one, the saying ‘No’ to all but one.” Once all possibilities save one are excluded, it is then that we cooperate with God in a free act. In short, “God only says ‘Yes’ with us in our free choices; we alone say the ‘No’ which is the necessary prelude to our combined ‘Yes’.”

---

101 Ibid., 205.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid., 206.
104 Ibid. Italics in the original.
105 Ibid.
Clarke closes by pointing out that all he has really done in this article “comes down to reinterpreting the immutability in God to fit the perfection proper to the dimension of personal—and therefore interpersonal—being, hence proper to God as truly, through analogously, personal.”\textsuperscript{106} Clarke concludes “that it is perfectly legitimate, from the metaphysical point of view, quite adequately metaphysically grounded, even in a Thomistically inspired metaphysics, for the religious consciousness to speak in the warmest personalist terms of God’s truly (‘really’) caring, personal relation of mutual love with us.”\textsuperscript{107}

**LIMITS OF ST. THOMAS’S ESSENCE-EXISTENCE DOCTRINE**

Clarke had other publications in 1973 and 1974,\textsuperscript{108} but the next worth examining in detail is his 1974 article, “What Cannot Be Said in St. Thomas’ Essence-Existence Doctrine,”\textsuperscript{109} wherein he analyzes the central metaphysical piece of Thomas’ system: the essence-existence doctrine.\textsuperscript{110} Although this doctrine is admittedly both profound and difficult, Clarke insists that “it points beyond to something that cannot properly be said, but can only be recognized, not conceptualized,

---

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 207.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 208.

\textsuperscript{108} Clarke published two articles during this time that will not be examined. “Seventeenth Award of the Aquinas Medal to Cornelio Fabro, C.P.S.,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 48 (1974): 323-325, was simply Clarke’s introduction of Fabro as he was awarded the America Catholic Philosophical Association’s Aquinas Medal in 1974, which was truly an honor for Clarke on account of how influential Fabro had been in Clarke’s own dissertation on participation. “Reflections on the XVth World Congress of Philosophy and the First International Congress of Metaphysics,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 14 (1974): 115-124, is not worth discussing, as Clarke found the congress “philosophically dull and unilluminating for the most part.” Ibid., 122, italics in the original. Clarke also published two book reviews: “On Caring by Milton Mayeroff,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 13 (1973): 152-153; and “Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages by Francis Klingender,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 13 (1973): 153-154, as well as one poem: “Popular History of Philosophy – Plotinus,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 13 (1973): 242.


\textsuperscript{110} “It is common knowledge that the essence-existence doctrine of Saint Thomas is the central piece in his whole metaphysical system.” Clarke, “Thomas’ Essence-Existence Doctrine,” 117.
in a flash of synthetic insight.” Before diving into his analysis of the essence-existence doctrine, Clarke begins by laying out four basic elements of the Neoplatonic participation doctrine. First, there is a single source possessing perfection in un-participated, unlimited plenitude. Second, the source shares that perfection with all its participants. Third, there is a multiplicity of participants, each of which participates in its own limited mode according to the capacity of its receiving principle. Fourth, there is a resulting metaphysical composition in each participant of the participated perfection and its limiting mode. Thomas takes this participation structure and centers it “around the more radical supraformal perfection of existence conceived as basic act or energy (virtus essendi)” in order to answer “the fundamental problem of all medieval metaphysics: how creatures are both like and unlike God.”

In analyzing the essence-existence doctrine of Thomas, the first thing Clarke wants to do is point out the remarkable daring and power of this doctrine. After laying out the perspective of Plotinus, Clarke asserts that “what Saint Thomas has done, unique in this among metaphysicians, is to turn the tables completely” by reducing all to the “is,” or “the act of radical unqualified presence.” Clarke says, “I know of no more thoroughgoing, daring, and truly radical metaphysical theory of the unity of reality, short of monism, in Western thought.” Nevertheless, this daring metaphysical theory does generate some disturbing paradoxes, which Clarke examines in the following section.

111 Ibid., 117.
112 Ibid., 118.
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid., 120.
115 Ibid.
The first key to Thomas’s essence-existence doctrine that Clarke chooses to focus on is Thomas’s conception of God as pure Subsistent Act of Existence. Now, whereas there is a scholastic tradition running through Anselm, Scotus, Suarez and carried on by Descartes, Spinoza, and Kant that interpret this Subsistent Act of Existence as the assertion that God cannot not exist, Clarke claims that Thomas’s main point is something much more radical. Namely, “that the entire essence itself of God is nothing else than the pure unlimited Act of Existence (Ipsum Esse Subsistens), which of itself by ‘nature’ contains, at least equivalently, all possible perfections.”

In short, according to Clarke, “this is the truly daring aspect of the doctrine” because Thomas is inviting us to transcend the distinction between subject and verb by fusing them into the “unsayable and unconceptualizable” name of God: Ipsum Esse. What Thomas is intending by Ipsum Esse Subsistens “in the real order is an utterly simple identity beyond all distinction of subject-verb, essence-existence, that which is and the act of ising.” On account of this daring fusion of subject and verb, we are left with something unsayable. “The last ‘word’ of the doctrine, we might say, is therefore a dimension of eloquent silence.”

Clarke next applies Thomas’s doctrine of essence and existence to creatures, in particular by focusing “on the more fundamental and fruitful notion of participated existence itself.” Now, “if this participation doctrine is to express an objective structure in reality itself—and this is surely the case with Saint Thomas himself—then ‘participated existence’ . . . must refer to something in the real order . . . and what it expresses must also be somehow objectively one.” However, upon

---

116 Ibid., 121. Italics in the original.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid. Italics in the original.
119 Ibid., 122.
120 Ibid., 123.
121 Ibid.
examination we find ourselves in “the old problem of the ontological status of universal predicates all over again.”^122 Clarke briefly mentions the solutions of Wittgenstein, Ockham, and Scotus before positing that the solution of Thomas “lies precisely between that of nominalism and strong realism.”^123 While Thomas is clear that “participated existence, considered precisely as one, exists only in the mind,”^124 he is more reticent about participated existence considered as many, i.e. as isolated in the thing itself.

Subsequently, Clarke proposes his own solution: “What I propose is that the ultimate root and explanation of the unity of any participated perfection, and in particular of participated existence (where the problem becomes most acute), lies in the creative intentional act of its source, precisely as intentional (using ‘intentional’ here in its technical Thomistic sense of the intentionality of an act of consciousness.)”^125 An intentional act “is the only kind of reality in the universe . . . which has the peculiar property of joining together in the unity of a single act both one and many, singular and universal,” and therefore it “is the only possible ultimate ground, both of being and intelligibility, for the one-many unity of participation as an accomplished existential fact.”^126 Therefore, Clarke attributes unity of existence to real participation, which is “an indivisible two-poled dynamic whole”^127 between the intentional act and the real similarity between things and their source.^128 Nevertheless, “at the heart of real participation lies something

---

122 Ibid., 124.
123 Ibid., 126.
124 Ibid., 126. Italics in the original.
125 Ibid., 127. Italics in the original.
126 Ibid.
127 “Real participation is thus, in the last analysis, an indivisible two-poled dynamic whole: the one-many unity of the creative intentional act, on the one side, and the ontological reflection of this intention in the real similarity of things to each other and their source, on the other.” Ibid.
128 “The power of intentional consciousness, the conscious and efficacious act of willing to share one’s own riches with others, is thus the ultimate reason and ground of both intelligibility and being for the universe precisely as universe, as one world, as a unified order of reality.” Ibid., 128. Italics in the original.
which cannot properly be said, although it can be recognized in a single synthetic intellectual insight as to ‘what’s going on’ in the world.”

The third point of the essence-existence doctrine that Clarke examines is the notion of essence as limit. Clarke points out three interpretations of how essence limits the act of existence. First, there is “the older, pre-existentialist phase of interpretation as found in the great commentators, where existence is conceived more as a kind of extrinsic act coming to actualize the positive perfection potentially inherent in essence itself.” Second, there is the “thick-essence” view in the contemporary existentialist interpretation of Thomas, where “essence is still looked on as possessing a certain positivity of its own.” Third, there is the “thin-essence” view, in which essence “becomes nothing but the interior limiting principle, the inner limit or partial negation” of the act of existence itself. Clarke says, “I personally prefer, as a metaphysician, the ‘thin-essence’ view of essence as a more streamlined and rigorously consistent following-out of the implications of Saint Thomas’s breakthrough to existence as perfection.” But where does this leave the reality of limit as such? Clarke says Thomas himself rarely uses the expression “real

---

129 Ibid.
130 Ibid., 129.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid., 129-130.
133 Ibid., 130. Clarke was very sympathetic to the “thin-essence” view put forward by William Carlo. In fact, Carlo asked Clarke to write the preface to his major work on the subject: The Ultimate Reducibility of Essence to Existence in Existential Metaphysics, The Hague: Martinus Nijoff, 1966. Clarke says the following in his preface, after summarizing the difference between the thick-essence and thin-essence viewpoints: “The trouble, however, with this under-the-surface controversy, is that both points of view, both interpretations of essence, can find enough textual support in St. Thomas to justify being defended respectfully as Thomistic. Pure textual criticism, therefore, cannot settle the issue apodictically, though I myself, together with the author, believe that the deepest and most ultimate level of understanding of the essence/existence doctrine in the texts themselves is consistently dominated by the second [i.e. thin-essence] point of view.” Carlo, Ultimate Reducibility, viii. Clarke goes on to comment on the serious objection that the thin-essence view practically does away with the real distinction between essence and existence. Clarke concludes as follows: “I suggest that we may finally be led . . . to a more modest and less explicit formula something like this: in every finite being there is an intrinsic ontological duality or tension between the perfection of the act of esse and a partial negation or limitation of the same act.” Ibid., xiv.
distinction,” so he advocates a toning down of “the ‘reality’ and solidity of the so-called ‘real-distinction’.”

Rather, “the essential point truly worth holding onto in the doctrine of Saint Thomas is the notion of limited participation in the central perfection of existence.”

In summary, then, Clarke argued that “the essence-existence doctrine of Saint Thomas contains at least three elements which cannot be said directly in language”: the name of God, the being of participated existence, and the being of essence as limit. “Must not the last word of metaphysical—as well as any other—wisdom be the eloquence of silence? Did not Saint Thomas himself say, ‘Omnia exeunt in mysterium’?”

THE RELEVANCY OF THOMAS’S METAPHYSICS IN 1974

In his 1974 article, “What Is Most and Least Relevant in the Metaphysics of St. Thomas Today,” Clarke attempts to sift through the metaphysical tradition handed down by Thomas “in order to discern what is most relevant and fruitful in it for the philosophical thinking” at the time of original publication. Although “the substantive content of St. Thomas’s metaphysical vision is extremely rich and profound,” Clarke points out that “there is a serious block to the accessibility of this content for the ordinary educated contemporary thinker” because “St. Thomas’s thought comes to us encased in a whole tightly knit technical framework” of Aristotle. Thus, what is

---

135 Ibid. Italics in the original.
136 Ibid., 131.
137 Ibid.
140 Ibid.
needed “is an operation of ‘detechnicalizing’ his thought,”¹⁴¹ and Clarke presents this article as a modest attempt at such an operation.

After forty-five years of meditating “on both Thomistic and modern thought,” Clarke identifies eight main doctrines of Thomas that are “the most relevant and fruitful for nourishing our philosophical thought today”¹⁴²: (1) the intrinsic connaturality between the human spirit and the realm of being; (2) the close relation between the existential meaning of being and action; (3) the explanation of the *one and the many* by participation theory; (4) person as the highest mode of being; (5) the dynamic notion of substance; (6) the notion of substantial potency; (7) the theory of efficient and final causality; and (8) the relation to God as Source and Goal of all being.

The first doctrine that Clarke points out is the correlation between the intelligibility and goodness of being and our drive to know and be fulfilled by being. This correlation is twofold, Clarke claims, such that all spirit “has a natural aptitude” to know and be fulfilled by being, while “being itself has a natural intrinsic aptitude to unveil itself to mind . . . and to fulfill the drive of the spirit.”¹⁴³ Clarke sees this principle “at the root of the whole Thomistic vision of the universe”¹⁴⁴ and “makes possible the unfolding of the entire intellectual life in all its forms.”¹⁴⁵ Clarke is extremely confident of this transcendental Thomist principle, stating that “there is no doubt that St. Thomas holds this basic principle and that it is the secret dynamo energizing the whole movement of his thought to work out a systematic explanation of the world, as the transcendental Thomist movement has so convincingly shown.”¹⁴⁶

---

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 2.
¹⁴² Ibid.
¹⁴³ Ibid., 3.
¹⁴⁴ Ibid.
¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 3-4. Italics in the original.
¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 4. Clarke points to the “synthetic sweep such as in the splendid article 1 of the *De Veritate*” (ibid.) as the Thomistic text that supports the transcendental Thomist interpretation. Although Clarke had made one other
The second doctrine is the “uncompromisingly existential character” of Thomas’s analysis of real being. When esse is understood as the central core of perfection that is determined by essence, then the intelligibility of a thing is that same esse “shining through” the essence. Clarke then argues for action as the self-manifestation of this inner being by developing “the close link of action with being.” According to Clarke, action provides both the criterion for recognizing real being and a grounding for a realistic epistemology. Clarke concludes by bravely summing up “the whole of Thomistic epistemology as resting on this one principle: ‘All knowledge of real being is an interpretation of action’.”

The third doctrine Clarke looks at is Thomas’s “solution to the problem of the one and the many in terms of the participation of all finite beings in existence as the central unifying perfection of the universe.” This doctrine, according to Clarke, “undoubtedly is at once the most central and the most original doctrine of St. Thomas’s metaphysics,” and “is one of the most radically unified and daringly simple metaphysical visions of the unity of the universe, short of monism,

---

reference to the “synthetic sweep” of the “splendid article 1 of the De Veritate” in 1960, cf. “Possibles Revisited,” 100, he strangely never again makes a reference to article 1 of De Veritate throughout his entire career. I find that odd since Clarke considered this text as strongly supporting transcendental Thomism.

147 “The latter now appears as the very light of existence itself shining through the manifold prism of essences recognized as diverse modes of active presence.” Clarke, “Metaphysics of St. Thomas Today,” 7.

148 “Thomas has also made it possible to include the entire range of reality . . . under one completely positive viewpoint, yet without being forced to constrict the mystery of the divine Infinity into our own limited categorical concepts.” Ibid.

149 Ibid., 5. Italics in the original.

150 “. . . we now have a decisive criterion, both necessary and sufficient, for recognizing real being and distinguishing it from merely mental, possible, or ideal being.” Ibid., 9. Italics in the original.

151 “The second significant consequence of this linking of action with being as its natural manifestation is that it provides the basic grounding for a realistic epistemology . . .” Ibid., 10. Italics in the original.

152 Ibid.

153 Ibid., 12.
that one can find anywhere in the history of thought, whether in the West or the East."\textsuperscript{154} The aspect of this doctrine that Clarke sees as the most fruitful and relevant “is the notion of diverse participation in the central perfection of existence through the varied limiting modes of existence.”\textsuperscript{155} In short, essences limit existence, which is “derived from a single supra-essential Source that is pure unparticipated, hence unlimited Act of Existence.”\textsuperscript{156} This, according to Clarke, is “the irreducible positive core of St. Thomas’s vision.”\textsuperscript{157}

The point of the fourth doctrine that Clarke wants to emphasize is that for Thomas, “if being is allowed to be itself above a certain level of limitation . . . it naturally flowers out into the perfection of a person,” with qualities of both self-consciousness and freedom.\textsuperscript{158} Thus, the fullness of being “is of its very nature personal,” and the nature of the person is “to be an active self-possessing presence.”\textsuperscript{159} Referring to Thomas’s claim that the “person signifies that which is the most perfect in all of nature,”\textsuperscript{160} and pointing out that “the act of existence is the root of all perfection” for Thomas, Clarke concludes that “being naturally turns into person whenever its restricting level of essence allows it to be intensely enough.”\textsuperscript{161} Once this doctrine of the correlativity of being and person is accepted, then the human person can be taken as “the privileged vantage point from which we know \textit{from within} what each concept stands for and from which we extend it by analogy both below and above us.”\textsuperscript{162}

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 13-14.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 14.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 15.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 15-16.
\textsuperscript{160} ST, I, q. 29, a. 3, c. (Leon. Ed., Vol. 4.331) “. . . persona significat id quod est perfectissimum in tota natura . . .” Translation mine.
\textsuperscript{161} Clarke, “Metaphysics of St. Thomas Today,” 16. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid. Italics in the original.
Clarke’s emphasis of the fifth doctrine of substance as “a dynamic center of activity and receptivity” is in response to the modern notions of substance that have been inherited from Descartes and Locke.¹⁶³ A dynamic notion of substance is important in order to see how “every finite substance we know or can conceive of is intrinsically relational, set in the matrix of the world-system as a whole,” yet also “conceived precisely as the integrating center of a being’s activities.”¹⁶⁴

The sixth doctrine is regarding potency. Clarke points out that Thomas uses potency in two primary ways. The first way Thomas inherited from Neoplatonism, and that is potency as a “limitation of some higher perfection.”¹⁶⁵ The second way Thomas inherited from Aristotle, and that is potency as “the subject of continuity in change.”¹⁶⁶ In this section, Clarke is concerned only with this second use of potency in Thomas. In particular, Clarke wants to bring attention to “the indispensable role of potency as a condition of possibility for the existence of any complex whole that is not a mere aggregate.”¹⁶⁷ Clarke refers to the following text of Thomas in support of this point: “Out of two entities in act it is impossible to make a natural or intrinsic unity.”¹⁶⁸ Here Clarke introduces new terminology: substantial potency. By this term, Clarke is referring to the fact that “in order to form a per se unity . . . all the lower elements in a composite must have the potentiality to be taken over and unified by a single higher act. This means that all these lower

¹⁶³ Ibid., 16.
¹⁶⁴ Ibid.
¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 17. Italics in the original.
¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 18. Italics in the original.
¹⁶⁷ Ibid. Italics in the original.
¹⁶⁸ Clarke references the following two locations in Thomas to justify his quotation: De spir. creat., a. 3 (Leon. ed., Vol. 24.2.33-48); SCG, I, c. 18 (Leon. ed., Vol. 13.49). However, after looking them over myself, the closest texts from Thomas I can find to justify Clarke’s quote of Thomas are perhaps the following from SCG, I, c. 18: “Non enim plura possunt simpliciter unum fieri nisi aliiquid sit ibi actus, et alius potentia. Quae enim actu sunt, non uniuntur nisi quasi colligata vel congregata, quae non sunt unum simpliciter,” and the following from De spir. creat., a. 3: “. . . unde omnis forma est actus; et per consequens est ratio unitatis, qua aliud est unum.”
components must have an innate ‘plasticity’ or determinability at the substantial (not merely accidental) level.”

In conclusion, Clarke makes an interesting distinction between material and spiritual being. “Substantial determinability, in fact, would be one way of defining what we mean by a ‘material being’,” while “any existing spiritual being must be a personal being.” Thus, in this article Clarke defines material being by substantial potency/determinability and spiritual being by personhood.

Clarke summarizes the importance of the seventh doctrine, that of efficient and final causality, in one “simple” statement: “They are simply the fuller elaboration of the conception of the world as a vast system of interacting agents, actively communicating to each other out of their richness and passively receiving from, or dependent on each other out of their poverty, their lack of self-sufficiency—all under the universal influx (i.e., the communication of existence) of the one self-sufficient Source of all existence.”

Taken individually, efficient causality is understood as a single event which takes place in the effect as from the cause and is the causing of being, the communication of existence, while final causality is “simply the inner orientation of every agent toward some determinate effect-to-be-produced” and whose ultimate sufficient reason “must be sought in an intelligence.”

The eighth doctrine, and “the crown of the entire Thomistic vision of the universe,” according to Clarke, is “the notion of God as infinitely perfect pure Plenitude of Existence, ultimate Source and Goal of all other being.” This is the final doctrine of Thomas that Clarke examines,

---

170 Ibid., 22.
171 Ibid., 23.
172 Ibid.
173 Ibid.
174 Ibid., 24.
pointing out that the participation doctrine of Thomas “allows for a radically unified vision of the
universe” while also permitting “a doctrine of God in positive terms, yet one that leaves intact the
full mystery of God as ineffable.”\(^{175}\) However, the important part of Clarke’s examination is his
“creative readjustment” of Thomas’s concept of real relations. Thomas’s highly technical doctrine
is impeccably reasoned and based on his theory of efficient causality. In short, every creature has
a real relation to God, but God’s immutability is so absolute that it excludes any real relation to
creatures. Clarke argues that Thomas does not say enough. By pointing out Thomas’s own
distinction between \textit{esse intentionale} and \textit{esse naturale}, Clarke claims that the order of divine
knowledge and love is in the order of \textit{intentionality}, and that a “specific focusing of his knowledge
and love on the created participations of his own goodness . . . does make a highly significant
difference in \textit{personal relations}. For it is precisely in the intentional order of knowledge and love
that interpersonal relations are located.”\(^{176}\) Therefore, by making a distinction between real
relations and personal relations, Clarke concludes, “I believe we can truly say that without doing
violence to his own basic metaphysical positions St. Thomas could and should say that God does
have authentic mutual \textit{personal relations} with all created persons.”\(^{177}\)

 Clarke concludes by making two final distinctions. First, Clarke distinguishes two senses
of immutability. On one hand, God’s immutable “intrinsic intensity and fullness of his own being
and faithful love of us” is an appropriate and necessary proper perfection of a person, but on the
other hand an “ongoing sensitive adaptation to the mutual relations of an interpersonal dialogue is
appropriate and necessary for the perfection proper to a person,” too.\(^{178}\) These two senses of

\(^{175}\) Ibid.
\(^{176}\) Ibid., 25-26. Italics in the original.
\(^{177}\) Ibid., 26. Italics in the original.
\(^{178}\) Ibid.
immutability depend upon a further distinction: “‘Different’ and ‘changing’ are not identical concepts.”

Change implies time and mutability, whereas difference implies a contrast to another possibility, so although God is different because of our actions in time, He does not change. 

**THE PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO GOD**

Clarke was very productive leading up to the publication of his first book, but *The Philosophical Approach to God* was actually the fruit of being invited to be the main speaker during the 1978 James Montgomery Hester Seminar at Wake Forest University. The book is his first serious effort at a “creative retrieval” of Thomas, which he presented in three lectures focusing on the ascent to God by philosophical reason. The first lecture deals with “the unrestricted dynamism of the human spirit towards God” both through the intellect towards Being and Truth and

---

179 Ibid.
180 Ibid. Italics in the original.

the will towards Being as Good. The second lecture “deals with the classic Thomistic metaphysical ascent from creatures to God through participation and finitude.” The third lecture “deals with the question of whether the conception of God in the contemporary Whiteheadian Process Philosophy is really compatible with that of Christianity.”

*The Turn to the Inner Way in Contemporary Neo-Thomism*

In the first lecture, Clarke attempts to present the essential core of the Transcendental Thomist analysis of human knowing and willing. This is the foundation of Clarke’s relational metaphysics. He has internalized the essential core and presents the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will in such a way that he takes philosophical responsibility for it. His lecture is divided into three parts. First, he clarifies what he understands as “Neo-Thomist” and briefly presents the development of that interpretation of Thomas. Second, he presents his argument for “The Ascent through the Dynamism of the Intellect.” Third, he presents his argument for “The Ascent through the Dynamism of the Will.”

Clarke understands Neo-Thomist “to signify that loosely but recognizably united group of thinkers who acknowledge that the basic inspiration and structure of their thought derives from St. Thomas Aquinas, even though each one may have made various creative adaptations of his own, in both method and content, inspired by various movements of thought since the time of St. Thomas.” In particular, the brand of Neo-Thomism that Clarke is particularly interested in at

---

184 Ibid., vii.
185 Ibid., viii.
186 “I myself can take philosophical responsibility for it and make it my own.” Ibid., 11.
187 Ibid., 12.
188 Ibid., 22.
189 Ibid., 1.
this moment is Transcendental Thomism, which “was initiated by the Belgian Jesuit philosopher Joseph Maréchal, in the late 1920s and 1930s at Louvain, in his famous five-volume work *Point de départ de la métaphysique.*” Clarke then traces the development of Transcendental Thomism through various Jesuits before clarifying his own position, which is different than strict Transcendental Thomism because he does not think it necessary to ground the validity of human knowledge by first going up through God as final cause.

Clarke is attempting to use a more directly Thomistic path, rather than going through the Kantian door. He is taking the Thomistic and leaving the Kantian out of his Transcendental Thomism. Clarke says, “What I intend to do is rather to extract what seems to me the essential core common to the whole school and present it in a way that I myself can accept and use in constructing a viable philosophical approach to God.” This essential core fills the lacuna in Thomistic thought that rubbed Paul Tillich the wrong way, leading him to characterize Thomas as the “first atheist.” Thus, what Clarke pulls out of Transcendental Thomism is an Augustinian-Franciscan interior approach that is within the resources of Thomas’s own thought. Clarke says, “It is precisely in its effort to fill this gap in Thomistic thought that the special historical significance of the Transcendental Thomist movement seems to me to lie. It represents a new turn to the inner path, analogous to that in the Augustinian tradition, but discovered within the resources of St. Thomas’s own thought.” In short, Clarke says that the main fruit of Transcendental

---

190 Ibid., 3.
191 “How do I differ from the strict Transcendental Thomist position? I accept the ascent to God through the dynamism of intellect and will, but not the roundabout way of grounding the validity of human knowledge by first going up through God as final cause, then back to our ordinary knowledge of the finite world of our experience.” Ibid., 5.
192 Ibid.
193 Ibid., 7.
194 Ibid.
Thomism is that it has brought out the profound doctrine of the dynamism of the human spirit. Lest one think that the Transcendental Thomists have shoehorned their own philosophy into Thomas, Clarke makes clear to point out that “using this radical dynamism of the human spirit to illuminate the foundations of the whole of Thomistic philosophy—in particular the rational ascent to God—was entirely in harmony with St. Thomas’s own deepest thought.” In support, Clarke refers to where Thomas himself “had worked out quite explicitly and carefully, in his treatise on the ethical life of man, the doctrine of the natural desire in man for the beatific vision of God.”

Clarke’s argument for the ascent to God through the dynamism of the intellect is accomplished in five steps. The first step is the recognition, when “we reflect on the activities of our intellectual knowing power,” that it is “an inexhaustible dynamism of inquiry, ever searching to lay hold more deeply and widely on the universe of reality.” It is this first step that allows Thomas to say that “the only adequate formal object of the human mind is being itself.” Therefore, the “mind must have a dynamic a priori orientation . . . for the totality of being,” which means that the mind has “a kind of implicit, pre-conceptual, anticipatory grasp or foretaste of being as the encompassing horizon and goal of all its inquiries.” For the second step, Clarke goes on to “further analyze this vague and indeterminate horizon of being,” and concludes “that no limits

195 “The essence of the Transcendental Thomist approach to God seems to me to be this: it has brought out of obscurity into full development St. Thomas’s own profound doctrine of the dynamism of the human spirit, both as intellect and will, towards the Infinite—a dynamism inscribed in the very nature of man as a priori condition of possibility of both his knowing and his willing activities—and then applied this doctrine to ground epistemology, philosophical anthropology, metaphysics, and the flowering of the latter into natural theology.” Ibid., 10. Italics in the original.
196 Ibid.
197 Ibid.
198 Ibid., 12.
199 Ibid., 13.
200 Ibid. Italics in the original.
can be set to this field of intentionality, this anticipated horizon of being.”^201 The third step examines the content of this field, which can be reduced to only two alternatives. Either “the actual content of being is nothing but an endless or indefinite field of all finite entities,”^202 or there exists an actually infinite Plenitude of Being: *Ipsum Esse Subsistens.*^203 These alternatives were poetically expressed by the German poet Angelus Silesius: “The abyss in me calls out to the abyss in God. Tell me, which is deeper?”^204 Thus, this third step is grasping the very nature of our inner dynamism of inquiry to be an inexhaustible abyss. The fourth step is conceiving of a union with an Infinite Plenitude “as a fullness out of which continually and spontaneously overflow free creative expressions of ecstatic joy.”^205 Clarke bases the crucial concluding fifth step on freedom. Which of the two alternatives is actually true? “On the one hand, the darkness of ultimate nothingness of what can never be; on the other, the fullness of ultimate Light, which already awaits our coming.”^206 Although Maréchal had a strong position that insisted “that the structure of human thought as oriented toward Infinite Being is a necessary a priori structure or condition of possibility of all our thinking,”^207 Clarke tries to dig a little deeper and “move the option into the realm of a radical existential decision in the order of freedom, of free self-assumption of our own nature as gift.”^208 Although this can appear foolhardy to base the foundation of his entire relational metaphysics on a free decision, Clarke does not hesitate to be clear: “Hence it seems to me that

---

^201 Ibid., 15.
^202 Ibid. Italics in the original.
^203 Ibid., 16.
^206 Ibid., 19.
^207 Ibid. Italics in the original.
^208 Ibid., 20.
there is no logical argument by which one can be forced to choose one side of the option, light or darkness, rather than the other.”209 This is because the issue “is at the root of all rationality”210 and is the existential choice that is “the most important choice of our lives.”211

Clarke’s argument for the ascent to God through the dynamism of the will is briefer than the previous argument through the dynamism of the intellect. Despite its brevity, however, Clarke insists that the argument through the dynamism of the will “works even more powerfully and effectively.”212 The first step is reflecting on the operation of our will, the nature of which is revealed “as an unrestricted and inexhaustible drive toward the good”213 manifested by a process of moving beyond a particular attained good towards another unattained good, always longing for further fulfillment. The second step is reflecting on the ultimate goal of this whole process, which “can be nothing less than the totality of the good,” and revealing that there is “in the will a dynamic a priori orientation toward the good as such.”214 The third step is to recognize that this a priori orientation implies that we “live volitively in the horizon of the good.”215 To describe this kind of living, Clarke recollects the profound insight from Plato’s Meno that “in any inquiry or search, unless we somehow dimly and implicitly knew ahead of time what we were looking for, we would

---

209 Ibid. Italics in the original.
210 Ibid.
211 Ibid., 21.
212 Ibid., 22.
213 Ibid.
214 Ibid., 23. Italics in the original.
215 “Now this a priori orientation and natural affinity for the good implies that the will, in order to recognize and respond to a good when it finds it, must have written within it—analogously to the intellect—a pre-conceptual ‘background consciousness,’ an anticipatory grasp—unthematised or implicit, obscure and indistinct—of the good as somehow present in its very depths, magnetizing and attracting it, luring it on to actual fulfillment of its innate potentiality by distinct conscious appropriations of actually existing concrete goods. This is what it means to live volitively in the horizon of the good.” Ibid., 23.
never recognize an answer as an answer to our search.”

Clarke finds this same kind of living in Thomas’s claim that “every knower knows God implicitly in anything it knows,” and Clarke expands the same idea to the will when he says, “similarly, every will implicitly loves God in anything it loves.”

Next, Clarke begins to examine “the content of this unlimited horizon of the good,” and although it “appears to us first as a vague, indefinite, indeterminate totality,” when “we analyze the dynamism of the will . . . we discover that no finite particular good can be its adequate final goal.” This brings us to yet another radical option, as in the case of the intellect, between affirming the will can be satisfied by the actual existence of an Infinite Good, or else the will must be “doomed to an unfillable, insatiable abyss of longing.” Here again, Clarke prefers “to propose the option as appealing to the radical freedom of each human person to assume or reject, freely, the ultimate meaningfulness of his or her own human nature as power of willing and loving the good. No logical argument can force me to choose one alternative over the other.”

Given that the ascent to God through the dynamism of both the intellect and will reduces to an appeal to personal, radical freedom rather than logic, it is not surprising that the “approach to God through the dynamism of the will toward the good has a far more powerful appeal to most people than the approach through the intellect alone as ordered toward truth.”

---

216 Ibid., 24. Clarke is referring to Plato’s Meno, wherein Socrates claims to “have heard wise men and women talk about divine matters . . .” (81a), i.e. about the immortality of the soul and the theory of recollection. Plato, Complete Works, ed. John Cooper, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Inc., 1997), 880.
217 De ver., q. 22, a. 2, ad 1. (Leon. Ed., Vol. 22.3.612) “. . . omnia cognoscentia cognoscunt implicite Deum in quolibet cognito.”
218 Clarke, Philosophical Approach to God, 24.
219 Ibid., 24-25.
220 Ibid., 25.
221 Ibid., 26. Italics in the original.
222 Ibid., 27.
difficult to “humbly and gratefully accept” that the nature of the unrestricted dynamism of the intellect must resolve to freedom rather than logic. However, humbly accepting that the nature of the unrestricted dynamism of the will must resolve to freedom is much more palatable. Also, Clarke points out that the will is more foundational than the intellect in the sense that, “as St. Thomas points out, unless possessing the truth appeared to us as a good attracting the will, we would not be drawn to seek knowledge at all.”

Clarke’s simplified Transcendental Thomist ascent to God through the dynamism of the intellect and will is a complement to the Aristotelian styled argument to God through cosmic motion. Akin to the “ancient Platonic path through the *eros* of the soul” and the inner path of the Augustinian tradition, Clarke opens up as similar tradition found in the heart of Thomas. There are differences, however, between the inner path taken by Augustine and Thomas. First, for Augustinians “the *ontological* order of the priority of God as First Cause and our radical dependence on Him for all knowing and loving tends to be identified here with the *epistemological* and *psychological* order of our discovery of God.” Second, the medieval Augustinian tradition spoke of the soul as having two “faces,” an Aristotelian, material face and a Platonic, spiritual face. For Thomas, “because of the intrinsic interdependent unity of soul and body—hence intellect and sense—in man, all his *natural* knowledge was intrinsically sensitive-intellectual in origin.”

Consequently, the content of our natural knowledge of God arrived at through the Thomistic ascent through the dynamism of the intellect and will “is considerably more indirect and modest than that of Augustinian man” and “needs to be completed by the so-called outer path

---

223 Ibid.
224 Ibid., 29. Italics in the original.
225 Ibid., 32-33. Italics in the original.
226 Ibid., 33. Italics in the original.
of cosmic ascent to God, by which we reach God not just through final causality—*as* my God, my ultimate satisfaction—but through efficient causality also as God the Creator, the ultimate Source of all being and goodness in the universe."\(^{227}\) This path is the topic of Clarke’s second lecture, which he transitions to with the following statement: “I myself believe, with St. Thomas, that the truly Christian God must be found as immanent both within the person and within the cosmos, as Lord of both the inner and the outer world.”\(^{228}\)

*The Metaphysical Ascent through Participation and the Analogical Structure of Language*

In his second lecture, Clarke draws upon his mastery of the participation structure of the universe in Thomas in order to complement the inner path developed in the first lecture. First, Clarke explains why the inner path is insufficient. Second, he presents his argument for the ascent to God through participation metaphysics. Third, he explains his understanding of analogy in order to explain how language about God can be meaningful.

Knowing God through the inner path of final causality allows us to know Him as *Omega*, the goal, but in order to also know Him as *Alpha*, the Creator and source, we must pursue the outer path of efficient causality. As Clarke puts it, “the God of authentic religion must always be both, the God of *Genesis* as well as *Exodus*.\(^{229}\) There is a complementarity to the inner and outer paths. Both should be followed out in order to grasp a more complete knowledge of God. “The inner path and the cosmic path are sisters who must walk hand in hand if they are to reach their common goal of the true God.”\(^{230}\) Clarke begins by pointing out the lacuna in Thomas’s Five Ways and

\(^{227}\) Ibid., 35. Italics in the original.
\(^{228}\) Ibid., 36.
\(^{229}\) Ibid., 40. Italics in the original. Also, in the original 1979 version Clarke wrote “*Exodus,*” but for some reason he changed it to “*Exodos*” in the 2007 revision.
\(^{230}\) Ibid.
explaining “some of the reasons why many contemporary Thomists today—especially Transcendental Thomists like Rahner and Lonergan—stay away from the Five Ways.” Clarke states unequivocally: “This is definitely my position.” Instead, Clarke presents his own cosmic way to God through Thomas’s Neo-platonically inspired participation metaphysics.

Clarke begins by summarizing Thomas’s metaphysics in four steps. Thomas began with the “general formal structure of Neoplatonic participation theory,” and then he emptied it “of its excessive Platonic realism of ideas,” before filling it with “the act of existence as the ultimate positive core of all real perfections” and expressing it “in a transformed Aristotelian terminology of act and potency.” Given Thomas’s metaphysical structure, Clarke presents two arguments for God. However, Clarke is clear to point out that these arguments are “not the type of formal-logical argument that can (if indeed any argument for anything real can) force all minds to accept it with compelling logical rigor. Its power perhaps lies more in the evocation of a basic metaphysical insight” that “may well have to be indissolubly a quest of the whole person.”

Clarke’s first argument moves from the many to the One “in a single step from the beings of our experience, taken simply as many and existing, to a single Infinite Source of all being and all perfection.” It is not surprising that Clarke considers this argument to be “the simplest, most streamlined, most direct of all metaphysical arguments for God that have ever been proposed,” given that the argument is a single step. Of this argument Clarke says, “I love it, as I am sure St.

---

231 Ibid., 45.
232 Ibid., 48-49. See also ibid., 61: “This synthesis of Neoplatonic participation, Aristotelian act-potency and efficient causality, and his own notion of existence as intensive act and the core of all perfections, constitute the profoundly original and personal participation metaphysics of St. Thomas, which I consider as perhaps his greatest contribution to philosophical thought.”
233 Ibid., 49-50.
234 Ibid., 50. Italics in the original.
235 Ibid.
Thomas did,”\textsuperscript{236} referring to Thomas’s presentation of it in \textit{De Potentia}.\textsuperscript{237} Clarke summarizes the argument in two sentences. “Wherever there is a many sharing some real perfection, there must be a single common source for this perfection. Since existence itself is the most universally shared of all perfections, including all that is real in any way, there must be a single common ultimate Source of all existence from whence all others participate in it, each in its own way.”\textsuperscript{238} Clarke points out two principles required for this argument to be valid. “The central one is the epistemological realism of Aquinas,”\textsuperscript{239} which limits the application of the argument to a few transcendental predicates. A second required principle to understand participation properly is a proper “dialectic of finite and infinite.”\textsuperscript{240} Given these two principles, this argument “is really more in the nature of a synoptic insight into the presence of the One as reflected in the many.”\textsuperscript{241}

Clarke’s second argument “is slightly more complex”\textsuperscript{242} and moves from the finite to the One in two steps. First, it moves from the finite to the infinite. Second, it moves from the infinite to the One. Since the argument moves through the infinite, it is important to understand the term “infinite” as “the unrestricted qualitative plenitude of a perfection as it is in its unparticipated state.”\textsuperscript{243} The first move from the finite to the infinite begins with the realization that “no finite

\textsuperscript{236} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{237} \textit{De pot.}, q. 3, a. 5, ad 1. (Marietti ed., Vol. 2.49) “Oportet enim, si aliquid unum communiter in pluribus inventur, quod ab aliqua una causa in illis causetur, non enim potest esse quod illud commune utrique ex se ipso conueniat, cum utrumque, secundum quod ipsum est, ab altero distinguatur; et diversitas causarum diversos effectus producit. Cum ergo esse inveniatur omnibus rebus commune, quae secundum illud quod sunt, ad invicem distinctae sunt, oportet quod de necessitate eis non ex se ipsis, sed ab aliqua una causa esse attribuatur. Et ista videtur ratio Platonis, qui voluit, quod ante omnem multitudinem esset aliqua unitas non solum in numeris, sed etiam in rerum naturis.” Other places Clarke references where Thomas relies upon this argument are the following: \textit{ST}, I, q. 65, a. 1 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 5.148-149) and \textit{ST}, I, q. 44, a. 1 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 4.455-456); \textit{De ver.}, q. 2, a. 14 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 22.1.91-93); and \textit{SCG}, II, c. 28 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 22.1.334-336).
\textsuperscript{238} Clarke, \textit{Philosophical Approach to God}, 53.
\textsuperscript{239} Ibid., 54.
\textsuperscript{240} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{241} Ibid., 55. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{242} Ibid., 56.
\textsuperscript{243} Ibid., 58.
possessor of a perfection can ever be the ultimate self-sufficient source of a perfection that it possesses only imperfectly and incompletely,” and therefore every finite being “points beyond itself to an infinite Source.” In the case of transcendental perfections, such as existence, “we find that every finite possessor of these perfections points beyond itself to an Infinite Plenitude-Source of the same,” resulting in “an Infinite Source of existence itself, as the ground of all other perfections.” The second move, from the infinite to the One, is quick and easy, since “it is impossible for there to be two actually existing absolute infinities of perfection, for there could be nothing to distinguish them.” The result of this second argument is “the unique, ultimate, infinite Source of all being, the ultimate mystery of Plenitude that is also the magnet and final goal of the entire dynamism of the human spirit, both intellect and will.”

With these two arguments presented, Clarke then makes the “highly controversial suggestion that all objective metaphysical arguments for the existence of God must eventually pass over one or both of these aforementioned paths, from the many to the One and from the finite to the Infinite, if they wish adequately to attain their end.” Clarke then concludes this section with a couple of postscripts on how efficient causality must be understood. First, since “for St. Thomas, ‘every act is by its nature self-communicative’ through action,” Clarke is not bothered by post-Kantian philosophers of religion who prefer the language of communication to the language of efficient causality. Second, it is important not to use the emasculated sense of cause introduced by modern science that denies the simultaneity of cause and effect in pursuit of the goal of

---

244 Ibid., 59.
245 Ibid.
246 Ibid., 60.
247 Ibid.
248 Ibid.
249 Ibid., 63.
250 Ibid., 64.
predictability. Rather, a causal explanation is “a judgment, based on evidence judged adequate, which assigns active responsibility for an observed event to a non-observed cause.”

Lastly, Clarke examines the analogical structure of language about God. However, rather than working with Thomas’s treatment of analogy in De veritate, which Clarke claims “was actually quietly abandoned by St. Thomas himself in his later works as too agnostic,” Clarke chooses to present “a much richer and more metaphysically grounded ‘analogy of causal participation’.” He begins by limiting his focus to “analogy of proper proportionality,” which are analogous terms that properly and literally express “some real intrinsic similarity found diversely but proportionately in all the analogates.” Next, Clarke states a basic principle whose importance to understanding analogy cannot be overstressed: “all terms expressing a proper analogy of proportional similarity are action-terms, activity-terms, expressing some action or activity that can be exercised diversely by different subjects, proportionate to their natures.” The next point Clarke makes is the “most important point for the understanding of analogy.” This is that properly analogous terms “are systematically vague terms” which Clarke likes to call “a stretch-concept.” Such terms cannot be defined, but the meaning is known “by running up and down the scale of its known examples and seeing the point, catching the point, of the similarity it

251 See the section “Causality and Time” in chapter two of this dissertation.
252 Ibid., 66. Italics in the original.
253 Ibid., 72.
254 Ibid. Clarke has a tendency to work at reconciling opposing viewpoints. However, this tendency leads him to present a rather confusing picture of analogy. Clarke consistently introduces the concept of analogy by tying it to his participation metaphysics, yet he always tries to frame that newly developed understanding of analogy within the traditional Cajetanian terminology. He did this in his 1976 article on analogy, he does it here in 1979, and he even conflates the two understandings of analogy in 2001 in The One and the Many. cf. Analogy and the Meaningfulness of Language about God.” Explorations in Metaphysics: Being—God—Person (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 123-149, and The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics, (University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 44-50.
255 Ibid., 73-74.
256 Ibid., 74.
257 Ibid. Italics in the original.
expresses in all.” Clarke locates this analogous shift “in the living act of judgment.” Thus, “analogy is found and understood only in the lived use of concepts and language which takes place in the act of judgment.”

The “general rule” that Clarke is appealing to is the ability of the mind to “expand its conscious horizon of being.” For Clarke, analogy relies upon judgment. Nevertheless, “analogy is not itself a way of discovering anything new,” rather “analogy comes along only afterwards to organize the newly conquered territory and work out the conceptual and linguistic expression of the bonds of community with the already known. It is a perfectly natural, spontaneous, and valid movement of the mind to extend thus the analogous range of its concepts and language, provided it has good reason to set up the new beachhead in the first place.”

When Clarke turns his attention to applying analogical language to God, he says that “there is only one bridge that enables us to pass over the cognitive abyss between ourselves and God and talk meaningfully about Him in our terms: the bridge of causal participation, or more simply of efficient causality, taken with all its implications.” This leads to the most important point Clarke wants to highlight in this chapter on analogy. “If there is one point I would like to highlight in this chapter, it is the capital importance of the ontological bond of similitude deriving from causal

---

258 Ibid.
259 Ibid., 75.
260 Ibid., 75. Italics in the original.
261 “The general rule is this: whenever the mind finds it rationally necessary or fruitful . . . it simply expands its conscious horizon of being as intelligible to open up some new determinate beachhead in the already unlimited, indeterminate horizon of being in which the mind lives implicitly all the time.” Ibid., 76-77.
262 “Once the mind . . . judges it necessary to save the intelligibility of something in our experience by positing some necessary condition of intelligibility outside our experience, it posits the latter at once as a real condition of intelligibility and as necessarily analogous with the rest of being, in one and the same movement of thought.” Ibid., 77. Italics in the original.
263 Ibid., 78. Italics in the original.
264 Ibid.
participation as the indispensable metaphysical underpinning for giving meaning to language about
God in Thomistic (and, I do not hesitate to say, I think any viable) philosophical theology.”
But which attributes can be extended properly and legitimately to God? The pure perfections, which
are “purely positive qualitative terms that do not contain as part of the meaning any implication of
limit or imperfection.” Once a pure perfection is located, “what we intend or mean directly by
the concept . . . is a flexible . . . core of purely positive meaning that transcends all its particular
possible modes.”

