physicists and the fliers of nuclear bombers. We all have to face it. "Their" intention to make nuclear war is *our* intention, so long as we accept the system.

Today there are some heavily committed people in the peace movement—Christian women especially—who are there, going through all the misery of getting themselves arrested on demonstrations and so on, because this is the only way that they can cope with "the nuclear shadow" which they have found to be stripping every activity in life, even the rearing of children, of all real value. People as sensitive as this only make up a tiny minority. But the moral quality of everyone's life is radically altered for the worse by living with nuclear deterrents, whether one realises this or not, and whether one is sensitive or not.

So the peace question is not just the business of a few, but is everybody's business in a very personal sense. And that means it is part of the drama of everyday loving and surviving after all! Public persons and their executives talking generalizations about peace are bound nearly always to be boring, but let us scrutinise ourselves if we go on finding peace itself is a yawn-subject.

J.O.M.

The Need for Philosophy in Theology Today

Fergus Kerr OP

The text of a paper presented at the Upholland Theological Consultation, 25—27 April 1984, the gathering which founded the Catholic Theological Association of Great Britain.

With all the welcome emphasis, since Vatican II, on biblical studies, patristic ressourcement, the historical approach, the ecumenical dimension, pastoral and missionary relevance, and so on, there is still a need, in Catholic theology, for philosophy: that is the thesis to be ventilated here

With the tradition we have inherited, constructive theology is

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something that people have a right to expect from the Catholic community. There can be no constructive theology—because there can be no constructive thought on any matter of human concern—without a measure of philosophical reflection. Certainly, if theologians work in the belief that they are doing without philosophy, they will simply be the prisoners of whatever philosophy was dominant thirty years earlier—or 350 years earlier. For it is with Descartes that Catholic theologians have not yet settled their account. A great deal of theology today displays the marks of a certain Cartesianism.[1] That is why some of it is so popular. The philosophy which it was the main purpose of pre-Vatican II theology to exclude has never really been expelled. We failed to keep Cartesianism out of our system because we did not realize how deeply rooted inside the system it had been all along.

It is worth going into this here because it indicates one of the ways in which a more self-critical (and therefore more self-confident) Catholic theology might connect with some of the deepest arguments in Anglo-American philosophy today. There is always something worthwhile about a piece of theology when it connects with questions that interest non-theologians. It would surely make sense for a gathering and regrouping of intellectual energy round problems identified by Catholic theologians in Britain to be connected with themes and anxieties that are prominent in the local philosophical scene.

PHILOSOPHY IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES BEFORE VATICAN II

Students of Catholic theology, a quarter of a century ago, usually began by being immersed for two years in Scholastic Philosophy. The first year was devoted to Logic, Cosmology, and Rational Psychology. In the second year we turned to Metaphysics and Ethics.

Logic meant studying Aristotle's *Prior Analytics,* or the subject-matter of the same in some putatively simpler and more compact exposition. Ideally, students were being instructed, as learned men had been for two thousand years, to appreciate the power and elegance of Aristotelian syllogistic. A whole cast of mind was being inculcated. We were being inducted into a certain conception of theological discourse. Together with the skills necessary to derive a new truth from some pair of already known truths, we were being taught to acknowledge the primacy of *propositions.*

Cosmology meant studying Aristotle's *Physics,* or some version of the same. Thus we were introduced to the terminology of substance and accident, nature, essence and cause. Above all, we were being indoctrinated with a very different notion of *causality* from the Humean one dominant in our culture.

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Rational Psychology was the study of Aristotle's *De Anima:* the soul is neither the ghost in the machine (Ryle) nor the pilot in his ship (Descartes). It is the form of the body.

In the second year we turned to Metaphysics, which of course meant Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* or some derivative exposition of the Science of Being. This prepared the way for demonstrations of the existence of a certain unmoved Mover.

Fifthly, and lastly, we studied Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics.* This prepared the way for that moral philosophy which places so much emphasis on teleology, happiness and the virtues, as opposed to the Protestant-Kantian ethics that pervaded British Christianity in those days—the categorical imperative, duty, conscience, etc.

Some of the liveliest debates in Anglo-American philosophy today are to be found in these areas.