According to Clarke, there are two types of pure perfection. First, there are “absolutely
transcendental properties of being, such as unity, activity, goodness, and power.” Second, there
are “the relatively transcendental properties of being . . . such as knowledge (particularly
intellectual knowledge), love, joy, freedom, and personality.” Regarding the absolutely
transcendental properties, Clarke says we definitely know that these positive qualitative attributes
or perfections are “really present in God and in the supreme degree possible. Such knowledge,
though vague, is richly value-laden and is therefore a guide for value-assessment and for value-
responses of worship, love, and the like.” Regarding the relatively transcendental properties,
Clarke says that they “are richer in content” and “demand our unqualified approval as
unconditionally better to have than not to have.”

265 Ibid., 81. Italics in the original.
266 Ibid., 82. Italics in the original.
267 Ibid. Italics in the original.
268 Ibid., 83. Italics in the original.
269 Ibid. Italics in the original.
270 Ibid., 84. Italics in the original.
271 Ibid., 84.
272 Ibid., 85. Italics in the original.
Clarke describes how we use transcendental properties by describing an “existential move.” What happens “is that even though our discovery of their meaning has been from our experience of them in limited degree, we immediately detach them from restricting links with our own level, make them more purified and indeterminate in content, and project them upward along an open-ended ascending scale of value-appreciation.” Here we are employing the unrestricted dynamism of our minds and wills in order to accomplish the existential move. “The very fact that we can judge our present achievement as limited and imperfect implies that we have reached beyond it by the implicit dynamism of our minds and wills.” Thus, Clarke’s entire understanding of how analogy allows us to apply transcendental properties to God relies on his unrestricted dynamism argument. “Thomistic analogy makes full sense only within such a total notion of the life of the spirit as knowing/loving dynamism.” In support, Clarke mentions Pascal’s “knowledge through the heart” and Thomas’s “connatural inclination.”

“To sum up, analogous knowledge of God . . . delivers a knowledge that is intrinsically and deliberately vague and indeterminate, but at the same time richly positive in content.” Although the fact that this knowledge is vague and indeterminate could lead to hesitation regarding precision and certainty, Clarke insists that the what is vague, but the that is precise. “Such luminous precision in the order of value-knowledge is far from empty or sterile: it is life-guiding and life-inspiring in the highest degree.”

---

273 Ibid., 86. Italics in the original.
274 Ibid. Italics in the original.
275 Ibid., 87.
277 Clarke, Philosophical Approach to God, 88-89.
278 Ibid., 90.
Christian Theism and Whiteheadian Process Philosophy: Are They Compatible?

The third and final lecture is Clarke’s dialogue with process philosophy. This lecture received a drastic revision between the original first edition of *The Philosophical Approach to God* in 1979 and the revised edition in 2007. Although the first chapter of this dialogue is interesting on its own, regarding Clarke’s criticism of how Whitehead understands God as Creator, it is not essential to tracing the development of Clarke’s relational metaphysics and does not warrant an in-depth analysis. The second chapter, however, is a further development of Clarke’s 1972 article, “A New Look at the Immutability of God,” discussed earlier in this chapter, and merits a closer look. However, with the multitude of revisions Clarke added in the revised edition of 2007, it will be more fitting to examine it in chapter seven of this dissertation.

CONCLUSION

The twelve year span of Clarke’s career from 1968 until the publication of his first book in 1979 is characterized by his efforts to solidify the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will as the foundation upon which his metaphysical system rests. In order to lay a solid foundation, Clarke dove back into the writings of Thomas. During this span, Clarke cited 42 passages of Thomas that

---


280 There are really only two points worth mentioning, both of which relate to participation. “In Thomistic metaphysics . . . all creatures participate, as images of God, in the basic perfections of God—including His power—although in varying limited degrees.” Ibid., 122. Italics in the original. “For St. Thomas, God does indeed support or ‘concur’ with the being in its actions. But this divine collaborative power is always channeled through the nature, as root of the act, into the act, and is determined to this or that particular act, not independently and extrinsically by God, but only by the form given it by the determinate nature and whatever use it makes of its powers.” Ibid., 123.

he had never cited in any prior publication, giving evidence that he returned to the font of Thomas to lay this foundation. Most of those passages were used to support Clarke’s foundation of the unrestricted dynamism of the human spirit, as was shown above, but there are five other passages of Thomas in particular that are worth mentioning, as they planted the seeds for the following three stages of his career. Clarke cited each of these five texts for the first time in his career in his landmark 1976 article, “What is Most and Least Relevant in the Metaphysics of St. Thomas Today?”

Perhaps the most valuable pair of texts that Clarke discovered during this time are the following: “Omnis enim res propter suam operationem esse videtur: operatio enim est ultima perfectio rei,” which Clarke cites twelve more times throughout his career, and “. . . cum omnis res sit propter suam operationem,” which he cites seven more times. In fact, these texts becomes Clarke’s go-to proof texts for the second pillar of his relational metaphysics investigated in chapter two of this dissertation: existence as a dynamic act of presence. Clarke’s early career was rather unfocused, but once discovered, these two particular texts appear to have drawn together the various strands in his earlier publications and bound them together into the second pillar of his relational metaphysics. Going forward, whenever Clarke speaks of substance and existence as a dynamic act of presence, he invariably cites these two texts.

---


283 *SCG*, III, c. 113 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 14.359-360). Clarke commonly translates this text as “Each and every thing shows forth that it exists for the sake of its operation; indeed operation [activity] is the ultimate perfection of each thing.” For the 12 subsequent references of *SCG* III.113 see Appendix B.

284 *ST*, I, q. 105, a. 5 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 5.475-476). Clarke commonly translates this text as “All things exist for the sake of their operations.” For the seven subsequent references of *ST* Iq105a5, see Appendix B.

Another very important pair of texts Clarke discovered during this span of his career\textsuperscript{286} are “Unde unumquodque agens agit secundum quod in actu est,” which he cites ten more times throughout his career,\textsuperscript{287} and, “Agere autem aliquem effectum per se convenit enti in actu: nam unumquodque agens secundum hoc agit quod in actu est,” which he cites nine more times.\textsuperscript{288} These texts also become the foundation stone of the next pillar of Clarke’s relational metaphysics: action as self-manifestation of inner being. Research into and defense of this pillar becomes the next major focus of his career, as I shall show in the next chapter.

Finally, the last important text that Clarke cites for the first time\textsuperscript{289} is Thomas’s definition of the person in his treatment of the Trinity in the \textit{Summa theologiae}: “. . . persona significat id quod est perfectissimum in tota natura . . .”\textsuperscript{290} Clarke cites this definition six more times throughout his career. Although this text and the importance of the person in Clarke’s relational metaphysics subsides into the background for several years, Clarke returns to this topic with an intense focus starting in 1988. This new focus culminates with his influential Marquette lecture in 1993: \textit{Person and Being}.
\textsuperscript{291} The importance of person in Clarke’s career will be the theme of the second part of this dissertation.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[286] Clarke, “Metaphysics of St. Thomas Today,” 8.
\item[287] \textit{De pot.}, q. 2, a. 1 (Marietti ed., Vol. 2.24-27). Clarke commonly translates this text as “Every agent acts according as it is in actuality.” For the 10 subsequent references of \textit{De pot}. q2a1, see Appendix B.
\item[288] Clarke frequently cites \textit{SCG}, II, c. 7, for this text, but it is actually a citation of \textit{SCG}, II, c. 6 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 13.281-282). Clarke commonly translates this text as “Active power follows upon being in act, for anything acts in consequence of being in act.” For the nine subsequent references of \textit{SCG} II.6, see both \textit{SCG} II.6 and \textit{SCG} II.7 in Appendix B.
\item[289] Clarke, “Metaphysics of St. Thomas Today,” 16.
\item[290] \textit{ST}, I, q. 29, a. 3, c. (Leon. Ed., Vol. 4.331). For the six subsequent references, see Appendix B.
\end{footnotes}
CHAPTER 4
ACTION AS SELF-MANIFESTATION OF INNER BEING

Introduction

The Philosophical Approach to God was a capstone to Clarke’s early career. The first part solidified his underlying presupposition to his relational metaphysics: the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will. The second part summarized the theme of the participation structure of the universe, which was the theme of his dissertation and is the first pillar in his relational metaphysics. The second pillar, existence as a dynamic act of presence, and the theme of chapter two of this dissertation, had unfortunately not been as clearly presented by Clarke. Thus, for the next step in the development of his relational metaphysics, Clarke immersed himself in Thomas again in order to clarify the second pillar and gain a deeper understanding of action.

The fruit of this immersion was his 1982 article “Action as the Self-Revelation of Being: A Central Theme in the Thought of St. Thomas.”¹ Yet again, nearly every citation of Thomas that Clarke appeals to in this article appears for the first time in his published work. These citations also become foundational to his relational metaphysics going forward. Here, Clarke precisely presents the principle that action is the self-revelation of being and one of the great central organizing themes in Thomas’s thought. To be is to be actively co-present to the community of

existents. To be is to be self-communicative. Looking back on this article, Clarke did not hesitate
to say that he considered it “one of the most important I have done.”

Before examining this critical article of Clarke’s career, however, I will examine two other
important articles that led up to it. Although each of these two articles are rather removed from the
theme of this chapter, they nevertheless shed light on several other themes of his relational
metaphysics and are worth examining. His 1980 article, “The Philosophical Importance of Doing
One’s Autobiography,” refines his concept of person and the importance of taking self-possession
of one’s own historical activity as story in order to become dominus sui. His 1981 article, “The
Natural Roots of Religious Experience,” connects action and presence, such that to act is to make
one’s presence felt. Here Clarke asserts that being, in its deepest analysis, is the act of presence.

After these two articles have been discussed, I will provide a careful examination of Clarke
important 1982 article, “Action as the Self-Revelation of Being,” before concluding with his 1986
article “To Be Is to be Self-Communicative: St. Thomas’s Vision of Personal Being,” wherein he
lays out the three central characteristics of personal being and begins to transition to the next phase
of his philosophical development.

---

2 W. Norris Clarke, S.J., “Fifty Years of Metaphysical Reflection: The Universe as Journey,” in The Universe
University Press, 1988) 75.
3 W. Norris Clarke, S.J., “The Philosophical Importance of Doing One’s Autobiography,” in The Creative
523.
5 W. Norris Clarke, S.J., “To Be Is to be Self-Communicative: St. Thomas’ Vision of Personal Being,”
6 In addition to the above articles, Clarke also published three other articles during this time that will not be
examined in detail: “The Role of Essence in St. Thomas’ Essence-Existence Doctrine: Positive or Negative Principle?
A Dispute within Thomism,” in Atti del Congresso Internazionale di San Tommaso, (Naples: Edizioni Domenicane,
Fordham University Press, 2009), 152-170. Revised and expanded from a previously published article in Graceful
In 1980, the American Catholic Philosophical Association presented Clarke with the Aquinas Medal. In his Medalist’s Address, Clarke took the opportunity to talk about the philosophical importance of writing an autobiography. Although an autobiography may not appear to be of much philosophical importance, Clarke says, “I consider it to be a truly serious philosophical theme.” In fact, Clarke has been pondering the theme of autobiographies since reading an article by John Claude Curtin in 1974, with whom Clarke now finds himself in agreement. Since “to be is to be one,” and “to be a person . . . is to take conscious self-possession of one’s own being, to be master of oneself (dominus sui),” it is important to do an autobiography in order to assimilate and integrate our own past “so that our lives reveal themselves as a meaningful story.” It is only in this way that we can “know in full self-consciousness who we are” by discerning the pattern of our lives that reveal our story.

The result of integrating the whole of one’s past into one’s present “is that a surprising amount of psychic ‘energy’ is released.” Clarke expands this to apply to societies as well as individual persons in order to explain the value “of commemorating the important events in their

---

Acknowledgments:

7 Clarke, “Doing One’s Autobiography,” 5.
10 Ibid. Italics in the original.
11 Ibid.
past in celebrations,” even giving the Eucharistic prayer, “Do this in memory of me,” as an example. Clarke’s main point in this whole article, however, is to stimulate philosophers “to try to come to know who they are existentially as philosophers.”

Clarke’s own autobiographical recounting of his story is punctuated by a couple of particular points. First, he pinpoints his first coming to self-consciousness around three years of age on account of jumping from one rock to another. This leads into recounting experiences of high places and correlating those experiences to his awakening as a metaphysician. Clarke summarizes the connection thus: “the great panoramic vistas one gets from such places are like a concrete visual symbol of a metaphysical synthesis, first lived before it is thought.” These panoramic views from above are “like an archetypal symbol of the intellectual vision of the metaphysician, who is always trying to see the whole of reality from a vantage point where the whole comes together into a meaningful, unified pattern.” This vision, Clarke says, “is really what I have been pursuing throughout my whole career as a metaphysician.”

Clarke begins the academic portion of his autobiography with André Marc, who taught him the metaphysics of Thomas at the French Jesuit House of Philosophical Studies on the Isle of Jersey. Marc, who was a leader in “the French branch of Transcendental Thomists,” introduced Clarke “to the Thomistic act of existence and the essence/existence structure of the universe.” This introduction, says Clarke, “seemed to me like the key to the universe I had always been looking for.”

---

12 Ibid., 7.
13 Ibid. Italics in the original.
14 Ibid., 10.
15 Ibid., 10-11.
16 Ibid., 11.
17 Ibid., 12.
18 Ibid.
Clarke also singles out two books for having “an especially profound and decisive role” in his philosophical development: Maurice Blondel’s *L’Action* and Maréchal’s *Le Point de Départ de la Métaphysique*.¹⁹ From Blondel, Clarke discovered the importance of the limitless dynamism of the human spirit and intellect, and he said they have “been the dynamic underpinnings of my own metaphysics ever since.”²⁰ From Maréchal, Clarke says, “Though I have since drawn back from certain of the technical positions of the Maréchal school, this experience of metaphysical reflection on the whole development of Western philosophy from one systematic vantage point marked somehow a decisive threshold of philosophic maturity for me.”²¹

Clarke then identifies two influences from his doctoral studies. First, he “drank deeply of the newly burgeoning existentialist and personalist thought, then tried to integrate it into a streamlined existential Thomism.”²² Second, he “discovered the dimension of Neoplatonic participation in Saint Thomas.”²³ The result, Clarke says, is that “existence as act and participation, with all their implications, have been the central pillars of my metaphysical thought ever since.”²⁴ During the first part of his career, Clarke focused on participation. However, now that he has worked to fill out all the implications of participation and the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will in his first book, *The Philosophical Approach to God*, Clarke now begins to focus on existence as act and how action self-manifests inner being. Before moving onto that phase of his

---

²¹ Ibid.  
²² Ibid.  
²³ Ibid.  
²⁴ Ibid., 14.
career, Clarke quotes Josiah Royce to conclude his current autobiographical waypoint: “The self is a unified autobiography through time.”

THE NATURAL ROOTS OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

In his 1981 article, “The Natural Roots of Religious Experience,” Clarke turns his attention to another aspect of the human person, namely the aspects that make natural religious experience possible. He begins by clarifying what he means by “natural” and “religious experience.” By “natural” Clarke means “that which all men are in fact endowed with when they enter this present world of human history before they enter into any particular religious context.” By “religious experience” Clarke means “any direct existential awareness of the presence or activity of an ultimate, absolute, transcendent dimension of reality, especially the more intense forms of unitive awareness of this Transcendent which have traditionally been called ‘mystical experience’.” The goal of Clarke’s paper is to seek a common ground underlying the religious experience of all men, and he concludes to four basic natural roots of religious experience in the human person: (1) an innate dynamism toward the infinite, (2) a similitude of the human spirit to the divine, (3) a permanent presence of the infinite in the human spirit, and (4) a direct intuitive knowledge of our own inner spirit.

The first natural root of religious experience that Clarke identifies is also the foundation for his system of relational metaphysics: the radical dynamism of the human spirit towards the

---

25 Ibid., 15.
27 Clarke, “Roots of Religious Experience,” 511.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., 512.
infinite. The evidence Clarke provides is “the fundamental human experience of stretching beyond any limit we encounter.” In short, since to know a limit as a limit is to have already transcended it, and since “we are the kind of being that can never be satisfied with any finite goal, any finite good or bit of truth,” we are, in the words of Clarke, “stretchers-beyond-all-finites.” It is possible, however, if someone just endlessly moves from one finite good to another, to never recognize this radical dynamism for the infinite. Yet it is possible “to sum up the whole process and catch the point of it. If no finite can satisfy me, then I can be fulfilled only by something beyond all finites, that is, by some limitless plenitude of being, truth, goodness, beauty. My very nature, therefore, cries out to me that I am a being in quest of the infinite.” This realization brings about an ultimate, free choice: the human person is either “a radically absurd, necessarily frustrated being, an abyss of nonsense,” or else the human person can reach out with a radical conviction that the infinite actually exists in order to become “a being stretched out in hope towards the infinite.” A free choice for the second option is “the fundamental root and condition of possibility of all religious experience” because in order “to be open to religious experience one must be a quester who is unsatisfied on the one hand, but hopeful on the other.”

---

30 Ibid., 513.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., 514.
33 Ibid. Italics in the original. cf. Clarke, “Analogy and the Meaningfulness of Language about God,” in Explorations in Metaphysics: Being-God-Person (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 128. Originally published in Thomist 40 (1976): 68. Clarke uses a similar image, i.e. “catching the point,” when describing how analogy works. It is also interesting that by this point in his career (1981), Clarke unqualifiedly lists beauty along with other transcendentals, whereas five years earlier in his article on analogy he prefaced beauty with “probably” when he lists the absolutely transcendental properties: “unity, intelligibility, activity, power, goodness [. . .] and probably beauty too.” Ibid., 144.
34 Clarke, “Roots of Religious Experience,” 514. Italics in the original.
35 Ibid., 514.
36 Ibid., 515.
The second natural root of religious experience that Clarke identifies “is the similitude of the soul in depth to the divine.”

Clarke believes this root is necessary because “all love presupposes some bond of mutual affinity, of mutual likeness between lover and beloved.” However, Clarke’s argument for this root is rather weak. He says, “It is difficult, if not impossible, I admit, to prove this logically. It seems to be a kind of fundamental intuition discovered in the very experiencing of loving.” Nevertheless, Clarke lists similitude as a condition of the possibility of loving as a reason in support of this second natural root, along with a second reason: every effect must in some way resemble its cause. Finally, Clarke concludes his examination of this second natural root by relating it to the first root. “It is this hidden dynamic similitude of the soul to God, seeking to come to fruition, that constitutes the very inner dynamo of the drive of the spirit towards the infinite.”

The third natural root of religious experience that Clarke identifies is “the permanent presence of the infinite within the soul.” Whereas the first two roots were regarding us, and how our souls are both unlike and like the divine, this third root is “more mysterious and less easy to analyze, because we are attempting now to speak of . . . the divine itself.” Clarke approaches this task in two ways: empirically and philosophically. From the empirical approach, Clarke examines actual cases of religious experience and concludes that what is “characteristic in all is the note of unveiling a presence that is already there, but hidden, inaccessible to the concepts and reasoning of our ordinary rational consciousness, or to the deliberate striving of our will.” From the

---

37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., 516.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 517.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid., 518. Italics in the original.
philosophical approach, Clarke reflects upon the implications of our inner drive towards the infinite and introduces the concept of the good as goal that draws every being into act. “The infinite implies that our spirit is somehow being existentially drawn by the infinite good as by a great hidden magnet . . . but that which existentially and actively draws us as the inner core of all our desires and attractions must be something already present within us,” since “there is no action at a distance. To act is to make one’s presence felt.”

Clarke also points out three additional characteristics of the infinite. First, the infinite cannot be in any way absent, since what “being itself means, it its deepest analysis, is the act of presence.” Second, spirits can be “simply present to each other” through “mutual immanence,” i.e. “by thinking about each other and especially by loving each other.” Third, “the infinite presence cannot be anything but pure spirit,” which while “constantly knowing and loving us, must be totally present to, totally immanent within, our spirits.” Clarke concludes that “the infinite goal of the quest of the human spirit must already be present in the most intimate depths of our human nature as endowed with spiritual intellect and will. It is the always-already-present-to-us, ‘God with us’, which manifests itself “constantly by its very magnetizing power as the Good.”

The fourth natural root of religious experience that Clarke identifies is regarding “our mode of knowing experientially the presence of the infinite within us.” After eliminating several other possibilities of knowing God through various other means, Clarke concludes that “we experience the presence of God by directly knowing our own selves as passive, receptive, to the immediate

---

44 Ibid. Italics in the original.
45 Ibid., 519.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., 520.
50 Ibid., 520.
action or ‘touch’ of God on the soul.”\textsuperscript{51} Of course, this implies that we know ourselves. Regarding this aspect, Clarke says, “To speak meaningfully of myself as ‘I’ implies that I must have some direct knowledge of myself precisely as source of my actions, as subject and not object.”\textsuperscript{52} Thus, it is action that manifests the being of our own conscious selves to ourselves. Clarke turns to Thomas to support this position: “St. Thomas insists, and I agree with him as to our ordinary mode of knowledge, that we do not know this ‘I’ by direct introspection into the reality of the ‘I’,” rather “the ‘I’ awakens or comes to light only when it is in the act of knowing or thinking something other than itself.”\textsuperscript{53} In fact, our immediate intuitive knowledge of our own conscious self is “always mixed in with some relation to another.”\textsuperscript{54} Finally, Clarke identifies three ways that one can “pass to actual awareness of the enveloping immanent divine presence by being attentively passive to the latter’s immediate action on the spirit.”\textsuperscript{55} First, there can be an experience of a sudden “welling up” in the soul. Second, the soul can experience an ecstasy of being drawn out and absorbed in God. Third, there can be a slow, gradual, and unobtrusive seeping in of “a great enveloping presence.”\textsuperscript{56}

In conclusion, Clarke summarizes the four basic natural roots of religious experience that he developed in this paper. Since these natural roots are “common to all men,” Clarke identifies them as “the common bond of all religious humanity” and “the justification for maintaining – as I think we should – that there is a single spiritual history of humanity.”\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 521.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 522.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 523. Italics in the original.
ACTION AS THE SELF-REVELATION OF BEING

Introduction

Clarke’s goal in “Action as the Self-Revelation of Being: A Central Theme in the Thought of St. Thomas,” 58 is to explicitly highlight one of the central governing universal principles that Thomas uses to solve problems: action as the self-revelation of being. “By this is meant that action, activity, not only follows naturally from being, but is also a natural self-communication and self-revelation of the being that acts, ‘pointing out,’ as St. Thomas graphically puts it, both its existence and its essence, both that it is and what it is.” 59 Yet Clarke ventures even further, claiming that “the whole of Thomistic epistemology, in its large lines, can be summed up as follows: all human knowledge of the real is an interpretation of action.” 60 After such an investigation, Clarke hopes his article will “highlight not only the unity but the profoundly dynamic character of the entire worldview of St. Thomas.” 61

Natural Overflow of Being

Clarke begins by looking at a few passages in Thomas. 62 From these texts Clarke concludes that “it is proper to every being, insofar as it is in act, to overflow into action, to act according to

60 Clarke, “Self-Revelation of Being,” 46.
61 Ibid., 46.
its nature.” The distinction is that first act, which is the esse, or act of existence, of any being, overflows into second act, which is the action or activity of the being. Second act may be either immanent action or transient action, depending on whether the action terminates within or outside the agent, respectively.

According to Clarke, the way that Thomas makes the connection between being and its overflow into action is “by a reflective insight arising from an inductive examination.” This connection cannot be made by deduction or logical inference from something more fundamental. Clarke insists that we arrive at this connection by observing “it constantly at work in all the cases and at all the levels of being we know, until we are finally brought to the level of a ‘metaphysical insight’ that this property somehow belongs to the very nature of existential being as such and could not be intelligibly otherwise.” This would partially explain why Thomas never explicitly treats this principle. “To be, in the strong sense of to be real or actually existing, is seen to be ambiguous, incomplete, empty of evidential grounding, unless it includes, as natural corollary, active presence, that which presents itself positively to others through some mode of action. To be is to be actively co-present to the community of existents, of other active presences.”

Self-Communication of Being

What follows from the natural overflow of being is self-communication. Clarke understands Thomas to say that every being “insofar as it is in act, tends naturally to overflow into

---

64 Ibid., 47.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid. Italics in the original.
action, and this action is a *self-communication*, a self-giving in some way.”⁶⁷ In support of this interpretation, Clarke refers to several passages in Thomas, the most poignant of which are the following: “It is in the nature of every actuality to communicate itself insofar as it is possible.”⁶⁸ “It follows upon the superabundance proper to perfection as such that the perfection which something has it can communicate to another.”⁶⁹ “Communication follows upon the very intelligibility of actuality. Hence every form is of itself communicable.”⁷⁰ “For natural things have a natural inclination . . . to diffuse their own goodness among others as far as possible. Hence we see that every agent . . . produces something similar to itself.”⁷¹

What follows from this is that not only does every being overflow into action, but that “action is both a self-manifestation and a self-communication, a self-sharing, of the being’s own inner ontological perfection, with others. This natural tendency to self-giving is a revelation of the natural fecundity or ‘generosity’ rooted in the very nature of being itself.”⁷² Thus, whereas the Platonic tradition had the Good be self-diffusive, Thomas has turned this self-diffusiveness into a property of being itself. Thus, “for St. Thomas the good is a derivative property of existential being itself, expressing more explicitly the primal dynamism of self-expansiveness and self-giving inherent in the very nature of being as act of existence.”⁷³

According to Clarke, “We have here penetrated to the very roots of being itself, to the primal spring of its activity without which there would be no universe.”⁷⁴ However, “it cannot be

---

⁶⁷ Ibid., 47. Italics in the original.
⁶⁸ *De pot.*, q. 2, a. 1. (Marietti ed., Vol. 2.24-27)
⁷⁰ *In Sent.*, I, d. 4, q. 1, a 1. (Mandonnet ed., 130-133)
⁷³ Ibid., 48-49.
⁷⁴ Ibid., 49.
deduced from anything more ultimate but is reached by insight through induction.” Nevertheless, Clarke continues to push forward, insisting that “in its highest form as self-communicative altruistic love, it is the ultimate reason why the Many emerges from the One at all.”

Here Clarke appeals to Revelation, which will soon begin to become a habit: “Revelation here gives us a marvelous further insight, inaccessible to strictly philosophical penetration, into the interior depths of the divine self-communicativeness within its own being . . . the procession of the Son or Logos according to self-knowledge, and the procession of the Holy Spirit according to self-love.”

In conclusion, Clarke reaches the end of his exploration with the claim that “the Ultimate Fact that Being is identically Love precludes all further explanatory moves and serves itself as the ultimate explanatory reason for the entire dynamic nature of the universe.”

Here Clarke emphasizes the difference between Neoplatonism and Thomas regarding the self-diffusiveness of the Good. Whereas Neoplatonism insisted on the necessity of the self-diffusiveness of the Good, Thomas “holds firmly to the divine freedom in creation, that God is free to create or not to create finite beings.” In order to maintain God’s freedom, Thomas “tones down the meaning of the adage, bonum est diffusivum sui, to mean the self-diffusiveness of the good in the order of final causality,” whereas in the order of efficient causality “every being is capable of active self-communication, has a natural aptitude for it, but does not necessarily have to actualize this aptitude.”

---

75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid., 50.
79 Ibid., 50. Italics in the original.
Clarke criticizes Thomas here for being overcautious. Rather than limiting the diffusiveness of the Good to final causality, Clarke proposes two other means of preserving God’s freedom while also maintaining the importance of the principle “that it is proper to every being in act to be self-communicative through action.”\textsuperscript{80} The first suggestion that Clarke proposes is that Thomas “could have appealed to the revealed doctrine of the Three Persons in the Trinity.”\textsuperscript{81} The necessary law of the self-communication of the Good is satisfied in the Trinity, thus leaving the rest of creation as an act of freedom. The second suggestion that Clarke proposes is “that there is a kind of moral exigency of perfect love that it share itself in \textit{some} way.”\textsuperscript{82}

Whereas God is perfect and thus always pours over to share His perfection with others, finite creatures on the other hand are both rich and poor, leading to two kinds of communication. Insofar as finite creatures are in act, they pour over and share their perfection with others in imitation of God. Insofar as finite creatures are poor, they reach out to share in the riches of others. “Thus the universe becomes a vast interconnected web of interacting beings, reciprocally acting on and being acted on by others, giving and receiving. \textit{To be finite is to share.}”\textsuperscript{83} Clarke concludes by summing up the self-communication of being with a rather poetic image: “action, as the natural overflow and self-communicative dynamism of existential being, is the indispensable shuttle on which is woven the web of this, and any other, universe.”\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 51. Italics in the original. \\
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid. Italics in the original. \\
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
Self-Revelation of Being

The next section is the longest and most detailed part of the article. What follows from the natural overflow of self-communication is the self-revelation of being. “For St. Thomas, as for Aristotle and Neoplatonism, every being, by the very fact that it communicates itself through action, also produces in the recipients of this communication an ontological self-expression” since “every effect must in some way resemble its cause.” Thus, in effect, “every being is naturally a self-symbolizer,” and this truth “opens up a profoundly illuminating harmony between philosophy and theology, reason and faith, in St. Thomas’s worldview: the self-symbolizing tendency in all the finite beings we know turns out to be an imperfect participation or imitation of the inner being of God himself, revealed to be supremely and perfectly self-symbolizing in its eternal interior procession of the Son from the Father and the Holy Spirit from both.”

Clarke next show how this self-revelation of being is the key to a realistic epistemology. According to Clarke, Thomas says that “all knowledge of particular real beings or kinds of being must come through the illumination or self-revelation of things themselves in direct contact with us.” However, “there must be some mediating bridge” since we do not have direct intuition of substantial forms, and “the only bridge is the mediation of action . . . as the self-revelation of the being of the agent that is its source.” This action pours out from the whole unified inner being of the thing: “its action cannot help but be essence-structured action revealing . . . both the actual existence and the essence.” In support of this interpretation of Thomas, Clarke quotes a passage

---

85 Ibid., 51-52. Italics in the original.
86 Ibid., 52. Italics in the original.
87 Ibid., 53.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid., 54. Italics in the original.
from the *Summa Contra Gentiles*: “The operation of a thing manifests both its substance [essence] and its existence.”

In addition, since this action is structured, it “reveals to us the essence or nature of the agent precisely as *this kind of actor on me.*” However, this understanding of knowledge is restricted, as is seen by Clarke’s conclusion that “this is precisely what our knowledge of the essences of real beings comes down to: we know them as such and such *kinds of actors*, distinguished from others by such and such a *set of characteristic actions.*” We do not know complete essences by direct intuition, but we are rather limited by actions, which are “always at once revealing and concealing.” Actions are revealing insofar as they show something of the inner nature of the actor, yet actions are also concealing insofar as every action always “leaves unrevealed further depths or aspects of the reservoir of active potency within it,” including “its hidden ontological connections with every other being in the universe and especially with its Infinite Source, God himself.”

In support of this conclusion Clarke again turns to the text of Thomas. “The substantial forms of things, which, according as they are in themselves, are unknown to us, shine forth to us through their accidental properties.” Also, “our knowledge is so weak that no philosopher was ever able to investigate perfectly the nature of a single fly.” Thus, rather than grasping the whole

---

92 Ibid. Italics in the original.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 “Quia tamen formae substantiales, quae secundum se sunt nobis ignotae, innotescunt per accidentia; nihil prohibet interdum accidentia loco differentiarum substantialium poni.” *ST*, I, q. 77, a. 1, ad 7 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 5.239).
96 “Sed cognitio nostra est adeo debilis quod nullus philosophus potuit unquam perfecte investigare naturam unius muscae.” *In Symb.*, Proemium.
essential form through a process of abstraction, Thomas understands the process of abstracting the form to be more like “an authentic sighting of the form,” a sighting which is always incomplete because of the limited nature of the action and because “whatever is received is received according to the mode of the receiver.”

Based on these statements, Clarke asserts that the modern insistence on “the perspectival character of all human knowing can be assimilated easily enough into Thomistic epistemology.”

Not only is action seen as the key to the abstraction process, but action can also be expressed “as the bridge between knower and known in the language of intentionality,” which is “that property of something by which it tends dynamically and relationally towards something else.” However, it is essential that intentionality is understood both in the ontological and cognitive orders. Only when understood under both orders, in a kind of double movement, can intentionality be seen as “the key to knowledge for St. Thomas.” The first movement is “the incoming ontological intentionality of action itself into the knower,” and is “recognized as a natural similitude, image, or sign of its source.” After the first movement, the second, “complementary movement of cognitive intentionality now occurs when the consciousness of the knower . . . recognizes it explicitly as a sign or message from another and reaches out dynamically in the cognitive order . . . to refer it by an intending relation back to the thing itself from which it came,” and “pointing back to the thing through the referential act of judgment.” This whole double movement of intentionality is a great theme in Clarke’s relational metaphysics which he

---

99 Ibid. Italics in the original.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid. Italics in the original.
102 Ibid. Italics in the original.
returns to often as a summary of Thomas. Clarke says, “St. Thomas even sums up the whole activity of the universe in a dazzling synthetic vision under the image of the great circle of intentionality,” which “begins from God, passes through the created universe to us, then through us as knowers and lovers back to its Source again.”¹⁰³ Clarke concludes, “To be, once again, is to be self-communicative.”¹⁰⁴

Clarke concludes this rather long and involved section on action as the self-revelation of being by showing how this understanding overcomes Kantian agnosticism about knowledge. This is done by embracing a moderate “relational realism” founded on the middle ground of action.¹⁰⁵ This action-mediated realism of Thomas supports a carefully qualified, dynamic correspondence theory of truth. In this theory, action reveals “the presence in the thing of a set of dispositional properties (active potencies, in Thomistic terms) for action that characterize this being as distinct from others.”¹⁰⁶ It is the knowledge of these dispositional properties that forms the foundation of the relational realism that Clarke is advocating. “The knowledge of the dispositional properties of things is the most important and consequence-laden thing we need to know about them.”¹⁰⁷ Not only is this relational realism helpful for answering Kantian agnosticism, but it also “fits the needs of contemporary physicists as they advance into the increasingly strange world of subatomic quantum physics.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Ibid., 57-58.
¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 58. The texts of Thomas that Clarke references in support of the great circle of intentionality: ST I, q. 105, a. 3 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 5.473); ST I, q. 56, a. 2 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 5.64-65); Quaes. disp. de an., art. 20 (Leon. Ed., 24.1.168-175); In Sent., II, d. 12, q. 1, a. 3, ad 5 (Mandonnet ed., 311).
¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 60. Italics in the original.
¹⁰⁷ Ibid.
¹⁰⁸ Ibid.
Clarke summarizes his conclusions in this massive section in the following manner:

“Action as the self-communication and self-revelation of being is the key to the whole of Thomistic epistemology: all knowledge of the real, for St. Thomas, is an interpretation of action,” and “all action is both revealing and concealing. The self-revelation of being to the human observer is necessarily a chiaroscuro of light and darkness.”

Self-Fulfillment of Being

Finally, Clarke presents “a last crowning piece in St. Thomas’s metaphysics of action,” which is that action “is not only the natural self-communication and self-manifestation of being, but also the final perfection of its self-realization or self-fulfillment.” Here Clarke references four texts from Thomas to support his crowning piece, and although he had quoted two of them in a previous article, the other two appear for the first time in his career. Going forward, these texts become a staple of Clarke’s metaphysical outlook and he continues to rely upon them throughout the rest of his career. Without a doubt, the publication of this article and the conclusion Clarke arrived at is a turning point in his career and one that solidifies the pillar of

---

109 Ibid., 61. Italics in the original.
110 Ibid. Italics in the original.
112 SCG, III, c. 113 and ST, I, q. 105, a. 5 were both quoted in Clarke’s 1974 article, “What Is Most and Least Relevant in the Metaphysics of St. Thomas Today?” See “The Relevancy of St. Thomas’ Metaphysics in 1974” in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.
113 All four texts are quoted frequently throughout the remainder of Clarke’s career. SCG, III, c. 26 is quoted by Clarke three more times, in 1986, 1992, and 1993. SCG, I, c. 45 is also quoted by Clarke three more times, in 1987, 1992, and 1993. SCG, III, c. 113 is one of Clarke’s most frequently quoted passages from Thomas, as it appears in 11 subsequent articles all the way up until 2004. ST, I, q. 105, a. 5 is quoted by Clarke six times, all the way up until 2001. See Appendix B for the exact citations of each.
action as self-manifestation of inner being in Clarke’s relational metaphysics. Summarized simply, Clarke argues that because “activity is the passing into actuality of the active potencies of a being,” then “action is thus the final natural fruition or self-expression of any real nature.”\textsuperscript{114} Therefore, the final “fruition,” as Clarke puts it, of any being whatsoever, is self-communication to others, and which for self-conscious beings is love.\textsuperscript{115} Thus, according to Clarke, an authentic understanding of substance from the Thomistic perspective is as an abiding center totally oriented towards self-communicating action.\textsuperscript{116} For self-conscious persons, this is love.

Conclusion

Clarke concludes this article by summing up the unfolding process of action that he walked us through. A being in act, an \textit{ens}, naturally overflows into action,\textsuperscript{117} which is a self-communication that draws everything into a universe.\textsuperscript{118} Action also makes knowledge and love possible because an \textit{ens} can both take in and reciprocate the self-communication of itself and others,\textsuperscript{119} and these actions draw the universe into an \textit{intentional} unity.\textsuperscript{120} Finally, the self-

\textsuperscript{114} Clarke, “Self-Revelation of Being,” 61.
\textsuperscript{115} The “final fruition of any being, its peak of self-realization, is reached only in its self-communication to others, its self-sharing with others. The final perfection of the whole of being, therefore, is to form a community of reciprocally self-communicating actors, which, on the level of self-conscious beings, is but another name for love.” Ibid., 61-62.
\textsuperscript{116} The “authentic Thomistic conception . . . defines substance as an abiding center of activity, subsisting in itself as an autonomous center, but totally oriented toward self-communication through action as the supreme fulfillment of its being.” Ibid., 62.
\textsuperscript{117} “. . . action, for St. Thomas, is the \textit{natural overflow of being in act}.” Ibid., 62. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{118} “. . . this overflow of action becomes the self-communication of being, thus drawing together the multiplicity of real beings into a true \textit{universe}.” Ibid., 62. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{119} “. . . to be is to self-communicate; to know is to pick up within oneself the self-communication of being.” Ibid., 63.
\textsuperscript{120} “. . . as the \textit{self-revelation} of being, action lights up beings for each other, making mutual knowledge of each other possible, thus drawing the universe together into an \textit{intentional} unity through knowledge and love.” Ibid., 62. Italics in the original.
revelation of action ends up being “the supreme perfection and self-realization of every being, the final raison d’être, of being itself.”

TO BE IS TO BE SELF-COMMUNICATIVE: THOMAS’S VISION OF PERSONAL BEING

Clarke’s first major article after his retirement as a philosophy professor at Fordham was the fruit of his first year of retirement and was initially presented at Rockhurst College in Kansas City, where Clarke was asked to give the 1986 William L. Rossner Visiting Scholar Lecture. Later that same year, he published “To Be Is to be Self-Communicative: St. Thomas’ Vision of Personal Being,” in Theology Digest. In this article we can see Clarke begin the transition from action as the self-manifestation of inner being to the topic that will become his greatest contribution to philosophy: the relational metaphysics of the person.

Clarke builds his analysis of personal being on two aspects of Thomas’s metaphysics, one which is well-known, and another which is less well known. The well-known aspect of Thomas’s metaphysics is that it “is profoundly existential, i.e., the whole center of gravity in his explanation of being has shifted from essence and form—what things are—to the underlying act of existence or existential presence by which things actually are at all.” The less well-known aspect of Thomas’s metaphysics “is the close link between existential presence and action.” Since it is of the very nature of being “to be self-communicative, self-sharing,” through action, “how much more so for the supreme flowering of being,” the person, which according to Thomas is “that

---

121 Ibid., 63. Italics in the original.
123 Ibid., 441. Italics in the original.
124 Ibid., 442.
125 Ibid.
which is most perfect in all of nature.”¹²⁶ Given these connections between being, action, sharing and person, Clarke asserts that “here—all at once—we are touching the very roots of being, of the person, and of love.”¹²⁷

*Action as Self-Communication of Being*

Before turning to analyze three central characteristics of the person, Clarke first develops the less well-known theme in Thomas of action as the natural overflow of being. First, the act of existence of any being is a presence *in itself* that becomes an *active presence* to the community. This *active presence* manifests both the existence of the being, insofar as the being is acting at all, and its essence, insofar as the act is a particular sort. Also, since every effect is similar to its cause, action is necessarily a *self-communication* of being. In short, “action is what allows beings . . . to be present *to* and *for* others.”¹²⁸ According to Clarke, the act of existence and action itself are the two basic bonds holding together the universe into a unity. The act of existence is the basic static bond, while action is the basic dynamic bond.

Clarke then supports his argument by quoting seven of his favorite and most frequently referenced texts of Thomas.¹²⁹ These texts clearly display that “this innate fecundity and generosity proper to being . . . is St. Thomas’ way of integrating into his own metaphysics of being the rich

¹²⁸ Ibid. Italics in the original.
Platonic and Neoplatonic tradition of the Good as naturally self-diffusive, self-sharing.”

From here, Clarke moves to love. “And since, for St. Thomas, the highest instance of both being and the good is God as spiritual and personal being, it follows that the ultimate explanation of the fecundity of being, of the self-diffusiveness of being as good, must be that Infinite Being is also by its very nature Infinite Love.”

With this foundation built, Clarke turns his attention to the person, “that which is most perfect in all of nature.” According to Clarke, personal being is the perfection of being itself, such that “when being is allowed to be fully presence it necessarily turns into luminous presence to itself, i.e., self-presence.” Technically, this “turning into luminous presence” is what happens when existential being becomes endowed with a spiritual intellect and will. This is the moment when existential being “becomes personal being, i.e., luminously present to itself as conscious self-presence and actively present to others by conscious self-communication through self-expression, action and love.” Clarke insists that for Thomas, however, person means more than just a certain level of being. “For St. Thomas . . . this extra requirement is that the individual rational nature be a complete, actually existing being with its own act of existence which renders it the ultimate, autonomous, responsible source of its own actions.” In short, “personal being is a rational being that through its own act of existence has become self-possessing or, as St. Thomas states it with masterful succinctness, ‘master of itself’ (dominus sui).”

131 Ibid.
134 Ibid., 444. Italics in the original.
135 Ibid. Italics in the original.
Person as Self-Possessing

The first aspect of personal being that Clarke examines is self-possessing. The ontological root of this aspect is the act of existence that bestows autonomy of action upon the subject. There are two ways that this ontological self-possession manifests itself in the life of a person: self-consciousness in the order of knowledge and self-determination in the order of action. These two manifestations bestow moral responsibility upon the person, and “herein lies the true dignity of every personal being.” Clarke concludes that “the essence of morality for St. Thomas . . . consists in the fact that a created person is self-governing,” and it is “in this free, responsible self-government that moral life becomes an image of God.” Just as God providentially guides all of creation towards its final end, a human person can also guide his or her own life towards its final end “with a view toward harmonizing it with the good of the whole universe.” Thus, Thomistic ethics is primarily “a morality of the free person, responsibly guiding himself or herself towards God as final goal.” Rather than being a law-focused morality, Thomas’s ethics are “a value and goal-centered ethics.” Clarke concludes this section with a warning not to misunderstand the aspect of self-possession in human persons as complete or perfect in this life. Although our freedom is real, it is not total. “That is what it means to be a human person in this life: to possess enough self-mastery to qualify as a responsible moral agent, at least part of the time in our lives, but a self-mastery that is on a journey towards wholeness, ever imperfect and incomplete.”

---

138 Ibid., 445. Italics in the original.
139 Ibid.
140 Ibid.
141 Ibid.
142 Ibid., 446. Italics in the original.
Person as Self-Communicating

The second aspect of personal being that Clarke examines is self-communicating. Whereas the self-possessing aspect of personal being is the introverted, substance side of the person, the self-communicating aspect of personal being is the extroverted, relational side of the person. In Clarke’s words, “the whole life of personal being revolves around this basic polarity of presence to self and presence to others – a living synthesis of substantiality and relationality.” Clarke points to a text of Thomas to support this relational aspect: “Each and every thing shows forth that it exists for the sake of its operation; indeed operation is the ultimate perfection of each thing.”

The self-communicating aspect is also important in actualizing human consciousness, which begins “in a kind of darkness, a state of being in potency towards knowing all things, in act toward none.” The move to actuality happens once the self is opened to the world of others, and it is only through the mediation of others that human consciousness can “return to itself to discover itself as ‘I,’ as this unique human person.” Once this “I” is discovered, it matures in consciousness through actively engaging in interpersonal relations. This activity allows a person to discover positively what and who he is. Thomas stressed the social nature of the person, and “phenomenological descriptions have made it clear that no one can come to the awareness of himself or herself as an ‘I’ save through the reaching out of another to us who already is an ‘I’ and appeals to us as a ‘Thou,’ inviting us to respond . . . as a personal ‘I’ open to the other.”

---

143 Ibid., 446.
146 Ibid.
147 Ibid. Clarke is referring to what Thomas says in ST, II-II, q. 114, a. 2, ad 1 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 9.442). “delectabiliter vivere in communi” (It is natural for human beings to take delight in living together.)
There is a relational complementarity between the aspect of self-possession and self-communication. “The life of every human person unfolds through an ever-developing spiral circulation between self-presence and active self-expressive presence to others.”¹⁴⁸ In fact, the more intense one’s self-possession, the more intensely one is truly present to others through self-communication. Amazingly, Clarke then expands this complementarity to the relationship between a person and being itself. “The same creative tension exists, by the way, in the most fundamental relationship of all, that of the person and being itself.”¹⁴⁹ This is on account of the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will, which are created as the complements to the intelligibility and goodness of being. Likewise, the more aware we are of our personhood, the more we wake up to our “innate openness and orientation to the limitless horizon of being.”¹⁵⁰

Clarke next points out that it is essential to express “the integral wholeness and unity of the self” in order to fully mature as a human person.¹⁵¹ “It is hard for us to keep alive consciously what we never express, even to God. For it is the law of being itself that whatever truly is tends naturally to pour over into self-communication, sharing what it has with others.”¹⁵² This leads to the counterintuitive truth that “the more we give ourselves away to others, the more we can hold on to ourselves.”¹⁵³ Clarke calls this counterintuitive truth “the law of the innate generosity of being.”¹⁵⁴

Towards the end of this section, Clarke turns to revelation to further illuminate this aspect of the person. Since “it is the very nature of Infinite Being . . . to pour over into two immensely rich, real, personal self-communications within the unity of its one nature,” therefore “the fullness

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.
¹⁵⁰ Ibid.
¹⁵¹ Ibid., 448.
¹⁵² Ibid. Italics in the original.
¹⁵³ Ibid.
¹⁵⁴ Ibid.
of being demands of its very nature as being that it be self-communicative.”155 Since we are created as the images of God, “we tend naturally to be self-expressive. And because that is the way God is, we will be unfulfilled if we do not actualize this tendency.”156 Lastly, Clarke issues a warning about the current trajectory of society towards a consumerist view, as opposed to the self-actualizing view that he has been developing as a path to personal maturity. “Self-actualizer, or consumer? Which one is, or will become, the dominant formative influence in our society?”157

**Person as Self-Transcending**

The final aspect of personal being that Clarke treats is self-transcending, and it is “the one most shot through with paradox and mystery.”158 There are three, increasingly intense meanings of self-transcendence. Clarke quickly dismisses the first of these meanings, which very broadly applies to “any person who goes out of oneself to relate oneself to another in knowledge or love.”159 This is self-transcending in a horizontal sense. A second, more restricted meaning of self-transcendence adds a component of reaching out in love and care for the other’s own sake. “In this sense all authentic friendship and love of benevolence is a self-transcending act.”160 The philosophy of friendship makes it clear that mature development as a person requires “giving oneself to another in self-forgetting love of some kind,” and that “to be a true self one must somehow go out of oneself, forget oneself.”161 Clarke says that “St. Thomas develops it succinctly, but clearly, in his analysis of natural friendship and supernatural charity” by offering a solution to

---

155 Ibid., 449. Italics in the original.
156 Ibid.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid., 450.
159 Ibid.
160 Ibid.
161 Ibid.
the apparent paradox of forgetting oneself to find oneself by appealing to participation and similitude.\textsuperscript{162} Since we all participate in the same human nature, “we recognize a deep natural affinity between ourselves and others,” in our implicit love of the Infinite.\textsuperscript{163} Also, insofar as we are images of God, we all share a similitude with “the ecstatic, outgoing self-sharing of God as Infinite Good.”\textsuperscript{164} By overflowing in action and self-communication, we are imitating God, and “personal development in a created person is to become more and more like God.”\textsuperscript{165} Clarke then stunningly concludes this second meaning of self-transcendence with the claim that “the ultimate mystery of being turns out to be that to be is to be a lover.”\textsuperscript{166}

The third and final meaning of self-transcendence is “its most radical and intense level . . . in a \textit{vertical} sense.”\textsuperscript{167} In short, this third meaning of self-transcendence is “a radical de-centering of consciousness from self to God” so that “we take on a God’s-eye view of all things, seeing them as he sees them in the ordered unity of being as a whole, and loving them all as he loves them in the ordered unity of goodness as a whole.”\textsuperscript{168} This even includes the self, so that self-love is disengaged from the self and instead re-centered on God, so that “I know and love myself as God knows and loves me. And as a result I open my whole being to the Great Center so that it can act out its life of creative love through me.”\textsuperscript{169} This de-centering of self becomes “a new finding of one’s ‘true self’ at a deeper level.”\textsuperscript{170}

\begin{flushright}
\begin{itemize}
\item Clarke, “Vision of Personal Being,” 450.
\item \textsuperscript{163} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{164} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\item \textsuperscript{165} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\item \textsuperscript{166} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\item \textsuperscript{167} Ibid., 451. Italics in the original.
\item \textsuperscript{168} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\item \textsuperscript{169} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{170} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{flushright}
In support of this vertical sense of self-transcendence, Clarke appeals to several religious traditions. From St. Paul’s “I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me,” and Jesus saying “he who loses himself will find himself,” in Christianity, to Buddha’s “no-self” doctrine, to the Hindu *atman* letting go of the illusion to become one with the *Atman*, and even the Islamic Sufi’s begging God to “take away this I that stands between me and Thee,” Clarke sees signs of this vertical self-transcendence in all the great spiritual traditions. Clarke even examines it from a Jungian psychological perspective, pointing out how the first part of a person’s life is spent “acquiring a strong and secure sense of self and what it can do,” but then around the mid-point of our life’s journey we realize that “to move on further, some radical shift of focus must take place. This is the call to radical self-transcendence.”

Clarke then attempts to give a philosophical explanation for the cause of this seeming paradox of letting go of self in order to reach full self-development. The answer, according to Clarke, “lies in the nature of spiritual intellect and will as dynamic faculties oriented by a built-in natural drive towards the fullness of the formal objects, being and goodness as such.” In short, it is the natural, unrestricted dynamism of our mind and will as persons, created in the image of God, that can only be fully active when we transcend our own limited point of view and take on the total point of view of God. “Here shines forth the magnificent, liberating paradox of personal development: because the person is endowed with a spiritual intellect and will, possessing a natural drive toward the Infinite, the fullness of truth and goodness, the only way it can reach its own...

---

171 Galatians 2:20  
172 Matthew 10:39  
174 Ibid., 452.  
175 Ibid.
fullness of perfection as spirit is precisely to transcend its own—and any other—limited viewpoint to take on the divine point of view of knowing and loving all things, including oneself. “Self-transcendence is thus of the very essence of all personal development at its highest.”

“In a nutshell, for St. Thomas, to be a human person in all the fullness of that term, is to be on a journey.” Yet even in the wake of this philosophical analysis, Clarke still returns to where this article began: mystery. “To be a person, in the fullest sense of the term, is indeed a deep and wondrous mystery.”

CONCLUSION

Now that we have passed the midway point of Clarke’s career, we can look back and see how his system of relational metaphysics is coming together. With the foundation of the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will solidly developed in his first book, *The Philosophical Approach to God*, Clarke is now able to build the pillars upon that foundation. By this point in 1987, Clarke has solidly placed three of his pillars on that foundation. The participation structure of the universe was worked out in his dissertation. Existence as a dynamic act of presence was striven towards early in his career, as was shown in chapter two of this dissertation, but was only solidified once the foundation was built, as was shown in chapter three of this dissertation.

Now we have the third pillar firmly placed upon the foundation: action as self-manifestation of inner being. His landmark 1982 article, “Action as the Self-Revelation of Being,” was the fruit of intense labor for Clarke. Nearly every reference to Thomas in this article was the

176 Ibid., 453.
177 Ibid.
178 Ibid. Italics in the original.
179 Ibid.
first time Clarke had ever cited those texts. Thus, it is clear that Clarke spent extensive time re-immersing himself in Thomas in order to develop this third pillar. There are four texts that Clarke hits upon in particular that he cites at regular intervals for the rest of his career.

First, Clarke returned to Thomas’s commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. Although Clarke had made extensive use of this text early in his career, he had not cited from it since 1961. When Clarke returned to this font of wisdom two decades later in 1982, he discovered a text that he would rely upon for the rest of his career, citing it at least seven more times: “Item, omne quod communicat se, communicat se ratione actus qui est in ipso.”

Another text that Clarke discovered during his return to Thomas is from the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Although Clarke had cited chapter 69 of book III in his dissertation and following articles, he had not cited it since 1955. One he rediscovered it, however, he would go on to cite it at least nine more times during his career. “. . . ex abundantia enim perfectionis est quod perfectionem quam aliquid habet, possit alteri communicare.”

There are also a pair of texts from Thomas’s *Summa theologiae* that Clarke incorporates into his metaphysical outlook from this point forward, citing each five more times throughout his career. The first emphasizes how natural things, insofar as they are perfect, communicate their

180 *In Sent.*, I, d. 4, q. 1, a. 1 (Mandonnet ed., 131). Clarke cited this text correctly three more times before the publication of *The One and the Many* in 2001. Unfortunately, there was a typo in his citation of that text on page 34, incorrectly citing it as *In Sent.*, I, d. 4, q. 4, a. 4. This incorrect citation was then copied in three subsequent publications. Therefore, in order to see the other seven citations of this text, see both *In Sent.* Id4q1a1 and the incorrectly cited *In Sent.* Id4q4a4 in Appendix B. Clarke’s English translation runs as follows: “Communication follows upon the very intelligibility of actuality. Hence every form is of itself communicable.”

181 *SCG*, III, c. 69 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 14.199-202). Unfortunately, Clarke cites this text incorrectly as *SCG*, III, c. 64 in the next article it appears, and the typo is perpetuated until 2001. Thus, in order to see the other nine citations of this text, see both *SCG* III,69 and the incorrectly cited SCG III,64 in Appendix B. Clarke’s English translation runs as follows: “It follows upon the superabundance proper to perfection as such that the perfection which something has it can communicate to another.”
goodness to others,182 while the second rather beautifully describes how the substantial forms of things “shine forth to us (innocescunt) through their accidental properties.”183

These four texts become the cornerstone of his textual support for action as self-manifestation of inner being, and with this pillar now solidly placed among the other previous two on the foundation of the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will, Clarke is now confident to begin building the next great pillar of his metaphysical system and the apex of his career: arguing for the supreme value of persons in the universe.

182 “Unde et hoc pertinet ad rationem voluntatis, ut bonum quod quis habet, aliis communicet, secundum quod possibile est. Et hoc praecipue pertinet ad voluntatem divinam, a qua, per quandam similitudinem, derivatur omnis perfectio. Unde, si res naturales, inquantum perfectae sunt, suum bonum aliis communicant, multo magis pertinet ad voluntatem divinam, ut bonum suum aliis per similitudinem communicet, secundum quod possibile est.” ST, I, q. 19, a. 2 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 4.233). Clarke’s English translation runs as follows: “It pertains, therefore, to the nature of the will to communicate to others as far as possible the good possessed; and especially does this pertain to the divine will, from which all perfection is derived in some kind of likeness. Hence if natural things, insofar as they are perfect, communicate their goodness to others, much more does it pertain to the divine will to communicate by likeness its own goodness to others as far as possible.”

183 “Quia tamen formae substantiales, quae secundum se sunt nobis ignotae, innocescunt per accidentia; nihil prohibit interdum accidentia loco differentiarum substantialium poni.” ST, I, q. 77, a. 1, ad 7 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 5.239). Clarke’s English translation runs as follows: “The substantial forms of things, which, according as they are in themselves, are unknown to us, shine forth to us through their accidental properties.”
PART TWO

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A HUMAN PERSON?
CHAPTER 5

PERSONS AS SUPREME VALUE IN THE UNIVERSE

Introduction

Clarke retired from Fordham in 1985 after he reached the mandatory retirement age of 70. He taught philosophy full time for 30 years at Fordham, where he received the Outstanding Teacher Award in 1980. The next phase of his philosophy career included a series of visiting professorships at several universities over the next 15 years.¹ This major life change also resulted in a rather significant shift in philosophical focus for Clarke. The central focus of Clarke’s philosophical career up to his retirement in 1985 could broadly be characterized as an attempt to answer the following question: What does it mean to be real? The underlying presupposition of the unrestricted dynamism of the human spirit and the three pillars of his relational metaphysics, i.e. participation, existence, and action, are all aspects of what it means to be real.

After retiring from Fordham, Clarke turned his philosophical attention to another central focus: What does it mean to be a human person? As we have just seen in the previous chapter, the first article Clarke published after his retirement, “To Be Is to be Self-Communicative: St. Thomas’ Vision of Personal Being,”² was the perfect bridge between these two primary foci of his philosophical life. From this point forward, Clarke’s goal is to understand the human person. In

pursuit of that goal, he spends less time with Thomas and more time dialoging with other philosophers.

His new focus on the human person is made very clear in his 1988 book, *The Universe as Journey*, wherein he claims the person is the key to why there is anything rather than nothing at all. Clarke follows this claim by publishing five very insightful articles over the next four years. He begins by laying the groundwork of his new focus with the 1990 article “Thomism and Contemporary Philosophical Pluralism,” wherein he goes into great detail regarding how he understands the relationship between Thomism and phenomenology.

Clarke then proceeds to publish four very important articles in 1992. “To Be Is to Be Substance-in-Relation,” integrates Clarke’s understanding of a classical, dynamic substance with the notion of relation, so that real being is a dyadic synthesis of substance and relation. Person and receptivity are frequent examples. “The ‘We Are’ of Interpersonal Dialogue as the Starting Point of Metaphysics,” suggests a starting point within real sensible being that establishes both realism and further metaphysical development. Clarke also makes the following strong claim in this article:

---


4 “The person is ultimately the key to why there is anything at all and not rather nothing.” Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 80-81.


“Thus Thomism, beginning with the person as subject and ending with Transcendent Person Being as the supreme level of being, can truly be called a personalist philosophy.”

Clarke clears out some philosophical obstacles introduced by the moderns before offering a radically metaphysical argument as a new foundation for natural theology in “Is a Natural Theology Still Viable Today?” Clarke’s article on natural theology is one of his best and allows him to clarify his philosophical foundation for—and understanding of—the divine as person. Both clarifications are essential to the final result of his relational metaphysics: the personalization of existence itself.

Finally, in “Person, Being, and St. Thomas,” Clarke lays out the goal of this latter part of his philosophical career: “I would like to do for Thomistic metaphysics what Thomas himself could have done, but for various reasons did not get around to doing,” which is connecting being and person in such a way that they can be seen as “paradigms of each other.” Clarke concludes this article by attempting a “creative completion” of Thomas by introducing receptivity as a perfection of being and person, which is covered in chapter six of this dissertation.

---

8 Ibid., 41.
THE UNIVERSE AS JOURNEY

Introduction

In many ways, *The Universe as Journey* is located at the epicenter of Clarke’s philosophical career. Having recently retired from full-time professorship at Fordham University, Clarke began a series of visiting professorships while dedicating the majority of his time to developing his relational metaphysics and following out the implications for the person. Initially composed for a Suarez lecture at Fordham University, Clarke’s lecture was later published along with a substantial introduction by his close friend and fellow philosopher, Gerald McCool. Also included in the book are responses to Clarke’s lecture from three fellow philosophers: John Caputo, Lewis Ford, and John Smith. These responses give Clarke the opportunity to refine his position in his respective responses to each. Thus, this book serves as a capstone to Clarke’s first 50 years of metaphysical reflection, but also provides pointers towards where the rest of his career was headed during his long and fruitful 23-year retirement.

Predisposition to Metaphysics

Clarke begins by pointing out two benchmarks by which one can identify whether a person has “a certain natural aptitude, affinity, or bend of mind that can be called metaphysical.”\(^\text{12}\) The first benchmark is “a passion for unity, for seeing how the universe and all things in it *fit together as a whole*, a meaningful whole, a longing for integration of thought and life based on the integration of reality itself.”\(^\text{13}\) After sharing many entertaining personal stories of his love of heights and peering over vistas while mountain climbing, Clarke concludes that all these

\(^{12}\) Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 50.

\(^{13}\) Ibid. Italics in the original.
experiences were “a kind of physical practice for doing metaphysics” in the sense that they allow a person “to see how it all fits together, making a single overall pattern.” The second benchmark is “a sense of some kind of overall hidden harmony of the universe.” Whereas the first benchmark is analogous to seeing how everything fits together on the surface, this second benchmark is analogous to hearing the music underneath the surface. Clarke says, “I felt there was something great going on under the surface of things, some kind of hidden music, some harmony of all things.” Clarke then uncharacteristically quotes Nietzsche: “The philosopher seeks to hear the echoes of the World Symphony and reproject it into concepts.”

Metaphysical Development

Clarke begins by clearly expressing his understanding of philosophy and metaphysics. Philosophy “is a person taking reflective possession of him- or herself and his or her place in the universe as a whole.” Metaphysics is understood in the classical sense of Aristotle, i.e. “that part of philosophy which attends explicitly to the vision of the whole, which tries to lay out the great general laws and principles governing all beings and rendering them intelligible, including what it means to be real at all.”

Clarke’s introduction to systematic Thomism was by his teacher, André Marc, who had synthesized Maréchal and Blondel into his own personal Thomistic metaphysics. Of his own

---

14 Ibid., 53. Italics in the original.
15 Ibid., 54. Italics in the original.
16 Ibid., 54. Italics in the original.
17 Ibid., 55. Clarke is quoting Nietzsche, but he does not provide a reference or credit a translator. The closest text I could find is the following: “Der Philosoph sucht den Gesammtklang der Welt in sich nachtönen zu lassen und ihn aus sich herauszustellen in Begriffen.” Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*. Kapitel 3. From *Digitale Kritische Gesamtausgabe Werke und Briefe* (eKGBW) at www.nietzschesource.org.
18 Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 55.
19 Ibid., 56.
reading and research, Clarke says, “My own greatest and most deeply formative metaphysical experiences were reading on my own the four volumes then extant of Joseph Maréchal’s great summa of Transcendental Thomism, Le Point de départ de la métaphysique . . . , and Maurice Blondel’s powerful and seminal work, L’Action.”20 Thus, at the age of 24, Clarke’s philosophical vision was mostly in place: “I felt I was now a metaphysician in my own right, with my own basic metaphysical vision firmly in place.”21

However, Clarke identifies some additional contributions to his metaphysical foundation that were added during his graduate education in Louvain. He came to appreciate more fully “the existential turn of St. Thomas in setting the act of existence at the center of his whole philosophical system,” while also discovering “for the first time the Neoplatonic dimension of St. Thomas’ participation doctrine.”22 In addition, Clarke “came to realize the absolutely central role of action not only for binding together all things into a universe but also for grounding the link of our minds with reality.”23 This is an idea that Clarke would continue to contemplate during his retirement years, eventually realizing “the central role not only of the person in general but especially of the intersubjective dimension of the person.”24

*Six Main Themes*

Here Clarke provides the six self-identified major themes that have dominated his metaphysical reflection during the first 50 years of his philosophical life. These themes also serve

---

20 Ibid. Italics in the original.
21 Ibid., 57.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
as the organizational structure of this dissertation. While Clarke presents the themes in the order necessary to build his relational metaphysics, I am treating these themes in the chronological order with which Clarke treated them most explicitly in his publications. This chronological approach allows us to see more clearly the development of Clarke’s relational metaphysics.

Clarke begins by identifying the foundational underlying presupposition that supports his system of relational metaphysics: “the *unrestricted dynamism of the inquiring mind* to understand all of being.”25 In short, this foundation is “the deep natural drive of the human mind to lay hold of intellectually and understand as far as possible the entire order of being, all there is to know about all there is.”26 There is also an unrestricted dynamism of the will towards all of being as good. The natural correlative to the human mind and will “is being itself in all its fullness” as intelligible and good. This foundation opens out at once into the Principle of Sufficient Reason, which Clarke says cannot be proved. Rather, “it is a kind of lived existential necessity” and “a certain ‘natural faith.’”27 Clarke is fond of Maritain’s description of this relationship between mind and being as a “nuptial relation,” with the mind like the mother and reality like the father, as is evidenced by the term “concept.”28 We examined the foundation of the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will in this dissertation’s third chapter, when Clarke solidified his thought on this topic during his teaching career at Fordham and his first published his book in 1979.

After detailing the essential foundation, Clarke identifies five central themes, or five “pillars of reality” as he calls them, found in his relational metaphysics and built upon the

---

25 Ibid., 58. Italics in the original.
26 Ibid., 58-59.
27 Ibid., 60.
28 Ibid.
unrestricted dynamism of the human spirit. The first is “existence as the act of presence,” which Clarke understands as “the rediscovery, or new highlighting, of the ‘act of existence’—the esse or ‘to be’ of things, as St. Thomas insists on putting it—as the central vantage-point of the entire Thomistic philosophical vision of the universe.” The shift from essence and form to existence itself results in “an inner dynamic act of presence that makes all forms or structures actually present as diverse modes of the radical ‘energy’ of existence” and “naturally flows over to express itself in action.” Thus, “to be” means “to be a presence-with-power, a power-filled presence in the world.” This theme “renders degrees of being possible,” and also provides “the key to unlock the whole nature of Divine Being for St. Thomas.” There is a “philosophical awakening” that happens when the mind shifts its reflective awareness from the fact of existence to “the recognition of that which grounds this fact inside the things itself, the being’s own inner act of existence.” Clarke calls this philosophical awakening “the great central pillar of St. Thomas’ and of my own metaphysical vision of the universe,” and it served as the central theme in chapter two of this dissertation. This theme worked underneath the surface to motivate his early publications.

The next central theme that Clarke mentions is participation, which is “the basic ontological structure of sharing in the universe.” This theme was the first to be cemented in Clarke’s career, since participation was the focus of his dissertation, as I presented in chapter one of this dissertation. There are two co-principles involved in participation: “one representing the

29 Ibid., 61-62. Italics in the original.
30 Ibid., 62. Italics in the original.
31 Ibid. Italics in the original.
32 Ibid., 63. Italics in the original.
33 Ibid., 64. Italics in the original.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
common unifying perfection shared . . . and the other representing the limiting receiving subject.”

This is also the core of how Clarke understands Thomas. “St. Thomas took over this whole systematic participation structure from Neoplatonism in order to complete and enrich the Aristotelian theory of change,” and “Thomas’ genius was to apply this old Platonic doctrine, originally focused on participation in idea or form, to his own new concept of the act or energy of existence as the ultimate ground and bond of unity of all things.”

This gives rise to the “famous Thomistic doctrine of the real distinction,” which “is the very center of the whole Thomistic vision of the universe both philosophically and theologically—and, we might add, mystically. This is for St. Thomas—and for me, too—. . . . that single simple center-point of every great philosopher’s thought.”

Clarke insists that participation must “come alive in the mind” so that it is “seen as a synoptic vision of the universe, in which all beings, from the lowest to the highest, come together to form a single great community.” For Clarke, “To be is to be together,” such that “the whole universe thus becomes a single great hierarchically ordered community or ‘family’ with the same Father.”

Another pillar of Clarke’s relational metaphysics is action, which was the theme treated in chapter four of this dissertation, and understood as “the activity by which the various centers of

---

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., 65.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., 66.
40 Ibid. It is worth pointing out Clarke’s daring claim in this section that “there is no radical split even between matter and spirit, because both are in the last analysis only different degrees or modalities of the common energy, or force-filled presence, of existence itself.” This is a position that Clarke himself ends up repudiating in one of his final published articles, “The Immediate Creation of the Human Soul by God and Some Contemporary Challenges,” The Creative Retrieval of St. Thomas Aquinas, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 173-190. When Ernan McMullin presents a similar claim, Clarke responds by saying that “this kind of language seems to me to involve a serious philosophical confusion.” Ibid., 187.
41 Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 68.
existential energy in the universe pour over into self-expression and self-communication with each other.”

By connecting his doctrine of existence as existential act with the Platonic tradition of the Good as self-diffusive, “St. Thomas sees every real being, because of its inner existential act, as possessed of a natural dynamism to pour over into self-expressive action, which communicates its own perfection as far as it can to others, in turn receiving from them—if it is finite—what they have to give: agere sequitur esse.”

Clarke quotes nine of his favorite passages from Thomas in support of this pillar. In view of this pillar, “to be is to make a difference to others,” so that “action is the basic necessary and sufficient criterion for distinguishing between truly real beings and merely mental beings.”

Clarke again reiterates that he believes “the essential core of all Thomistic epistemology . . . can be summed up in one sentence: All knowledge of the real is an interpretation of action—period!”

However, there is an important consequence to this theory of knowledge. “It contains built into it the implication of the always partial relativity, the perspectival character, of our human knowledge.”

In conclusion, Clarke states that “Knowledge through action, then, is the key to all human knowledge of the real. But it also allows only a moderate, relational realism.”

The next pillar of his relational metaphysics that Clarke mentions is the good. This theme is woven throughout his entire career and is given particular focus at the end. For these reasons, I

---

42 Ibid., 68-69.
43 Ibid., 69.
45 Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 71. Italics in the original.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., 72.
48 Ibid., 75.
will wait to examine the theme of the good until the concluding chapter of this dissertation. However, a short introduction is appropriate here. Since every action tends towards some goal as a good, the good is therefore woven into the very fabric of action, just as action is woven into the very fabric of being. Thus, there is a chain from being, to action, to the good. Action stands between being and goodness, and the intelligibility of action is composed from the being of the agent as source and the good of the goal the action is tending towards. “Hence every action by its very nature is for the good, dynamically drawn or magnetized by the good,“\textsuperscript{49} so that “the search for being as the good is the ultimate trigger of all action.”\textsuperscript{50} However, the good takes on a particular quality once self-conscious being enters the picture. “And as soon as we reach the higher levels of being, that is, self-conscious being, the notion of the good blossoms out into the notion of love, equally ultimate, though not as widely extending as the good.”\textsuperscript{51} Clarke does not stop there, however. Since the source of all being must be an intelligent, self-conscious cause, “the ultimate secret of the very existence of the universe at all must be an act of love.”\textsuperscript{52} Thus, in light of this pillar, “The ultimate answer to Heidegger’s—and before him Leibniz’—question, ‘Why is there anything at all rather than nothing?’ is Love.”\textsuperscript{53} Clarke concludes, “To sum up this whole section: being, action, the good, and love form an inseparable quaternity . . . at the most intimate core of all that is. To be, ultimately, is to be loved and to love.”\textsuperscript{54}

The final pillar that Clarke mentions is the person, which will be the theme examined in detail for the rest of this current chapter. Upon retiring from Fordham in 1985, Clarke refocused

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 76. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 77.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 78. Italics in the original.
on this pillar with particular intensity, as we shall see, since “the person for St. Thomas is ‘that which is most perfect in all of nature.’ ” Clarke shows how impressed he is by Thomas’s definition of person when he says it is, “not only the briefest, but I think one of the most profound, definitions or descriptions of the person ever given. The person, he says, is that which is *dominus sui*, or master of itself: that is to say, self-possessing of its own being; self-possessing in the order of knowledge by its self-consciousness or self-awareness; self-possessing in the order of action by its power of self-determination, or free will.” In short, the person is essentially “an autonomous subject, knowingly and freely guiding itself in its quest for self-fulfillment through the good.” The human person, however “must relate itself to others knowingly and freely, by its own act, in order to reach this fulfillment.”

In his treatment of the person, what Clarke is concerned with is, “the connection of the person with the fullness of being and the dynamic order of the universe as a whole.” According to Clarke, when looked at in light of this connection, “the notion of person lights up as the perfection of being coming to its full flowering of self-possessing active presence, and inner luminous presence to itself.” In fact, “personal being is nothing but being itself, freed from the limits of material modes of existence that hold it down in the darkness of un–self-conscious lack of self-presence, being itself allowed now to take on the full dimensions of what it meant to be,

---

56 Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 78. Italics in the original. Here Clarke is referring to three different texts of Thomas where he uses the phrase “dominus sui”: ST, I-II, q. 6, a. 2, ad 2 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 4.331-332), ST, II-II, q. 64, a. 5, ad 3 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 9.72), De ver. q. 5, a. 10 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 22.1.169).
57 Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 78. Italics in the original.
58 Ibid., 79. Italics in the original.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid. Italics in the original.
that is, to be active presence in the world.”  

In short, “to be without restrictions, therefore, necessarily means to be personal.”

Clarke takes it another step further. “Not only must the ultimate Source of the universe be personalized being,” but “we can also say that for the created universe to make full sense . . . it would have to be for persons.” This conclusion is founded on the Principle of Sufficient Reason that flows from Clarke’s foundation of his relational metaphysics: the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will. According to Clarke, “a created universe would be meaningless unless it contained created persons within it, unless it were not only from a personal Source but also for persons, a gift to persons.” Therefore, because of the Principle of Sufficient Reason, and because “mind and love are the root of all being,” Clarke stunningly concludes that “the person is ultimately the key to why there is anything at all and not rather nothing.” With such a bold statement, Clarke unsurprisingly chooses to focus on the concept of person for the remainder of his career.

Clarke goes one step further, however, and moves beyond Thomas. According to Clarke, “the notion of person itself necessarily turns out to be interpersonal.” Although Thomas himself never explicitly developed this aspect of the person, Clarke does refer to two dissertations he directed that shed light on a couple twelfth-century theologians, namely Richard of St. Victor and William of St. Thierry, who opened up this aspect of the person “with astonishing reflective

---

61 Ibid. Italics in the original.
62 Ibid. Italics in the original.
63 Ibid., 80. Italics in the original.
64 Ibid. Italics in the original.
65 Ibid., 80-81.
66 Ibid., 81. Italics in the original.
sophistication.” Clarke was inspired to look in this direction by his study of the Existentialist Personalists. As is becoming a habit for Clarke at this time, he turns to the Trinity to shed light on this aspect of the person. “It is here, by the way, that the Christian Revelation of God as a Triune Personal Being—a Three in One—opens up in a dazzling new way the mystery of God into which philosophy alone could not penetrate further with any assurance, and sheds immense light on the very nature of being and person. For it reveals that the Supreme Being, by an inner necessity of the perfection of being itself, must be interpersonal, a Personal ‘We’.”

Here Clarke gives a glimpse into one of the most controversial claims of his relational metaphysics: receptivity as a positive perfection of personal being. “This intersubjective understanding of personhood, involving as it does the reciprocal receiving as well as giving of love in relation to another person, added an original new perspective to my Thomistically grounded philosophy of God.” Clarke’s development of the relationship between being and person lead him to this new, controversial claim, which will be covered in chapter six of this dissertation. Clarke tries to “soften or tone down” the stress on the immutability and infinity of God, which “allows God to receive love from His personal creatures (not merely pour out His goodness to them in a one-way self-communication of love), and to be more positively affected by His creation (new joy, etc.) in a way never countenanced by a more traditional Thomistic philosophy of God.”

---

67 Ibid. The dissertations Clarke is referring to are the following: Ewert Cousins, “The Notion of the Person in the De Trinitate of Richard of St. Victor” (Fordham University, 1966), and Thomas Tomasic, “William of St. Thierry: Toward a Philosophy of Intersubjectivity” (Fordham University, 1972).
68 Clarke mentions Gabriel Marcel, Auguste Brunner, Emmanuel Mounier, Martin Buber, Maurice Nédoncelle, and John Macmurray.
69 Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 81. Italics in the original.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., 82.
The Great Circle of Being

After detailing the foundation to his relational metaphysics and the five pillars built upon that foundation, Clarke brings them all together into a unified vision of the universe as a journey: the great circle of being. “Only an image,” Clarke says, “can hold together at once a multiplicity of conceptual analyses in a holistic unity.”  

The image of the great circle of being is composed of an exodus and reitus. “First there is the exodus, or journey outward of all created being from its Infinite Source, the emanation of the Many from the One, as St. Thomas puts it.” This exodus is grounded in efficient causality and goodness as diffusive. Next, “it pivots upon itself and starts back on a journey home again to its Source (reditus), drawn by the pull of the Good.” This reitus is grounded both in final causality and goodness as attractive. Clarke turns to Thomas: “Just as ‘all knowers implicitly know God in all that they know,’ he tells us, so too all actors, desirers, lovers implicitly love God in all that they love or desire.”

The presence of man, however, is indispensable “in this journey of the material universe home to its Source,” because “only a being endowed with intelligence and will can be united directly with God.” Thus, the only way the material universe can accomplish reitus is by means of a bridge-building mediator between earth and heaven. According to Clarke, “man is this

---

72 Ibid., 82.
73 Ibid., 83. Italics in the original. Clarke’s reference to Thomas is explained in Endnote 45: “The entire Summa Theologiae is built on this pattern of the emanation of all creatures from God and their return to Him through man and Christ. Part One deals with ‘the emanation of all being from God’; Parts Two and Three, with the reitus or return.” Ibid., 91. Italics in the original. This exitus-reditus structural intrepretation of Thomas’s Summa Theologiae was introduced by Marie-Dominique Chenu, O.P., Toward Understanding Saint Thomas (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964), chapter 11.
74 Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 83. Italics in the original.
75 Ibid. Clarke is referencing Thomas’s De ver. , q. 22, a. 2, ad 1 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 22.3.612), and expanding knowledge to love.
76 Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 84. Italics in the original.
mediator,” and he has “the capacity through his intellect and will . . . to gather together into his consciousness the entire community of existents, especially the material ones that cannot do this for themselves, and refer them back again with conscious recognition, gratitude, and love to their Source. Thus man takes all of nature with him, so to speak, on his own personal return toward final transforming union with the Infinite Source of his own and of all other being.”

Thus, man has a fundamental service to perform for the whole material universe, since he is “the necessary mediator without which it could not complete its own journey back to its Source.” This is part of the great dignity of the human person according to Clarke, and he even mentions contemplative religious orders as an excellent example of people who “gather up in their reflective prayerful consciousness the meaning of the Great Circle of Being, and by their adoration, gratitude, and love complete the return to its Source of a universe that is for the most part all too oblivious of the meaning of its journey or the nature of its Goal.”

THOMISM AND CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHICAL PLURALISM

Every decade or so Clarke would take a step back to look at the state of Thomism in the philosophical world that he currently inhabited. His next occasion for doing this was the William Wade Philosophy Lecture, which Clarke was asked to give at St. Louis University on February 12, 1989. After a brief summary of his philosophical education and background, Clarke summarizes the sources of the decline in Thomism around him early in his career. In short, young Catholic

77 Ibid., 84.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid., 85.
philosophers “did not so much argue with St. Thomas or refute him as simply move away from his whole systematic metaphysical approach.”\textsuperscript{81} This was simply the result of the pervasive pluralism in society at large.

Referencing the historian Philip Gleason,\textsuperscript{82} Clarke traces the decline of Neothomism to a few factors: “the upward mobility of Catholics . . . into the wider stream of American society,” the fact that Neothomism “was itself splitting off intellectually into several major streams,” and finally that in the philosophical and theological scene as a whole, “the goal of synthesis . . . was by 1960 effectively abandoned.”\textsuperscript{83} However, Clarke is not as pessimistic as Gleason about the effects of pluralism.\textsuperscript{84} According to Clarke, there “is good in the resulting pluralism. No one philosophical approach or methodology can any longer handle all philosophical problems in all areas of interest. There must be complementarity and collaboration. The complementarity of Thomistic metaphysical analysis and phenomenology is a leading example.”\textsuperscript{85}

Discussing the role of Thomism on our pluralistic society, Clarke identifies four ways in which Thomism can be related to various other philosophies. First, “there can be \textit{competition} within the same field with those who share roughly the same objectives.”\textsuperscript{86} An example of this relationship can be found between competing metaphysical systems, such as Whitehead and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 125.
\item Clarke, “Thomism and Contemporary,” 127.
\item Gleason was particularly pessimistic. Speaking of Vatican II, Gleason says, “The Council itself quickly took on the character of a volcanic eruption. That eruption, combined with the more general cultural earthquake of the 1960s, reshaped the older Catholic worldview and shattered its intellectual underpinning, Neoscholastic philosophy.” Gleason, “Neoscholasticism,” 22.
\item Clarke, “Thomism and Contemporary,” 127-128.
\item Ibid., 128. Italics in the original.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Thomas. “We might call this relationship one of peaceful but competitive co-existence.” Second, there can be “a relationship of positive complementarity and collaboration.” An example of this relationship can be found between phenomenology and Thomas. Third, there are “border disputes between Thomism and certain other philosophical approaches.” An example of this relationship can be found when linguistic analysis steps beyond its bounds when trying to make metaphysical claims. Fourth, there can be “total warfare” between philosophical outlooks. Such is the case between Thomism and empiricism.

Clarke then turns his attention to the complementarity of Thomism and phenomenology, which he considers “the most significant challenge and opportunity for Thomism today.” On account of the method of phenomenological analysis, it cannot answer questions of existence and action, nor can it provide any type of causal explanation. Clarke points out that Thomism can provide these philosophical underpinnings to phenomenology. Regarding existence and action, it is revealing to notice that Clarke turns to the act of judgment: “the mind must interpret the action and point back through it, in an act of interpretive judgment, to the real source existing in itself beyond our consciousness.” Regarding causal explanation, Clarke focuses on the importance of restoring efficient causality, and gives a very succinct summary of his proof for the existence of an Infinite Being in question form: “Why not use a causal argument, sufficient reason and efficient causality to reach beyond our finite horizon and affirm the exigency for an Infinite being as

---

87 Ibid., 129. Italics in the original.
88 Ibid. Italics in the original.
89 Ibid., 129. Italics in the original.
90 Ibid., 130. Italics in the original.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid., 131. Italics in the original.
required to ground our finite world?" Confused as to why Heidegger did not do this, Clarke tracked down one of Heidegger’s former students, who told Clarke that Heidegger had told him, “I’m still too much of a Kantian to accept efficient causality as revelatory of the real. The revelation of Being that includes efficient causality belongs to a medieval epoch of Being that is no longer accessible to us.” Thus, Clarke thinks that “one of the most significant contributions Thomism can make in the contemporary pluralist scene is the restoration of the validity of explanation by efficient causality.”

Clarke then turns his attention to the “total warfare” between Thomism and Kantianism, which “is still very much with us.” Clarke begins in attack mode, claiming Kant’s “thought, especially his arguments, are severely flawed and not at all coercive.” In particular, Clarke criticizes Kant’s understanding of efficient causality, claiming that “it is still a confused compromise between Humean temporal sequence and the older classical notion of the efficient cause as the active producer of its effect and therefore the explanatory ground or sufficient reason for it.” Another strong criticism of Kant that Clarke puts forward is regarding the famous “Kantian Critique” of the cosmological argument for the existence of God. Clarke says that Kant “has simply gotten the classical forms of the Cosmological Argument all wrong.” Whereas Kant presents the classical argument as deducing Necessary Being from $\textit{Ens Realissimum}$, Clarke insists that Kant “has exactly reversed the procedure of the classical argument,” where $\textit{Ens Realissimum}$
is in fact ‘deduced’ . . . from Necessary or Self-sufficient Being, not the contrary, as Kant supposes.”

The final point of criticism that Clarke levels against Kant is “his refusal to allow the human mind knowledge of the real world as it is.” This is because of Kant’s “failure to draw the consequences of action as the self-manifestation of being, the mediator between the real and our minds,” which is what Clarke considers “the single greatest lacuna in his epistemology.” Clarke concludes this final criticism with an appeal to his moderate, relational realism.

Clarke concludes by pointing out how Thomism needs to adapt itself in the face of hermeneutics, since “it is no longer possible to return to a pre-hermeneutic state of innocence.” Hermeneutics states that “all focal human perception or intellectual knowledge of any kind always comes surrounded and supported by an aura of peripheral knowledge that is lived existentially but can never be fully and explicitly articulated.” Thus, it is important for Thomists to “accept and learn to be comfortable in the realization that their system of thought, like all others, is subject to the conditions and limitations of hermeneutical interpretation.” Clarke insists that these hermeneutical limitations do not relativize our understanding of objective reality. Rather, Clarke sees “no difficulty in an alert Thomism’s assimilating the attitude of a realistic, moderate

---

100 Ibid., 136. Italics in the original.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid. Italics in the original.
103 “A more modest, yet real and objective knowledge of the real is open to us, a relational realism that reveals to us the objective relations of the world to us, i.e. what kind of habitual actors things are towards us and other beings, which is equivalently to reveal what kind of natures they have in themselves. This, to my mind, is the core of the ‘moderate realism’ of St. Thomas, and it reveals what after all is what we really want to know about the world: what kind of difference do things make to us.” Ibid. 137. Italics in the original.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid. Italics in the original.
106 Ibid.
hermeneutics,” since an awareness of these limitations will give Thomism “a new humility, a self-consciousness of its own built-in limitations.”

Summarizing his article, Clarke says that Thomism “must work positively with phenomenology, linguistic analysis, hermeneutics, and many aspects of Pragmatism, but vigorously resist and critique all strong forms of empiricism, Kantianism, and contemporary relativisms of all stripes. And, of course, it must listen attentively to, learn from where appropriate, and dialogue with other contemporary metaphysicians.” With this last statement, Clarke has Whitehead particularly in mind, as we shall see in chapter seven of this dissertation.

TO BE IS TO BE SUBSTANCE-IN-RELATION

“To Be Is to Be Substance-in-Relation” is a pivotal article for Clarke. He begins by attempting to retrieve a classical, dynamic notion of substance from Aristotle and Thomas. Next, he tries to integrate that dynamic notion of substance with the idea of relation as an intrinsic dimension of being. Finally, Clarke applies this newly synthesized relational substance to the concept of person. Thus, in this article Clarke is attempting to use his relational metaphysics to build the foundation for his understanding of person. Without a clear, accurate notion of real being as a substance that is necessarily relational, one will not be able to have a clear, accurate notion of what it means to be a person.

107 Ibid., 138.
Clarke begins his retrieval of the classical notion of substance by uncovering the errors of Descartes, Locke, and Hume in what he humorously calls, “The Sad Adventures of Substance.”†109 Descartes made substance self-enclosed. Locke made substance an inert, unknowable substratum. Hume made substance separable and unintelligible. Clarke asserts that this self-enclosed, inert, separable substance has been repudiated “by the majority of late modern and contemporary thinkers.”†110 However, there was even a latent danger in Aristotle of overstressing the notion of substance to the point where relations become secondary in importance. According to Clarke, Thomas restored the complementarity between substance and relation by his “doctrine of real being as intrinsically ordered toward action and self-communication.”†111 Two other areas that brought out this complementarity between substance and relation were the Christian revelation of the Trinity and the notion of the human being as social by nature.

Clarke points out that Thomas’s philosophical analysis of what it means to be a person was focused “on identifying precisely the root of the ‘incommunicability’ or uniqueness of the person.”†112 This focus led to an emphasis on the in-itself aspect of the person, rather than the relational aspect, which was nevertheless “explicitly affirmed in the case of the divine Persons and clearly implied for all persons.”†113 Thus, Clarke first attempts to retrieve “the classical notion of substance as active and self-communicative,” and then “the full value of the relational dimension of being,” in order to show that “to be real is to be a dyadic synthesis of substance and relation; it is to be substance-in-relation.”†114

†109 Ibid., 102.
†110 Ibid., 102.
†111 Ibid., 103.
†112 Ibid.
†113 Ibid., 104.
†114 Ibid. Italics in the original.
**Classical Notion of Substance**

The “classical” notion of substance means the full notion of substance as both active and self-communicative. This fullness allows Clarke to draw out the relational aspect of substance, which is generated by the active and self-communicative properties of substance understood in its fullness. In short, “the intrinsic orientation toward self-expressive action” which is part of the full notion of substance “implies that all substances will be related at least to some others.”

Clarke begins with “the basic classical argument for the necessity of substance wherever there is real being.” If every being inhered in another we would have an infinite regress, but an infinite regress is impossible in the case of real being because that would just endlessly defer existence itself. Thus there must always be some grounding substance. Then Clarke lists four basic points about the classical conception of substance: (1) it “has the aptitude to exist *in itself*”; (2) it “is the unifying center of all the various attributes and properties that belong to it”; (3) it is “the abiding, unifying center of the being across time”; and (4) “it has an intrinsic dynamic orientation toward self-expressive action, toward self-communication with others, as the crown of its perfection, as its very *raison d’être*, literally, for St. Thomas.” Clarke points out that the fourth basic point about classical substance has been mostly forgotten since Descartes, and therefore Clarke himself stresses this fourth point more than the other three.

---

115 Ibid., 105.
116 Ibid.
117 Ibid. Italics in the original.
118 The absence of this fourth basic point about substance since Descartes is also, I believe, one of the main contributing factors for the nearly complete disappearance of the topic of friendship from the study of ethics in the early modern ethical theories.
Clarke then turns to Thomas and quotes some of his favorite passages to show how through action every substance self-communicates both its existence and essence.\textsuperscript{119} “Every real substance, therefore, is highly dynamic.”\textsuperscript{120} However, it is important to remember that self-identical is not the same as unchanging. Rather, “\textit{in every accidental change the substance itself changes, but not substantially, only accidentally.}”\textsuperscript{121} Also, the root of “this notion of substance as dynamic self-identity expressing itself in action” is found in the active, power-filled presence in the core of every real being: \textit{esse}.\textsuperscript{122}

Clarke then makes a connection to the concept of receptivity, which will be the focus of chapter six of this dissertation, in order to show how the universe is a dynamic bond between beings. “Since all action is not only self-manifestation but self-communication in some way, every being is by nature self-communicative, oriented toward presenting itself through action to the community of other real existents and reciprocally receiving their self-communications in its own being.”\textsuperscript{123} This matrix of communication and receiving bonds the substances together, making a universe. “The immediate corollary of this notion of dynamic substance is that every substance, as active, becomes the center of a web of relations to other active beings around it.”\textsuperscript{124} In short, it is

\textsuperscript{120} Clarke, “Substance-in-Relation,” 106.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 107. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.
impossible to be without being related, and therefore the “structure of every being is indissolubly dyadic: it exists both as in-itself and as toward others.”125

To complete his classical notion of substance, Clarke turns to Christian revelation. This turn become controversial because of the question whether divine revelation has a place in philosophy. Despite the previous conclusion that esse is necessarily self-communicative, Thomas himself “does not want to say that reason alone can deduce that the divine nature is necessarily self-communicative within itself . . . nor does he want to say that God necessarily pours over to share his own goodness.”126 Thomas merely limits himself to analogy that it is necessary that God “should have this same aptitude in the highest degree and most ‘fitting’ that it should exercise it.”127 Clarke himself wishes that Thomas would have spoken “more daringly,” along the lines of Bonaventure and Hegel, who argue that it is inevitable for the divine nature “to communicate its goodness to some finite created world, but to which particular finite universe would have to be determined by a free choice.”128 Christian revelation, however, reveals that “the inner being of God is by the very necessity of its nature self-communicating love,” showing that “it is the very nature of being at its supreme intensity to pour over into self-communicative relatedness.”129 Clarke concludes this section by drawing out the implication for persons. Self-communication and relatedness to others must belong especially to persons, such that “every person must bear within it the dyadic structure of in-itself interiority and self-transcending relatedness towards others.”130

125 Ibid., 108. Italics in the original.
126 Ibid. Italics in the original.
127 Ibid. Italics in the original.
128 Ibid. Italics in the original. This is Clarke’s own interpretation of Bonaventure and Hegel.
129 Ibid. Italics in the original.
130 Ibid.
Modern Distortions of Substance

There are three modern distortions of substance that Clarke mentions. Descartes made substance a self-enclosed, radical autonomy by simply changing a single word of the classical definition. Classical substance was defined as “in-itself,” but Descartes defined it as “by-itself,” cutting all substance off from all relation. In response to Descartes’ error, metaphysicians like Whitehead erred in the other extreme by claiming that “actuality is through and through togetherness.”¹³¹ Locke made substance an “inert, unknowable substratum of accidents,” cutting all substance off from activity.¹³² In response to Locke’s error, Hegel substituted “subject” for “substance” as the primary instance of being. Hume made substance an illusion, with the metaphysical assumption that “all real distinction implies separability.”¹³³ Classical substance was understood as really distinct from its accidents, but never separable from all of them, but Hume’s assumed metaphysical principle makes substance nonexistent. Clarke thinks Hume’s error is the basis for why most existentialists and phenomenologists reject substance as applying to the human person.¹³⁴

Reintegrating Substance and Relation

With a notion of classical substance retrieved, and the modern errors purged, Clarke “is now in a position to retrieve creatively the full richness of what it means to be.”¹³⁵ Simply speaking of substance tilts the scales too far in the “in-itself” dimension. Simply speaking of relations tilts

¹³¹ Ibid., 110. Clarke quoting Whitehead.
¹³² Ibid., 111. Clarke’s interpretation of Locke.
¹³³ Ibid., 112. Clarke’s interpretation of Hume.
¹³⁴ “... most, if not all, existentialists ... and most phenomenologists reject substance as applying to the human person.” Ibid.
¹³⁵ Ibid., 113.
the scales too far in the “toward-others” dimension. Rather, we must always keep in mind that “the intrinsic structure of all being is irreducibly dyadic: substance-in-relation.”\textsuperscript{136} With this structure in mind, “we can integrate with it all the rich developments of the relational dimension so characteristic of later modern and contemporary thought.”\textsuperscript{137}

There is, however, an important qualification to this understanding: “Substance, like all the major metaphysical concepts, must be understood analogously.”\textsuperscript{138} This is Clarke’s particular understanding of analogy, where the intensity and perfection of the qualities of the substance increase and decrease as one goes up and down the scale of being respectively. Thus, individuality, autonomy, and self-possession receive their baseline meaning in human substance, but grow weaker as we descend the scale of being to sub-atomic particles, while growing stronger as we ascend the scale of being to the Supreme Being.\textsuperscript{139}

\textit{Application to the Human Person}

With this newly reintegrated understanding of substance-in-relation, Clarke turns to that reality which is the closest and most significant to us: the human person. The first place he turns is to a text of Thomas describing the vegetative, animal, and rational powers of the soul.\textsuperscript{140} Josef Pieper provides a beautiful summary of this text from Thomas. “To sum it up then: to have (or to be) an ‘intrinsic existence’ means ‘to be able to relate’ and ‘to be the sustaining center of a field

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 113. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 113.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 114. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{139} “But at all levels real being would always remain dyadic, a polarity of active substance and relation, of in-self interiority and self-transcending outreach toward others.” Ibid., 115.
\textsuperscript{140} \textit{ST}, I, q. 78, a. 1 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 5.250-251).
These two aspects combined—dwelling most intensively within itself and being *capax universi*, able to grasp the universe—together constitute the essence of the spirit.”¹⁴¹

Clarke then makes a connection to another text of Thomas: “It has been said that the soul is in a certain sense all in all; for its nature is directed toward universal knowledge. In this manner it is possible for the perfection of the entire world to be present in one single being.”¹⁴² Clarke then goes beyond Thomas to also apply the same truth to the will in its power to love all beings as good before concluding that “the full flowering of perfection of the human person as such, consists of the fullest and broadest possible self-transcendence toward loving relationships to others.”¹⁴³ With both universal knowledge and self-transcending love, Clarke defines what he considers to be the perfection of a person: living in love.¹⁴⁴

Although phenomenologists and personalist existentialists have provided rich descriptions of the relational dimension of the human person, Clarke criticizes them for their singular focus on the relational aspect. This myopic vision has led many philosophers to downplay substance and engage in a postmodern “war against interiority.”¹⁴⁵ Clarke points out that for Thomas, however, “there is no need to play down the substance pole of a being in order to safeguard the relational: the substance itself is the active source form which flow the relations as its own self-expression.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ “To be authentically for a human person is to *live in love*, to express itself by loving, in the broadest sense of the term, to make itself the center of the widest possible web of relationships to all things, and especially to all persons, through our two major self-relating and self-transcending powers, knowledge and love. To live as a person is to live in relation.” Clarke, “Substance-in-Relation,” 117. Italics in the original.
Clarke next turns towards theology, and in particular the writings of Joseph Ratzinger, who “makes the point that the Christian theological tradition did not have to wait for contemporary phenomenology to discover the relational dimension of the person. It was already deeply imbedded in its own Gospel revelation and theological explication of the Trinity, though this has never . . . been adequately developed and exploited in the Christian philosophical tradition.” Clarke makes this admonition of Ratzinger a rallying cry for the rest of his philosophical career, which always has the relational metaphysics of the person as a final goal. Turning to the Trinity, Clarke points out that “the whole personality of Jesus as expressed in the Gospels is also totally relational, dialogical, toward the Father.” Relating this insight gained from theology, Clarke returns to a philosophical conclusion. “So we too come to know ourselves, what we are and who we are, only by looking in the eyes of another, through the loving . . . look in the eyes of another person.”

It is important to remember that, in a sense, the relational aspect of the human person is prior to the conscious, interior in-itself aspect. “The human person, in fact, comes into existence enveloped in a web of relations of dependence on others even before it can begin to generate its own relations actively.” This leads to the development of the person, which is a back-and-forth exchange between the substantial, interior pole and the relational, exterior pole. The knowing, loving relationships of others flow over onto the substantial, interior pole of a particular person. The interior of that particular person then develops and abundantly flows over into knowing, loving relationships toward others. “And its whole development will consist in relating itself

---

149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
appropriately, both actively and responsively, to the world around it and especially to other persons, both human and divine.”  

Conclusion

Clarke’s conclusion to this article is a summary of his life’s philosophical work up to this point, and also a powerful lodestone guiding the remainder of his career. “In sum, to be is to be substance-in-relation. And the ultimate reason for this is, in what to my mind is the essence of St. Thomas’s metaphysical vision, that the esse (the “to be”) or act of existing that is the deepest core of every real being is of its very nature not just presence but active presence: presence both in itself and actively presenting itself to others.”  

Referring to a text of Thomas, “Communication follows upon the very intelligibility (ratio) of actuality,” Clarke says that it “seems to be one of the richest and most profound in all of St. Thomas, indeed in any philosopher, whether of East or West. In the last analysis, it sums up all I have been trying to say in this essay.”

INTERPERSONAL DIALOGUE AS THE STARTING POINT OF METAPHYSICS

Clarke presents a new starting point for a realistic Thomistic epistemology and metaphysics in his 1992 article, “The ‘We Are’ of Interpersonal Dialogue as the Starting Point of Metaphysics.” Although he does not present it as the only or as a necessary starting point, Clarke

---

151 Ibid., 118.
152 Ibid., 118-119. Italics in the original.
153 The closest text in Thomas I could find that Clarke may be referring to is the following: “Item, omne quod communicat se, communicat se ratione actus qui est in ipso; quia potentia non agit nec communicat se.” In Sent., I, d. 4, q. 1, a. 1. (Mandonnet ed., 131).
does “believe it is a significantly, perhaps uniquely, fruitful one for our time.” The starting point Clarke proposes is the experience of getting to know other people as equally real with ourselves through meaningful dialogue. Clarke condenses this experience of interpersonal dialogue into the following thought: “I know that we are, that we are like each other, that we can engage in meaningful communication with each other.”

After this experience of interpersonal dialogue is existentially lived, it can be philosophically unpacked. Clarke identifies some epistemological implications that can be drawn from an experience of interpersonal dialogue. I am real and actively present to another real being who truly acts like me. I can also “receive a pre-structured, pre-formed message” from this other real being acting like me, thus “our cognitive equipment is able, and naturally disposed to, taking in already formed messages.” Finally, “the I-Thou of interpersonal dialogue, now become a ‘We,’ can then turn to explore, share, and discuss the messages coming in to both from a non-human world beyond, and outside the controlling power of, the dialoguers, the common world that may be called ‘It,’ or the non-personal real.”

Clarke is very clear that he is not deducing these implications from a logical argument. Rather, the progressive unfolding of implications that he has guided us through must be “perceived by reflective insight as flowing out of the data” with the necessity of “retorsion,” i.e. a lived contradiction arises if the insights are not accepted. Taking interpersonal dialogue as a starting point also cuts through “the whole discussion over foundationalism and anti-foundationalism.”

156 Ibid., 31.
157 Ibid., 33. Italics in the original.
158 Ibid., 34-35. Italics in the original.
159 Ibid., 35.
160 Ibid., 38.
161 Ibid., 39. Italics in the original.
by offering “a rich wholistic matrix, assimilated by a synthesis of sense data, intellectual insight, and prudent judgment which requires the personal responsible involvement of the knowing person as a whole.”\textsuperscript{162} Thus, Clarke rests the foundation of metaphysics on personal judgment.\textsuperscript{163}

In the final section of the article, Clarke lays out six implications for the development of metaphysics. First, “real being is revealed as active presence, as self-communicating active presence, which distinguishes it decisively from merely mental being.”\textsuperscript{164} Second, “the intellectual awareness of We are immediately reveals to us real (i.e. actually existing) being . . . as a field of interaction which is at once one yet many,” so that “the state is now set for the whole dialectical analysis of being as a participation system.”\textsuperscript{165} Third, “the participation of two distinct real beings in the same essential mode or species of being is also revealed.”\textsuperscript{166} Fourth, “to be real is to be substance-in-relation.”\textsuperscript{167} Fifth, it is revealed that being “. . . has an inner subjective dimension . . . that transcends all conceptual analysis and can only be grasped intuitively by immediate lived awareness.”\textsuperscript{168} Here Clarke makes one of his boldest and most radical claims: “Thus Thomism, beginning with the person as subject and ending with Transcendent Person Being as the supreme level of being, can truly be called a personalist philosophy.”\textsuperscript{169} Sixth, “the interpersonal context of truth emerges for further development.”\textsuperscript{170} This provides a basis for moving from a subjective

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 40. Italics and “wholistic” in the original.
\textsuperscript{163} “There is no knowledge of the real outside world attainable by . . . bypassing the role of personal responsible judgment by the knower, who must size up prudently the situation as a whole.” Ibid.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 40-41. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 41.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., 41.
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid. Italics in the original.
honesty to an objective truth through refinement by a community. In light of these six developmental paths forward for Thomistic metaphysics, Clarke concludes that “the full dimensions of what it means ‘to be’ can be found only in personal being, in its interpersonal manifestation.”

IS A NATURAL THEOLOGY STILL Viable?

Turning from the human person to the divine, Clarke makes a serious attempt at providing a convincing metaphysical foundation for natural theology in his 1992 article, “Is a Natural Theology Still Viable Today?” With this foundation, Clarke is able “to speculate creatively and imaginatively on what the ‘personality’ or ‘character’ must be like of a Creator in whose image this astonishing universe of ours is made.” As Clarke stated soon after his retirement from Fordham, “a created universe would be meaningless unless it contained created persons within it, unless it were not only from a personal Source but also for persons, a gift to persons.” This present article on natural theology is laying the foundation for exploring the personality of the personal Source which gifted us the created universe.

---

171 “Each person must indeed verify a truth individually for himself or herself, but feedback from the others, the community, is an important confirmatory factor in the security of one’s conviction. A shared truth always carries more weight than a solitary one.” Ibid., 42.
172 Ibid. Italics in the original.
175 Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 80. Italics in the original.
**Relation to Science**

Clarke begins by noticing how, “in relation to contemporary science, natural theology is . . . on better terms with it than it has been for a long time.”\(^{176}\) Both theoretical physicists and cosmologists are displaying a newfound “openness or ‘compatability’ [sic] of the scientific picture with the theistic hypothesis,” yet “this hypothesis is only compatible with the results of contemporary science, not authorized or established by them.”\(^{177}\) One argument that Clarke dismisses right at the beginning is for a “God of the gaps,” which has traditionally been employed to fill in some gap in the current scientific picture of the universe. However, with scientific progress developing at a faster pace than at any time in recorded history, Clarke is correct to conclude that “natural theology today should avoid any attempt to build its foundations on apparently unfillable gaps in the scientific picture of the universe.”\(^{178}\) Rather, “only a radically metaphysical argument, from the very existence of any determinate world at all, or from the existence of any dynamic order at all, has a fair chance of succeeding.”\(^{179}\)

**Philosophical Obstacles**

Before building his metaphysical foundation for a natural theology, Clarke must first remove a few philosophical obstacles that have been placed as roadblocks to any transcendent reality. Relativism, postmodernism, deconstructionism, empiricism, and Kantianism are all significant roadblocks that must be cleared.

\(^{176}\) Clarke, “Natural Theology,” 150.  
\(^{177}\) Ibid., 151. Italics in the original.  
\(^{178}\) Ibid., 152.  
\(^{179}\) Ibid.
The first three, relativism, postmodernism, and deconstructionism, “promptly self-destruct and become inoperative as a critique” whenever they “move to a really radical stance.”\(^{180}\) In moderation, however, “they can lead us to an important, more realistic understanding of what in fact is the case about our human reason,” namely, that “there is no going back to a pre-hermeneutic understanding of human thought and language.”\(^{181}\) This hermeneutical understanding of human thought leads us to admit “that our human reason must always see the world from some limited (incomplete) historical perspective” and “that what is seen from other vantage points is . . . complementary.”\(^{182}\) Also, we “must go through some apprenticeship in a living hermeneutical tradition” in order to attain reliable knowledge about the real through “personally responsible judgment.”\(^{183}\) Finally, we must admit that “all of our perception, concepts, and understanding are . . . a synthesis of focal and peripheral (or background) knowledge.”\(^{184}\) The result is an intrinsically analogous and realistic metaphysics that can never be made fully explicit.\(^{185}\)

Regarding empiricism, Clarke points out that “it is in essence an arbitrarily restrictive theory of knowledge” that limits itself to the realm of experience.\(^{186}\) The roadblock of empiricism must be removed so that we can rescue the principle of efficient causality, which is essential to Clarke’s metaphysical foundation of natural theology. According to Clarke, efficient causality is

\(^{180}\) Ibid., 154.

\(^{181}\) Ibid., 155.

\(^{182}\) Ibid.

\(^{183}\) Ibid.

\(^{184}\) Ibid.

\(^{185}\) Ibid.

“In a realistic metaphysics like that of St. Thomas, the metaphysical notion of being, like most metaphysical concepts, is intrinsically analogous, that is, pregnant with one and many, sameness and difference, remaining systematically vague, so that all that is in it can never be made fully explicit.” Ibid., 156.

\(^{186}\) Ibid., 156-157.
“the reaffirmation of the basic commitment of the inquiring human mind to the unrestricted intelligibility of the real, tailored to fit a particular situation.”

Regarding Kantianism, Clarke argues that Kant’s refutation of the cosmological argument for God “is flawed by a serious misreading of the traditional argument,” which “is precisely the opposite” of what Kant refutes. Kant also overlooks “the key role of action as the self-revelation of being in our human knowing.” According to Clarke, the root of Kant’s trouble lies in his “implicit rationalist ideal of knowing the real as knowledge by a detached, uninvolved pure knower of a real being as it is in itself independent of any action upon others.” However, the whole key to Clarke’s action-based realist epistemology is that our knowledge “is through and through relational.” Clarke next combines two texts from Thomas to argue that substantial forms are known through the intentionality of judgment rather than a direct intuition. “Such a relational knowledge through action is necessarily perspectival and incomplete, proportional to the conditions and limitations of the receiver, but it is a genuine perspective on the known as self-revealing actor.” Before moving on to present his metaphysical arguments for founding a natural theology, Clarke makes sure to clarify that his arguments “are not Cartesian absolute certitudes, but explanatory hypotheses that recommend themselves as worthy of reasonable affirmation.”

187 Ibid., 158.
188 Ibid.
189 Ibid., 159.
190 Ibid.
191 Ibid.
193 Clarke, “Natural Theology,” 160.
194 Ibid., 161.
Constructing a Natural Theology

Clarke lays out four metaphysical arguments in his attempt to construct a natural theology. There is a common method to these arguments. Clarke begins by trying “to identify significant gaps in the intelligibility of our universe as a whole,” and then moves on to propose “the main options for filling these gaps, and to try to eliminate all . . . save one.”

Lest one think that a gap in intelligibility is equivalent to proposing a God of the gaps, Clarke clarifies what he means by a gap in intelligibility: “I mean that one must show positively that given the nature of the data there is something in them that excludes any adequate explanation of them . . . if taken by themselves alone.”

Before presenting his four arguments, Clarke clarifies that they are not proofs and that they do not proceed by means of the “Inner Path” through the innate drive of the human spirit. Rather, they are arguments that “exhibit a certain cumulative effect” and they proceed by means of the “Outer Path” through the entire cosmos.

The first argument that Clarke presents moves from any conditioned being to a single infinite Source of all being, and is based on a classical argument of Thomas. The radical question Clarke begins with is regarding the very existence of things. “Why do they exist at all in this way that they do exist? What is the ultimate intelligibility, or sufficient reason, why they in fact exist at all?”

There are three steps to the argument. Given any conditioned being, there must exist at least one self-sufficient being. But only a qualitatively infinite being can be self-sufficient. Therefore there can only be one such being infinite in all perfections and it “must be the unique

---

195 Ibid., 162.
196 Ibid.
197 Ibid.
199 Clarke, “Natural Theology,” 163.
Ultimate Source of all being.” In short, the three steps can be summed up as “if anything at all exists, then there must exist one and only one Infinite Source of all being. This we may call an apt philosophical definition of ‘God’.”

The second argument that Clarke presents moves from any finite being to a single infinite Source of all being, and “is a classic Neo-Platonic procedure, often used by St. Thomas himself.” In short, every finite being, “by the very fact that it is limited, indicates that it is a participated perfection, and points beyond itself to an unparticipated infinite Source.” A more powerful and impressive version of this argument takes the entire system of our material cosmos as the starting point.

The third “argument” that Clarke presents is more of a reflection “in the order of a metaphysical insight” into “the profound gap in intelligibility that lies between the possible existence and the actual existence-with-energy of our universe.” In short, because our universe is radically contingent, what it needs is some cause “for whom actual existence is a part of its very essence, whose very essence is the fontal plenitude of actual power-filled existence itself, an existent self-explanatory of its own existence. But this is precisely for St. Thomas the proper philosophical name of God, Subsistent Existence itself (Ipsum Esse Subsistens).”

The fourth argument that Clarke presents moves from the order in the world to a creative Ordering Mind, and is more commonly called the teleological argument. Clarke himself agrees

---

200 Ibid., 164.
201 Ibid., 168.
202 Ibid. For example, in De pot., q. 3, a. 6 (Marietti ed., Vol. 2.49-55).
204 Ibid., 170.
205 Ibid., 171. Italics in the original.
with Thomas that this is “the most widespread and efficacious path to God (via efficacissima) for all peoples, in all times and all cultures.”206 A classical version of this argument is presented by Thomas in his Fifth Way, but Clarke presents, to his mind, a more powerful adaptation of the argument in accord with our current understanding of nature. In any dynamically ordered system of active elements, “where each active element’s basic properties (their natures, in metaphysical terms) are defined by relation to the others in the system, no one element can explain its own nature.”207 This leads to a cosmos-wide order “in which many are brought together under the unity of great overarching laws of mutual interaction,” and these laws can have their ultimate sufficient reason “only in some cosmos-wide unifying cause” that “can only be a Mind.”208 This Mind “must transcend the system that it has constituted” and it must be one.209 “To sum it up, the last word about this or any cosmos must always be (to paraphrase philosophically the beginning of St. John’s Gospel): ‘In the beginning was the Word.’ Before all action, there must always be the inner word, the creative thought, the Logos.”210

Clarke concludes his article by sketching out “with extreme brevity the general procedure for determining which attributes (or predicates) can legitimately be applied to the God.”211 Based on the principle that similitude “must exist in at least some analogous way between an effect and

---

206 Ibid., 172. The closest text of Thomas that I could find that Clarke may be referring to is the following: “Quidam enim per auctoritatem Dei in ipsius cognitionem pervenerunt; et haec est via efficacissima. Videmus enim ea quae sunt in rebus naturalibus, propter finem agere, et consequi utiles et certos fines; et cum intellectu careant, se ipsa dirigere non possunt, nisi ab aliquo dirigente per intellectum dirigantur et moveantur. Et hinc est quod ipse motus rerum naturalium in finem certum, indicat esse aliquid altius, quo naturales res diriguntur in finem et gubernantur. Et ideo cum totus cursus naturae ordinata in finem procedat et dirigatur, de necessitate oportet nos ponere aliquid altius, quod dirigat ista et sicut dominus gubernet: et hic est Deus.” Lect. super Ioann., Proemium (Marietti ed., 1).
207 Clarke, “Natural Theology,” 174.
208 Ibid.
209 Ibid., 175.
210 Ibid. Italics in the original.
211 Ibid., 177.
its cause,” and on the principle “that we cannot without further analysis transfer any attribute found in the effect directly and literally to its cause,” we can purify a small number of basic attributes that “can be applied literally, though analogously, to God, with the index of infinity added.” Clarke lists a small number of viable attributes, “like existence, unity, activity-power, goodness, intelligence, will, love,” but claims that “a central one would be God as supremely personal being.” It is important to remember that we know only that God has these attributes, but not how he has them. However, we can glimpse a clue by our experience of our unrestricted dynamism of mind and will. “Our own natural dynamism of intellect and will toward the Infinite . . . illumines obscurely but richly this mystery-shrouded essence of God by a certain ‘connatural affinity’ with Him (St. Thomas) as His lovingly created images, that is, by a ‘knowledge of the heart’ (Pascal) through longing and love, as magnetized in the depth of our being by this Infinite Good that is our final End—a ‘knowledge’ through longing and love, I repeat, not through vision—at least in this life.”

PERSON, BEING, AND ST. THOMAS

Initially presented at a meeting of the Metaphysical Society of America in March 1992, “Person, Being, and St. Thomas” represents the summation of Clarke’s relational metaphysics of the person up to this point, and also transitions to the controversial principle covered in the next chapter: receptivity as a positive perfection of personal being. Clarke begins by presenting the

---

212 Ibid.
213 Ibid., 178.
214 Ibid., 178.
dynamic, relational notion of being that he developed in his 1982 article, “Action as the Self-Revelation of Being,” and was discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation. Clarke next applies this notion of being to the person. Finally, Clarke concludes with receptivity as a positive perfection of person and being, which he considers a “creative retrieval and completion” of Aquinas’s own metaphysics.216

Before launching into his dynamic, relational notion of being, Clarke begins with a short introduction regarding the relationship between person and being, which “are in fact deeply intertwined, since personal being is the highest mode of being, the most perfect expression of what it means to be.”217 In short, person is “simply what being is when allowed to be at its fullest, freed from the constrictions of subintelligent matter.”218 Another way of putting it is that “person and being are, in a sense, paradigms of each other.”219

Although Thomas developed his understanding of person as it applies to the two central Christian doctrines of God as Triune and Christ as God-man, he never applied this development to his philosophical notion of person, and was criticized by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger on this account. As Clarke explains, “Thomas failed to recognize that in the relational notion of person developed within the theology of the Trinity ‘lies concealed a revolution in man’s view of the world: the undivided sway of thinking in terms of substance is ended; relation is discovered as an equally valid primordial mode of reality.’ ”220 Thus, it is Clarke’s goal to “creatively complete”

216 Ibid., 221.
217 Ibid., 211.
218 Ibid. Italics in the original.
219 Ibid., 212.
Thomas in this area, as he says, “I would like to do for Thomistic metaphysics what Thomas himself could have done, but for various reasons did not get around to doing. I would like to join together his dynamic relational notion of being as active, already explicitly developed, with the notion of person, already rooted by him in the act of existence, to bring into the clear the intrinsically relational character of the person precisely as the highest mode of being.”

The Dynamic, Relational Notion of Being

Clarke begins by referencing some of his favorite texts of Thomas in support of the notion of real being “as intrinsically active and self-communicating.” Clarke then lists a few additional texts from Thomas to show how “self-expression through action is actually the whole point, the natural perfection or flowering of being itself, the goal of its very presence in the universe.”

Taking these two points, Clarke concludes that “for Aquinas, finite, created being pours over naturally into action for two reasons: (1) because it is poor,” or “(2) even more profoundly because it is rich.” According to Clarke, “this understanding of being as intrinsically active, self-manifesting and self-communicating through action” is “one of the few great fundamental insights in the history of metaphysics, without which no viable metaphysical vision can get far off the ground.”

---


221 Clarke, “Person, Being, and St. Thomas,” 212.


224 Clarke, “Person, Being, and St. Thomas,” 214. Italics in the original.

225 Ibid., 215.
are inseparable.” Of course, this leads to a “moderate, relational realism,” where to know another being “is to know it as this kind of actor.”

The above leads to the clear implication “that relationality is a primordial dimension of every real being, inseparable from its substantiality, just as action is from existence.” This inseparability points to the truth that “relationality and substantiality go together as two distinct but inseparable modes of reality,” such that “To be is to be substance-in-relation.” Here Clarke appeals to the divine revelation of the Trinity, in which God is revealed as relations of procession between the three Persons, to explain why lower beings manifest a dyadic nature. “The ultimate reason why all lower beings manifest this relationality as well as substantiality is that they are all in some way images of God, their ultimate Source, the supreme synthesis of both. Therefore, all being is, by its very nature as being, dyadic, with an ‘introverted,’ or in-itself dimension, as substance, and an ‘extroverted,’ or toward-others dimension, as relational through action.”

Application to the Person

Clarke begins with how Thomas understands person: “to be a person is to be an intellectual nature possessing its own unique act of existing so as to be the autonomous source of its own actions.” Person is also “that which is most perfect in all of nature.” Thus, “to be a person . . .

---

226 Ibid.
227 Ibid. Italics in the original.
228 Ibid. Italics in the original. cf. Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 75.
229 Clarke, “Person, Being, and St. Thomas,” 216. Italics in the original.
231 Clarke, “Person, Being, and St. Thomas,” 216. Italics in the original.
232 Ibid., 217. Clarke is summarizing his understanding of Thomas.
is really only the perfection of being itself,” such that “when being is allowed to be fully itself as active presence, it necessarily turns into luminous self-presence—self-awareness, or self-consciousness—one of the primary attributes of person. To be fully is to be personally.”

This is as far as Thomas went, according to Clarke, but Clarke himself bravely marches forward drawing out even more implications. Clarke concludes both that an authentic person is to be a lover living a life of inter-personal self-giving and receiving and that person is essentially a ‘we’ term that only exists fully in the plural.

Now that Clarke has accomplished his goal of integrating the relational notion of being with person as the highest expression of being, “the way is open to grafting the whole rich contemporary phenomenology of the person as essentially relational and interpersonal onto the more basic metaphysics of being as active presence.” This integration also brings out the important and essential fact that “the person is intrinsically ordered toward togetherness with other human persons—and any other persons accessible to it—i.e., toward friendship, community, and society.” Here Clarke refers to a text by Thomas: “It is natural for man to take delight in living together with other human beings.”

---

234 Clarke, “Person, Being, and St. Thomas,” 218. Italics in the original.
235 “And if personal being is really being itself only at its supra-material levels, then it follows that to be a person as such is to be a being that tends by nature to pour over into active, conscious self-manifestation and self-communication to others, through intellect and will working together. And if the person in question is a good person, i.e., rightly ordered in its conscious free action, then this active presence to others will take the form of willing what is truly good for them, which is itself a definition of love in its broadest meaning, defined by Thomas as ‘willing good to another for its own sake.’ To be a person, then, is to be a bi-polar being that is at once present in itself, actively possessing itself by its self-consciousness (its substantial pole), and also actively oriented toward others, toward active loving self-communication to others (its relational pole). To be an authentic person, in a word, is to be a lover, to live a life of inter-personal self-giving and receiving. Person is essentially a ‘we’ term. Person exists it its fullness only in the plural.” Ibid., 218. Italics in the original.
236 Ibid., 219.
237 Ibid. Italics in the original.
238 The reference Clarke gives is ST, I-II, q. 114, a. 2, ad 1 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 7.346), but as far as I can tell this is a typo. Rather, I think Clarke is referring to ST, II-II, q. 114, a. 2, ad 1 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 9.442). “Sicut autem non
Receptivity as a Perfection of Being and Person

Clarke concludes by officially arguing for his most controversial “creative completion” of Thomas: receptivity as a perfection of being and person. However, Clarke is very clear that this aspect “has not been developed, even implicitly, it seems, by St. Thomas himself.”[^239] This argument is a “creative completion” in the fullest sense, and Clarke owes his inspiration for taking this direction to two sources: John Cobb, a process philosopher, and Hans Urs von Balthasar, a Swiss theologian. While John Cobb simply asked an insightful question at a conference that spurred Clarke’s thought in this direction, Balthasar’s inspiration was much more influential. In particular, it is during Balthasar’s creative rethinking of God’s immutability that “he makes the point that in an adequate notion of the perfection of love receptivity is the necessary complement of active self-communication and of equal dignity and perfection with the latter. Self-donation would be incomplete without welcoming receptivity on the other side of the personal relation. And this belongs to the very perfection of the love relationship itself.”[^240]

Receptivity is not passivity. Rather, it should be understood as “an active, ‘welcoming’ receptivity that is a mark of the perfection—not the imperfection—of interpersonal relations.”[^241]

[^239]: Clarke, “Person, Being, and St. Thomas,” 220.
[^240]: Ibid., 220. Italics in the original. Clarke is expressing Balthasar’s point.
[^241]: Ibid.
For his proof, Clarke controversially turns to the Trinity. “The proof that this welcoming, active receptivity is a mode of actuality and perfection, not of potentiality and imperfection, is seen clearly when we turn to the intra-Trinitarian life of God,” where “the personality of the Son might well be called ‘subsistent gratitude’,” and the Holy Spirit called “actively receptive love.”

Clarke concludes his “creative retrieval and completion” of “Aquinas’s own metaphysics” with a nice summary: “The radical dynamism of being as self-communicative evokes as its necessary complement the active, welcoming receptivity of the receiving end of its self-communication. Authentic love is not complete unless it is both actively given and actively—gratefully—received. And both giving and receiving at their purest are of equal dignity and perfection. The perfection of being—and therefore of the person—is essentially dyadic, culminating in communion.”

Objections

There are two objections that immediately spring to mind if being is intrinsically self-communicative. Clarke replies to them at the conclusion to this article, although his responses in the article as contained in Explorations in Metaphysics are “completely rewritten and significantly different from the text of the original article as published in Communio.” His responses in Explorations in Metaphysics are much more lucid and precise, so they will be treated here.

The first objection is that if being is intrinsically self-communicative, then “God must necessarily, rather than freely, communicate the divine goodness in creation.” In response to

---

242 Ibid., 221.
243 Ibid., 221. Italics in the original.
244 Ibid., 222.
245 Ibid.
this, Clarke turns to Thomas, who “points out that there already exists in God a supremely perfect and complete self-communication in the inner life of God,” and “this self-communicating love . . . is of its nature necessary.”

Although the appeal yet again to revealed truth remains controversial on account of the apparent commingling of theology and philosophy, Clarke nevertheless says that “this is a perfect example, to me, of what it means to have a properly Christian philosophy, where one can draw when necessary on a higher revealed source of truth to illumine and help to solve a problem incapable of adequate solution on the level of a metaphysics of purely natural reason.”

Clarke recognizes that Thomas also provides a purely philosophical reply to the first objection when he argues that “one can say first that the creation of any particular finite world by an infinite cause must be free.” However, when pushed even further and the question is asked whether it is necessary that the self-diffusiveness of the divine goodness manifest itself in some finite universe, Clarke diverges from Thomas. “St. Thomas would say ‘No.’ I think one should say ‘Yes,’ with some reservations.” Clarke does not want to say that the divine goodness necessarily manifests itself, so he makes a distinction and between the necessary and the inevitable. “It seems to me one can say it is inevitable that it will pour over in some way,” but “this inevitability” is “the very ‘logic,’ the special logic, of a loving nature . . . uncompelled by anything but love, yet inevitable, ‘out of character’ for it not to happen.” Here Clarke says that in God “freedom and necessity come together in a transcendent synthesis, proper only to the nature of love,” and that “the rationality of love is a unique kind of rationality transcending the limits of logic.” In short,
“it is free, but in a manner that is also somehow fitting, appropriate to divine goodness, hence also in a sense ‘inevitable’.”

The second objection is that if being is intrinsically self-communicative, then “God’s own inner being must be intrinsically relational, involving more than one person.” Thus, it would appear possible to deduce “the philosophical necessity of something like the Trinity of Persons in God.” Clarke responds by saying that “there must be some kind of interpersonal relation on the divine level, following from the analogy of the terms person and love, but one could not deduce with any certainty just what form this would have to take or how many persons it would have to involve.” Thus, while interpersonal relation can be philosophically shown, God as Triune remains a Christian mystery.

CONCLUSION

We now have four of the five basic pillars of reality, all built upon the underlying presupposition of the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will, which is the foundation that makes Clarke’s metaphysical enterprise possible. After developing the first three—participation, existence as the act of presence, and action—Clarke then turned his attention to the person. In a sense, the importance of the person develops directly out of the underlying presupposition of the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will. The unrestricted dynamism of the mind points to how mind is at the root of all being, while the unrestricted dynamism of the will points to how love is at the root of all being. These two roots—mind and love—are the origin of how Clarke develops

---

252 Ibid., 226.
253 Ibid., 222.
254 Ibid., 226.
255 Ibid., 227. Italics in the original.
his worldview of the universe as radically personalized, leading to the stunning conclusion quoted earlier: the “person is ultimately the key to why there is anything at all and not rather nothing.”

There are four principal texts from Thomas that Clarke relies upon for his development of the role of person in his relational metaphysics. The first is Thomas’s definition of person from the early treatment of the Trinity in the *Summa theologiae*: “persona significat id quod est perfectissimum in tota natura.” This text is one of Clarke’s favorites that he cites six times throughout his career. The other three texts are places where Thomas uses the phrase “dominus sui” to describe the person. These three texts always appear together, first appearing in 1986, then again in 1988, and then one final time in Clarke’s 1993 Marquette lecture, *Person and Being*. Combining these two ideas, Clarke concludes that the person is the apex of existence, and that “To be without restrictions, therefore, necessarily means to be personal.”

However, Clarke does not stop there. Rather, he chooses to develop his relational metaphysics by turning to existential personalists, process philosophy, and Christian revelation. While the existential personalists primarily provided inspiration, process philosophy and Christian revelation substantially influenced Clarke’s relational metaphysics. As we shall see in chapter seven of this dissertation when examining Clarke’s revisions to the second edition of *A*

---

256 Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 80-81.
261 Clarke lists several inspirations from the existentialist personalist movement: Gabriel Marcel, Auguste Brunner, Emmanuel Mounier, Martin Buber, Maurice Nédoncelle, and John Macmurry. Cf. Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 81. Clarke’s dialogue with process philosophy is primarily with the thought of Whitehead’s disciples, such as Lewis Ford. Clarke also appeals to the Christian revelation of the Trinity with increasing frequency.
Philosophical Approach to God, Clarke went down some philosophical dead-ends during his discussions with process philosophy that he ended up revising at the end of his career. Also, Clarke’s reliance on Christian revelation led him to develop an extremely controversial aspect of his relational metaphysics: receptivity as a positive perfection of personal being. More than any other aspect of his thought, Clarke’s position on receptivity resulted in the most intense scholarly debate amongst fellow Thomists. The next chapter of this dissertation examines how receptivity developed out of Clarke’s relational metaphysics before summarizing the most relevant aspects of the debate.
CHAPTER 6
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF THE PERSON

Introduction

In his 1993 book, *Person and Being*, Clarke explicitly begins to develop his relational metaphysics beyond the bounds of Thomas himself by arguing that receptivity is a positive perfection of personal being,\(^1\) which elicited the most heated debate of his philosophical career. From 1993 until 1997, Clarke went back and forth with Steven Long, George Blair, David Schindler, and Kenneth Schmitz on the topic of receptivity.\(^2\) This debate and Clarke’s clarifications of his position developed in three parts, each of which will be examined in chronological order alongside the development of Clarke’s understanding of the human person in his original writings.

The result of this debate and Clarke’s research during this period resulted in a pillar of his system of relational metaphysics that he himself did not identify as a pillar: Christian philosophy. Although Clarke did not name this theme as a pillar of his relational metaphysics, it is clear that his ultimate conclusion and development of his understanding of the human person would not have been possible without the illumination of Christian revelation, as I will attempt to make clear throughout the rest of this chapter.

---


230
I will begin with an examination of Person and Being, where Clarke presents receptivity as a positive perfection of personal being. The resulting debate began soon after, and the first two parts will be examined before turning to Clarke’s 1996 article, “Living on the Edge: The Human Person as Frontier Being and Microcosm,” wherein he attempts a creative retrieval of a pair of ancient ideas in order to integrate them into his conception of person. The third and final part of the receptivity debate will then be covered before three more original articles, all of which further develop Clarke’s understanding of both the human person and Christian philosophy during this phase of his career.

Clarke’s 1997 article, “Conscience and the Person,“ clarifies his understanding of conscience, which he calls “the most distinctive expression of what it means to be a person.” His 1998 article, “Is the Ethical Eudaimonism of Saint Thomas Too Self-Centered,” tries to expand both what is meant by the spiritual self-fulfillment of a person and the phenomenological description of the will before claiming that the most fulfilling goodness in our universe is shared goodness: that of giving-receiving, being flowing over into self-communication, reception, and return. Finally, I will look at “God and the Community of Existents: Whitehead and St. Thomas,“ in which Clarke tries to construct a new synthesis of Thomistic and Whiteheadian thought. This

---


5 Clarke, “Conscience and the Person,” 95.


article sheds light on how this dialogue influenced Clarke’s understanding of receptivity, as he strives to build on the relational aspect of his metaphysics while defending receptivity as a positive perfection.8

PERSON AND BEING

Arguably the most influential work of Clarke’s career, Person and Being was originally delivered for the 1993 Aquinas Lecture at Marquette University. Pulling together the most important metaphysical insights of his career, Clarke presents Person and Being as a “creative retrieval and completion” of Thomas’s thought on the metaphysics of the human person.9 Clarke mentions two inspirations for turning his attention to the metaphysics of the person, Joseph Ratzinger and Karol Wojtyla, both of whom criticized Thomas for not applying the relational notion of the person that he developed in the context of Trinitarian theology to a philosophical analysis of the human person.10 Clarke sees his development of the metaphysics of the person as


already implicit “in Thomas’s own highly dynamic notion of existential being (esse) as act and as intrinsically ordered toward self-communication,”¹¹ but does not shy away from taking philosophical responsibility for the “creative completion” that he is pursuing. In particular, Clarke’s insistence on receptivity as a positive perfection of personal being is the part of his “completion” that provoked the most intense firestorm from fellow Thomistic philosophers. Nevertheless, Clarke stands firm and defends his position.

Clarke’s overall goal in Person and Being is to graft the relational dimension of the person onto the Thomistic metaphysics of being. In a concise summary of how he plans to do this, Clarke says, “I propose to do this by developing the dynamic, relational aspect of being itself for St. Thomas, with its indissoluble complementarity of substantiality, the in-itself dimension of being, and relationality, the towards-others aspect. Then I will apply this dyadic structure to the person as the highest manifestation of being itself, with the resulting characteristics of the person as self-possessing, self-communicative, and self-transcending.”¹²

Being as Dynamic Act

Clarke begins by summarizing his 1982 article, “Action as the Self-Revelation of Being: A Central Theme in the Thought of St. Thomas.”¹³ Clarke uses his typical texts of Thomas to move from real being as intrinsically active and self-communicating¹⁴ to self-expression through action

---

¹¹ Clarke, Person and Being, 3.
¹² Ibid., 5. Italics in the original.
¹⁴ SCG, I, c. 43 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 13.124-125); SCG, II, c. 7 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 13.283); De pot., q. 2, a. 1 (Marietti ed., Vol. 2.24-27); ST, I, q. 19, a. 2 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 4.233). Clarke also references SCG, III, c. 64, which he
as the natural perfection of being itself. Thomas speaks “of an intrinsic dynamism in every being [ens] to be self-communicative,” which “pours over naturally into action for two reasons: (1) because it is poor;” or “(2) even more profoundly because it is rich.” The ultimate reason every ens pours over into self-communicative action is because “they are all diverse modes of participation in the infinite goodness of the one Source, whose very being [esse] is self-communicative love.” As is becoming increasingly common, Clarke appeals to the Trinity to shed light on his understanding of esse. “Philosophy and revelation here go hand in hand to open up the profoundest depths of what it means to be.” Again, Clarke points out that he considers this understanding of esse to be “one of the few great fundamental insights in the history of metaphysics,” and that “the full meaning of ‘to be’ is . . . ‘to be actively present’.” Also, he restates his commitment to moderate relational realism: “to know another being [ens], therefore, is to know it as this kind of actor, on me or others, as manifested to me.”

The next step to relationality is not as explicit in Thomas, but Clarke insists that it is a consistent development of his metaphysics: “relationality is a primordial dimension of every real being, inseparable from its substantiality, just as action is from existence.” Thus, “relationality and substantiality go together as two distinct but inseparable modes of reality,” such that “to be
fully is to be *substance-in-relation*.”

Thus, everything is *dyadic*, with both a substantial, *in-itself* dimension, and a relational, *towards-others* dimension. In the past, Thomists have emphasized the in-itself dimension at the expense of the towards-others dimension, while contemporary phenomenologists and personalists have focused almost exclusively on the towards-others dimension because of the emasculated versions of substance bequeathed to them by Descartes, Locke, and Hume. Clarke tries to return balance by insisting that “the inseparable complementarity of *in-itself* and *towards-others* must be maintained: to be is to be *substance-in-relation*.”

Clarke draws attention to a few final aspects that *esse*, understood as dynamic and self-communicative, implies: receptivity, community, communion, and self-transcendence. First of all, “if self-communication is a fundamental aspect of real being, so too must be receptivity, the complementary pole of self-communication.” If this is the case, then “receptivity as such should be looked on . . . as in itself a positive aspect or *perfection* of being.” Receptivity is necessarily a perfection if love is a purely positive perfection, because without receptivity love remains incomplete. However, Clarke correlates the perfection of receptivity with where that receptivity is found on the scale of being. At lower levels of being, receptivity is associated with poverty and change from potency to act, but “as we move higher in the scale of being . . . it turns more and

---

23 “All being, therefore, is, by its very nature as being, *dyadic*, with an ‘introverted,’ or *in-itself* dimension, as substance, and an ‘extraverted,’ or *towards-others* dimension, as related through action.” Ibid., 14-15. Italics in the original.
24 See Clarke’s discussion of the modernist misinterpretation of the classical notion of substance in chapter 3 and chapter 6 of this dissertation, covering Clarke’s two articles, “What Is Most and Least Relevant in the Metaphysics of St. Thomas Today?” and “To Be Is to Be Substance-in-Relation.”
25 Clarke, *Person and Being*, 17. Italics in the original.
26 Ibid., 20. Italics in the original.
27 Ibid. Italics in the original.
more into an active, welcoming, gratefully responsive attitude.”

At the highest levels of being, in the absence of change and time, then “the receiver always possesses what it has as a gift,” so that receptivity “must be a purely positive perfection connatural to being itself.” Clarke admits that “this thematizing of the positive value of receptivity” is something new in his thought, but it nevertheless seems to him “an inescapable implication of St. Thomas’s own metaphysic of being and phenomenology of the love of friendship.”

Another implied aspect is that “real beings tend naturally to form . . . some kind of community,” such that “to be, it turns out, means to-be-together. Being and community are inseparable.” When this community of beings is on the level of conscious personal being, then “the ontological community of beings turns into conscious social community,” such that “the conscious bonds of human togetherness turn into communion.” This communion is a limited participation at the finite human level, but personal being nevertheless “tends ultimately toward communion as its natural fulfillment.” Shifting from the horizontal to the vertical, the final aspect Clarke points out is one step beyond communion: self-transcendence. What Clarke means by vertical self-transcendence will be explained in more detail when applied to the person, but for now it is enough to recognize this aspect as “an immense implicit aspiration towards the Divine.”

---

28 Ibid., 21.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., 22.
31 Ibid., 22-23. Italics in the original.
32 Ibid., 23. Italics in the original.
33 Ibid., 24. Italics in the original.
34 Ibid.
The Meaning of Person

Clarke makes it clear that person is simply the fullness of being itself. “To be fully, without restriction, therefore, is to be personal.”35 Through an analysis of how the understanding of person developed through the theological clarification between nature and person in Christ, Clarke points out that “it is the nature’s own proportionate act of existence, actualizing it as an existent, which formally constitutes that nature a person.”36 This actualization gives rise to self-consciousness and free-will, which are both expressed by Thomas in what Clarke considers to be one of the best descriptions of person ever given: “a person is a being that is dominus sui, that is, master of itself, or self-possessing.”37 Self-possessing manifests itself as self-consciousness in the order of knowledge and as free-will in the order of action.

Clarke, in his effort at creative completion, offers his “more adequate definition of person for St. Thomas.”38 A person is “an actual existent, distinct from all others, possessing an intellectual nature, so that it can be the self-conscious, responsible source of its own actions.”39 Clarke does not shy away from the fact that he is attempting a creative completion when he says, “It should be noted that neither of the two definitions of person for St. Thomas that I have given above occurs in its complete form in any one text of St. Thomas, so far as I know. I have deliberately combined two perspectives, the metaphysical and the anthropological.”40 Clarke then claims that the general consensus among contemporary, phenomenological philosophers is “that to be a person signifies a being that is the self-conscious, responsible source of its own actions.”41

36 Ibid., 27.
37 Ibid. Italics in the original.
38 Ibid., 29.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 30.
41 Ibid.
Clarke reminds us that we must keep in mind that “the notion of person, however, is an analogous one, ranging over several different levels of being, determined by the kind of intellectual nature which the person possesses as its own.”  

Structure of Human Nature

Although Aristotle’s definition of man was “rational animal,” emphasizing man’s place as the highest of the animals, Clarke insists that Thomas’s definition of man would be “embodied spirit,” emphasizing man’s place as the lowest of the spirits whose “destiny is to make its way back to God by a journey through the material world.”  

Rather than engage in an analysis of human nature as such, Clarke merely points out five central themes that have been the fruit of Thomistic anthropological studies.

First, it is important to realize that “the human soul is not just the ‘form of the body,’ as it seems to be for Aristotle, but a form plus, a spirit and a form, a spirit which does indeed operate as a form within the body but also transcends it with higher operations of its own,” such as its own act of existence which it can retain even when separated from the body.  

Second, the human will is a spiritual faculty and “necessarily oriented towards nothing less than the Infinite Good as its only adequate fulfillment.”  

Third, we are magnetized by the nature of our unrestricted dynamism of our mind and will towards the Infinite Good,” which “energizes our whole lives, driving us on to ever new levels of growth and development.”  

Fourth, the human being is a “microcosm” of the entire universe, sinking deep roots into the material cosmos with his body while living in the

---

42 Ibid., 32.
43 Ibid., 32-33.
44 Ibid., 35. Italics in the original.
45 Ibid., 36.
46 Ibid., 36-37.
spiritual horizon by his spiritual soul.\textsuperscript{47} Fifth, the human journey must be both social and historical.\textsuperscript{48}

Putting these five central themes together, Clarke concludes with a synthesis of them all to express the structure of human nature. “A human being is by nature a finite embodied spirit, in search of the Infinite, in social solidarity with its fellow human beings, on an historical journey through this material cosmos towards its final trans-worldly goal.”\textsuperscript{49} With this understanding of human nature in place, and along with the understanding of person arrived at previously, Clarke summarizes the “characteristics of personal living into three basic ones: Personal Being as Self-Possessing; Personal Being as Self-communicative and Relational; and Personal Being as Self-transcending.”\textsuperscript{50}

\textit{The Person as Self-Possessing}

There are two main aspects to the person as self-possessing: self-consciousness in the order of knowledge and self-determination, or free-will, in the order of action. Self-consciousness “enables a personal being to be aware of itself . . . as subject, immediately present to itself from within.”\textsuperscript{51} In fact, “to be able meaningfully to say ‘I’ is the unique prerogative of personal being.”\textsuperscript{52} "In the higher ranges of personal being, such as in God and the angels, this self-presence is immediate, totally transparent, and complete,” but in the human person, this is not so.\textsuperscript{53} Rather, as embodied spirit, “our intellectual consciousness starts off not yet in act, but potential, in the dark,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[47] Ibid., 37. See the section titled “The Human Person as Frontier Being and Microcosm” later in this chapter.
\item[48] Ibid., 38-39.
\item[49] Ibid., 41.
\item[50] Ibid., 42.
\item[51] Ibid., 43-44. Italics in the original.
\item[52] Ibid., 44.
\item[53] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
so to speak.” According to Clarke, “the explicit awakening to self-awareness as an ‘I,’ as a self, can only be done by another human person, reaching out to us with love and treating us as a person, calling us into an I-Thou relation.” In a rather poetic image, Clarke says we are “like the Sleeping Beauty, we must first be touched by another before we can wake up to ourselves.” Thus, “the relation to others comes first, then the awakening to ourselves as persons.”

Although this process of “awakening” continues throughout life, “the human self remains always a ‘known-unknown,’ a mysterious abyss, in which more remains unknown than known.” Clarke quotes Angelus Silesius for an evocative image: “The abyss in man cries out to the abyss in God. Tell me, which is deeper?” In rather striking imagery that weaves Augustine with John Scotus Eriugena, Clarke says that “our self-awareness is a partial zone of light within us, ever in fluid expansion or recession, surrounded by a penumbra of shadow shading off into an (at present) impenetrable darkness. St. Augustine once said that the whole aim of his philosophy was ‘to know myself and to know Thee, O God.’ Actually the two focuses of knowledge advance together, in an alternating spiral of reciprocal illumination until the final vision. As that ninth-century genius, John Scotus Eriugena, put it brilliantly: ‘God and man are paradigms of each other’.”

Self-determination, or free-will, is the source of moral responsibility. Thus, good and evil are possible when being has reached a fullness capable of self-determination. The true dignity of

---

54 Ibid., 45.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., 46.
58 Ibid.
60 “Moral responsibility flows immediately from this self-possession through freedom.” Ibid., 47.
61 Ibid., 48.
every personal being lies in the fact that a personal being is a self-governing being. Thus, a human person can imitate God by responsibly exercising providence over his own life in its social context. The goal, however, of doing good and avoiding evil, could be expressed more simply in terms of pursuing fullness of being. “Be fully what you already are,’ or better: ‘Become fully what you already are, in the deepest, most authentic longing of your nature’.”

Karol Wojtyla “has carried a significant step further the analysis of self-determination” when he pointed out “that in exercising our freedom of choice we are not only freely determining our particular actions—as St. Thomas develops in detail—but we are also determining our own very selves as persons, our personal character, in a word, ‘who we are’.” Thus, we choose not only our actions but also our being as a person. “Every consciously chosen action, then, helps to mold and construct our own very selves, ‘who we are’ in the moral order, at a deeper level than the action taken by itself. In a word, our personal identity in the existential order of action is inseparable from our story as a whole, a story we must interpret and integrate to make fully meaningful.”

In concluding this section on self-possession, Clarke wants to emphasize that this self-possession aspect of the person is “the manifestation on the level of conscious experience of . . . its in-itselfness or substantiality.” This part is frequently left out by recent phenomenologists and personalists who reduce the person to a web of relations. However, “unless one has some distinct

---

62 “St. Thomas locates the true moral dignity of man . . . precisely in this capacity to be self-governing . . . to exercise providence over his own life.” Ibid., 50. Italics in the original.
63 “His limited providence is an image of the all-comprehensive Providence of God.” Ibid., 51.
64 Ibid. Italics in the original.
66 Clarke, Person and Being, 55. Italics in the original.
67 Ibid., 57.
self to give or share, and some conscious possession of it as one’s own, how could one ‘give oneself to another’ in friendship and love, as the phenomenological analyses describe so eloquently?”68 This self-possession aspect “is also important as a support for our sense of self-worth and dignity.”69

“To be a human person is to be on a journey from potential self-possession to actual.”70 And this journey is traveled with the loving presence of another person that awakens the potential person to their full actuality as persons.71 Even though it is a journey, we must remember that it can never be a completed journey in this life. We are always uncovering more of our personhood. Our self-determination “can never become complete and perfect at any time during our present lives on this earth.”72 Nevertheless, “we can gradually learn to exercise enough self-mastery over the significant choices in our lives to be called moral persons.”73 In short, our self-mastery is directly proportional to our virtue.

The Person as Self-communicative and Relational

Whereas the self-possessing side of the person is “introverted,” the self-communicative side of the person is “extraverted.” All being “is caught up in this unending dialectic of the within and the without . . . by which it enters into a web of relationships.”74 Thus, “a person, like every other real being, is a living synthesis of substantiality and relationality.”75 Human consciousness,

68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid., 59. Italics in the original.
71 “The person is awakened to actual exercise of its personhood by the initiatives of others, but is not constituted in being as person by them.” Ibid.
72 Ibid., 60.
73 Ibid., 61.
74 Ibid., 64.
75 Ibid.
however, “must first open itself to the world of others, be waked up by their action on it and its own active response, as the Sleeping Beauty in the symbolic fairy tale must be waked up by a kiss from without.”\textsuperscript{76} It is on account of this fact that community and culture are essential to the development of human person as “I.”

“The entire development of personal life unfolds through active dialogue with an ever growing matrix of relations to other persons and the larger world beyond them.”\textsuperscript{77} This developmental process continues throughout life, beginning in childhood. “The growing child gets its self-confidence and sense of self-worth in response to the nurturing, caring love of its parents and immediate family and surrounding playmates.”\textsuperscript{78} Built upon this sure foundation of self-confidence, the adolescent is able to begin developing relationships with the world. “The teenage person must struggle to find its own identity as distinct from its parents and in relation to its peers, especially of the opposite sex.”\textsuperscript{79} Relationships with the world solidify self-identity, allowing the young adult to contribute to the world by overflowing into action. “The young adult must affirm itself and find its place in the vaster and more complex matrix of relations that is the adult world of ever-widening social communities.”\textsuperscript{80} Thus, it is clear that “everywhere our growth and development . . . are mediated by relations.”\textsuperscript{81} Beyond affirming self-identity and overflowing into action through lack or abundance, there is the core of a person’s being: “at the deepest level of its

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 65. Clarke also used the “Sleeping Beauty” image earlier on page 45. However, the earlier image used “touched,” whereas this later image uses “kiss.” I think Clarke may have been intentional in moving towards a progressively greater relational intimacy with his images to reinforce the notion that he is moving from talking about the person as self-possessing to the person as self-communicative.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 67.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 68.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 67.
being and self-identity the human person must be defined in terms of its permanent relationship to God.”

Again, Clarke emphasizes the “spiral” movement between self-possession and self-communication. This alternation between the contemplative self-possession of substance and the active self-communication of relations leads to “an ever-developing spiral circulation” that develops and intensifies both the contemplation and the communication. In conclusion, Clarke echoes Pascal when he says, “Paradoxically, the more intensely I am present to myself at one pole, the more intensely I am present and open to others at the other.” Additionally, there is a similar relationship between the person and being itself.

Clarke now returns to the metaphysical roots of the person, beginning with “person, for St. Thomas, as we have seen, is the highest, most intense expression of the perfection of being.” Understanding person as the perfection of being in tandem with the relational aspect allows us to see that “to be a person is to be intrinsically expansive.” This expansiveness, when motivated

---

82 Ibid., 68.
83 “Relations come into us and call us outward first; then we (should, normally) return to our own center to reflect on the result and integrate it into the abiding center of the self, expanding it and enriching it in the process. This permits the enriched self to then reach out further to others, with a surer and more profound sense of self-possession and ability to communicate and share our own riches. So the spiral of self-development should ideally go on, alternating harmoniously between the two poles of the person’s being: self-possession and self-communication.” Ibid.
84 “Thus the life of every human person unfolds as a journey of the spirit through an ever-developing spiral circulation between self-presence and active self-expressive presence to others, between the ‘I’ and the world, both personal and subpersonal, between inward-facing self-possession and outward-facing openness to the other.” Ibid., 69.
85 Clarke, Person and Being, 68-69. I am thinking in particular of Pascal’s comment that virtue and greatness are not the mean or one extreme, but rather true virtue is touching both extremes at once and filling all the intervening space. “On ne montre pas sa grandeur pour être à une extrémité, mais bien en touchant les deux à la fois et remplissant tout l’entre-deux.” Blaise Pascal, Pensées: Édition Établie D’après La Copie De Référence De Gilberte Pascal. (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 1999), 404.
86 “The more I become aware of myself as related by intelligence and will to the whole order of being as intelligible and good, the more I come to understand myself as a human person, as embodied spirit, or ‘spirit-in-the-world’; and reciprocally, the more I come to take possession of myself as person, the more I wake up to my innate openness and orientation to the limitless horizon of being.” Clarke, Person and Being, 70.
87 Ibid., 71.
88 Ibid.
from developed self-possession, i.e. virtue, and overflowing in abundant relationships, leads us towards love. As Clarke says, “we are moving towards a metaphysics of love.”

Clarke traces the development of this “metaphysics of love” by examining the development of the person. “The initial relationality of the human person . . . is primarily receptive, in need of actualizing,” as is the case for an infant. “The human person as child first goes out towards the world as poor, as appealingly but insistently needy.” The activator in the infant’s life is the mother. However, the receptivity at this phase of a person’s life is anything but a positive perfection. Although “the receptive dimension dominates at first in the development of a human person,” it is because the self-consciousness of a human person begins in “darkness, a state of being in potency toward knowing all beings, in act toward none.” Here Clarke turns to Thomas for the next developmental step. “Only then, though the mediation of the other, can it return fully to itself, as St. Thomas puts it, to discover itself as this unique human person.” Thus, it is through interpersonal relations that the personhood of the self develops towards a fullness of being. “All this process of interaction, of giving and receiving, which constitutes the ‘breathing of being,’ we might say, necessarily spins out a whole web of relationality in all directions.” In short, “to be a person is to be related.”

There are two sides to the self-communicative aspect of a person’s relational dimension. “There is an acquisitive side to our going out to others, because we are poor and seeking our self-
fulfillment,” but “there is also a more generous drive toward self-communication of one’s own being because it is positively rich.”97 Since “being and good are convertible for Aquinas,” this generous self-communication tends towards sharing the good, and “when this intrinsic dynamism toward self-communication is realized on the level of personal being . . . it turns into love.”98 Thus, we reach the summit of Clarke’s metaphysics of love, such that “to be an actualized human person, then, is to be a lover, to live a life of inter-personal self-giving and receiving. Person is essentially a ‘we’ term. Person exists in its fullness only in the plural.”99

Regarding the nature of a gift, Clarke says that “for giving to be truly personalized, a gift must proceed . . . from the spiritual roots of the person.”100 Since this is the case, Clarke combines all possible personalized gifts into two categories: wisdom in the realm of knowledge and love in the realm of will. “This expansive drive of the human person towards others tends to flow over naturally” into bonds that coalesce into community.101 Here Clarke references Mary Rousseau, who “finds the living roots of every viable human community in some kind of communion of love, involving an altruistic component of self-giving, even self-forgetting love of friendship.”102 Clarke concludes by agreeing with an insightful comment by Rousseau “that all being tends ultimately towards communion, flaming up into consciousness in persons.”103

It may appear Clarke has been forging ahead on his project of creatively completing Thomas, but that is not the case. According to Clarke, “on this point there is no need to do a

97 Ibid., 75.
98 Ibid., 76.
99 Ibid. Italics in the original.
100 Ibid., 78.
101 Ibid.
103 Clarke, Person and Being, 79.
‘creative completion’ of St. Thomas. In treating of the perfection of the universe as a whole, he affirms quite explicitly, in a great sweeping cosmic vision, that the whole universe of subrational beings exists for the sake of making possible and nurturing the life of rational beings, and that the final perfection of the latter is the . . . communion of persons.”\(^{104}\) Summarizing Thomas, Clarke says that “the goal and perfection of the whole universe is, literally, the *communion between persons*, who in turn gather up the whole universe in their consciousness and love and thus lead it back to its Source.”\(^{105}\) Clarke then connects two other texts from Thomas to arrive at a rather surprising conclusion. Although “it is already well known that Thomas speaks of the power of the finite mind, including the human, to gather up and ‘inscribe the whole order of the universe’ in the unity of its own consciousness, ‘as a remedy for its finitude’,,” what is less well known is that Thomas also declared that “it is possible to love with the altruistic love of charity not only other persons but the whole material universe itself!”\(^{106}\)

Clarke concludes by reminding us of the substantial pole aspect of the person. Despite this incredibly far-reaching relationality that loves the whole material universe itself, “we do not lose our self-identity and self-possession as we become absorbed deeply in communion and community,” rather community liberates and nourishes the free self “and ends up bringing us to know our own unique individuality even more keenly.”\(^{107}\) With this summit of the person as self-communicative and relational finally ascended, Clarke concludes that “to be, therefore, it finally

\(^{104}\) Ibid.
\(^{105}\) Ibid., 79-80. Italics in the original.
\(^{107}\) Clarke, *Person and Being*, 80.
turns out, is to be-in-communion, or if you wish, to be, in the full deployment of its actuality, is to commune.”

Receptivity as Complementary to Self-communication

Clarke now tackles the most controversial claim of his relational metaphysics: receptivity as a positive perfection. Clarke admits up front that receptivity “has not found explicit development at all, as a positive perfection of being, in the metaphysics of St. Thomas and Thomism in general, so far as I know, although it is certainly implicit in his phenomenology of friendship.”

The short answer to why receptivity is a necessary component to Clarke’s metaphysics of being is that “there can be no giving without receiving.”

Clarke readily admits the metaphysical tradition in the line of Aristotle and Thomas has consistently seen receptivity as a deficiency, and Clarke agrees that in the subhuman world this is correct. However, “once one crosses the threshold into personal being, the picture begins to change significantly. Once one begins to analyze love, in particular the highest move of love, the love of pure friendship, it is clear that mutuality is of the essence of this love. Friendship means essentially that one’s love is accepted, joyfully welcomed by another, and returned in kind, and the same is true reciprocally for the other person with respect to me. Receptivity, therefore, is part of the essence of the highest love.”

In personal relations, we catch a glimpse of receptivity as a positive perfection, yet there is still a strain of imperfection insofar as there is a change “from prior non-possession of my friend’s love to later receiving it.” This imperfection arises from the temporal

---

108 Ibid., 82. Italics in the original.
109 Ibid., 83. Italics in the original.
110 “… if there is to be effective self-communication of any being, there must be a corresponding receptivity for it somewhere in being.” Ibid.
111 Ibid., 83-84. Italics in the original.
112 Ibid., 84.
aspect, however, rather than from the nature of receptivity itself. Clarke also makes the distinction between passivity and an active, welcoming receptivity at the level of personal love. Clarke proposes a thought experiment to bring out the nature of receptivity as a perfection. If we remove all aspects of motion and change from receptivity, such that “person A timelessly gives perfection X to person B,” then the receiving person B “always possesses it in act.” Also, if person “B receives X in equal fullness to A’s possession of it, then no potency is involved at all.” Seen in the light of this thought experiment, it becomes clear “that to be gifted and to be grateful are in themselves not a sign of inferiority or deficiency at all, but part of the splendor and wonder of being itself at its highest actualization, that is, being as communion.” Clarke likes to speak of “self-communication and receptivity” as “two complementary and inseparable sides of the dynamic process of being itself, implicit in St. Thomas’s own notion of esse as primal expansive act and perfection.”

Clarke admits that this development regarding receptivity cannot be found explicitly in Thomas or Aristotle, so he takes philosophical responsibility for his new “creative completion.” Clarke says, “I admit that I have never developed it before in my own writings on St. Thomas, nor have I seen it in other Thomists . . . but the principal catalytic agent, to which I am happy to admit my full indebtedness, is the profound and daring speculation of the Swiss Catholic theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar.” In particular, Clarke was inspired by Balthasar’s Trinitarian writings.

---

113 “Receptivity and passivity are not identical.” Ibid.
114 Ibid., 85. Italics in the original.
115 Ibid.
116 Ibid.
117 Ibid., 85-86. Italics in the original.
118 Ibid., 86.
Although he has grown in the habit of appealing to the Trinity to shed light on his metaphysics, Clarke now takes a moment to clarify exactly how he sees the relationship between revelation and philosophy. “Christian philosophy can fruitfully shed light on a philosophical problem itself, by drawing on Revelation,” which “operates as opening up for reflection a new possibility in the nature and meaning of being that we might never have thought of ourselves from our limited human experience.”\textsuperscript{119} In particular, Clarke points to the doctrine of the Trinity, which he sees as “a uniquely powerful source of illumination in both the philosophy of being and the philosophy of the person,” and “as a paradigm for human relations in community.”\textsuperscript{120}

Now that Clarke has established “how the dynamism of self-communication is part of the very nature of being and so of the person,” he takes a step back to examine the cause: “the reason why all being, and all persons preeminently, are such is precisely because that is the way the Supreme Being, the Source of all being, actually is, and, since all creatures – and in a special way persons – are participations and hence images of their divine Source, then it follows that all created beings, and more intensely persons, will mirror in some characteristic way the divine mode of being.”\textsuperscript{121} Drawing on the doctrine of the Trinity, we know “God’s very nature is to be self-communicative love” and “we can now see that it is of the very nature of being as such, at its highest, i.e., as personal, to be such. This is what it really means to be at its fullest: to be caught up in the great dynamic process of self-communication, receptivity, and return that we have called communion.”\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 87. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 87-88.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 88.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 88-89. Italics in the original.
Personal Being as Self-Transcending

The third and final phase of personal development “is that the fully developed person be self-transcending.”123 Whereas the previous phase required an extensive “creative completion” of Thomas by Clarke, regarding this final phase Clarke says, “we can pick up St. Thomas again without too much creative completion required, since much of this point has already been explicitly developed by him, or is evidently implicit in much that he has said, and needs only for the parts to be drawn together into a whole.”124 The parts Clarke is referring to are texts where Thomas speaks of loving God more than self.125 Also, Clarke’s intention is “only to sketch the outlines of this rich dimension of self-transcendence, which moves finally from the articulation of metaphysics into the silence of mysticism, and links up Thomistic metaphysics and philosophical anthropology with all the great spiritual traditions.”126

Clarke begins by setting limits on the range of experiences that are classified as “self-transcending.” Although all knowing and loving of another is a kind of self-transcending, that is not Clarke’s concern at present. A more restricted sense of self-transcending applies to putting our center of attention in another when we reach out in love and care for their sake. “All authentic friendship and love of benevolence is a self-transcending act in this sense.”127 This restricted sense is important because “no one can reach mature development as a person without . . . giving oneself to another in self-forgetting love.” This paradox and its philosophical solution shed light on the full sense of self-transcending that Clarke will treat next.

---

123 Ibid., 94. Italics in the original.
124 Ibid.
125 ST, I, q. 60, a. 5 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 5.104-105); ST, I-II, q. 109, a. 3 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 7.295); ST, II-II, q. 26, a. 3 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 8.211.212).
126 Clarke, Person and Being, 95.
127 Ibid., 96.
Clarke notes that this paradox has been mulled over in various philosophies of friendship. “St. Thomas develops it succinctly but clearly in his analysis of natural friendship and supernatural charity,” and his “solution lies along the lines of participation and similitude.” Since we participate in the same human nature, share in the common bond of existence, and because we are all images of God, we recognize the infinite in the other. Our implicit love of the infinite grounds all our love of finite beings.

Clarke also identifies another, more dynamic solution to the paradox of becoming a true self by forgetting oneself. Namely, as images of God we must imitate the self-sharing of the Infinite Good. Thus, “personal development in a created person is to become more and more like God,” and since “God is Love, the infinite Lover,” it follows that “we too, as his images must be lovers.” Therefore, we end up seeing that “the ultimate mystery of being turns out to be that to be is to be a lover.”

From here, Clarke turns his attention “to explore self-transcendence at its most radical and intense level.” Whereas the two previous senses of self-transcendence were in a horizontal sense of loving and self-forgetting other human persons, this third most radical sense of self-transcendence is in a vertical sense of “a radical decentering of consciousness from self to God.” Rather than focusing on our own love or on another particular person, our central focus of concern becomes “the Good in itself and the good of the whole universe as seen from God’s point of

---

129 Ibid., 97.
130 Ibid. Italics in the original.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid., 98. Italics in the original.
Even the self is now loved “only as known and loved by God.”\textsuperscript{134} Just as the previous sense of self-transcending led to a paradox of finding one’s true self by forgetting self, so also does this vertical self-transcendence of decentering oneself paradoxically result in “a new finding of one’s self at a deeper level.”\textsuperscript{135}

Why? Because “the deep finality built into the very nature of every finite being . . . can be satisfied only by the total plenitude of being as true (intelligible), good, and beautiful.”\textsuperscript{136} Thus, we are drawn by the nature of our unrestricted dynamism of intellect and will “to direct personal union with the Infinite Good that is the lodestar of all being.”\textsuperscript{137} Here we catch a glimpse of the final pillar of Clarke’s relational metaphysics: the good as goal that lures all being into act. Clarke says, “the infinite Source draws all creatures back to itself by the pull of the good working proportionately within the nature of each,” which is “intrinsically finalized toward the good.”\textsuperscript{138} According to Clarke, “this is what a nature means for St. Thomas.”\textsuperscript{139} Thus, we have “a great double ‘movement’ in the universe of actual being from the Source outward toward creation and from creation back towards its Source. St. Thomas calls this the great circle of being (\textit{circulatio entium}).”\textsuperscript{140}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid. Italics in the original. \\
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 99. \\
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 100. \\
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid. Italics in the original. \\
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 100-101. Italics in the original. Clarke is referring to In Sent., I, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2 (Mandonnet ed., 325): “Quod in exitu creaturarum a primo principio attenditur quaedam circulatio vel regiratio, eo quod omnia revertuntur sicut in finem in id a quo sicut principio prodierunt.” Clarke translates as follows: “In the emergence of creatures from their first source is revealed a kind of circulation (\textit{circulatio}), in which all things return, as to their end, back to the very place from which they had their origin in the first place.”
\end{flushleft}
This vertical self-transcendence is not the ordinary mode of consciousness of every mature person, but rather it is “a phase in the journey toward full self-development as a person that usually emerges somewhere toward mid-life.”¹⁴¹ This mid-life phase appears as a “call to radical self-transcendence, to let go of our own selves as center of interest and take on the Great Center as our own new center of consciousness and open ourselves to let its life flow through us and express itself more and more fully in our lives.”¹⁴² Here we can see the mystery and paradox of personal being at its most profound, because as we find our true selves through self-transcendence, our self-communication becomes less about ourselves. Rather, “now our self-communication to others becomes, mysteriously, more and more of a God-communication through us.”¹⁴³

Clarke then turns to philosophy and the pillars of his relational metaphysics to shed some light on this mysterious level of personal development. How can the decentering of the personal self lead to full self-development? “The answer,” Clarke says, “lies in the nature of spiritual intellect and will as dynamic faculties oriented by a built-in natural drive toward the fullness of their formal object, being and goodness as such.”¹⁴⁴ Not only human persons, but “every created spiritual intellect, angelic, human, or whatever, is endowed according to St. Thomas, with a radical innate drive toward the whole of being, the unlimited horizon of being as intelligible.”¹⁴⁵ In every kind of spiritual intellect there is “a natural drive to know God” and “to know all other things from his point of view.”¹⁴⁶ Also, “in the order of spiritual will there is a natural drive toward all being

¹⁴¹ Clarke, Person and Being, 103.
¹⁴² Ibid., 104.
¹⁴³ Ibid.
¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 105.
¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 106.
¹⁴⁶ Ibid.
as good,” such that “there is a natural drive to love him as Infinite Goodness beyond all other goods” and “to love all other goods as he himself loves them.”147

Here we are presented with the ultimate paradox of personal development: a person only reaches perfection by taking on a divine point of view.148 Thus, it is “only by de-centering ourselves, transcending our finite selves,” that we can “fully become our own true selves as embodied spirits and thus fulfill completely the potentialities of personal being as such.”149 “Self-transcendence is thus of the very essence of all personal development at its highest,” and “only by reaching beyond the human can we succeed in becoming fully human.”150 “To be a human person fully means to self-transcend toward the Infinite.”151

**Conclusion**

Clarke concludes with a brief mention of the problem of evil. Since all actual being is always something positive and good for Thomas, evil is simply a privation, or “the hole in the cheese of being, to put it in homely terms.”152 The existence of moral evil in the world is on account of the fact that “the human person is endowed with freedom,” and “hence is intrinsically defectable.”153 Thus, our journey “home in good shape is not an automatic process, but a high-stakes, high-risk achievement.”154

---

147 Ibid.
148 “Here shines forth the magnificent, liberating paradox of personal development: because the person is endowed with a spiritual intellect and will, possessing a natural drive toward the infinite, the fullness of truth and goodness, the only way it can reach its own fullness of perfection as spirit is precisely to . . . take on the divine point of view for knowing and loving all things.” Ibid., 107.
149 Ibid.
150 Ibid., 108.
151 Ibid. Italics in the original.
152 Ibid.
153 Ibid., 108. Italics in the original.
154 Ibid., 109.
In short, Clarke laid out his argument in two steps. First, the nature of being must be understood “as dynamic, expansive act” that “generates a whole web of relations around it.” Second, when applying this understanding of being to the person, which is “the highest perfection and most intense expression of existential being itself,” we see that “to be a person is to be with . . . , to be a sharer, a receiver, a lover.” With these two steps taken, Clarke says “the three basic phases of personal development, corresponding to the attributes of existential being itself, are self-possession, self-communication, . . . and self-transcendence.”

Summarizing the whole work, Clarke says, “To be a person is to be a dynamic act of existence on the move, towards self-conscious, free sharing and receiving, becoming a lover, and finally a lover totally centered on Infinite Being and Goodness itself, the final goal of our journey as embodied spirits towards being-as-communion – the very nature of the Source of all being, and hence of all beings created in its image. Perhaps we can risk here a final summing up of all our explorations into person and being: to be fully a person consists in living out to the full the alternating rhythm of self-possession and openness-to-others.” This brilliant synthesis of being and person was Clarke’s answer to the perennial problem of the One and the Many: “Thus it is precisely – and only – through the person that the One and the Many – the oldest and the most profound mystery of all being – can finally be reconciled.”

---

155 Ibid., 111.
156 Ibid., 111-112. Italics in the original.
157 Ibid., 112.
158 Ibid., 112-113. Italics in the original.
159 Ibid., 113.
Clarke’s *Person and Being* ignited the most involved debate of his career, centering on the claim of receptivity as a positive perfection of personal being. The initial response to Clarke was David Schindler’s “Norris Clarke on Person, Being, and St. Thomas.” After beginning with an excellent summary of Clarke’s initial argument, insightfully expressing that in Clarke’s argument receptivity “is to be understood both as active and as a perfection,” Schindler then presents two crucial points of scrutiny. First, “How can relationality in fact be said to be—as Fr. Clarke himself says it is—‘an equally primordial dimension of being as substantiality,’ if relationality begins not in first but in second act?” Second, “Clarke needs yet to show us why receiving-from, and to this extent ‘emptiness’ and ‘poverty,’ can be said truly to be ‘actual’ and thus ‘perfect’.”

Before providing his own attempt at developing these crucial points of receptivity, Schindler makes a couple of insightful comments regarding Clarke that are worth pointing out. “Clarke seems himself to accept in principle the notion of Christian philosophy,” namely “that faith anticipates truths which can then be given a distinctly philosophical meaning.” This claim is true, as Clarke himself develops later. Also, in perhaps the most worthwhile insight he offers, Schindler recognizes that for Clarke receptivity is “included within the meaning of *agere*, and in

---

161 Ibid., 581.
164 Ibid., 584.
this way is a perfection.” In short, Clarke is identifying two aspects of pure act: communicability and receptivity, both of which are included in the meaning of action.

Schindler misunderstands Clarke, however, to place the perfection of receptivity in actions that flow from esse, rather than in esse itself. Clarke does not hold back in his response, stating that “this is not at all my position.” Clarke clarifies the misunderstanding by making the Thomistic distinction between contingent and proper accidents. Action is a proper accident of esse, such that esse could not actually be what it is and be deprived of action.

However, Schindler’s attempt to build on Clarke’s ideas to develop receptivity as a positive perfection fully embraces the Balthasarian position. Schindler even attempts to show how “the receptivity-poverty proper to childhood is a ‘perfection’ never to be superseded by any developing or mature consciousness.” Schindler does this by presenting “an image of receptivity as pure perfection of being as exemplified in the Son as the Second Person of the Trinity.” Clarke appreciates this insightful contribution, even claiming, “Here I agree with Schindler almost entirely,” and “All of the above I accept gratefully, as an important and broadening and deepening of my own horizon of discussion.”

---

166 Schindler, “Clarke on Person,” 584. Italics in the original.
170 Clarke, “Response to David Schindler’s Comments,” 595.
171 Ibid.
172 Ibid., 596.
RECEPTIVITY DEBATE – PART II

The agreement between Schindler and Clarke regarding this Balthasarian development of Thomistic metaphysics prompted two other interlocutors to join in the debate the following year, Steven Long and George A. Blair, with responses from both Clarke and Schindler following soon after. Long’s criticism centers on receptivity, while Blair’s criticism centers on relationality.

Although Long is in “profound agreement with Clarke’s characterization of Aquinas’s metaphysical emphasis upon” esse as self-communicating and relational through action, Long criticizes what he sees as a twofold error that “vitiates the idea of receptivity as a perfection.” Long’s first point is regarding the difference between divine and creaturely receptivity. In short, Catholic authors, such as Reginald Garrigou-LaGrange, have explicated a divine receptivity that does not involve potency, but as Long points out, “such ‘receptivity’ is strictly equivocal with respect to the normal meaning of the term.” Long’s second point pertains to transcendental perfections and can be summarized as two objections: “receptivity as found in nature lacks both the perfection of act (its definition includes potency) and the universality characteristic of genuine transcendentality.”

178 Ibid., 152.
179 Long refers to Reginald Garrigou-LaGrange, Christ the Savior (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1957), 42.
180 Ibid., 155.
181 Ibid., 158.
Clarke’s reply quickly dispels a misunderstanding regarding Long’s second point. Clarke never intended to argue for receptivity as a transcendental perfection. Rather, Clarke wants to claim that receptivity is a perfection of personal being. “It is one thing to claim that every being has a receiver,” which is Clarke’s claim, “and quite another to claim that every being is a receiver,” which is how Long misunderstood Clarke’s claim. Clarke does not want to include receptivity with one, true, good, beautiful, and active. Rather, Clarke is making a case for receptivity to be included with personal perfections, such as intelligence, love, and freedom.

Long’s first point, i.e., the claim that all creaturely receptivity must contain potency in its very meaning and is thus equivocal with divine receptivity, is strongly rejected by Clarke as unfounded. Displaying his Thomistic habits, Clarke begins by replying in the scholastic method of negating all creaturely limitations from the notion of receptivity, including any connotation of temporal change and any aspect of limitation. The result is that Clarke sees “no convincing reason for including imperfection and limitation as part of the very meaning of the term ‘receptivity,’” which Clarke clarifies as follows: “I am taking receptivity here precisely to signify a spiritual attitude proper to the level of self-conscious personal being.” To strengthen his argument, Clarke turns to a direct positive analysis of the experience of genuine friendship, wherein we have a very real experience “of what can be described only as active receptivity.” According to Clarke, it is the “active disposition within the very receiving itself” that “is precisely what characterizes conscious personal receptivity.” Clarke then offers Long an “important distinction between

---

183 Ibid., 167.
184 Ibid., 168. Italics in the original.
185 Ibid. Italics in the original.
receiving as bare neutral receiving and receptivity as a positive active disposition”\textsuperscript{186} before concluding with a clarification that he is engaging in Christian philosophy.\textsuperscript{187}

Blair’s criticism of Clarke is much more thorough than Long’s, but it is also rife with misunderstandings, and thus Clarke’s response is nearly effortless. Blair’s criticizes Clarke for deducing that \textit{esse} is self-communicative and relational from the Trinity,\textsuperscript{188} but this is precisely what Clarke has \textit{not} done.\textsuperscript{189} Blair also criticizes Clarke for implying that God must necessarily create,\textsuperscript{190} but again, this is something Clarke has explicitly avoided.\textsuperscript{191} Finally, Blair criticizes Clarke for projecting a creaturely notion of relationality and receptivity onto God,\textsuperscript{192} but yet again, Clarke clarifies that he is most certainly not doing so, and that “we can never do this in any predication about God.”\textsuperscript{193} The only insightful criticism Blair has for Clarke is regarding immanent activity, i.e., an act that begins and ends in the agent. Since the highest activity is immanent, Blair argues that activity does not necessarily imply self-communication or relationality.\textsuperscript{194} Clarke admits the truth that immanent activity need not be communicated, but since this type of activity only occurs in free agents, this lack of necessity “does not exclude [sic] that this same agent can further direct its immanent action to communicate some of the agent’s goodness to another, in an active causality grounded in the immanent action.”\textsuperscript{195}

This second part of the receptivity debate concluded with a rather detailed article by Schindler, “The Person: Philosophy, Theology, and Receptivity.”196 After a few comments regarding the critique of both Long and Blair, as well as Clarke’s respective responses, Schindler proposes “a friendly amendment” to Clarke’s project.197 After an insightful comment about the difference in metaphysical starting points between Clarke and Long, Schindler tries to push receptivity into the realm of transcendental perfection, revealing his Balthasarian inclinations. The main thrust of Schindler’s article, however, is a very detailed criticism of Long’s position. Together with Clarke’s response, these two articles motivated Long to plunge back into Thomas to develop a more thorough response three years later. During those three years, Clarke continued to develop his Christian philosophy of the person, as we shall see in the next section.

THE HUMAN PERSON AS FRONTIER BEING AND MICROCOSM

Clarke expands his philosophical concept of the person in his 1996 article, “Living on the Edge,”198 by proposing “a creative ‘retrieval’ of an interconnected pair of very ancient . . . ideas of what it means to be a human being and have a place in the cosmos.”199 “The first of this pair of ideas is that of the human person as a ‘frontier being,’ living on the edge, on the frontier, between matter and spirit, time and eternity,” and able to freely shift “its conscious focus between these dimensions.”200 “The second idea is that of the human person as ‘microcosm,’ or small cosmos,”

197 Ibid., 172.
199 Ibid., 132.
200 Ibid.
wherein a “person unites in itself all the levels of the universe from the depths of matter to the transcendence of spirit.” After his creative retrieval of these two ideas, Clarke offers some philosophical reflection on them, as well as “some striking evidence from recent scientific studies of the brain.”

The Human Person as Frontier Being

The idea of the human person as a “frontier being” surfaces first in Plato. In the *Timaeus*, Plato “describes the human soul as a ‘middle being’ situated between the pure upper world of soul and ideas and the lower world of matter and body, linking the two but also pulled in opposite directions by both.” However, it must be noted that since the soul for Plato is equivalent to the human person, it is the soul that is the “middle being.” Clarke also thinks Plato saw the human condition as “a lowly and precarious one in the order of true being.” Plotinus and the Neoplatonic tradition, however, have a more positive view. They speak of the human soul as “the ‘frontier’ ([methorion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Methorion)), between matter and spirit,” and describe it very insightfully “as a border that both separates and unites,” while also being movable, capable of shifting either up towards the spiritual or down towards the material. In short, “the human soul is the ‘traveler’ of the universe.” But according to the Greeks, this traveler, the human being, “should know its place

---

201 Ibid., 133.
202 Ibid.
203 Ibid. “The components from which he made the soul and the way in which he made it were as follows: In between the Being that is indivisible and always changeless, and the one that is divisible and comes to be in the corporeal realm, he mixed a third, intermediate form of being, derived from the other two.” *Timaeus* 35a. Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John Cooper, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Inc., 1997), 1239. Italics in the original.
204 Clarke, “Living on the Edge,” 134.
205 Ibid. Italics in the original.
206 Ibid., 135.
in the universe and stick to it,” which “is right in the middle,” and thus the human being “should act accordingly.”\textsuperscript{207}

The concept of the human person as microcosm “is considerably richer in its meaning and implications.”\textsuperscript{208} Clarke attempts to trace the pre-Christian history of person as microcosm through Heraclitus, Anaximander, Pythagoras, and Plato, but his results are rather weak. The notion of “middle being” is more central to these early thinkers, and the same can be said of the Neoplatonic tradition, because even though “the term of microcosm is certainly present there,” the fact is that the human person as frontier being “is stressed even more explicitly and centrally than in Plato.”\textsuperscript{209} Aristotle, although he does compare the macrocosm to the microcosm, is interested in the epistemological ramifications more than the ontological.\textsuperscript{210}

With the onset of early Christian thought, however, “the notion of the human person as microcosm takes on new momentum.”\textsuperscript{211} The reason for the new momentum is the shift from the pre-Christian philosophers, who primarily saw the body negatively, to the Christian tradition, where the body “has its own value and dignity given it by God himself, though at the service of the spiritual soul.”\textsuperscript{212} On account of the material universe being created good by God, “the human person now becomes a microcosm in a new and richer sense” that “incorporates into itself all the

\textsuperscript{207} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{208} Ibid., 136.

\textsuperscript{209} Ibid., 137.

\textsuperscript{210} Clarke refers to \textit{Physics} VIII.2, 252b. “Now if this can occur in an animal, why should not the same be true also of the universe as a whole? If it can occur in a small world it could also occur in a great one.” \textit{The Basic Works of Aristotle}, edited by Richard McKeon, (New York: Random House, 1941), 359.

\textsuperscript{211} Clarke, “Living on the Edge,” 138.

\textsuperscript{212} Ibid.
levels of the universe and all its values.” The whole human person, rather than just soul as the pre-Christian philosophers advocated, now becomes the central middle point of the universe that “binds together into one the two great disparate dimensions of reality, the material and the spiritual.” Thus, in a great revolution, the material and the spiritual cease their immemorial war and are brought to peace in the human person, which becomes not only “the bond, the nodal point, that gathers together the whole universe into unity,” but also “the symbol and expression of the unity of the whole of creation and so of the unity of God, its Creator.” Clarke recognizes that this idea of the human person as the bond of unity “is a distinctively Christian contribution to the conception of the microcosm.”

“If the human person is the bond uniting the material world to the spiritual, then it can also be the mediator between . . . the whole material world and its Creator,” becoming “the high priest, the pontifex (bridge builder), of this whole material cosmos.” The person as pontifex is vastly different from the pre-Christian image of the human being, or more precisely the soul, as a microcosm. The Christian image “results in a new vision of the grandeur and dignity of what it means to be human.” Clarke then references several early Greek Fathers who spoke of man the microcosm: Irenaeus, Gregory of Nazianzen, Nemesius of Emesa, and Maximus the Confessor.

---

213 Ibid.
214 Ibid., 138-139.
215 Ibid., 139. Italics in the original.
216 Ibid.
217 Ibid., 139. Italics in the original.
218 Ibid., 140.
219 In particular, a quote from Maximus the Confessor is quite beautiful. “That is why man was introduced last into creation, as a natural bond of unity, mediating between the extremes because related to them all through the different aspects of his own self . . . drawing them all to unity within himself, and so uniting them all to God as their cause.” Clarke’s translation of Maximus the Confessor, Ambigua, 41 (Migne, PG, 91, 1305a-c).
Clarke also traces references to man the microcosm through the Latin Fathers along similar lines, but then points out that Thomas “adds his own original twist to this ancient idea.”\footnote{Clarke, “Living on the Edge,” 142.} Both the idea of the human person as frontier being\footnote{In Sent., III, Prologus (Moos ed., Vol. 3.1-3); ST, I, q. 77, a. 2 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 5.240).} and as microcosm\footnote{In Sent., II, d. 1, q. 2, a. 3 (Mandonnet ed., 49-51); Quod., IV, q. 3 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 25.2.323-325).} appear in Thomas’s thought, but “Thomas adds a significant modification of his own.”\footnote{Clarke, “Living on the Edge,” 143.} The Greek and Latin Fathers still clung to some of the antagonism between matter and spirit found explicitly in the pre-Christian philosophers, such that it was somehow unnatural for human beings to have a spiritual soul and material body. Thomas, however, thinks “the union of soul and body in us is a natural one: the soul needs the body for its own completion as a human soul.”\footnote{Ibid., 144. Italics in the original.} With this view of the natural unity of the body and soul, matter is made as a gift to spirit, and the soul “reaches down into matter to take on a body for itself, thereby lifting up matter into the light of consciousness and enabling the material world to return to God . . . through the human person as the natural unity of both worlds.”\footnote{Ibid. Italics in the original. This quotation is an amazing example—perhaps the best in all of Clarke’s published work—of how Clarke understands receptivity as active. Matter (the body) is the gift, which spirit (the soul) receives by reaching down, lifting up, taking on, and enabling a return to God.} Thus, Thomas has purified the conception of the Church Fathers, resulting in an even greater unity so that “the human person now becomes even more meaningfully the centerpiece of the created universe, showing forth with ontological splendor the unity of all creation and so of its Creator.”\footnote{Ibid.}

The Renaissance saw “the notion of the human person as microcosm burst forth again with new splendor,” but it burned out rather quickly in the wake of the Enlightenment on account of
several reasons. First, “the new science, with its mathematical structure and strict empirical methods, does not take kindly to such imaginative, untestable thinking.” Second, “the concept itself of microcosm begins to take a turn into more dubious directions, namely towards astrology, magic, and the occult.” Third, the rise of Protestantism began presenting an irremediably corrupted human nature. Even in our day, with prevalent materialism and scientism, “there is clearly no place for the conception of . . . man the microcosm: he cannot be the bond of unity of matter and spirit if there is no spiritual dimension to bind into unity.” Clarke, obviously, thinks the concept is still relevant today, especially since it is derived “from the notion of the human as the center point of the hierarchy of being (the different ontological levels of being), not of physical place, and in this respect is just as apt today as it ever was.”

Not only did “the two allied notions of the human person as frontier being and as microcosm” provide “us with a rich holistic vision of how we fitted into a larger whole,” they also gave us a mission “as the bond of unity of the whole and as the mediator of the lower to the higher.” Thus, Clarke thinks it would be wise to return these allied notions to the cultural consciousness so that we can overcome the homelessness that has arisen in the wake of modern philosophy and feel at home again in our universe. Clarke suggests “that these ancient ideas of man as frontier being and as microcosm are just as valid, enriching, and indispensably nourishing today as they were in their early Christian, medieval, and Renaissance heyday.”

---

227 Ibid.
228 Ibid., 145.
229 Ibid.
230 Ibid., 147.
231 Ibid. Italics in the original.
232 Ibid., 147.
233 Ibid., 148.
Clarke concludes with a brief look at Paul McLean’s “Three Brain Theory,” which is “a well established fact” that we “have three brain centers actively working together within the one brain”: reptilian, mammalian, and the neocortex.\textsuperscript{234} Although “in moments of heavy stress we tend to drop down spontaneously to the next lower level,” this can be avoided “if we develop personal, deliberate \textit{habits} of virtue.”\textsuperscript{235} Thus, to avoid acting in an animal-like manner, “we must actively \textit{make} our moral character by habitually acting according to values, to principles, beyond the automatic reflexes of the animal or reptile.”\textsuperscript{236} According to Clarke, this shows how “we humans as embodied spirits are destined to live on the edge of matter and spirit, time and eternity.”\textsuperscript{237} However, “we have to work at it with free, deliberate, responsible choice, cultivating the habits of good action (virtue) which Saint Thomas calls a ‘second nature,’ acquired, not innate,” in order to “truly shine forth as microcosms, as the bond of unity of all creation, weaving together into one being the two great realms of spirit and matter and thus showing forth the unity of its Creator.”\textsuperscript{238}

**RECEPTIVITY DEBATE – PART III**

In 1997, the debate over receptivity as a positive perfection of personal being took another step forward. Soon after the previous debate in 1994, Kenneth Schmitz published “The First Principle of Personal Becoming.”\textsuperscript{239} Just as Leibniz and Newton independently discovered calculus in nearly the same year, so also did Clarke look back upon this article by Schmitz as the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{234} Ibid., 148-149.
  \item \textsuperscript{235} Ibid., 149. Italics in the original.
  \item \textsuperscript{236} Ibid., 150. Italics in the original.
  \item \textsuperscript{237} Ibid., 151.
  \item \textsuperscript{238} Ibid., 151.
\end{itemize}
beginning of a convergence of both of their careers. Long was inspired by the appearance of this article by Schmitz, as well as the replies of Clarke and Schindler to his earlier article in 1994, to immerse himself in Thomas again in order to develop a thoroughly Thomistic response. The result was “Personal Receptivity and Act: A Thomistic Critique,” an article brimming with 37 different citations of Thomas in order to make an argument against the integration of person and being argued for by both Schmitz and Clarke. Long’s impressive article was soon replied to by both Clarke and Schmitz, bringing to a close the most heated argument of Clarke’s career.

In short, Long takes exception with Schmitz’s idea of “nonpassive receptivity” and Clarke’s idea of personal “active receptivity.” Thus, Long argues against two primary ideas in his article: (1) that personal activity transcends the ontological principles of act and potency, and (2) that receptivity is a pure perfection of act. According to Long, both of these ideas lead to “the abandonment of Thomistic metaphysics.”

240 “In the last quarter of our careers we have both moved toward a remarkably similar synthesis or integration of person and being, personalism and metaphysics, but following somewhat different but converging paths.” W. Norris Clarke, S.J., “The Integration of Person and Being in 20th Century Thomism,” Communio, 31 (2004): 435.
244 Although Blankenhorn’s thesis, “Toward a Thomistic Personalism,” is a very impressive analysis of the first two parts of the receptivity debate covered earlier, I find it rather surprising that he only examines Long’s article from 1997. Blankenhorn considers neither Clarke’s response to Long’s 1997 article, nor any text by Schmitz which argues for receptivity as a positive perfection of personal being.
246 Clarke, “Response to Long’s Comments,” 168. Long summarizes Clarke by saying, “Clarke infers that creaturally receptivity is defined more by act than by potency.” Long, “Personal Receptivity and Act,” 1. Italics mine. However, this is not an accurate representation of Clarke’s position. Long should have used personal instead of creaturally. Clarke very clearly limits active receptivity to personal receptivity. “. . . an active disposition within the very receiving itself . . . is precisely what characterizes conscious personal receptivity.” Clarke, “Response to Long’s Comments,” 168.
Long begins his analysis of receptivity by looking at Thomas’s ontology of knowledge in an attempt to counter Schmitz’s idea of “nonpassive receptivity.” Long draws out the ideas of “imperfect act” and “active potencies” from Thomas, but neither of these account for Schmitz’s idea of “nonpassive receptivity.” Long then moves to an analysis of *esse* and operation in the human person, concluding that “to assert that the human person transcends the division of being into act and potency is to assert the fundamental inadequacy of Thomistic metaphysics.”

Long then turns his attention to Clarke’s “active receptivity” by investigating whether all receptivity can be considered an act separable from potency. Although Long respects Clarke’s method of argument, namely using a judgment of separation, he nevertheless claims that Clarke’s argument does not work. Simply put, Long argues that, naturally speaking, receptivity “indicates the possession of a perfection by virtue of another and not by virtue of oneself,” and thus, since the receiver is not the origin of the perfection, “the subject would stand in an atemporal relation of potency vis-à-vis the originating principle of the perfection.” Therefore, according to Long, Clarke’s argument for receptivity as an act using a judgement of separation regarding time does not obtain. In conclusion, Long simply accuses Clarke of “transubstantiating potency into act.”

Clarke’s reply centers on what he considers “the wider and more important issues at stake,” namely, “the intelligibility of a distinctive Christian philosophy.” Clarke begins by defining what he understands his Christian philosophizing to be: “Using the Christian revelation of the Trinity (one God in three Persons) as a principle of illumination (not rigorous, purely philosophical argument) to shed new light on the deeper meaning of both person and being, helping us to notice

---

248 Ibid., 18.
249 Ibid., 27.
250 Ibid., 29
251 Clarke, “Reply to Steven Long,” 617.
more positive aspects of both even in our own world that may have escaped our attention so far.”

When Clarke turns to Long’s particular criticisms, he simply says that he finds Long’s “reply as a whole seriously inadequate, missing the mark, so to speak, as a critique of my position as I have expounded it.” In short, Clarke was doing an exercise in Christian philosophy, and Long did not even address his principal source of evidence: the interpersonal life of the Trinity and Christ’s use of receptivity. The exact claim on which Long and Clarke diverge is the following: Can a received perfection be received in its totality? Long says no, but Clarke points to the Trinity.

The conclusion to this third part of the receptivity debate can be found in Schmitz’s article, “Created Receptivity and the Philosophy of the Concrete,” where he clarifies his use of “non-passive receptivity,” and decides that “non-privative receptivity” would have been better.

CONSCIENCE AND THE PERSON

In 1997, Clarke also turned his attention towards conscience in his article, “Conscience and the Person,” wherein he examines the importance of conscience to the mature person. For Clarke, not only do “conscience and the person fit together inseparably,” but “conscience is also perhaps the most distinctive expression of what it means to be a person” because it expresses “what it means to be human,” and “what it means to be me.”

---

252 Ibid., 618.
253 Ibid., 622.
254 “. . . a received perfection cannot be received in its totality.” Long, “Personal Receptivity and Act,” 28.
255 Schmitz, “Created Receptivity,” 109. Although an interesting article, it is too far afield to warrant discussion in this dissertation centering on Clarke’s relational metaphysics.
257 Ibid., 95.
For Clarke, conscience “refers to that ‘inner voice’ that advises me and commands me in the presence of a moral decision as to how to act in a given situation.”\textsuperscript{258} Thus, there are two components to conscience: the advisory aspect that declares what is good to do or evil to avoid, and the command aspect that declares “an obligation to do the good.”\textsuperscript{259} Both of these aspects make up our moral conscience, which “begins to manifest itself clearly enough from around the age of six or seven.”\textsuperscript{260} Before discussing Thomas’s theory of conscience, Clarke makes the distinction between the Freudian superego and conscience. Whereas the superego “is superimposed on our own consciousness . . . as the voice of some human authority outside of us,” our authentic conscience “speaks to us as our own inner voice, commanding us . . . in terms of values that we ourselves understand and have internalized as our own.”\textsuperscript{261}

In developing his theory of conscience, Clarke admits, “I shall be following here the main lines of Saint Thomas’s theory of conscience, because it seems to me to be the most satisfactory.”\textsuperscript{262} So following Thomas’s lead, Clarke describes conscience as “a strictly cognitive act, a judgment of our reason, which applies . . . our final end, to the particular situation confronting us and calling for decision here and now.”\textsuperscript{263} Clarke understands our final end as “the natural law imprinted in our hearts by God,” which is “a participation in the divine law in God’s intellect which is His plan for our happiness and final destiny.”\textsuperscript{264} Our conscience is basically a power of judgment “to apply the general to the particular in the order of moral action.”\textsuperscript{265}

\textsuperscript{258} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{259} Ibid., 95-96. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{260} Ibid., 96.
\textsuperscript{261} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{262} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{263} Ibid., 97. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{264} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{265} Ibid. Italics in the original.
Clarke draws attention to Thomas’s insightful insistence “that the voice of conscience is a judgment of my reason alone addressed to my whole person” and “is both a declaration of fact and the authoritative imposition of an obligation to act this way or that.”\(^{266}\) It is important to remember the distinction that “an ought, a moral obligation, is not a compulsion. It is still up to me to decide freely with my whole person—intellect, will, emotions all working together.”\(^{267}\) Regarding the operation of conscience, Clarke says that “conscience operates both antecedently, before my free decision, guiding me with either a warning or command, and consequently, after the decision, with praise or blame.”\(^{268}\) Therefore, conscience acts as a “wise guide” and is “an expression of one of the fundamental roles of reason in a rational being:” to impose order on experience and to guide the whole person towards its final end.\(^{269}\)

The aspect of obligation that conscience lays upon us results in an almost universal understanding of it as “the voice of God” or “the voice of our inner (or higher, better, authentic) self.”\(^{270}\) According to Thomas, “it is appropriate for us to call the voice of conscience ‘the voice of God’,” on account of the unconditional moral obligation it lays on us as “a participation in the divine law in the mind of God exercising providence over us.”\(^{271}\) However, it is important to remember that our conscience “can be fallible and, in certain cases, even erroneous” because it is “mediated through our own imperfect human reason.”\(^{272}\) Nevertheless, “we must still follow it, until corrected, as our immediate guide to moral action, for, as Aquinas says, ‘Every human being

\(^{266}\) Ibid. Italics in the original.
\(^{267}\) Ibid. Italics in the original.
\(^{268}\) Ibid., 98. Italics in the original.
\(^{269}\) Ibid. Italics in the original.
\(^{270}\) Ibid. Italics in the original.
\(^{271}\) Ibid., 99.
\(^{272}\) Ibid.
must act according to reason, the reason that he himself has from God, whether natural or infused.”

Clarke next describes how the judgment of conscience works. “The practical judgment of conscience . . . manifests itself as a spontaneous, quasi-intuitive judgment that sizes up the whole concrete situation . . . together with its relation to me and . . . the good in my journey towards my ultimate fulfillment.” Also, this spontaneous, quasi-intuitive “judgment is strictly concrete and existential. Thus, conscience is not a fully-conscious, reasoned out abstract process, but rather “it sees in a kind of intuitive insight how it all fits together” and “then immediately speaks to me in a command.” Here Clarke turns to Thomas, who “speaks of it as a kind of ‘knowledge by connaturality,’ a knowledge . . . by a certain existential affinity and resonance of your whole person—mind, will, heart all working together—with the moral goodness involved.”

Although conscience must be formed, this is not the exclusive domain of intellectual education, as the whole person must be formed in order for conscience to be correctly formed. “Thus a well-developed, sensitive conscience does not at all require that one be an educated person, or possess a highly developed speculative intelligence.” Rather, Clarke identifies four aspects of a well-developed, mature conscience: self-possession, commitment, experience, and personalization. First, a mature person with a well-formed conscience must have “a certain self-possession through self-consciousness and the ability to reflect on one’s actions.”

---

275 Ibid., 100.
276 Ibid., 99. Italics in the original.
277 Ibid., 99-100.
278 Ibid., 100.
279 Ibid. Italics in the original.
must be “a basic commitment of oneself as a person to the moral good” that “makes us want to discern the authentic moral good in the present situation.”

Third, a well-formed conscious must be based on “a certain fund of practical life experience.” On account of this aspect, Clarke points out that “the best way to train young people” is “to help them see the consequences of their possible choices and face up to them.”

Fourth, there must be a “personalization of this voice as conscience” so that it “is genuinely my own judgment, proceeding from insight into the values which I have personally internalized and expressing my own authentic self and/or the voice of a higher authority.”

Turning again to Thomas, Clarke clarifies that his explanation of moral action “posits as a necessary presupposition . . . the innate positive dynamism of the whole person, intellect and will, towards the final good which defines our nature.” It is this dynamism that moves a person to act. “This deep preconscious dynamism of the whole person” is the “source of psychic energy impelling the practical intelligence to spontaneously discern the appropriate or morally good action in the situation . . . and then to carry it out.”

Even if one has developed a mature conscience, the fact remains that “conscience can be uncertain,” and while clarity regarding the right choice of action is ideal, “sometimes we can never reach this clarity despite our sincerest efforts.” Nevertheless, Thomas argues that every human being “is obliged to act according to reason, i.e., the reason which he or she actually possesses,
whether natural or supernaturally infused.”

Clarke sides with Thomas, saying that “it is part of our basic human dignity as persons to take responsibility for our own journey toward God.” So even though “conscience is fallible,” we must nevertheless “follow what our conscience clearly commands us to do with certainty . . . since our own reason is the ultimate immediate norm of all responsible human action.” However, although “we must act according to the light we have,” we must remember that “we also have the moral obligation . . . to make our conscience a well-informed one, and, in this regard, to solicit the help of others.”

Clarke says that “Thomas is uncompromising on the obligation to follow the voice of my own personal conscience, to act according to the light of my reason, the reason that God has given to me personally.” This is a rather important distinction by Thomas, as now “in the analysis of the moral act, the good” is “no longer the objective good in itself, but the good as presented to me by my own personal reason, the reason that I have from God, natural or infused.” The result is not, however, that the objective good falls by the wayside. We still have a moral responsibility to form our conscience in accord with the objective good. “Thomas, however, hastens to restore the balance with the objectivity of morality by adding that the objective moral goodness of an act in itself is still determined by conformity with the objective norm of right reason (recta ratio),” and “one has an ever-present personal obligation of conscience to try to conform one’s conscience as closely as possible to this ideal of objective moral wisdom.”

---

288 Clarke, “Conscience and the Person,” 103.
289 Ibid. Italics in the original.
290 Ibid. Italics in the original.
291 Ibid. Italics in the original. Clarke recognizes that this is in contrast to the other thirteenth century scholastics, such as the “Franciscan masters and most others, even his own master, Saint Albert the Great,” who were teaching that “it was a sin to follow an erroneous conscience.” Ibid.
292 Ibid., 104. Italics in the original.
293 Ibid. Italics in the original.
In the wake of his analysis of conscience, Clarke draws out some distinctive characteristics of personhood, since “conscience is one of the most privileged places . . . where the distinctive characteristics of personhood . . . shine forth most luminously.” On the one hand, “it declares my solidarity with all my fellow human beings,” while on the other hand “it also makes manifest unmistakably my own uniqueness.” There is a two-fold way this uniqueness is manifest: the formation of conscience and the free-response to conscience. Our conscience can be malformed if we develop “habits of negative response to the voice of conscience,” which “tend to blur its vision and weaken its voice so as to reduce it almost to silence.” Here Clarke quotes the old adage, “If you don’t act according as your conscience judges, you will end up judging according as you act.” Our conscience is also formed by “the influence of our own early education,” and “the influence of social pressure.”

However, “far more striking and luminous is the uniqueness that shines forth in my free response to the voice of my own individualized conscience.” It is “I alone, my whole person,” that is “responsible for making this decision—and nobody else.” Taking personal responsibility “lies at the very core of the awareness and acceptance of yourself as a unique person . . . having the dignity and responsibility of self-governing your own life towards its final end.” It is this self-governing that Thomas points to when he “declares that this is why we are images of God in leading a good moral life. The essence of the moral life” consists “in our participation in his

---

294 Ibid.
295 Ibid. Italics in the original.
296 Ibid., 105.
297 Ibid.
298 Ibid. Italics in the original.
299 Ibid. Italics in the original.
300 Ibid.
301 Ibid., 106. Italics in the original.
providence over life.” God exercises his providence over the whole universe, while “we can exercise our own wise providence over our own lives . . . and in this we are images of God.”

Clarke stresses this personal responsibility by turning to Thomas again, who, in “speaking of the obedience of a subject to any human superior,” makes a “ringing affirmation of the independence of conscience of every human person.” Thomas says, “It is not the place of the subject to pass judgment on the command in itself in its own wisdom and goodness, but it is his responsibility to pass judgment on his own fulfilling of the command here and now.” Although this text surprised many nuns, seminarians, and even professors to whom Clarke read it during lectures, he assured them all that “it is the constant traditional teaching of all the great Catholic philosophers and theologians in the Church—at least after Aquinas.”

Clarke then moves this article into Christian philosophy with a short description of how the life of grace elevates conscience. “The operation of conscience” is “transformed when subsumed into the spiritual life of the baptized Christian. It is now illuminated from above by the gifts of the Holy Spirit,” and “it lifts this voice of the inner judge . . . into a whole new dimension of personal relationship with God, our loving Father.” Conscience “now appears as a personal call of God into closer intimacy with him, uniting our will to his in our growth in holiness and . . .

---

302 Ibid. Italics in the original.
303 Ibid. Italics in the original.
304 Ibid.
305 Clarke’s rather loose translation of the first part of De ver., q. 17, a. 5, ad 4 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 22.2.528). “Ad quartum dicendum, quod subditus, non habet iudicare de praeccepto praelati, sed de impletione praecepti, quae ad ipsum spectat. Unusquisque enim tenetur actus suos examinare ad scientiam quam a Deo habet, sive sit naturalis, sive acquisita, sive infusa: omnis enim homo debet secundum rationem agere.”
307 Ibid., 108. Italics in the original.
a more manifest likeness of his own divine wisdom and goodness, something whose intrusion we . . . welcome as the personal loving guidance of the Holy Spirit itself.”

In conclusion, Clarke emphasizes the connection between conscience and what it means to be a person. “Thus deliberate conscious commitment to be willing to follow the call of conscience . . . turns out to be one of the most fundamental and indispensable manifestations of our unconditioned commitment to . . . become the unique authentic image of God that he has destined us to be—which in the last analysis is what it really means to be an authentic person.”

IS SAINT THOMAS TOO SELF-CENTERED?

In 1998, Clarke wrote the article, “Is the Ethical Eudaimonism of Saint Thomas Too Self-Centered?” The article was Clarke’s response to critics who were claiming that the ethics of Thomas are “much too self-centered and individualistic, focusing on my personal fulfillment, the good for me.” His critics claim that Thomas neglects a side of willing and valuing, namely the appreciating, admiring, and responding to goods for their own sake. “This aspect of the moral development and perfection of the human person seems to be ignored or unduly submerged in Thomistic ethics,” they claim, and that Thomas has “too limited a perspective to do justice to the richness of the human person.” Clarke identifies the sources of these criticisms in “the school of Max Scheler, carried on and adapted by Dietrich von Hildebrand,” but the roots come from

---

308 Ibid.
309 Ibid.
311 Clarke, “Ethical Eudaimonism of Saint Thomas,” 89. Italics in the original.
312 Ibid.
Duns Scotus, who distinguished two types of willing: “desiring what is self-perfective (voluntas commodi) and admiring or approving what is good in itself for its own sake (voluntas justitiae).”

Although it is true that “the structure of Saint Thomas’s ethics is found on . . . the teleology of human nature as ordered towards its own final end,” which is the happiness that consists “mainly in the fulfillment of our longing for truth and goodness in all their fullness,” Clarke believes that Thomas can be presented in a way that would mollify his critics.

“First, we must note the difference in context of the two approaches. Saint Thomas sees the human being in its place in a total metaphysical context,” while the von Hildebrand school seems “to be focused only on a phenomenological description of the experience of humans as they relate to values.” In short, the phenomenologists have not been interested in a total integrated metaphysics of the human person, which is a foundation from which Thomas argues.

Second, Clarke does believe that Thomas remains “too narrowly within the Aristotelian perspective,” but Clarke also thinks that “it is quite easy to correct this by actually examining . . . the final fulfillment, the happiness, of the human person.” According to Clarke’s reading of Thomas, “the final fulfillment of human beings” consists in “the total communion of all human persons,” which is “a single great goal shared in by all, where the joy of others is part of each one’s own joy” and “where all will be friends in the most profound and complete sense.” Thus, one must keep in mind that the happiness Thomas speaks of as the final end of the individual human person “would be incomplete without this solidarity with all.”

---

314 Clarke, “Ethical Eudaimonism of Saint Thomas,” 90. Italics in the original.
315 Ibid., 90-91.
316 Ibid., 91. Italics in the original.
317 Ibid.
Third, it is important “to examine what in fact constitutes the perfection or fulfillment of the human faculties of intellect and will.”\textsuperscript{318} The intellect is directed toward “the totality of all being as true,” such that “the natural fulfillment of the intellect itself lies along the line of . . . an absolutely objective ‘God’s eye’ view of all being as it really is.”\textsuperscript{319} “Similarly the natural drive of the will is toward union with the total fullness of being as good.”\textsuperscript{320} Thus, by taking on God’s view we can find the fulfillment of our human faculties of intellect and will. We can see that the human faculties of “intellect and will tend naturally toward an ideal limit where total subjectivity and total objectivity coincide, the ‘coincidence of (apparent) opposites’.”\textsuperscript{321}

Finally, “the richest key notion to pull all this together is the conception . . . of the nature of the human being at its deepest level as being an image of God,” such that our perfection “consists in growing, through our actions, more and more like God.”\textsuperscript{322} That the nature of the human being is to become more and more like God is clearly a paradox, but in the last analysis, this is truly what it means to be a person. According to Clarke, “only a participation metaphysics can do justice to such a paradox,” but we must also “expand our phenomenological description of what the will is.”\textsuperscript{323} Clarke proposes the following phenomenological description of the will: “the spiritual faculty of responding to the good as presented to it by the intelligence.”\textsuperscript{324}

Clarke describes the movement of the will in two steps. “The first movement of the will’s response should be . . . an affirmative, affective response to the truth of being’s goodness as

\textsuperscript{318} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{319} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{320} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{321} Ibid., 92.
\textsuperscript{322} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{323} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{324} Ibid. Italics in the original.
presented to it by the intellect.”

This “objective loving matched to the objective lovableness of real beings themselves,” according to Clarke, “should be the primary foundational movement of the will.”

“Then a second movement of response of the will to the good presented to it by the intellect will be the desire to share this good.”

This second movement manifests itself in two ways. The “desire for union with and ‘possession’ (along a wide analogous spectrum from physical to spiritual) is actually the first to manifest itself chronologically in the life of a person.”

Once the person has matured, the second movement can manifest itself in “the most fulfilling kind of love of the good,” which is “appreciative and unitive.”

Clarke then observes how a person matures from possessive to appreciative in this second movement of the will: through friendship. “The best model to guide us in this growth into mature, wise loving is our experiential knowledge and appreciation of the love of friendship between persons. We come to discover there the richness of loving another person for his or her own sake, of truly caring for and rejoicing in their good, that they may be happy, and ourselves being caught up in the same happiness shared with them.”

Thus, it is by engaging in friendships of increasing quality that we mature as persons, capable of loving the good in an appreciative, rather than possessive sense. “In the last analysis the supreme and most fulfilling goodness in our universe is shared goodness, intrinsic goodness flowing over into mutual sharing, the highest expression of what I think can be said to be the most fundamental rhythm of all being: that of giving-receiving, being flowing over into self-communication, reception, and return.”

---

325 Ibid. Italics in the original.
326 Ibid., 92-93.
327 Ibid., 93. Italics in the original.
328 Ibid. Italics in the original.
329 Ibid.
330 Ibid. Italics in the original.
331 Ibid. Italics in the original.
goodness is “the most profound dynamism in all real being,” and the paradoxes mentioned earlier “come to rest in the integrated harmony of the lived experience of authentic personal love, and the understanding of human persons as in their profoundest nature images of God.”

Here Clarke goes beyond Thomas in his effort “to assimilate all this into a living Thomistic synthesis.” Clarke thinks we must “restructure his [Thomas’s] general metaphysics of the good and the will’s relation to it to make place for the dual aspects of the will’s response to the good, first, that of contemplative appreciation, admiration, delight in the presence of the good for its own sake . . . and secondly, its desire for personal fulfillment by appropriate ways of . . . union with the good.” Clarke thinks that this restructuring of the will’s relation to the good lines up with Thomas’s own definition of the good. For if Thomas’s “definition of the good is that which is perfect in itself . . . and perfective of something, in that precise order, then the appropriate response of the spiritual faculty of will should follow the same order—that is, first, recognize and affectively admire and approve of this inner worth or intrinsic goodness . . . and then secondly, recognize and go out toward the same being for its perfective relation to me.”

WHITEHEAD AND ST. THOMAS

Clarke continued his dialogue with Whitehead in the year 2000 with the article, “God and the Community of Existents: Whitehead and St. Thomas.” The intention of the article was to both “suggest how St. Thomas can stimulate Whiteheadians,” while also putting forward “some

---

332 Ibid., 94.
333 Ibid.
334 Ibid. Italics in the original.
335 Ibid. Italics in the original.
‘creative completions’ of Thomas’s own thought in certain areas.”\textsuperscript{337} Although Clarke’s attempt to stimulate Whiteheadians is not relevant to the project of this dissertation, Clarke’s attempt at a “creative completion” of Thomas merits examination. There are three primary “creative completions” that Clarke suggests in this article.

The first insight of Whitehead that Clarke thinks should be integrated into Thomistic metaphysics is “how profoundly \textit{process} and \textit{becoming} are woven into the very texture of being itself in our world.”\textsuperscript{338} In short, “it is not being \textit{or} becoming, being \textit{against} becoming, but being \textit{in} and \textit{through} becoming, through process,” such that it is now understood as “\textit{being} through guided \textit{becoming}.”\textsuperscript{339} The second area where Whitehead can be of help is in giving “an account of the obvious multiplicity of elements which are being integrated by the central form” of a real being.\textsuperscript{340} This account can be accomplished by “a more precise analysis and formulation of the mode of presence and action of the subordinate elements in a compound unity.”\textsuperscript{341} The third area Clarke proposes for a “creative completion” of Thomistic metaphysics is beginning to see “actuality as through and through togetherness.”\textsuperscript{342} This point has been developed by Clarke throughout his career, such that Clarke now believes that Thomas “turns out to resonate in deep harmony with the Whiteheadian on this point.”\textsuperscript{343}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{337} Ibid., 266.
\item \textsuperscript{338} Ibid., 273. Italics in the original.
\item \textsuperscript{339} Ibid., 273-274. Italics in the original.
\item \textsuperscript{340} Ibid., 274.
\item \textsuperscript{341} Ibid., 275.
\item \textsuperscript{342} Ibid., 276.
\item \textsuperscript{343} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
CONCLUSION

Without a doubt, Clarke’s defense of receptivity as a positive perfection of personal being was the most controversial claim of his relational metaphysics. The debate that ensued between Clarke, Long, Blair, Schindler, and Schmitz from 1993 to 1997 was perhaps the most heated of Clarke’s career, leading even Clarke himself to admit in his reply to Long: “I have been somewhat harsh in my reply to my critic. I am not accustomed to writing in this way.”

A few theses written on this debate have tried to clarify the confusion, and two in particular are worth mentioning. Gabriel Mosher employs the work of David Liberto to strengthen Clarke’s argument for receptivity as a perfection of personal being. Liberto looks at Thomas’s analysis of the love of friendship and the role of similitude as cause to show how receptivity as a personal perfection is an act of love: “the lover receives by the very fact of his or her loving another.” Thus, in the love of friendship, “the highest mode of love” according to Clarke, receptivity is an act.

Bernhard Blankenhorn wrote an impressive thesis analyzing Clarke’s debate on receptivity as a positive perfection. Although Blankenhorn concludes that Clarke’s notion of receptivity as a perfection ultimately contradicts Thomas’s doctrine of pure act, he nevertheless recognizes that

---

344 Clarke, “Reply to Steven Long,” 623.
346 David Liberto, “Person, Being, and Receptivity: W. Norris Clarke’s Retrieval and Completion of Thomas’ Thought,” in Aquinas as Authority: A Collection of Studies Presented at the Second Conference of the Thomas Instituut te Utrecht, December 14-16, 2000, edited by Paul van Geest, Harm Goris, and Carlo Leget, (Peeters, Leuven: Thomas Instituut Utrecht, 2002) 209. I had the chance to speak with Liberto in person regarding his article. Liberto said that Clarke personally told him that his article was a perfect representation of what he meant by receptivity as a positive perfection of personal being.
347 Clarke, Person and Being, 84.
Clarke’s argument for receptivity as a perfection is more nuanced than the position of the other interlocutors on the side of receptivity as a perfection. Rather than arguing in a dialectical mode, Clarke argues in the scholastic method of making distinctions and of negating all creaturely limitations from the notion of receptivity. However, when Clarke makes the move to describe how he understands receptivity as a positive perfection, Blankenhorn points out that Clarke “may not have noticed that he has now identified elements of action on the part of the receiver as perfections. It seems that Clarke is no longer pointing towards the perfection of receptivity but to the perfection of the active disposition and the active response of the receiver.”

I am inclined to give Clarke more credit. Clarke certainly recognizes that he is identifying actions as perfections. Clarke’s main point is that when he negates every creaturely limitation from the notion of receptivity, all that remains are the active aspects. For Clarke, receptivity is not a purely passive notion. Perhaps a more accurate term for Clarke to use would have been “responsivity” rather than “receptivity,” but he remained consistent in his defense of the term “receptivity” as a positive perfection of personal being until the end of his career.

Despite the controversy regarding receptivity, Clarke did find time to dive back into Thomas this late in his career in order to find new support for his system of relational metaphysics. Two texts in particular are worth pointing out, as he had never cited them before this period, yet he goes on to cite them multiple times. The first is Thomas’s mention of “circulatio,” which Clarke uses to support both his system of relational metaphysics and the exitus-reditus

---

349 Ibid., 95. Italics in the original.
350 “Respondeo dicendum, quod in exitu creaturarum a primo principio attenditur quaedam circulatio vel regiratio, eo quod omnia revertuntur sicut in finem in id a quo sicut principio prodierun.” In Sent., I, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2 (Mandonnet ed., 325). Clarke, Person and Being, 101; “Metaphysics as Mediator,” 479; and The One and the Many, 304, 308. Clarke’s typical translation of this text runs as follows: “In the emergence of creatures from their first source is revealed a kind of circulation, in which all things return, as to their end, back to the very place from which they had their origin in the first place.”
interpretation of Thomas’s metaphysics. The second important text is from *De caritate*, where Thomas argues that it is possible to love the whole material universe with the altruistic love of charity. Clarke begins to pair this text with a favorite reference from *De veritate*, and these two texts point to the final phase of Clarke’s career and the pillar that has been woven throughout the entire development of his relational metaphysics: the good as goal that lures every being to act.

With this fifth pillar in place, Clarke concludes that we are made to love not only other persons with the love of charity, but also the whole material universe. Although the conclusion that we are made to love the material universe is unusual, Clarke argues that it is possible on account of the bond the universe has with rational beings. As Clarke says, and as we shall see in the final chapter of this dissertation, “It is hard to conceive of a more radically personalized universe than this!”

---


352 *De ver.* q. 2, a. 2 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 22.1.42-47). This text has been with Clarke since the beginning. He referenced it in his dissertation (“The Principle,” 238), in 1966 (“Self in Eastern and Western Thought,” 109), in 1973 (“Immutability of God,” 191), in 1992 (“To Be Substance-in-Relation,” 116), in 1993 (*Person and Being*, 80), and even as late as 2003 (“Reflections on John Deely’s Four Ages of Understanding,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 43 (2003): 535). In “Immutability of God,” Clarke provided the following English translation: “It has been said that the soul is in a certain sense all in all for its nature is directed toward universal knowledge. In this manner it is possible for the perfection of the entire world to be present in one single being.” The closest original Latin I could find in *De ver.* q. 2, a. 2 corresponding to Clarke’s translation runs as follows: “. . . et ideo in III de anima dicitur, anima esse quodammodo omnia, quia nata est omnia cognoscere. Et secundum hunc modum possibile est ut in una re totius universi perfectio existat.” In “Reflections on John Deely,” Clarke provided the following English translation: “. . . can overcome the limits of its finitude by inscribing the whole order of the universe within itself in the order of knowledge.” This translation by Clarke seems very loose to me, and I have not been able to find a corresponding Latin text in *De ver.* q. 2, a. 2.

353 Clarke, *Person and Being*, 80.
CHAPTER 7
THE PERSONALIZATION OF BEING ITSELF

Introduction

The final pillar of Clarke’s relational metaphysics is the good as goal that lures all being into act. This theme has been operating as the lodestone drawing Clarke’s entire philosophical career towards the ultimate conclusion of his relational metaphysics: the personalization of being itself. Clarke gathered up the threads of this theme that appeared throughout his career in The One and the Many,¹ which was the polished result of teaching philosophy, and metaphysics in particular, for forty five years.

I personally spoke with several of his students during my dissertation research and it was not uncommon to hear Clarke described as a “mystical metaphysician.” His students would go to class expecting a mystical experience with a guaranteed glimpse of God before the bell rang. Whatever may be said about the details of Clarke’s relational metaphysics, the fact remains that his resulting system was stunningly beautiful. Clarke would proudly recall how twice during his fifteen years as a visiting professor he had students tell him that they had given up on planned suicide projects after reading the course notes that eventually became chapter fourteen of The One and the Many. Clarke’s system of relational metaphysics is beautiful enough not only to change lives, but to save them.

Thus, I will begin with an analysis of The One and the Many: Clarke’s answer to what it means to be real and his foundation for the personalization of being itself. After The One and the

Many, Clarke’s subsequent publications brought his philosophical journey full-circle, as he returns to the topics of liberty and freedom and relates them to his concept of person.

Clarke’s 2004 article, “The Integration of Person and Being in 20th Century Thomism,” compares his philosophical journey with that of Kenneth Schmitz, and how they have both moved toward a remarkably similar synthesis of person and being, personalism and metaphysics, in the last quarter of their respective careers, concluding that the supreme perfection of being is persons-in-communion. In 2007 Clarke revised his first book, *The Philosophical Approach to God*, and made some significant revisions to the third part on his understanding of God’s immutability that are worth examining. “The Immediate Creation of the Human Soul by God and Some Contemporary Challenges” emphasizes the origin of personal dignity and how the only description that does adequate justice to this dignity is Thomas’s claim that human persons are embodied spirits. Two of Clarke’s late articles focused on the creative imagination, exploring how it is a unique expression of the human person as an embodied spirit acting in freedom and a distinctive aspect of the image of God in human persons.

---


Metaphysics in Twenty-First-Century Thomism\textsuperscript{5} is a final synopsis of how Clarke arrived at the personalization of being itself such that the fullness of being means “persons-in-communion.”\textsuperscript{6}

\textbf{THE ONE AND THE MANY}

\textit{The One and the Many} is Clarke’s “advanced textbook of systematic metaphysics in the Thomistic tradition.”\textsuperscript{7} Clarke is very upfront about the fact that he is not simply repeating the thought of Thomas, but is rather presenting a “creative retrieval” or “creative completion” of Thomas’s thought for which Clarke takes “full responsibility.”\textsuperscript{8} Thus, Clarke prefers to refer to his work as a “Thomistically inspired metaphysics.”\textsuperscript{9} It is representative of his mature and developed thought, and for this reason merits a thorough examination.

\textit{The One and the Many} is divided into nineteen chapters, with each chapter acting as a guide to help the reader take the next step in actually \textit{doing} metaphysics. According to Clarke, “one can

--


\textsuperscript{7} Clarke, \textit{One and the Many}, 1.

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 3.

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., 1.
learn metaphysical thinking only by first doing it under the guidance of some master, somewhat like the apprentices in any skilled trade or work.”10 As the works of Thomas served as the master for the young apprentice Clarke, so Clarke intends in this book to serve as the guiding master that takes the reader as apprentice in Clarke’s Thomistically-inspired metaphysical work.

*The Intrinsic Principles of Finite Beings*

Clarke begins by defining philosophy as “the critically reflective, systematically articulated attempt to illumine our human experience in depth and set it in a vision of the whole.”11 Metaphysics in particular is “that part which focuses its inquiry explicitly on the vision of the whole,” which is most commonly expressed as “the study of being qua being,” or “the study of all beings precisely insofar as they are real.”12 Metaphysics is also “a purely intellectual or speculative quest for wisdom about the meaning of the universe.”13 Clarke introduces his “relational realism,” which is based on seeing action as the self-revelation of being,14 before introducing the ultimate root of all metaphysical inquiry: “the radical dynamism of the human mind toward the fullness of being as true.”15 Clarke does not argue for this root, but rather claims that “in order to live our human lives effectively at all we are called to make a kind of commitment in hope, an act of natural faith, so to speak, in the radical intelligibility in principle of all being.”16 With this root accepted, Clarke draws his first metaphysical conclusion: “The first great conclusion of our metaphysical

---

10 Ibid., 4. Italics in the original.
11 Ibid., 5.
12 Ibid., 5-6. Italics in the original.
13 Ibid., 7. Italics in the original.
14 Action as the self-revelation of being was the topic of Chapter 4 of this dissertation, and serves as the third pillar of Clarke’s relational metaphysics.
15 Ibid., 14. The unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will was the topic of Chapter 3 of this dissertation, and serves as the foundation of Clarke’s relational metaphysics.
16 Ibid., 17. Italics in the original.
inquiry: mind and being are correlative to each other.” 17 Building on this conclusion, Clarke then introduces two great guiding principles of metaphysical inquiry: the principle of non-contradiction and the principle of sufficient reason.

The next major step is the discovery of being. Clarke begins by making the important distinction between “a being,” i.e. with the indefinite article, which for him signifies *that which is* (or *ens* in Latin), and “being,” i.e. without any article, which signifies existence (or *esse* in Latin), “precisely that in a thing which makes it to be a being.” 18 At other times, he uses the term “being” without any article, as a participial noun to signify “all that is”. 19 Awareness of these distinctions in his terminology is important because Clarke admits that “the interpretation of St. Thomas presented here is called ‘existential Thomism’,” and what makes a Thomistic metaphysician “existential” is recovering a “fresh explicit awareness of being itself, the being of beings.” 20

Clarke then points out his two paths for discovering this explicit awareness of being itself: exploring downward to the deepest level in any being and expanding outward toward all there is to know. These paths “lead towards an existential ‘awakening’ to experience what actual existence means in the concrete for the whole person—mind, heart, imagination, feeling, all together.” 21 When speaking of being, one of the most fundamental distinctions that must be made is between real being, “that which is present by its own intrinsic act of existence,” and mental being, that which is present only within an idea, such that its being “is its to-be-thought-about.” 22 The criterion for distinguishing between real and mental being, according to Clarke, is action, and his entire

---

17 Ibid. Italics in the original.
18 Ibid., 25.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., 26. Italics in the original.
21 Ibid., 27-28.
22 Ibid., 30.
system of relational metaphysics is built around it.\textsuperscript{23} Action is the link that connects our minds to real beings. This is a relational realism that gives us knowledge of “how the real world is related to us and we to it,” and “these relations are quite real, what really is the case, verifying the requirement for truth = the conformity of mind to reality.”\textsuperscript{24} Clarke begins to explore this new discovery of being by taking the person as the best model for understanding being, and interpersonal dialogue as the most fruitful starting point.

Clarke then examines two types of metaphysical “tools,” as he calls them, which he will use during his exploration of being: transcendental tools and analogous tools. Transcendental tools, when applied to being, imply all-inclusiveness with regard to two aspects: comprehension and extension. Thus, transcendental tools can apply to every existing thing. Also, transcendental concepts of being are unique in that they are not formed by abstraction, but rather by a “judgment of separation, since it requires a series of judgments of existence as its basis.”\textsuperscript{25} This “judgment of separation,” or separatio, is a negative judgment, as opposed to the positive act of abstraction. Also, because an act of judgment is required, the idea contains a verb. The idea of being is thus unique because it is “the only concept that explicitly contains the verb is as part of its meaning.”\textsuperscript{26}

The second type of metaphysical tools are analogous tools, which follow from all-inclusiveness with regard to extension. Clarke describes analogy as “a flexible or ‘stretch’ concept,” since “all the basic concepts we use in metaphysics have to be thus flexible to extend across the whole spectrum of being.”\textsuperscript{27} Clarke distinguishes different types of analogy, but “the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} “It seems to me, following St. Thomas—and the whole metaphysical system laid out in this book is built around it—that the only adequate criterion for discerning the presence of real being . . . is that of action.” Ibid., 31. Italics in the original.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 35. Italics in the original.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 43. Italics in the original.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 44. Italics in the original.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
analogy of proper proportionality is the key structure behind any proper and literally true analogous predication of any one attribute to many different subjects possessing diverse essences.”28 Also, according to Clarke’s relational realism founded on action, “all analogous concepts are terms expressing activity of some kind.”29

With “self-communicating, self-expressive action” settled on as “the first transcendental property of real being as such” in his relational metaphysics, Clarke examines the next transcendental property of being: unity.30 “Every being, to be a being, must be internally one.”31 Although there has been much disagreement between metaphysicians over the last several centuries about which properties qualify as a transcendental, unity as a transcendental property is not up for debate.32 First, Clarke defines unity as that which is undivided in itself and divided from every other.33 Clarke shows that unity is a transcendental property of being by “showing that the opposite is simply unintelligible.”34 In short, “to be real is to be one.”35

28 Ibid., 57. Italics in the original. In the 1950’s there were many scholars who began moving away from proper proportionality, e.g. George Klubertanz, St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy, (Chicago, IL: Loyola University Chicago Press, 1960), Ralph McInerny, Logic of Analogy: An Interpretation of St. Thomas, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961), and Bernard Montagnes, La doctrine de l’analogie de Votre d’apres saint Thomas d’Aquin, (Louvain-Paris: Nauwelaerts, 1963). However, in recent years there has been a return to an emphasis on proper proportionality, e.g. Steven A. Long, Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), and Joshua P. Hochschild, The Semantics of Analogy: Rereading Cajetan’s De Nominum Analogia, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010). Mortensen makes the case that Thomas uses both types of analogy at different points throughout his work, cf. John R. Mortensen, Understanding St. Thomas on Analogy, (Roma: Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2006).

29 Clarke, One and the Many, 57. Italics in the original.
30 Ibid., 60. Italics in the original.
31 Ibid. Italics in the original.
32 “So absolutely central is this attribute [i.e. unity] that it is agreed upon by metaphysicians of every tradition.” Ibid.
33 “Ontological unity as a property of being signifies the inner cohesion of something by which it constitutes an undivided whole. As St. Thomas defines it tersely: one = that which is undivided in itself and divided from every other.” Ibid., 61. Italics in the original. Clarke does not give a reference to Thomas, but he is likely thinking of the following text where Thomas defines “individual.” “Individuum autem est quod est in se indistinctum, ab aliis vero distinctum.” ST, I, q. 29, a. 5, c. (Leon. Ed., Vol. 4.333).
34 Clarke, One and the Many, 61.
As a transcendental concept, unity must be an analogous term, and as an analogous term, it must express activity of some kind according to Clarke’s relational metaphysics. Clarke works hard to explain how unity is an activity, but concludes that unity must be understood as “a positive energy by which each being actively coheres within itself . . . in a dynamic, self-unifying act.”

Clarke next makes the distinction between the intrinsic unity found in living things and the extrinsic unity found between multiple things. When this distinction is denied we are led to a materialist reductionism where there is no difference between living things and building blocks. Clarke concludes this section with a brief look at the unity of systems and societies. “One thing seems to be sure in our world: to be is to be a unity in a community, in a system, or perhaps better, in a system of systems.”

Clarke next introduces the problem of the One and the Many, which is “the ultimate paradox of being and the deepest and most fundamental problem of all metaphysics.” After a brief overview of several other attempts to solve the problem, Clarke eventually appeals to existential Thomism, which offers “one of the most profound and daring . . . attempts to solve the problem.” In order to understand this solution, one must “pass from the mere fact of existence to the inner act of existence grounding it—a crucial passage in understanding which leads us into the Thomistic vision of what it means to be, to be an actual existent.” As an example of making this crucial passage, we can recall Clarke’s fondness for climbing and high places, as well as their importance in the life of the metaphysician. “Unless we cross over this conceptual threshold of

---

36 Ibid., 63.
37 Ibid., 70. See “System: A New Category of Being?” in chapter 2 of this dissertation.
38 Ibid., 72.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 79. Italics in the original.
41 E.g., Clarke reminiscing about climbing the Alps: “The resulting vista of snowcapped peaks, valleys, rivers, towns, all woven into a single vast tapestry, blew my mind, lifting me into a kind of altered state of consciousness in
understanding in depth what it means to be (as a verb), the whole Thomistic doctrine . . . will remain incomprehensible.” However, once this conceptual threshold has been crossed, we can recognize how the principle of similarity and the principle of dissimilarity lead to a complementary polarity of two correlative metaphysical co-principles.

The principle of similarity leads us to discover the act of existence, insofar as everything is similar in that it exists, while the principle of dissimilarity leads to discover a limiting essence, insofar as nearly everything is different and limited in some way. In Clarke’s terms, these two metaphysical co-principles, the act of existence and the limiting essence, are “a real metaphysical composition.” The act of existence is “a maximum, an all-encompassing plenitude,” while the limiting essence is “a kind of receptive capacity that receives and ‘holds’ existence to this level.” However, “the participation structure of all existents . . . is the key to St. Thomas’s powerfully unified vision of reality.” With the support of Clarke’s understanding of participation, the real metaphysical composition between the act of existence and the limiting essence solve the problem, and “the One and the Many are thus reconciled as constituting together the world of reality.”

Clarke next turns his attention to the distinction between form and matter, which provides the metaphysical solution to the problem of how it is possible for many individual beings to belong to the same species. Whereas previously the principles of similarity and dissimilarity led to the act of existence and a limiting essence at the universal level of all real beings, those same principles

which I got a glimpse into the essence of majesty, sublimity, purity, and beauty.” Clarke, “Doing One’s Autobiography,” 10.

32 Ibid., 80. Italics in the original.
33 Ibid., 81. Italics in the original.
34 Ibid., 83-84. Italics in the original. According to Clarke, this is the revolutionary turn by Thomas. Whereas other metaphysicians had taken existence as a minimum, upon which other perfections were added, Thomas takes existence as the maximum, which is limited by essence.
35 Ibid., 85. See chapter 1 of this dissertation.
36 Ibid., 84. Italics in the original.
now lead to form and matter at the particular, individual level of all real beings. The principle of similarity leads to the principle of the essential form, which “is that in a being which makes it to be this kind of being and not some other.”\textsuperscript{47} The principle of dissimilarity, or distinction, leads to the principle of matter, “which is able to distinguish two natures without introducing formal qualitative differentiation between them.”\textsuperscript{48} These two principles are co-principles, only exist together, and they are fundamental not only to the philosophical science of metaphysics, but to the actual structure of our entire material cosmos. Thankfully, “the form/matter structure of our material cosmos matches the structure of our human knowing, which operates by abstracting intelligible form from particularized matter.”\textsuperscript{49} Clarke concludes, “\textit{In sum}, the form/matter distinction is a fundamental structure running all through the material cosmos in which we live, both in the \textit{order of being} and \textit{the order of knowing}, and neither can make full sense without it.”\textsuperscript{50}

The next pair of co-principles that Clarke introduces is act and potency. Whereas the previous two pairs of co-principles, i.e. existence/essence and form/matter, were “the two great ‘static’ structures of the universe of real beings,” the co-principles of act and potency are the first principles in “the second main division of metaphysics: \textit{the metaphysics of change}.”\textsuperscript{51} Clarke begins by noting how the history of philosophy has been fraught with debates between whether perfection consisted in immutability and permanence or in progress and process. In an attempt to rise above this debate, Clarke concludes “that every change must be a synthesis of permanence

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 96.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 107. This seems contrary to Clarke’s earlier claim that all knowledge is of action, rather than of abstracted forms. E.g., “All knowledge of real being is an interpretation of action.” Clarke, “Metaphysics of St. Thomas Today,” 10. See also “The Relevancy of Thomas’s Metaphysics in 1974” in chapter 3 of this dissertation.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 109.
and process.”\textsuperscript{52} In getting to this conclusion, Clarke begins by defining change as “the transition from one real mode of being to another.”\textsuperscript{53} He then distinguishes between two types of change: non-essential and essential. Non-essential, or accidental, change is “a transition from one real mode of being to another remaining within the same identical being.”\textsuperscript{54} Essential, or substantial, change is “a transition from one real mode of being to another such that the being at the end of the change is no longer the same being but a different one.”\textsuperscript{55} Regardless of the type of change, there is a general metaphysical law governing all change, namely that “every being undergoing real change must have within it a real metaphysical composition of two principles, related to each other as act and potency.”\textsuperscript{56} Potency can easily be misunderstood because it has a dual purpose. “The principle of potentiality is at once an \textit{openness} to the whole range of changes this being can undergo, and a \textit{closedness} to anything beyond this range.”\textsuperscript{57}

Clarke now goes into detail regarding non-essential, accidental change. Taking the self as the prime example, Clarke asks himself, “In many ways I am and am not the same person as I was ten years ago. How can this be?”\textsuperscript{58} After discussing the explanations of a few other philosophers, Clarke insists that “there must be some principle of self-identity through change in each human person.”\textsuperscript{59} We remember past events; we take responsibility for our moral actions; we try to be faithful to our promises; and we achieve goals. It is important to remember that “\textit{self-identical} is not the same concept as \textit{unchanging}.”\textsuperscript{60} Rather, keeping in mind Thomas’s understanding of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 111.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 114.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 115.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 118. Italics in the original.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 124. Italics in the original.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 126.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 128. Italics in the original.
\end{itemize}
substance as “a highly dynamic notion,” Clarke defines self-identity as “the active power of self-maintenance in exchange with others.”

With these distinctions and definitions in mind, Clarke concludes that the first role of substance is to be “the necessary metaphysical underpinning of every human life as a story with a point to it. No perduring substantial self = no story; no abiding center of natural potentialities = no growth toward fulfillment, no meaningful story!” Substance also has another role as “the unifying center of the many different attributes and properties possessed by one being at any one time, simultaneously.” With those clarifications having been made, Clarke now defines substance and accident. “Substance = that which is apt to exist in itself and not in another. Accident = that which is apt to exist not in itself but only in another.” Thus, “wherever there is being, there must be substance at its core.”

Clarke now turns his attention to essential, substantial change. Essential change is “a transition from one essential mode of real being to another, so that at the end of the change there is another real being entirely from what was present at the beginning.” Distinguishing between accidental and substantial change is based upon the general principle that “if the active properties of a being change radically after a change, then this is a sign of a change in its nature.” Examples would be the death of a living organism, the assimilation of food, or the breakdown of molecules

---

62 Ibid., 131. Italics in the original.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., 131. Italics in the original.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid., 139-140.
67 Ibid., 140.
into atomic components. According to Clarke, “there is no other criterion for the distinction of natures” other than how the “essences of beings are manifested by their actions.”

Clarke next tries to identify “what kind of intrinsic metaphysical composition is required in a being that undergoes such a profound change as to become a different being entirely.” Clarke identifies primary matter as the requisite metaphysical principle, which he describes as “quantitative extension in space.” This metaphysical doctrine of primary matter “is the most difficult and mysterious part of Aquinas’s metaphysical doctrine,” yet it is required to serve two functions: it must “provide the basic property of quantitative extension in space of all material things” and “be the principle of continuity when the lowest elements or particles change into each other.” Clarke concludes by taking a look at the fruit of the form/matter composition, which makes possible “the multiplication through matter of the same essential form in many different members of the same species,” and “the involvement of this entire world in a vast process of never-ending change from one essential form to another.”

The Metaphysical Structures of Finite Being

After Clarke has clarified the distinction between the four intrinsic metaphysical structures of finite beings, namely the co-principles of essence/existence, matter/form, substance/accident, and act/potency, he now turns his attention to drawing them together into a whole again. “Unity is the beginning and end of all analysis: we begin with a globally grasped but not yet analyzed and

---

68 Ibid.
69 Ibid., 141.
70 Ibid., 143. Italics in the original.
71 Ibid., 145-147.
72 Ibid., 148.
articulated whole,” and “we end with a clearly analyzed and articulated whole, an understood whole.” The co-principles of essence/existence and matter/form are classified by Clarke as static structures of being, and both are understood through the participation doctrine. “The *essence/existence composition* explains participation on the vertical or up and down scale of being, making possible a hierarchy of beings,” while “the *form/matter composition* allows multiple participations of the same form but now on the horizontal level of the same level of qualitative perfection.” The co-principle of substance/accident is classified by Clarke as a dynamic structure of being as changing, and when understood in light of the co-principle of form/matter, we are led to the two types of change: substantial and accidental.

The co-principle of act/potency, however, is a lens through which all three previous co-principles can be more clearly seen and understood. “This synthesis of all the metaphysical compositions into the one overarching structure of act-potency . . . is one of the characteristic distinguishing notes of the Thomistic metaphysical system.” Clarke then gives a brief synopsis of the historical development of the act-potency co-principle, and why limitation was given the priority over existence, before “*Thomas* bit the bullet by turning the priority upside down. The one ultimate utterly simple fullness of perfection must be the *Pure Act of Existence* itself, Subsistent Existence itself (*Ipsum Esse Subsistens*).” Thus, Thomas “expanded the original Aristotelian meaning of act-potency” and “this new expanded interpretation . . . fits perfectly all the three

---

73 Ibid., 151. Italics in the original.
74 “. . . static only in the sense that they describe permanent structures of being, structures of belonging to the two great communities of reality as long as they exist: the all-embracing community of all real existents, and the smaller, tighter communities of members of the same species or kind of being. But all the beings thus described are highly dynamic in themselves . . .” Ibid., 109.
75 Ibid., 152. Italics in the original.
76 Ibid., 155.
77 Ibid., 156. Italics in the original.
Thomistic metaphysical compositions: essence-existence, matter-form in both its roles, and substance-accident; it now becomes a general synthetic formula for expressing in analogous applications the entire structure of Thomistic participation metaphysics.”

The next major topic that Clarke addresses is that of time. This is a necessary topic since we are taking ourselves as the starting point of metaphysics; “time is an ingredient of all memory,” and “we are beings-in-time.” However, Clarke limits himself to “the metaphysical problem of the relation of time to being: what mode of being is time?” The three possible options are real, mental, or a combination of both. Some philosophers have made time an objective being on its own, like Newton, whereas others have argued that time is simply another name for change. Clarke argues that “something more is needed: the unifying intervention of consciousness. Time is a synthesis of real and mental being, founded in reality, existing formally in the mind.” Clarke arrives at this conclusion by examining the necessary conditions of time. First of all, time implies real change, but that is not enough to account fully for time. Real change is merely potential time, but actual time is when that real change is unified by some consciousness. This unification is typically done by measurement, which takes the form of comparing the real change, or potential time, of two different objects. These considerations lead to Clarke’s full definition of time: “real succession unified by some consciousness so that its phases can be recognized as before and after in reality, measured by comparison with some other convenient, publicly agreed-upon motion taken as a standard of reference.”

78 Ibid., 157.
79 Ibid., 161. Italics in the original.
80 Ibid. Italics in the original.
81 Ibid., 162. Italics in the original.
82 Ibid., 167.
The Extrinsic Causes of Being

After addressing the intrinsic metaphysical structure of finite beings, Clarke turns his attention to the extrinsic principles of finite being. This second major section of The One and the Many presents the argument for Clarke’s answer to the ultimate question, “Why is there anything at all, and not simply nothing?” Clarke begins by applying the principle of sufficient reason, the principle with which he began his book, in order to understand “the very existence of this world of our experience.” Since we are now searching for the extrinsic causes of the existence of beings, “the more general Principle of Sufficient Reason turns into the narrower Principle of Efficient Causality: Every being that does not possess the sufficient reason for its own existence in itself must have an efficient cause.” Clarke admits that “Thomas himself never explicitly appeals to this general principle of causality, or even the principle of sufficient reason,” as Clarke himself has done. However, part of Clarke’s goal in his creative retrieval of Thomas is to make explicit the underlying principles of Thomas’s metaphysics.

To identify these underlying principles, Clarke’s interpretation of Thomas “looks backward, i.e., given this effect, it needs such and such a cause to explain it.” This method of interpretation leads Clarke to think “that this general Principle of Sufficient Reason is a quite legitimate development of Thomism, with the advantage of summing up in one basic formula the principle of the intelligibility of being that is implied in all of Thomas’s specialized formulas of

---

83 Ibid., 179.
84 Ibid. Italics in the original.
85 Ibid., 179. Italics in the original.
86 Ibid., 180. Italics in the original. Clarke says that Thomas always has a particular application of the principle, rather than merely stating the principle in general. Clarke gives the following examples: “Every being that begins to exist needs a cause”; “Every finite, composed being needs a cause”; “Every changing being needs a cause.”
87 Ibid., 181. Italics in the original.
the Principle of Causality.”

Clarke gives five reasons for why beings need efficient causes: to begin to exist, to undergo real intrinsic change, to be composed, to be finite, and to belong to a system. In conclusion, Clarke examines the nature of efficient causality. He defines a cause in general as “that which contributes positively in any way to the being of another, which is called its effect,” while an efficient cause in particular is “that which contributes positively to the being of another by its action.”

The next extrinsic cause of being and becoming that Clarke examines is final cause: the cause that explains why an efficient cause produces “this effect rather than some other which it could also produce.” The best example is a particular objective of a human person, who determines activity “by choosing some goal or end-in-view and then acting to achieve this goal.”

There are two important metaphysical implications that final causality brings along with it that Clarke addresses. First, “every efficient cause needs a final cause to determine its action to produce this effect rather than that.” Clarke describes final causality as “focused efficient causality” because the final cause resides in the efficient cause “as focused toward its future effect-to-be-produced.” A final cause is also “the influence of the end or goal of the action . . . on the causal action itself.” In a certain sense, efficient causality and final causality are co-principles, since “every efficient cause, in order to be an efficient cause in action at all, must act for an end.” Thus, it is impossible to have an efficient cause that is not shot through with final causality.

---

88 Ibid.
89 Ibid., 181-186.
90 Ibid., 187. Italics in the original.
91 Ibid., 199.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid., 200.
94 Ibid., 201.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
distinction between the two arises because they answer different questions. Efficient cause answers *by which*. Final cause answers *why*. The most controversial part of final causality, however, is the second important metaphysical implication that it brings along with it: final causality requires intelligence as ultimate adequate cause.\(^97\)

With efficient and final cause examined, Clarke now turns his attention to the final problem of metaphysics: “tracing out the lines of dependency thus discovered all the way to their ultimate source.”\(^98\) Clarke begins with the question: “What does the world of my experience demand as its adequate sufficient reason, to render it adequately intelligible?”\(^99\) He then presents two paths, rather than proofs, and both paths present “fundamental options between two or more ultimate explanations of the meaningfulness of the universe,” between which “one must choose.”\(^100\) The first path is through the cosmic path of efficient causality, for which he presents four arguments which take as their starting point “only the basic underlying structure of the material universe.”\(^101\) The first argument uses the notion of *conditioned existent,*\(^102\) the second begins with any finite being, the third moves from many existents to one Source, and the fourth is a teleological argument.\(^103\) The second path is through the inner path of final causality, for which Clarke presents two arguments which take as their starting point “the interior dynamism of the human person.”\(^104\) The first argument uses the dynamism of the intellect and will, while the second argument begins

---

\(^97\) This is controversial on account of the early modern rationalist philosophers, such as Descartes, who denied final cause. Such rationalist philosophy has continued to filter down to our present day.

\(^98\) Ibid., 212.

\(^99\) Ibid., 213.

\(^100\) Ibid., 214-215. Italics in the original.

\(^101\) Ibid., 224.

\(^102\) Ibid., 216. Italics in the original.

\(^103\) Of the four, Clarke presents the third as “the simplest, briefest, most elegant, and some think, most profound and metaphysically beautiful of all arguments from causality.” Ibid., 222.

\(^104\) Ibid., 226.
with the moral imperative of conscience. Both inner paths ultimately come down to freedom and a choice: “thus either God exists, or I am absurd.”

After treating both the inner and outer paths, Clarke emphasizes that “the two paths complement each other beautifully. The God of the self must also be the God of the cosmos.” Clarke concludes this section by enumerating the attributes of God that are immediately deducible from the preceding two paths: eternal, simple, immaterial, and immutable. Clarke then presents “the classic Triple Way pioneered by Pseudo-Dionysius and refined systematically by St. Thomas and other medievals” for how we can affirm positive attributes of God, such as existence, activity, unity, goodness, power, intelligence, will, love, etc. With all these attributes in mind, we see that “the arguments we have presented lead necessarily to the conclusion of a God who is intelligent (wise) and loving, with a totally gratuitous, benevolent love for us, who wishes to share his own goodness and happiness with us as much as possible. But this is the very definition of a person, as a center of intelligent, free, responsible, loving action.”

Clarke next addresses the metaphysical problem of whether evolution violates the principle of sufficient reason. Clarke divides his answer into three parts: pre-biological, sub-human living species, and human beings. Regarding pre-biological evolution, Clarke says that “all that is strictly

---

105 Ibid., 227. Italics in the original.
106 Ibid., 228. Italics in the original.
108 Clarke, One and the Many, 239. Italics in the original. The arguments lead necessarily to the attributes of God, not His existence. Knowledge of God’s existence, as Clarke previously presented, is the result of walking down one of the two paths and freely choosing either God’s existence or personal absurdity.
109 “Granted from science the fact that in the course of evolution more complex and higher beings have in fact emerged from simpler and lower beings, how can this be, how is it metaphysically intelligible, without violating the causal axiom: ‘No effect can be greater than its cause,’ and hence the principle of sufficient reason?” Ibid., 247. Italics in the original.
needed here for purposes of sufficient reason is the infusion of a range of active potentiality within the original simple elements present in the original cosmic soup.”

Regarding the evolution of sub-human living species, Clarke proposes two metaphysical scenarios: either “adequate causality is already present in the cosmic system as a whole,” or the “creation of the material world by God is an ongoing process.” Regarding the evolution of human beings, Clarke focuses in a particular way on the creation of the immaterial human soul. Since the soul has no material parts, it must be created out of nothing, and this type of act “is in the power of God alone.” Clarke insists that “nothing less than the creative initiative of a transcendent cause can render adequate sufficient reason for the emergence at the end of the cosmic story of this amazing microcosm, the human person, that integrates within itself all the levels of creation from the lowest material to union with the highest spiritual, the Author of the whole story himself.”

Clarke next takes a step back and examines being as good. To arrive at a definition of the “good,” he first examines its nature. Most immediately, “the good appears as the objective correlate in being to our subjective inner dynamism of desiring, loving, valuing, admiring, both in the sensitive and the spiritual orders,” and thus it follows that “the good is that which is in some way lovable.” Also, “Thomas is one of those principally responsible for introducing the more relational and personalist aspect of the good as intrinsic to its meaning,” since to call something

---

110 Ibid., 252.
111 Ibid., 254. Italics in the original.
112 Ibid., 256. Italics in the original.
113 Ibid., 257.
114 Ibid., 258.
115 Being as good “could, strictly speaking, be discovered before establishing the existence of God,” as Clarke points out, if we had followed out the trail of the unrestricted dynamism of the will towards the good rather than of the intellect towards the true. Ibid., 261
116 Ibid., 262. Italics in the original.
good “adds on the connotation—at least implicit—of relation to some valuer.”\textsuperscript{117} Finally, “lest we fall into a radical subjectivism and relativism of the good,” it is important to remember that the good is a “\textit{synthesis of objective and subjective poles}.”\textsuperscript{118} Now we have arrived at a definition of the good: “that which is perfect in itself and perfective of another.”\textsuperscript{119}

After examining the good, Clarke turns his attention to its absence: evil. “The \textit{presence of evil} in the world around us is clearly an undeniable and important part of our human experience,” and thus it demands a metaphysical investigation into its status in being.\textsuperscript{120} After mentioning five other opinions regarding the being of evil, Clarke presents the solution “first worked out by \textit{St. Augustine}, after freeing himself from the Manichaeans, refined by \textit{St. Thomas}, and held by most traditional Christian thinkers since.”\textsuperscript{121} The first step is realizing that “evil is not a positive being in itself but is rooted in some form of negation, non-being.”\textsuperscript{122} Yet evil cannot be pure non-being, for then it would not exist. Therefore, “evil is the privation of a due good.”\textsuperscript{123} Although this understanding of evil is “the only really intelligible one,” nevertheless “two principal cases resist reduction to evil as a privation only, not a positive being or action: these are pain . . . and acts of hatred.”\textsuperscript{124} Regarding pain, Clarke says that it is “more accurately analyzed as a positive-negative mix than an evil, since it is something that should be here, is better to be there than not, in a healthy material organism.”\textsuperscript{125} Regarding hatred, Clarke says that the key to seeing it as a privation lies

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid. Italics in the original.  
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 264.  
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 275. Italics in the original.  
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 278. Italics in the original.  
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 279.  
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 280.  
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 281.
“in seeing that the action is rotten at its core because of the privation of a properly human goal and intention within a positive act.”\textsuperscript{126}

Next Clarke identifies two types of evil, physical and moral, before going on to investigate the cause. In short, “moral evil always consists in saying ‘No’ to some good that should be allowed or helped to be, instead of saying ‘Yes’ as we should have.”\textsuperscript{127} Thus, in a sense, all morally evil acts are sins of omission. Clarke concludes by addressing the objection that an omnipotent, all-good God would not allow evil. Regarding physical evil, Clarke hypothesizes that God allows it because “to intervene constantly to block it would be to radically change, to annul, the basic nature of the world as a theater for human development.”\textsuperscript{128} Regarding moral evil, Clarke simply states that since moral evil “is rooted in the disordered willing of a free created person, God is not the cause of moral evil.”\textsuperscript{129} Nevertheless, “one of the highest perfections God has decided to give to humans and other created intelligent beings is the gift of freedom,” which is “the necessary root of our ability to love freely other persons and God.”\textsuperscript{130} In conclusion, Clarke says that “it is not up to the theist to provide the exact reason why God permits a particular moral evil, but only to show that no cogent objection can be made forbidding him to act thus, and that there are positive reasons for the wisdom of his plan.”\textsuperscript{131}

Clarke addresses the transcendental properties of being in the penultimate chapter, since in light of everything previously discussed, “we can now pull them all together, and see how . . . they are complementary to each other, and taken together reveal the full richness of being, like so many

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 282.  
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 283.  
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 286.  
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 287.  
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 288.
facets of the same diamond, turned different ways.”  

Transcendental properties “can be predicated of every single real being,” and are commonly listed as one, true, and good. Clarke decides to add two additional ones: beauty and active.

Being as *one* should be understood as “the very dynamic inner act of *cohering,*” so that “to be is to cohere and act as a unit.” Being as *true* should be understood as “the *ontological truth* that is in things themselves as known or knowable in relation to all spiritual intelligences.” Truth is conformity between the mind and being, but it can be rooted either in the mind, which is epistemological truth, or in being, which is ontological truth, i.e., the transcendental property of being. Being as *good* is “being as intrinsically related by its very nature as real being to some appetite that is by nature reciprocally related to all being.” Clarke also shows how being as *good* cascades down from God, whose “loveableness” causes the loveable *good* in being to which our will responds. However, even if we do not love all being, all being still is good because “all beings are actually loved by the divine will, but only potentially so by our wills.” Clarke introduces a new transcendental, *active,* as part of his “creative retrieval” of Thomas, since “each and every thing abounds in the power of acting just insofar as it exists in act.” Clarke thinks “this is equivalent, practically word for word, to the proposition, ‘Every being is active’.” Thus

---

132 Ibid., 290.
133 Ibid. Italics in the original.
134 Ibid., 293. Italics in the original.
135 Ibid., 294. Italics in the original.
136 Ibid., 297.
137 “The loving power of our will is a response to the lovableness of beings themselves; God’s love is the *cause* of their lovableness.” Ibid., 297. Italics in the original.
138 Ibid., 298.
139 “... unumquodque enim tantum abundat in virtute agendi quantum est in actu.” *De pot.*, q. 1, a. 2 (Marietti ed., Vol. 2.10-12). Clarke later references *De pot.*, q. 1, a. 2 in three other places: *One and the Many,* 294; “God and the Community,” 276; “Reflections on Caputo’s,” 59.
140 Clarke, *One and the Many,* 294.
Clarke concludes, “To be, for St. Thomas, implies to be actively present to other real beings,” and thus active is a transcendental property of being.\footnote{Ibid. Italics in the original.} The final transcendental Clarke treats, beauty, is restricted to ontological beauty, defined as “that which, contemplated, gives delight,” rather than aesthetic beauty, which is “the beauty of works of art made by man.”\footnote{Ibid., 298.} Clarke thinks that “the uniqueness of beauty, which is one of the key arguments for including it as a distinct transcendental, is that it is related simultaneously to both intellect and will: that which gives delight to our wills precisely as intuitively contemplated by our cognitive faculties.”\footnote{Ibid., 299.} It is on account of this that “it has been called by many Thomists the synthesis of all the transcendentals,” making it “the full splendor of being in all its facets when related to the complementary world of spiritual intellects and wills, i.e., persons.”\footnote{Ibid. The debate regarding beauty as a transcendental is complex. Prior to 1991, the general consensus among preeminent Thomists, such as Gilson and Maritain, was that beauty was a transcendental. Cf. Etienne Gilson, “The Forgotten Transcendental: Pulchrum,” in Elements of Christian Philosophy, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1960), 159-163. Jacques Maritain, “Art and Beauty,” in Art and Scholasticism and The Frontiers of Poetry, trans. by Joseph Owens, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1962), 23-37. However, in 1991 Jan Aertsen argued against beauty as a transcendental very persuasively. Cf. Jan Aertsen, “Beauty in the Middle Ages: A Forgotten Transcendental?” Medieval Philosophy and Theology 1 (1991): 68-97. Recently, however, some scholars have become critical of Aertsen’s arguments and have returned to understanding beauty as a transcendental. Cf. David C. Schindler, “The Transcendentals,” in Chapter 5 of Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth: A Philosophical Investigation, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004) 350-421. Clarke, One and the Many, 303.}

In light of the extensive metaphysical examination Clarke provided in The One and the Many, “we are now in a position to look back on the whole process and try to pull it together in a single great synoptic vision of what this universe of ours is all about.”\footnote{Clarke, One and the Many, 303.} Thus, Clarke concludes his textbook of metaphysics with a great synoptic vision of the universe as a meaningful journey with two main phases. The first phase is “The Journey of the Many (all finite beings), projected outward from the One, their Infinite Source, by creation: the work of efficient causality. This can
be called the *Journey away from Home.*”

The second phase is “The *Journey of the Many back again towards reunion with the One,* their Source, drawn by this same Source through the pull of the Good built in to the very nature of every being through the mediation of final causality.”

“This innate implicit longing of all creatures for union with the Good can be called the *Journey back Home,* back to where each came from in the first place.”

Taken as a complete journey, traveling from home is known as *exitus,* while the journey to home is known as *reditus,* and thus “God as the ultimate One now appears as both the *Alpha* and the *Omega,* the Beginning and the End, at once the Source and the Goal.”

Thomas himself uses the image of “a kind of circular movement” and “actually uses the same structure of the emanation and return of all creatures from and to God as the basic organizing plan of his whole *Summa Theologiae,* his greatest work.”

The role of the human person is unique in this journey because the material universe “needs a *mediator* that can take it up into itself and somehow carry it back Home with itself.”

Human persons alone are capable of this because we are *microcosms* that “can take up the whole material world into our human consciousness . . . and offer it back to the Source whence it came with acknowledgement, gratitude, love for this gift.” Thus is revealed the dignity of the human

---

146 Ibid. Italics in the original.
147 Ibid., 304. Italics in the original.
148 Ibid. Italics in the original.
149 Ibid. Italics in the original.
150 In Sent., I, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2 (Mandonnet ed., 324-326).
152 Clarke, *One and the Many,* 306. Italics in the original.
153 Ibid.
person: we are the “sole mediators” between the universe and God.154 To be a human person, therefore, is to be a traveler on a journey, responsible for not just for ourselves, but also “for each other and for the whole world beneath us.”155 According to Clarke, this “great cosmic vision” of persons as responsible travelers on a journey is the animating force behind “the whole philosophy and theology of St. Thomas Aquinas.”156 In short, this vision is what metaphysics is all about, and thus Clarke leaves us with his final admonition: “Get on with the Journey, as a fully self-conscious Traveler! Homo Viator!”157

But what is the ultimate purpose of this Journey through the created universe? What is the meaning of everything? After first arguing that the ultimate meaning of existence itself is Person-to-Person gift, which infuses the created material universe with meaning,158 Clarke concludes with his ultimate answer to the mystery of existence: interpersonal love.159

154 “Human persons, therefore, are the sole mediators between the material universe and God, the Source of both.” Ibid.
155 “This, in sum, is what it means to be a human being, to be a traveler, each one on his or her own unique journey, but also an inseparable part of the journey of the whole cosmos, with responsibility not only for our individual selves but also for each other and for the whole world beneath us, in our common journey in and through the world of matter, a journey from time to eternity, from the lowliness of matter to the fullness of spirit in transformed matter.” Ibid., 307. Italics in the original.
156 “Such is the great cosmic vision animating the whole philosophy and theology of St. Thomas Aquinas.” Ibid.
157 “The Great Circle of Being, the Universe as Journey, is finally what the whole metaphysical quest is about. The message of this book: Get on with the Journey, as a fully self-conscious Traveler! Homo Viator!” Ibid., 308.
158 “I suggest that it would be a waste of time for God to create a material universe with no rational beings to appreciate it, beings capable of recognizing it as a person-to-person gift and responding appropriately with gratitude and love to the Giver. It follows that the intelligibility of being—all being—is inseparable from the context of persons: it is rooted in personal being, flows out from it, to other persons, who complete the circle by returning it back again to its personal source. In a word, the ultimate meaning of being is: Person-to-Person Gift!” Ibid., 309. Italics in the original.
159 “Thus the ultimate answer, the ultimate key to the mystery of being—why is there a universe of real beings at all?—turns out to be nothing less than interpersonal love!” Ibid., 310.
THE INTEGRATION OF PERSON AND BEING

Clarke’s 2004 article, “The Integration of Person and Being in 20th Century Thomism,” was the result of a presentation he gave at a symposium in honor of Kenneth Schmitz. The invitation to present at the symposium pleased Clarke greatly, as he saw himself “climbing the same path up the same mountain as Kenneth Schmitz, my fellow explorer, both using the same compass!” Speaking of Schmitz, Clarke said, “In the last quarter of our careers we have both moved toward a remarkably similar synthesis or integration of person and being, personalism and metaphysics, but following somewhat different but converging paths.”

Clarke begins by summarizing the important waypoints of Schmitz’s career. Beginning with a discovery of interpersonal phenomenology, Schmitz then turned his attention to Lublin Thomism as developed by Karol Wojtyla. The result of this immersion in Lublin Thomism, the central program of which was an integration of personalism with an existential metaphysics of Thomas, was Schmitz’s book on Karol Wojtyla’s own synthesis of personalism and Thomistic metaphysics, *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II.*

Clarke then focuses on a particular article by Schmitz, “The Solidarity of Personalism and the Metaphysics of Existential Act.” In this article Schmitz “lays out the steps by which he came to this integration, indicating the key contributions that each one of these movements makes to the

---

161 Ibid., 446.
162 Ibid., 435.
Clarke’s summary identifies some contributions that Schmitz thinks personalism can make to Thomistic metaphysics regarding subjectivity and freedom.

Subjectivity refers to an approach of knowing “from within, attempting to know a being as experienced from within, in its own existential uniqueness and originality, and its relation to other beings, especially other persons, precisely from this point of view.”166 In support of this approach to knowing, Schmitz refers to Wojtyla, who “has shown quite clearly how the objective metaphysical approach alone cannot do justice to the actual interior subjective experience of coming to a moral decision.”167 Schmitz, however, does not simply use phenomenology and Thomistic metaphysics to complement each other like Wojtyla, but rather, like Clarke, “he wishes to go further and recognize within Thomistic metaphysics itself an implicit affirmation of the subjective dimension not only in persons but in every real being, rooted in its existential act of existence (esse).”168 Schmitz accomplishes this by using Thomas’s distinction between substance and suppositum. The latter points “to a certain dimension of ‘interiority’ at the core of every real (existing) being” because of how it “expresses the ultimate uniqueness and originality of every being as actually existing.”169 Clarke agrees with and reinforces Schmitz’s point by adding Thomas’s “insistence that whenever existence is affirmed of individual beings, such predications

165 Clarke, “Integration of Person and Being,” 437.
166 Ibid.
168 Clarke, “Integration of Person and Being,” 438.
169 Ibid., 438.
are always analogous.” Clarke then refers back to the article he translated in 1956 by Joseph de Finance, “Being and Subjectivity,” which argues for this same point.

Schmitz also argues that personalism can contribute a fuller understanding of freedom to Thomistic metaphysics, in particular because freedom has been emphasized as the dominant attribute of the human person “not only in contemporary personalism but also in the whole later modern development of modern philosophy.” Schmitz, however, thinks that freedom so deeply illuminates the nature of being that “it should be extended to become one of the transcendental attributes of being itself . . . alongside of one, true, good, and (for many) beautiful.” This is an extremely daring move that Clarke himself is hesitant to make, claiming a need to “mull it over for a while longer.” Nevertheless, Schmitz backs his claim up with references to quantum mechanics, which “insists on a certain amount of ‘spontaneity’ that cannot be fully captured by any formal, mathematical laws.” As for areas where Thomistic metaphysics can contribute to personalism, Schmitz argues that it is the role of metaphysics “to situate ourselves and our role within the context of the whole community of real beings,” since “phenomenology by its very nature cannot reach beyond what is immediately present and presents itself to our consciousness.”

170 Ibid.
172 Clarke, “Integration of Person and Being,” 439.
173 Ibid.
174 Ibid.
175 Ibid.
176 Ibid., 440. Italics in the original.
Next, Clarke recounts his own philosophical journey. His formation as a Jesuit and time in Louvain provided Clarke’s understanding of Thomism before he immersed himself in the milieu of “the whole spectrum of new existentialist phenomenologies,” finding in them rich insights into “what it means to be a human person,” despite the fact that most “were seriously lacking in metaphysical grounding.” This second phase led Clarke to the conclusion that “the full description of any real being, above all the person, had to be dyadic: the *in-itself* of substance and the *toward-others* of relation.”

Clarke next explains how his own philosophical project has tried to uniquely contribute to the project of Schmitz with the personalization of *esse* itself. Clarke tries to clearly lay out, step-by-step, the insights that led to this contribution. The first step was bringing to light “the dynamic understanding of existential being in St. Thomas.” Here Clarke quotes his list of favorite texts from Thomas to support this step. “The second step is to draw the implication that... every existing being as active has a relational dimension to its being that is inseparable from its own full perfection.” After quoting Ratzinger in support of this step, Clarke develops two important

---

177 Clarke describes his “understanding of Thomism as an original synthesis of Aristotelianism, Neoplatonic participation metaphysics, and Thomas’ own truly original conception of the act of existence as the plenitude of all perfections, diversely participated in by limiting essences.” Ibid.
178 Ibid., 440-441.
179 Ibid., 441. Italics in the original.
180 “The last significant contribution I have tried to make to the common project of both Ken Schmitz and myself, i.e., the integration (or ‘solidarity,’ as he puts it) between person and being, personalism and Thomistic metaphysics, is the following: to show how the notion of person, taken in its full depth—revealed by both metaphysical and phenomenological analysis—can significantly enrich the Thomistic notion of being itself, what it means to be fully, what is the highest, most perfect expression of the act of existence (*esse*) itself.” Ibid. Italics in the original.
181 Ibid.
182 SCG, I, c. 43 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 13.124-125); De pot., q. 1, a. 2 (Marietti ed., Vol. 2.10-12); SCG, III, c. 69 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 14.199.202); SCG, III, c. 113 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 14.359-360); In Sent., I, d. 4, q. 4, a. 4. This last reference is a typo that originated in *The One and the Many*, 34. Prior to that typo, Clarke always correctly cited this particular Thomas text as In Sent., I, d. 4, q. 1, a. 1 (Mandonnet ed., 130-133). However, this text is always incorrectly cited after *The One and the Many*. This is more evidence that Clarke considered *The One and the Many* to be a summary of his metaphysical system, always going back to it whenever writing a new article afterward, incorrect references and all.
183 Clarke, “Integration of Person and Being,” 442.
points that follow from this second step. First, it follows that “some kind of self-communication and relationality is going to be found in the highest fullness and perfect expression of being itself.”\textsuperscript{184} Second, this relationality “also implies that being itself, for its full unfolding, requires a basic duality of giving and receiving,” such that “the fullness of being must somehow include the dynamic relation of giving-receiving.”\textsuperscript{185}

Although this dynamic relation of giving-receiving is not explicit in Thomas, Clarke believes that “it is certainly implicit there.”\textsuperscript{186} Clarke says, “This is what I have tried to do in what I call my ‘creative completion’ of St. Thomas, by suggestion that receptivity should be considered as in itself a positive perfection of being.”\textsuperscript{187} Clarke admits that “in our finite, time-bound world, our relations of receptivity are always infected with some degree of limitation and imperfection,” but “this picture changes profoundly when we move to the divine inner life of the tri-personal God.”\textsuperscript{188} Clarke has frequently taken criticism for jumping so quickly to the Trinity to defend his position on receptivity as a positive perfection,\textsuperscript{189} but here he comes back to the insights of phenomenology to support his position, since “there is of itself not the slightest imperfection connoted if one were to say, ‘All that I have I have received as gift. I am grateful for it’.”\textsuperscript{190} Pointing to the phenomenology of interpersonal love, and combining it with Thomas’s view of the person

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid., 443.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid. Italics in the original. See also the three parts of the “Receptivity Debate” in chapter 6 of this dissertation for additional detail.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{189} In particular, see W. Norris Clarke, S.J., “Reply to Steven Long,” \textit{The Thomist} 61 (1997), 617-624. In this article, Clarke clearly says that the Trinity “was my principal source of evidence for throwing new light on what it means to be and to be a person,” and again that the Trinity “was the main source of evidence, the central point, of my whole development.” Ibid., 622-623. However, at this later point in his career, although Clarke does still rely on references to the Trinity, he also frequently weaves in more phenomenological insights in order to support his claims regarding receptivity. It is reasonable to assume this mollification of Clarke’s stress on the Trinity was a result of his debate with Steven Long.
\textsuperscript{190} Clarke, “Integration of Person and Being,” 444.
as “that which is highest in all of nature,” Clarke concludes that “all the dynamic, self-communicating, giving-receiving relationality proper to being itself must belong also to the person in a higher degree than to any other mode of being.” Thus, since the “highest operation of the person is that of love, interpersonal love,” it follows that “the highest perfection of being itself must be . . . the highest degree of persons-in-communion.” The result is the goal of Clarke’s relational metaphysics, and “the personalization of being itself has taken place!”

Clarke credits Hans Urs von Balthasar for his inspiration to attempt this integration of personalism and Thomistic metaphysics. According to Clarke, Balthasar suggests “that there is a whole positive side to this receptivity in God that we human persons can participate in to a greater or lesser degree.” It is important to recognize that receptivity is not understood as a passive reception, but rather as “an active welcoming on the part of the receiver.” Here Clarke turns to the phenomenology of friendship to defend receptivity as a positive perfection of personal being. Since reception is a necessary part of the highest perfection of personal being, namely interpersonal love, it follows that reception must necessarily be a perfection of personal being.

The conclusion Clarke arrives at on account of his integration of person and being is “that the supreme perfection of being itself consists precisely in persons-in-communion.” Clarke then

192 Clarke, “Integration of Person and Being,” 444.
193 Ibid. Italics in the original.
194 Ibid.
195 Ibid., 445.
196 Ibid.
197 “If we look carefully at the higher reaches of human interpersonal love of friendship, we can also discern that as it becomes more and more perfect it becomes less and less passive, turning more and more into an attitude of active welcoming gratitude that reflects back again to the Giver its own self-giving love to the Receiver. Thus the full ‘process’ of interpersonal love proceeds in a kind of circular mode of giving-receiving-returning, proceeding from the Giver, through the Receiver, back to the Giver again.” Ibid.
198 “Only then is the mutual joy of both Giver and Receiver complete in its fullness, and the highest perfection of being itself achieved.” Ibid., 445.
199 Ibid. Italics in the original.
provides two names for this integration of person and being that he has presented. “One may call this contemporary integration a personalization of being; or a rooting of personal being in the deeper Thomistic metaphysics of being as existential act; or both. I prefer both.” Thus, Clarke and Schmitz “have come finally to a similar integration of person and being, personalism and Thomistic metaphysics,” such that “the highest perfection of being itself is persons-in-communion, including the dimension of positive ontological perfection in receptivity itself, analogously expressed in divine and human persons.”

GOD’S REAL RELATEDNESS TO THE WORLD

In 2007, Clarke released a second edition of his first book, *The Philosophical Approach to God*, which was originally published in 1979. The first part remained largely unchanged. The second part had minor revisions. The third part, however, underwent major revisions. While the majority of this third part continues Clarke’s ongoing dialogue with Whiteheadian process philosophy, the second chapter focuses on God’s real relatedness to the world. As this is Clarke’s most mature thought on this issue, it is worth looking at in detail.

Clarke deals with three topics in his revision: God’s relatedness to the world, His mutability, and how He is “enriched” by the world. After stating what he considers to be the primary contribution of process thinkers, Clarke summarizes his earlier position in which he made a distinction “between two orders in God: the order of real being (*esse reale*)—His own intrinsic,

---

200 Ibid.
201 Ibid., 445-446.
real perfection, which remains always an Infinite Plenitude—and the order of intentional being (esse intentionale)—i.e., the contents of the divine field of consciousness as related to creatures." Because “the world clearly makes a highly significant difference to the conscious, hence personal life of God,” Clarke asserts that for Thomas “it is both correct and necessary to say that God is truly personally related to the world. Relations in the intentional order are . . . true and authentic relations.” It is important to keep in mind that “difference (could have been otherwise, this rather than that) does not logically imply change (this after that).”

Regarding God’s relatedness to the world, Clarke would “like to make a significant shift in perspective” by taking the term “really” to imply “true” rather than “real” relations. This is because of the widely used, looser meaning of the term “really” in our current culture. Thus, Clarke says, “I am not proposing a change in Thomistic doctrine itself, but only a realistic strategy for communication with contemporary non-Thomistically trained thinkers.” Therefore, according to Clarke, it is allowable to say, “God is really and truly related to us, in His intentional consciousness.” But does this mean that God is affected by us? Clarke says God is different—but does not change!—on the level of His relational consciousness because of what we do. This

---

203 Ibid., 132. Italics in the original.
204 Ibid., 133. Italics in the original.
205 Ibid., 134. Italics in the original.
206 Ibid.
207 Ibid., 135.
208 Ibid.
209 “I would answer—in my project, ‘creative retrieval of St. Thomas’—that our metaphysics of God must certainly allow us to say that in some real and genuine way God is affected positively by what we do, that He receives love from us and experiences joy precisely because of our responses: in a word, that His consciousness is contingently and qualitatively different because of what we do. All this difference remains, however, on the level of God’s relational consciousness and therefore does not involve change, increase or decrease, in the Infinite Plenitude of God’s intrinsic inner being and perfection.” Ibid., 136. Italics in the original.
is an appropriate expression for the perfection proper to a loving personal being. However, since “to receive love as a person” is “a dimension of the perfection of personal being as lovingly responsive,” and “God is Infinite Perfection,” then Clarke even posits the possibility of referring to God as the universe’s “great Receiver.”

Regarding God’s mutability, Clarke examines time. He first clarifies that “it does not follow that contingent difference in the divine relational consciousness of the world necessarily involves temporally successive states in God.” Also, it is important to remember “that God knows and responds to the world not from all eternity, but in His eternal Now, simply present to each event as it actually takes place.” Our nows are exclusive, while the divine Now is inclusive. “It follows in St. Thomas’s austere logic of the divine eternity, as pure Presence to that which is, that all questions about divine foreknowledge, predestination, and so forth are, properly speaking, false problems,” since “it is impossible for us ever to say in our language when God knows anything . . . God simply knows—period!”

Regarding how God is “enriched” by the world, Clarke discusses God’s way of knowing with regard to His simplicity. In terms of God’s way of knowing, Clarke still holds to the position presented in his previous paper, “A New Look at the Immutability of God.” It is this

---

210 “The mutual giving and receiving that is part of God’s relational consciousness as knowing and loving what is other than Himself is merely the appropriate expression or living out of the intrinsic perfection proper to a perfectly loving personal being.” Ibid., 136-137. Italics in the original.
211 Ibid., 137. Italics in the original.
212 Ibid., 138. Italics in the original.
213 Ibid., 139. Italics in the original.
214 “The key point usually overlooked is that our ‘nows’ exclude each other, whereas the divine Now includes all others.” Ibid. Italics in the original.
215 Ibid., 140. Italics in the original.
understanding of God’s knowledge of creatures through cooperative activity that prevents many difficulties with thinking of God as the Great Receiver.®

With regard to divine simplicity, Clarke states that “the simplicity of the divine being now means only this: that there are no really distinct ontological parts making up the absolute divine being in itself.” However, “divine simplicity of nature does not exclude real multiplicity in the order of relations,” as is shown by the triple relational distinctness of the Trinity. Clarke then proposes “a loosening-up process” in order to allow for “distinct multiplicity of content in the divine relational consciousness related to the mental-intentional content of the divine mind and will.” Clarke says, “As long as multiplicity is confined to the strictly intentional order of the divine consciousness as oriented to the created world, I do not see any insuperable difficulty” in allowing “a rich multiplicity of relations . . . within the infinite internal simplicity” of God. Although hesitant to commit to the possibility, Clarke is willing to “assert only that the simplicity of God must be adjusted to whatever is required in order to fit the simplicity proper to the perfection of a loving personal being.”
In summary, Clarke has argued that “God can be said in some significant though carefully qualified way to be both (1) really related to the world in His intentional consciousness and (2) contingently different in his ‘eternal Now,’ because of what happens in the created world.”

THE IMMEDIATE CREATION OF THE HUMAN SOUL BY GOD

“The Immediate Creation of the Human Soul by God and Some Contemporary Challenges” is the first of four posthumously published articles in *The Creative Retrieval of St. Thomas Aquinas*, a collection of Clarke’s articles that prior to his passing he selected to be published. Along with Thomas, Clarke defends the spirituality of the human soul and the soul’s immediate creation by God with a worthwhile “creative retrieval.” Both the spirituality of the soul and its immediate creation by God are important foundational aspects of a person’s dignity. It is essential that the soul is spiritual and created by God in order to correctly understand the human person as “a unique fusion of the two great domains of reality in our universe, the spiritual and the material—‘man the microcosm,’ a single being summing up all the levels of being in the universe in itself, and so pointing to the unity of its Creator.”

---

223 Ibid., 147. Italics in the original.
226 “A ‘creative retrieval’ of the central pillars of our rich but fragile tradition seems to be required periodically, over and over again, as history unfolds. Here seems to me to be a prime candidate for such a creative retrieval.” Clarke, “Creation of the Human Soul,” 190.
227 “. . . the immediate origin of the human soul from God alone now confers a unique dignity on the origin of the entire human person.” Ibid., 178.
228 Ibid.
Not only does the immediate creation of the soul by God bestow dignity upon the created person, but also “would greatly add, in fact, to the dignity of the human parents.” For if God immediately creates the soul in collaboration with the parents, the act of conceiving a child is dramatically raised in dignity to an act of cooperation with the divine.

Clarke then addresses the proponents of nonreductive physicalism, “since it reveals such a profound shift even within Christian thought of what it means to be a human person.” Clarke begins by summarizing nonreductive physicalism down to four points. First, “any kind of dualism of substances or natures is out,” so that “anything of a so-called spiritual nature . . . must in principle be excluded.” Second, “the human person is a purely physical subject,” yet “it has a set of higher properties.” In effect, there is a dualism of properties rather than substances. Third, there is no “immortal soul to perdure for any kind of after-life, including the Resurrection.” Fourth, they understand the resurrection as “recreation by divine power.”

Clarke’s reply to the first two principles of nonreductive physicalism is based upon the principle that the effect cannot be greater than the cause. If the spiritual is excluded and the human person is purely physical, then there cannot be any set of properties that are higher than the purely physical. Clarke then reminds us that “Thomas’s solution achieves the same result that these contemporaries so vigorously . . . argue for.” Rather than having the spiritual arise from the physical, Thomas takes the opposite option and says that “the higher can well be the source of
lower level actions.”

Thus, “the powers of this same intellectual soul are not exhausted by its activity as form in matter,” but rather “it is a form plus, a form and a spirit . . . an agent that can operate on two levels, one higher, one lower.”

Clarke mentions a few objections, but he thinks that “the strongest, most serious argument against the immediate creation of the human soul by God” is “the objection from the gradual appearance of intelligence over long periods of time.” Clarke responds by postulating that “the spiritual soul could have been infused by God at any one of various locations in evolutionary history and then taken quite a long time for the necessary bodily and social structures to evolve enough to make their appearance empirically evident to us later generations.” A second objection that Clarke mentions is “that we no longer know the limits of ‘matter,’ hence we can no longer draw any clear limits between matter and spirit.” However, this objection is nearly identical to an argument that Clarke put forward nineteen years earlier in *The Universe as Journey*, where he argued, “A significant consequence . . . is that there is no radical split even between matter and spirit, because both are in the last analysis only different degrees or modalities of the common energy, or force-filled presence, of existence itself.” At this late point in his career, Clarke has apparently changed his mind in this regard. Speaking of the thought that “we can no longer draw any clear limits between matter and spirit,” Clarke says that “this kind of language seems to me to involve a serious philosophical confusion.” In short, although Clarke never
explicitly rejected his earlier claim, he has clearly returned to the opinion that, in regard to the
distinction between matter and spirit, “there is no sign yet that science requires abolishing this
basic distinction, whereas there are very cogent reasons for maintaining it.”

Clarke’s reply to the second two principles of nonreductive physicalism regarding the
resurrection is based upon the principle of the uniqueness of the self. Nonreductive physicalism
just postulates that God “recreates” the original person at a later time, but Clarke says that “is a
metaphysical impossibility. The recreated entity might be a clone, like me in many ways, but not
the same unique personal me . . . for the simple reason that it never experienced the same personal
life, the same story.” In short, “not even the omnipotence of God can do what is a metaphysical
impossibility: recreate the identical being that existed before, with no bond of continuity on the
personal level between the before and the after.” Clarke concludes that the best description of
the human person is an embodied spirit.

THE CREATIVE IMAGINATION

“The Creative Imagination: Unique Expression of Our Soul-Body Unity,” and “The
Creative Imagination as Treated in Western Thought,” are two companion articles on the
importance of the creative imagination. Whereas the previous article covered the nature and role

---

243 Ibid., 188.
244 Ibid. Italics in the original.
245 Ibid.
246 “The only adequate description of the human person, one that does justice both to its dignity and to the
splendor of its being, turns out in the end to be what Saint Thomas fought so hard to defend: we are embodied spirits,”
Ibid., 189. Italics in the original. Clarke references ST, I, q. 90, a. 2-3 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 5.386-388); SCG, II, c. 49-50
248 W. Norris Clarke, S.J., “The Creative Imagination as Treated in Western Thought,” in The Creative
of the creative imagination, the latter article covered the history of how the creative imagination has been treated in Western thought. Although it is not necessary to treat these articles with as much depth as previous articles, Clarke still brings out some worthwhile insights into the nature of person and being that are worth a brief examination. Also, these articles are a good example of Clarke going beyond Thomas.\textsuperscript{249} Thus, Clarke is very clear that he is “expanding the notion of the image of God to include our own limited . . . power of creativity, exercised through our imagination, in analogous imitation of the divine creativity itself.”\textsuperscript{250}

Regarding the ancient and medieval treatment of the creative imagination, there are three insights worth pointing out. First of all, there is a “firm subordination of the creative imagination to the rule of reason” during this period of history.\textsuperscript{251} Clarke claims that although Aristotle planted the seed for “a whole new dimension of creativity in human knowing” with his treatment of the imagination, “Aristotle himself did not walk through this door that he had opened,” and the world had to wait until after Kant before the Renaissance took up the torch again.\textsuperscript{252} Thomas, although very terse on the topic, nevertheless makes three isolated comments “that are quite positive about the service that the creative imagination can provide for reason.”\textsuperscript{253} 1. Providing concrete examples in images is the most effecting way to teach. 2. “The sensitive part of the soul is made more powerful by being joined with the intellectual.”\textsuperscript{254} 3. “The imagination does not only present to

\textsuperscript{249} “It should be noted that in thus presenting the creative imagination operating under the guidance of reason as a distinctive aspect of the image of God in human beings, we are going beyond the traditional position of Aquinas, Augustine, and others, who located the image of God exclusively in the spiritual intellect and will as able to know and love God.” Ibid., 225.

\textsuperscript{250} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{251} Ibid., 209.

\textsuperscript{252} Ibid., 211.

\textsuperscript{253} Ibid., 212. Clarke is referencing \textit{ST}, I, q. 84, a. 7 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 5.325-326).

\textsuperscript{254} Clarke, “Imagination in Western Thought,” 212. Clarke references \textit{ST}, I, q. 85, a. 4, ad 1, but this is a typo in the publication. The correct reference should be \textit{ST}, I, q. 85, a. 1, ad 4 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 5. 332): “. . . sicut pars sensitiva ex coniunctione ad intellectivam efficitur virtuosior . . .”
the mind images deriving from sense experience, but also ‘transmutes’ them in various ways under its own power, such as happens in dreams, but also under the command of reason, which arranges the phantasms provided by the imagination in order to help it better understand something.”

Clarke next takes a look at the Renaissance, which inaugurates “the central role of creativity as an essential property of human nature and as a mark of its status as participated image of God.” Clarke identifies three attitudes of this age that shed new light on the human person. 1. “Creativity is seen as an essential component of human dignity.” 2. “Creativity is rooted in the conception of the human being as image, participating through our finite creative imagination in the infinite creativity of God.” 3. “The ultimate source of creativity” originates from above “since God is pure spirit.”

Unfortunately, after the Renaissance the imagination quickly lost importance. The rationalists, such as Descartes, Leibniz, and Spinoza, were all rather hostile towards the imagination, and although the empiricists, such as Locke and Hume, gave a central role to imagination, they nevertheless “show little interest in the creative imagination as such.”

With the philosophical revolution introduced by Kant, the pendulum swung forcefully in the other direction. Kant’s ideas regarding the creative imagination filtered down through German Idealism and the Romantic Movement to the twentieth century phenomenologists and deconstructionists. Because “Kant had firmly rejected the one great umbilical cord that had connected the Aristotelian and Thomistic mind with the world of sense and the outside world: the

---

256 Clarke, “Imagination in Western Thought,” 214. Italics in the original.
257 Ibid.
258 Ibid., 215-216. This is Clarke’s assessment of the regard for imagination in these various philosophers.
power of the mind to have *abstract insight,*” he needed to postulate that “imagination is actually a *transcendental* (a priori), *radically spontaneous,* and *creative faculty* that underlies and renders possible the very activity of reason itself.”

This view was taken up by German Idealism, which was “a veritable ‘cult of the creative imagination’.” The Romantic Movement poets took up this view as “a philosophical manifesto” that saw the creative imagination as “an *autonomous creative power* grounded in nothing deeper or higher than itself.” Finally, “Nietzsche ends the nineteenth century by pricking the bubble of the Romantic exaltation of the creative imagination” by grounding it in the will to power.

The twentieth century introduced “a kind of schizophrenic alteration” between opposing views of the creative imagination. For some phenomenologists, like Edmund Husserl, the creative imagination served as “an indispensable collaborator and instrument of reason itself;” while others, like Martin Heidegger, use “this creative power to undermine the primacy of reason itself.” Then “Sartre initiates the whole deconstructive turn against the value of the creative imagination,” while Gaston Bachelard presents the creative imagination as “the great ‘humanizing faculty,’ the supreme expression of freedom in the human subject.” Finally, the Deconstructionists make a concerted effort “to undermine and dissolve not only the *autonomous rational self* of the Enlightenment . . . . but also the god-like *creatively imagining self* of the Romantic ideal.”

---

259 Ibid., 216-217. Italics in the original.  
260 Ibid., 219.  
261 Ibid., 220. Italics in the original.  
262 Ibid.  
263 Ibid., 221.  
264 Ibid., 221.  
265 Ibid., 222.  
266 Ibid., 223. Italics in the original.
At the end of this historical review of the role of the creative imagination in philosophy, Clarke concludes that although the existence of a creative imagination has never been in doubt, “its relation to the guidance and rule of reason, and what this relation tells us about the nature and dignity of the human person as embodied spirit and image of God,” has been the locus of a highly controversial and central debate throughout the centuries. At the end of this historical overview of the debate, Clarke leaves us with four conclusions. First, “the creative imagination . . . is the incarnation of idea in matter,” most luminously exhibited by the tradition of wisdom stories, and “the most distinctive expressions of the intrinsic unity within duality of soul and body” in the human person. Second, “the role of the creative imagination is . . . to be more radically creative in expanding and enriching the present world in new ways never seen before.” Third, “the only truly wise, enduringly fruitful, and authentically natural way of exercising this God-given power is under the guidance and illumination, the larger intentional finality, of human reason itself.” Clarke is right to conclude that the creative imagination “makes an invaluable servant and collaborator, but a poor master.” Fourth, “this power of the creative imagination is one of our most distinctive ways as embodied spirits . . . of manifesting the image in us of God as supreme, free, and unpredictable Creator of all other things totally out of nothing.” Clarke even goes further with his concluding postulate that “the deepest roots of our own creativity really rest in the power of our spiritual intelligence and will.”

---

267 Ibid., 224. Italics in the original.
268 Ibid. Italics in the original.
269 Ibid. Italics in the original.
270 Ibid. Italics in the original.
271 Ibid., 224. Italics in the original.
272 Ibid., 225. Italics in the original.
273 Ibid. Italics in the original.
THE INTEGRATION OF PERSONALISM AND THOMISTIC METAPHYSICS

As the final of the four unpublished articles that Clarke chose to be included in The Creative Retrieval of St. Thomas Aquinas, “The Integration of Personalism and Thomistic Metaphysics in Twenty-First-Century Thomism” serves as the perfect conclusion to his philosophical output. It clearly and succinctly lays out his argument for the integration of personalism and Thomistic metaphysics, is the capstone to Clarke’s relational metaphysics, and a summation of all that is best in his philosophical thought on being and person. His goal is simply “to lay out the main steps in . . . the integration of personalism and metaphysics in twentieth-century Thomism.”

Clarke begins with Karol Wojtyla and the Lublin school of Thomism in Poland. Wojtyla realized that the objective common structures of Thomistic metaphysics could not adequately deal with “the unique subjective interiority of human personal experience” in such cases as “the lived experience of friendship, of married love, etc.” With the insights offered in one particular article, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Being,” Wojtyla opened up “a whole new realm of exploration of the inner life of the person beyond the reach of the traditional method of Thomistic metaphysics.” However, Wojtyla is also “careful to point out that phenomenology alone is incapable of giving . . . us the final end, goal, and ultimate purpose of human life, because this still lies in the future, and can only be argued to by metaphysical analysis.”

---

275 Ibid., 226.
276 Ibid., 226. Italics in the original.
277 Ibid., 226. Italics in the original.
279 Clarke, “Personalism and Thomistic Metaphysics,” 227. Italics in the original.
first step taken by Wojtyla was recognizing that both the phenomenological and the metaphysical approaches are needed.\textsuperscript{280}

Clarke himself took the next creative leap beyond Wojtyla, along with some other contemporary philosophers like Kenneth Schmitz. In this next leap, Clarke is trying to carry Wojtyla’s “project of integration further by showing how a personalist dimension is actually implicit within the very structure and meaning of being itself in a fully developed Thomistic metaphysics.”\textsuperscript{281} Clarke then traces “the key steps in the unveiling of this implicit personalist dimension” in Thomas.\textsuperscript{282} As the primary foundation, Clarke spells out the aim of metaphysics: “to discover what it means to belong to the community of real existents, most basic of all communities.”\textsuperscript{283} This understanding is a necessary prerequisite to seeing the personalist themes hiding under the surface of Thomas’s metaphysics.

The first step taken from this foundation by a particular member in pursuit of this discovery is “to actively present itself to this community by its characteristic actions.”\textsuperscript{284} This is a primary qualification in order for someone to discover what it means to belong to a community. According to Clarke, there is no difference between not acting and not existing: both “\textit{make no difference} at all in the real universe.”\textsuperscript{285} According to Clarke, “\textit{to be a real being, therefore, is to be an actor.}”\textsuperscript{286} Clarke then takes a look at this first step of actively presenting oneself to the community from the

\textsuperscript{280} “This is an important new insight not contained explicitly either in the metaphysical or the phenomenological traditions alone.” Ibid., 227.
\textsuperscript{281} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{282} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{283} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{284} Ibid., 227.
\textsuperscript{285} Ibid. Italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{286} Ibid., 228. Italics in the original.
Christian perspective before emphasizing that “this point is particularly meaningful for those training to be priests: in the Consecration of the Mass they actually take on the words of Jesus as their own.”

The second step taken by Clarke is that “to be real is to be related.” Clarke justifies this step by appealing to three texts from Thomas, showing how “every real being is by nature active, tending to pour over into self-manifesting, self-communicative action.” Then, since every real being self-communicates through action, it necessarily “produces cause-effect relations all around it,” and thus “every real being is somehow related to others.” This “property of being related to others in the community of real existents is a necessary property,” and it “is what justifies Pope Benedict XVI’s earlier critique of Saint Thomas as not recognizing that ‘relationality and substantiality are equally valid primordial modes of the real’.”

The final—and most controversial—step taken by Clarke in his project of unveiling the implicit personalist dimension in Thomas is that “if every real being, therefore, has an active, giving side, the order of being itself, to be complete, must also have a receiving side.” Thus, “the whole order of real being . . . must by nature be dyadic, a giving-receiving whole. The fullness of real being . . . must be a giving-receiving community.” Clarke next combines a text of Thomas

---

287 “Christians can act out their authentic selves on two levels: the level of their natural potentialities and the supernatural level—that is, act out Christ in their own lives.” Ibid. Italics in the original.
288 Ibid.
289 Ibid. Italics in the original.
290 Ibid., 228. De pot., q. 2, a. 1 (Marietti ed., Vol. 2.24-27); SCG, I, c. 43 (Leon. Ed., Vol. 13.124-125); In Sent., d. 4, q. 4, a. 4. Again, this last reference is a typo originating in The One and the Many, 34. The correct reference is In Sent., I, d. 4, q. 1, a. 1 (Mandonnet ed., 130-133).
291 Clarke, “Personalism and Thomistic Metaphysics,” 228.
293 Clarke, “Personalism and Thomistic Metaphysics,” 228.
294 Ibid., 228-229. Italics in the original.
here regarding how the person is “that which is highest in all of nature” with the insight from personalism that “the highest mode of personal existence is . . . ‘persons in communion,’ loving communion,” to conclude that “it then follows that the highest mode of authentic real being itself is . . . persons-in-communion.”

Clarke realizes how controversial this final step is on account of his position that receptivity is a positive perfection of personal being, so he returns to the topic to provide a greater defense. Clarke recognizes the novelty of his argument for “the essential complementary value of the dimension of receiving alongside that of giving,” but he stands by it on account of the insights from personalist phenomenology into the higher realms of interpersonal relations. Clarke again turns to friendship as the prime example of receptivity as essential to being.

Hans Urs von Balthasar was Clarke’s “inspiration for this central insight into interpersonal phenomenology.” Through personalist phenomenology and the writings of Balthasar, Clarke recognized that in mature interpersonal love, “both parties must be reciprocally givers and receivers to each other.” It naturally follows that “receptivity is now seen as in itself a positive ontological perfection; hence the relation is better understood as one of equality,” and thus, “the

---

296 Clarke, “Personalism and Thomistic Metaphysics,” 229. Italics in the original.
297 “Human friendship and love are only fulfilling when the active giving is . . . freely, gratefully, actively welcomed, and this welcoming reception is positively communicated back to the giver and gratefully received in turn by the giver.” Ibid.
298 Ibid. Clarke says that the key text from Balthasar that provided this inspiration is the following: “Das Empfangen und Geschehenlassen ist für den Begriff der absoluten Liebe ebenso wesentlich wie das Geben, das ohne das empfangende Geschehenlassen [. . . ] gar nicht zu geben vermöchte.” Hans Urs von Balthasar, Theodoramatic, vol. IV: Das Endspiel, (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Johannes Verlag, 1983), 75.
299 Clarke, “Personalism and Thomistic Metaphysics,” 229.
final result is the personalization of being itself from within Thomistic metaphysics,” such that “the fullness of being now means ‘persons-in-communion’.”

Clarke concludes the article, the last of all his published works, by applying this personalization of being itself to God. In short, God “actually brings the entire community into existence as a whole,” such that “he is the very founder of the whole community itself.” Clarke then turns to revealed theology to complete his philosophy. The revelation of the Trinity confirms that self-communicating love in a community of three Persons is indeed the inner life of the Supreme Being, and this revelation confirms Clarke’s pursuit of a philosophical personalization of metaphysics. According to Clarke, he is simply furthering the original project of Pope John Paul II.

CONCLUSION

The good as goal that draws all being into act is a theme that has been consistently in the background throughout Clarke’s work, but it was not until the end of his career that he started to focus on how people can be practically motivated towards the good. One final time, we can see Clarke dive back into the texts of Thomas. Even this late in his career, Clarke is still doing research

---

300 Ibid., 230. Italics in the original.
301 Ibid.
302 “Whether and how the full notion of being as both giver-receiver personal being, developed above, can be affirmed of God, it seems that philosophical reason alone cannot quite establish this decisively.” Ibid. “That is where Christian revelation comes in to make a marvelous completion of Christian philosophical reason.” Ibid.
303 “This self-revelation on God’s own part confirms from above that our philosophical personalization of metaphysics is precisely on the right track. This is the very nature of Being itself at its highest level, to be Persons-in-communion, although philosophy cannot take us all the way to this secure affirmation on its own. The mystery unveiled by revelation makes the last step for our limited rational resources.” Ibid., 231.
304 “Thus the original project of John Paul II—the integration of personalism and Thomistic metaphysics—has been carried further than his own original vision. . . . It has been creatively extended further so as to uncover the personalist dimension lying implicit within the fuller understanding of the very meaning and structure of the metaphysics of being itself.” Ibid., 231.
and citing passages that he had never cited at any prior point. Not only does Clarke return to Thomas’s *Summa theologiae*, but he also takes a renewed interest in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, citing around 20 texts for the first time in his career. Most of these texts are in support of his newfound interest in practically motivating people towards the good.

As we have seen, after Clarke summarized his system of relational metaphysics in *The One and the Many*, he turned his attention to the creative imagination, conscience, wisdom stories, and narrative rationality. These are all means of motivating people towards the good, the final pillar of his relational metaphysics and the magnetic pull leading towards an understanding of persons-in-communion as the fullness of being. The investigation into freedom with which Clarke began his philosophical career now comes full circle. God freely creates us to participate in this grand journey of *being*, and draws us into action by means of the *good*, so that persons-in-communion can *love*, resulting in the ultimate conclusion of his system of relational metaphysics: *the personalization of being itself*. 
CONCLUSION

*How Thomistic is Clarke?*

One of the goals of this dissertation was to clarify how Thomistic Clarke’s system of relational metaphysics can be considered. If Thomistic is understood as the degree to which a philosopher relies upon the texts of Thomas while developing his own philosophy, then this dissertation has provided significant clarity. In short, Clarke’s answer to the first question—“What does it mean to be real?”—is steeped in Thomas and can be considered very Thomistic. However, Clarke’s answer to the second question—“What does it mean to be a human person?”—is heavily influenced by sources other than Thomas and must be considered significantly less Thomistic.

The participation structure of the universe that Clarke developed in his dissertation is undoubtedly the most Thomistic component of his relational metaphysics. More than any other work in his career, his dissertation is steeped in Thomas. With references to 267 different passages of Thomas, which is nearly half of all the different references to Thomas that Clarke made in his entire career, the participation pillar of Clarke’s relational metaphysics relies the most heavily on Thomas. Clarke displayed a mastery of Thomas early in his career that was the result of more than a decade of living within the texts of Thomas.

Existence as a dynamic act of presence, the second pillar of Clarke’s relational metaphysics, is also very Thomistic, but less so than the participation pillar. Although Clarke did not hesitate to call this pillar “the great central pillar of St. Thomas’ and of my own metaphysical vision of the universe,”¹ the influence of Plotinus is made clear in his 1959 article, “Infinity in

---

¹ Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 64.
Plotinus: A Reply.”

Of all the pillars of his metaphysical system, existence as a dynamic act of presence is the one that was developed in the most scatter-shot manner. Whereas the origin of most other pillars can be identified in a single work, this one simply runs underneath the surface throughout this early part of Clarke’s career. Nevertheless, Clarke is still very Thomistic, citing 76 different passages of Thomas during this time.

The unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will is the foundation of Clarke’s relational metaphysics upon which the other pillars are built. Although this foundation was initially inspired by André Marc, Maréchal, and Blondel, Clarke dove back into the primary texts of Thomas, citing 70 different passages, in order to develop this foundation and make it his own. The core reason why the unrestricted dynamism of the mind and will must be a foundation rather than a pillar is on account of the complement to this dynamism: the intrinsic intelligibility of all existence. Without this foundation, Clarke’s system cannot be built.

Action as self-manifestation of inner being, the third pillar of Clarke’s relational metaphysics, is deeply Thomistic. The development of this pillar occurred in Clarke’s landmark 1982 article, “Action as the Self-Revelation of Being,” and was the result of a return to the texts of Thomas. Although the idea originated in Clarke’s “reading of Joseph de Finance’s great book, Étre et agir,” and in Blondel’s L’Action, Clarke made this pillar his own by searching Thomas for support. During this period, Clarke cited 86 different passages of Thomas, the majority of which were cited for the first time in Clarke’s career.

---

4 Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 69.
The foundation and three pillars of his relational metaphysics that Clarke developed prior to his retirement from Fordham constitute his answer to the question, “What does it mean to be real?” Based on his frequent employment of Thomas, it is clear that the first part of Clarke’s career can confidently be called Thomistic. However, once Clarke begins to focus on the human person, he begins turning to other philosophers—and even theologians—to develop his own brand of Christian philosophy.

Persons as supreme value in the universe is the first pillar in response to the question, “What does it mean to be a human person?” Clarke cites 61 different passages of Thomas during this period of his career, but those citations are typically used as starting points for Clarke’s own development of what it means to be a human person. For Clarke, “the person is ultimately the key to why there is anything at all and not rather nothing.”\(^5\) In order make this claim more clearly understood, Clarke turned to process philosophy, phenomenology, and Christian revelation. At this point, these grafts onto Clarke’s Thomistically-based relational metaphysics begin to grow in controversial directions.

The largest controversy was Clarke’s defense of receptivity as a positive perfection of personal being while developing his Christian Philosophy. Clarke cited 60 different passages of Thomas during this period of his career, but only 20 of them appeared for the first time, indicating that Clarke was returning to Thomas with less frequency. Nevertheless, Clarke still thinks with a scholastic, Thomistic mindset. He may be developing his relational metaphysics in unconventional directions, but he still argues in the scholastic method of making distinctions. Although Clarke

---
\(^5\) Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 80-81.
may not be as Thomistic in his textual support, he is still Thomistic in his mode of thinking and arguing.

The final pillar of Clarke’s relational metaphysics, the good as goal that draws all being into act, can be found throughout his work. However, at the end of his career Clarke puts a renewed focus on the good and blends it with his developments into what it means to be a human person. The result is the “personalization of being itself” such that the fullness of being now means “persons-in-communion.” Clarke cites 74 different passages of Thomas during this final period, but even this late in his career he did not hesitate to immerse himself in Thomas again. In particular, his articles on the creative imagination are filled with unprecedented citations of Thomas. Clarke also finds himself returning to a more traditional Thomism after his three decades of “creative retrieval,” as is most clearly displayed in his 2007 revisions of The Philosophical Approach to God. As if taking a cue from his newfound emphasis on exitus-reditus at the end of his career, Clarke simply returned to where he began: Thomas.

Does Clarke’s System Stand?

Clarke’s love of high places is made clear when he recalls a plane ride along Mount Everest: “I got so excited I had to close my eyes to avoid exploding inside,” because those ultimate mountains of the earth “seemed to me like immense white-robed contemplatives, their faces lifted toward the heavens in the ultimate liturgy of the earth.” Clarke was also a climber, braving a 10,000-foot Swiss Alp “in pitch dark across a two-foot ledge along the face of the mountain with a 2,000-foot sheer drop on one side” while “nourished by brandy and chocolate.”

---

6 Clarke, “Personalism and Thomistic Metaphysics,” 230. Italics in the original.
8 Clarke, “Universe as Journey,” 52.
Clarke credited these high places with nourishing his metaphysical intuition, but a particularly powerful experience occurred when he was a teenager climbing the 500-foot-high cliffs of the Palisades. About two-thirds of the way up Clarke got stuck and could move neither up nor down. He recalls: “On studying my situation more carefully I discovered there was a bulge of rock to my right and I could see only that there was a niche for my foot beyond it. If there was one for my hand higher up, which I could not see, I could swing around and from there on it was easier going and I could get away. A decision had to be made at once. With a prayer and a hope, literally not knowing whether death or life awaited me, I gathered up my courage and swung around the rock into space.”9 This story, I believe, perfectly parallels the development of Clarke’s relational metaphysics.

Clarke began his career climbing the stable mountain of Thomas, that “immense white-robed contemplative,” in order to answer the question, “What does it mean to be real?” Once he turned his attention to climbing the philosophical project of what it means to be a human person, however, he started nourishing his relational metaphysics with the “brandy” of phenomenology and the “chocolate” of process philosophy. Clarke continued to use the tools and habits he had honed through years of metaphysical climbing within the system of Thomas, but two-thirds of the way through his career he got stuck. He noticed revealed theology, however, and could see a niche for his foot in the writings of Balthasar. If there was a metaphysical niche for his hand further up, which he could not see, then he could swing around and from there on it would be easier going. So, with a prayer and a hope, Clarke gathered up his courage and swung around the Rock and into Christian philosophy.

---

According to Clarke, his Christian philosophy uses “the Christian revelation of the Trinity (one God in three Persons) as a principle of illumination (not rigorous, purely philosophical argument) to shed new light on the deeper meaning of both person and being.”\textsuperscript{10} This illumination helped Clarke notice positive aspects of what it means to be a person that had escaped the attention of philosophers. Although Clarke’s principal and main source of evidence for throwing light on what it means to be a person is the Christian revelation of the interpersonal life of the Trinity,\textsuperscript{11} he nevertheless thinks that “theology must be separated from philosophy so as not to influence it unduly.”\textsuperscript{12} Philosophy simply cannot contradict revealed theology. Thus, Clarke uses light from revealed theology to develop a philosophy that does not contradict that same revealed theology.

In conclusion, Clarke’s answer to the first question—“What does it mean to be real?—is thoroughly Thomistic and stands solidly on that foundation. Clarke’s answer to the second question—“What does it mean to be a human person?”—is thoroughly Christian philosophy. The solidly of that foundation depends on whether one accepts a Christian philosophy. Clarke certainly does. Just as he found a handhold after swinging out into space hundreds of feet up on the cliffs of the Palisades—“Luckily, you can see, there was a handhold!”\textsuperscript{13}—so also does he find a metaphysical handhold in the light of revelation: “My final word: Is there an authentic and intellectually respectable project of distinctive Christian philosophizing? My answer is a resounding ‘Yes!’”\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{10} Clarke, “Reply to Steven Long,” 618.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 622.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 623.
\textsuperscript{13} Clarke, “Doing One’s Autobiography,” 9.
\textsuperscript{14} Clarke, “Reply to Steven Long,” 624.
APPENDIX A
Chronological List of Publications by William Norris Clarke, S.J.

Publication year and outline letters are used in Appendix B.

1940


1942

1945

1949


1950

1952


1953


1954


1955


1956


1957


1958


1959


1960


**1961**


**1962**


1964


1966


1967

1968


1969


1970


1971


1972

1973


1974


1975


1976


1977


1978


1979


1980


1981


1982


1983


1985

1986

1987

1988

1989
1990


1992


1993


1994


1995


1996


1997


1998


1999


2000


2001


2002


2003


2004


2007


2009


APPENDIX B

Every Cited Reference to Thomas Aquinas in the Publications of William Norris Clarke, S.J.

Thomas’s works are listed alphabetically, in the same order as the List of Abbreviations on page v of this dissertation. After each particular reference to Thomas, Clarke’s publications are listed by the last two digits of the original publication year with the letter from Appendix A, followed by the page numbers of the most recently published version, from which all these references originate. Clarke’s erroneous citations are listed as cited, but with corrected citations in brackets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comp. theol.</strong></td>
<td>49b:171, 189, 191, 205; 52b:80; 52c:94; 03e:372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c4</td>
<td>49b:255, 265, 271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c9</td>
<td>55b:85; 82b:83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c15</td>
<td>q2a1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c18-21</td>
<td>74d:8; 82a:442, 443; 86a:442, 443; 88e:70; 92b:213; 92c:106; 93c:6; 00b:276; 01b:34; 03e:59; 09d:228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c18</td>
<td>q2a2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c20-21</td>
<td>01b:34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c20</td>
<td>q3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De malo</td>
<td>60b:252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q1a2init</td>
<td>q3a3obj1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49b:267</td>
<td>49b:233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q6</td>
<td>q3a5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49b:204, 205</td>
<td>54c:109, 115; 57g:441; 69a:24; 74c:123; 74d:28; 93d:284; 07a:50, 58, 106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c6</td>
<td>q3a5ad2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87a:392</td>
<td>49b:298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De mix</td>
<td>01b:101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01b:101</td>
<td>q3a6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q1a2</td>
<td>52c:94; 69a:24; 74d:28; 92a:168, 173; 93d:284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q3a1</td>
<td>q3a6c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67e:633</td>
<td>49b:242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q1a1c</td>
<td>q3a7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49b:165</td>
<td>73b:204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q1a2</td>
<td>q3a7ad12-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49b:228; 52b:80; 52c:94; 59d:83;</td>
<td>73b:204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49b:228</td>
<td>q3a7ad13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52c:94, 96; 67b:924; 67e:633; 00b:276; 01b:294; 03c:59; 04b:442</td>
<td>90a:107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49b:274</td>
<td>49b:242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q1a2c</td>
<td>73b:204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

357
De prin. nat.
  cl
  49b:163, 209, 214

De spir. creat.
  a1c
  49b:237, 258, 289, 314, 334; 52b:80; 52c:94, 95
  a1
  49b:284; 60e:93
  a1Si
  49b:259, 286, 288, 289, 293
  a1Sed
  49b:283, 333, 343
  a1ad
  49b:288, 339
  a1ad1
  73b:191
  a1ad11
  49b:252, 293
  a1fin
  49b:288, 298
  a3
  52b:81; 74d:19
  a3Sed
  49b:266
  a3c,init
  49b:216; 52c:96
  a3ad
  49b:267, 291
  a5ad
  49b:333, 343
  a5fin
  49b:334
  a8
  57g:442
  a8secund
  49b:260
  a8tert
  49b:317, 321

De sub. sep.
  c1
  57g:441
  c3
  49b:243, 266; 52b:80; 52c:95
  c3init
  49b:287
  cc4-6
  49b:284
  c5
  49b:266, 267, 307; 52c:96
  c6
  49b:214, 228, 240, 245, 249, 251, 258, 286, 326, 335; 52b:80; 52c:94; 57e:131
  c7
  49b:216
  c8
  49b:308, 309; 52c:97
  c9
  49b:294; 52c:97
  c10
  49b:260, 311
  c12
  49b:240, 243, 259, 262; 52c:94; 57g:442

De uni. intel.
  c5
  49b:261

De unione Verbi
  a1-5
  86a:444; 93c:28
De ver.
q1a1
60e:100; 74d:4
q1a1ad3
74d:6
q1a5
54c:120
q1a5ad6
60e:86
q1a6
54c:120
q1a9
86a:445; 93c:44, 74
q2a2
66c:109; 73b:191;
92c:116; 93c:80;
03d:535
q2a2ad9
49b:238
q2a9
88c:165
q2a9c
49b:198, 203, 316;
52b:80
q2a14
52c:94; 69a:24;
74d:28; 07a:51
q3
82b:83
q3a1
60b:251
q3a2ad6
55b:85; 82b:83
q4
82b:83
q4a6&8
82b:84
q5a8
55b:82
q5a9
57g:441
q5a10
86a:444; 88e:78;
93c:28
q6&8
82b:83
q8a8c
49b:173
q9a2
90a:107; 07a:123
q9a3ad6
49b:307
q10a8ad8
86a:446, 447; 93c:48
q16a1c
49b:234
q17
97a:97
q17a4
97a:103
q17a5
97a:99
q17a5ad3
62a:79
q17a5ad4
62a:79; 71b:359;
93c:52; 97a:103, 106
q20a4ad1
88c:165
q21a1ad1
55b:73; 60e:94
q21a1ad4
92b:222, 223
q21a2
55b:69, 72, 82
q21a5c
49b:223
q21a5ad6
55b:72
q22a2ad1
88e:83; 07a:24
q22a5-6
40a:17; 76b:11
q22a10
73b:191
q22a11-12
40a:17
q22a13
40a:17, 18
q22a13ad2&8
40a:18
q22a15
40a:17, 18
q24a1-2
40a:17; 42a:33; 76b:11
q24a3
40a:17; 42a:33
q24a4
40a:18
q24a6ad1&5
40a:18
q27a1ad3
49b:213, 214, 248, 255
q27a1ad8
49b:192; 52b:80
De virt. in comm.
q2a7
93b:168; 93c:80

In De an.
la4
82b:83
la12fin
52c:96
II,L5
49b:325
II,L5n281
88e:70
II,L7
49b:336
II,L24n552-553
73b:191

In De caelo
Ic1L2n8
49b:220
Ic10L6n9
49b:321
Ic12L8n6
49b:230
In De div. nom.
c4L14
49b:241, 256; 52c:94, 95

c5L1
49b:129, 288, 232, 237, 293; 52b:80; 52c:94, 97

c13L1
49b:224, 228, 238; 52c:94

In De gen.
Ic3L8n3
49b:216

In De hebd.
lect2

lect3
49b:197

In De Trin.
q5a4ad4
49b:167, 172, 282, 333, 343

In Lib. de caus.
lect3
49b:242, 287, 294; 52c:97

lect4
49b:258, 260, 262, 311, 315, 317, 335; 52c:93

lect6
52b:77; 59d:81; 82a:63; 88e:65

lect6n68
03c:57

lect6n168
01b:300

lect9
49b:241, 242, 243, 258; 52c:94; 96a:143

lect12
49b:294; 52c:97

lect16
49b:243; 52c:94

lect20&22
57e:132

lect24
49b:298; 57e:132

lect25
49b:216

lect26
49b:248

lect30
49b:234

In Meta.
I,L10
82b:83

I,L10n154
49b:241, 318; 52c:94

I,L14-16
49b:307

II,L2
52c:93

IV,L2n6
74d:6

IV,L2n558
55b:79

IV,L6n606
55b:82

IV,L17n615
07a:56

VII,L3
49b:310

VII,L13n1588
49b:267; 52b:81; 52c:96

IX,L1n1770-71
49b:331

IX,L5n1823
49b:332

IX,L3,7,8
49b:165

XII,L1n2419
55b:72

In Phys.
Iic3L6n3
49b:306, 326, 330

IIic6L11n4
49b:220

VIIc10L21n9
49b:326, 330

VIIc10L21n12
49b:286; 52b:68, 75

VIIc10L21n13
49b:258, 286, 330; 52b:68, 75

VIIc10L21
52b:80

In Per.
lect5n30
55b:71; 60c:119

lect14n197
92b:226

In Post. an.
lect37n8
49b:315

In Sent.
Id4q1a1
82a:48; 86a:443; 88e:70; 92d:106

ld4q4a4 [Id4q1a1]
01b:34; 03d:535; 04b:442; 09a:228

ld5q1a1ad1
49b:194
In Symb.
Proemium
82a:56; 88e:75

In I Tim.
6:3 n268
01b:300; 03c:57

In II Cor.
3:17-18
93c:52

Lect. super Ioann.
Proemium
69a:24; 07a:42

Quaes. disp. de an.
a6c
49b:214, 284; 60e:93
a6ad2
49b:210, 250, 340
a12fin
49b:267, 291
a14ad3
49b:248
a17
83b:157; 02a:198;
07a:33
Quod.
IIq2a1(3)
49b:256; 52c:94, 95; 55b:73
IIq2a1(3)init
49b:242
IIq2a1(3)ad2
55b:79
IIIq2a1(3)
49b:228, 229, 245, 251; 52b:73; 88c:165
IIIq2a1(3)c
49b:265, 274, 314
IIIq3a1(6)
52c:97
IIIq8a1(20)
49b:228, 229, 245, 251; 52b:73; 88c:165
IIIq8a1(20)c
49b:266
IVq1a1c
49b:298
IVq3
96a:143
VIq1a1
49b:267
VIq1a1ad1
49b:177, 181, 239, 271; 52b:80
VIq1a3init
49b:199
VIIq3a7c
49b:340
VIIq4a10
49b:183
VIIIq1a1c
49b:274
IXq2a3
55b:72
IXq4a6c&ad3
49b:169
XLq1a1ad2
49b:202, 203; 52c:95
XIIq3a2(5)
49b:210, 215; 55b:79
SCG
1,13n35
92a:173
1,15
60b:252; 67a:946
1,15,Amp
89a:493; 90b:110; 07a:44
1,16
67e:633; 67f:1031
1,17
67f:1031
1,18
67e:633; 67f:1031; 74d:19; 00b:271
1,18init
49b:226, 290, 345; 52b:81; 52c:96
1,19
82a:52; 88e:83
1,22
67a:945
1,22,Amp2
49b:288, 290
1,23
49b:210, 250
1,26
67a:946; 74c:126
1,28init
49b:181, 210, 212, 221, 225, 232, 250
1,28,Amp1
49b:212, 221; 55b:69; 67a:946; 67f:1031; 01b:90; 07a:52
49b:343
1,28,Amp2
49b:322
I,32
52c:93; 01b:56
I,32,Amp
49b:240
I,32,Amp2
49b:221
I,37init
49b:222
I,38
49b:212, 221
I,38,Item2
49b:266
I,38n2
76a:141
I,39n6
49b:221
I,39,Item
49b:222
I,40
49b:212
I,41
49b:243
I,42n7
92a:173
I,43
49b:228; 52b:80, 81; 52c:94, 96; 59d:83; 67e:634; 67f:1031; 82a:46; 86a:443; 88e:70; 92b:213; 93c:6; 01b:34; 03c:59; 04b:441
I,28fin
49b:221
I,29n2
76a:141; 07a:79
I,30
66a:39
I,32
52c:93; 01b:56
I,32,Amp
49b:240
I,32,Amp2
49b:322
I,32n2&7
76a:141; 07a:79
I,37-41
49b:221
I,37init
49b:222
I,38init
49b:343
I,28fin
49b:221
I,29n2
76a:141; 07a:79
I,30
66a:39
I,32
52c:93; 01b:56
I,32,Amp
49b:240
I,32,Amp2
49b:322
I,32n2&7
76a:141; 07a:79
I,37-41
49b:221
I,37init
49b:222
I,38init
49b:343
I,28fin
49b:221
I,29n2
76a:141; 07a:79
I,30
66a:39
I,32
52c:93; 01b:56
I,32,Amp
49b:240
I,32,Amp2
49b:322
I,32n2&7
76a:141; 07a:79
I,37-41
49b:221
I,37init
49b:222
I,38init
49b:343
I,28fin
49b:221
I,29n2
76a:141; 07a:79
I,30
66a:39
I,32
52c:93; 01b:56
I,32,Amp
49b:240
I,32,Amp2
49b:322
I,32n2&7
76a:141; 07a:79
I,37-41
49b:221
I,37init
49b:222
I,38init
49b:343
I,28fin
49b:221
I,29n2
76a:141; 07a:79
I,30
66a:39
I,32
52c:93; 01b:56
I,32,Amp
49b:240
I,32,Amp2
49b:322
I,32n2&7
76a:141; 07a:79
I,37-41
49b:221
I,37init
49b:222
I,38init
49b:343
I,28fin
49b:221
I,29n2
76a:141; 07a:79
I,30
66a:39
I,32
52c:93; 01b:56
I,32,Amp
49b:240
I,32,Amp2
49b:322
I,32n2&7
76a:141; 07a:79
I,37-41
49b:221
I,37init
49b:222
I,38init
49b:343
I,28fin
49b:221
I,29n2
76a:141; 07a:79
I,30
66a:39
I,32
52c:93; 01b:56
I,32,Amp
49b:240
I,32,Amp2
49b:322
I,32n2&7
76a:141; 07a:79
I,37-41
49b:221
I,37init
49b:222
I,38init
49b:343
II,91
49b:249

II,93
49b:259; 52c:94

II,94
74d:9; 76b:2; 82a:54; 92c:106; 93c:90; 03c:59

II,95,Unde
49b:252

III,16-20
88e:83; 93c:24

III,18
01b:158

III,20,init
49b:212, 250

III,21
88e:83; 93c:24

III,25
86a:451

III,26
82a:61; 86a:451; 92c:106; 93c:92

III,27-37
86a:451

III,38
86a:451; 07a:41

III,39-48
86a:451

III,49
66a:39; 86a:451

III,50-53
86a:451

III,53,Nequ [III,54,Nequ]
49b:264

III,54-56
86a:451

III,56,Amp2
49b:210, 215

III,57-61
86a:451

III,64
86a:443; 92b:213; 93c:7; 03c:59

III,64 [In Sent. Id4q1a1]
92b:223; 00b:276

III,66,Adhuc,Amp2
49b:216

III,68
90a:107; 07a:123

III,68n14-15
07a:123

III,69
49b:308, 309; 52c:93; 55b:82; 03d:535

III,69 [III,64]
82a:48; 01b:34; 04b:442

III,70
55b:82

III,79
03c:59

III,81
93c:80

III,97
49b:214

III,113
74d:17; 82a:61; 86a:446; 87b:988; 88e:70; 92b:213; 92c:106; 93c:8; 99b:125; 00b:270; 01b:34, 129, 294; 03c:59; 04b:442

III,113n1
76b:2

IV,1
55b:82

IV,11
55b:86; 73b:191, 192

IV,13n10
82b:83, 84

Sermo V in Dom 2 Adventu
55b:82

ST
Iq1a6ad3
76a:147; 07a:88

Iq1a8ad2
53a:271

Iq1a9
02a:205

Iq2a3
67a:946; 73b:186; 92a:172; 07a:41

Iq2a3c
49b:282

Iq3
67f:1031

Iq3a4
67a:946

Iq3a4e
49b:210, 215, 345

Iq3a4ad2
49b:210; 66a:39

Iq3a6c
49b:339

Iq3a6ad2
49b:311

Iq3a7
52c:96

Iq3a7e
49b:266

Iq3a8c
49b:241

Iq4
67f:1031

Iq4-6
49b:221

Iq4a1ad1
49b:221

Iq4a1ad3
49b:210, 214

Iq4a2
49b:212

Iq4a2e
49b:221, 238, 239, 240, 250
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document References</th>
<th>Page References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iq105a4</td>
<td>I-IIq13a6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73b:204</td>
<td>76b:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iq105a5</td>
<td>I-IIq17a1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74d:17; 82a:61;</td>
<td>40a:110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86a:446; 92b:213;</td>
<td>I-IIq18a7ad3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93c:8; 99b:125;</td>
<td>49b:311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00b:270; 01b:129</td>
<td>I-IIq19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iq115a1c</td>
<td>97a:97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49b:312</td>
<td>I-IIq19a5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-II Proemium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86a:445; 93c:51;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04a:64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq1a1</td>
<td>I-IIq45a2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40a:82; 71b:358</td>
<td>76a:147; 07a:88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq2a6c</td>
<td>I-IIq52a1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49b:229, 245, 274;</td>
<td>49b:310; 52c:97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>315, 326</td>
<td>I-IIq77a1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq3</td>
<td>09a:212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86a:451</td>
<td>I-IIq94a2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq4a6ad3</td>
<td>92d:31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49b:181</td>
<td>I-IIq109a3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq6a2ad2</td>
<td>93c:94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86a:444; 88e:78;</td>
<td>I-IIq110a2ad3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93c:28</td>
<td>87a:392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq8</td>
<td>I-IIq114a2ad1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76b:11</td>
<td>92b:219; 93c:66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq8a1ad3</td>
<td>II-IIq23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60e:86</td>
<td>86a:450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq9-10</td>
<td>II-IIq25-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40a:17; 42a:33; 76b:11</td>
<td>86a:450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq9a6ad3</td>
<td>II-IIq26a1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90a:107</td>
<td>86a:450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq10a1-2</td>
<td>II-IIq26a3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76b:11</td>
<td>93c:94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq10a4</td>
<td>II-IIq27-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90a:107</td>
<td>86a:450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq11-12</td>
<td>II-IIq48a1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76b:11</td>
<td>57b:630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq13</td>
<td>II-IIq64a5ad3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40a:17; 42a:33; 76b:11</td>
<td>86a:444; 88e:78;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq13a1</td>
<td>93c:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40a:19, 112</td>
<td>II-IIq88a4ad1m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-IIq13a1ad2</td>
<td>76b:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40a:109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

367
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Clarke, William Norris, S.J. *See Appendix A*.


368


Freeman, K. Ancilla to the Pre-Socratics. Cambridge, MA, 1948.


———. “Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology.” *Communio* 17 (Fall 1990): 438-454.