Hume's fork retains its power over the theory of what a proposition is—"If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion".[2] The Humean choice between tautologies and empirically verifiable propositions continues to exert its authority. Sabina Lovibond's remarkable book, *Realism and Imagination in Ethics,* is only the most recent of a generation of arguments against "non-cognitivism" in ethics and aesthetics. In effect, following Wittgenstein's later work, she refuses to confine the descriptive or fact-stating function to those parts of language that deal with natural-scientific subject-matter. Lovibond *argues* for what Scholastic Philosophy merely *assumed.*

Hume's doctrine of causality certainly dominates modern philosophy—"The truth of this conception is hardly debated. It is, indeed, a bit of *Weltanschauung:* it helps to form a cast of mind which is characteristic of our whole culture". With these remarks, Elizabeth Anscombe, widely recognized as one of the finest philosophers in the country, opened her inaugural lecture at Cambridge in 1971.[3] She conceives herself, in that lecture, as making a first attempt to break the hold that the Humean notion of cause has on the minds of people in our culture. In the same year, Georg von Wright, another of Wittgenstein's pupils, in his book *Explanation and Understanding,* sought to bring purpose and intentionality, teleology and finality, back into philosophical discussion of human behaviour.[4] He sketched out two main traditions. The first he dates from Galileo's writings in the early 1630's (the writings which made Descartes nervous of publishing his thoughts): this is what he labels the causal-mechanistic point of view in our efforts to explain and predict phenomena—over

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against what von Wright calls the Aristotelian tradition, which seeks to make facts teleologically understandable. It is not the detail of the argument that concerns us here but simply the fact that the notion of cause remains so contested in contemporary philosophy. It is still necessary to *argue* against the Humean notion.

Thirdly, in studying Aristotle's *De Anima,* or some potted equivalent, Cartesian dualism in the usual sense was being confronted. This is the idea of constructing or justifying the reality of the world of external objects (including other minds) from some initial deliverance or datum of private and inward and absolutely certain experience—*cogito ergo sum.* This is where students of Catholic theology remain most vulnerable to Cartesianism; it is also an area in which much lively controversy is going on in Anglo-American philosophy today.

To mention Anscombe again, her lecture on "The First Person", given in Oxford in 1974, has set off a vigorous argument.[5] She argues that the word "I" cannot be a referring expression at all because the only thing that the word could refer to would be the "Cartesian Ego". She insists, against the Cartesian tradition, that self-knowledge is knowledge of the human animal that one is, and introspection is but one method of gaining such knowledge and a pretty dubious one at that—"it may consist rather in the elaboration of a self-image than in noting facts about oneself". Once again it is the fact, rather than the details, of the argument that we need to notice. The self of which people think that they have direct and interior consciousness, particularly by way of introspection, remains in the centre of philosophical debate—often far away from any explicitly theological discussion.

We had not heard of "Process Theology" twenty-five years ago, but surely the whole movement—that anxiety about the mover whom we cannot move—has to do with the deep-seated fear that the "Being" of which Scholastic Metaphysics was allegedly the "science" must be opposed to "Becoming"—to "Life", then, and thus to change, the historical, etc. Much debated as this is in Anglo-American theology, it seems to have little or no resonance in contemporary philosophy.[6]

Fifthly, on the other hand, Aristotle remains the most favoured alternative in contemporary moral philosophy. Here again, Anscombe's famous paper, published in 1958, signalled the beginning of the modern reaction against Kantianism.[7] The best course, so she argued there, would be to stop doing ethics until philosophers had cleaned such notions as "action", "intention", "pleasure", etc. This one of the growth points. Apart from recent work by Anscombe herself, Stuart Hampshire, and others of that generation, one might mention the highly original and imaginative exposure of "interior

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volitionism'' by Brian O'Shaughnessy, in his two-volumed work *The Will.*

In other words: the philosophical issues central to the Scholastic curriculum twenty-five years ago remain very much alive at the growing edge of philosophy in this country today, although Catholic theologians have lost interest in them.

THE ATTEMPT TO REPEL CARTESIANISM

The history of Catholic theology since Descartes may be read as the history of resistance to Cartesianism. The struggle became increasingly deliberate and systematic after 1870, but it is surely clear that the attempt to neutralise Cartesianism by establishing Aristotelian Thomism was part and parcel of the restoration of the papacy at the Congress of Vienna and the general recrudescence of Catholic energy. It was all part of the response of the Catholic Church to the Enlightenment. From the condemnation of the works of Georg Hermes in 1835 to the encyclical *Humani Generis* of 1950, the Holy See conducted a long campaign of resistance to the infiltration of modern philosophy.

Hermes was a contemporary of Schleiermacher. The ''Father'' of modern Protestant theology reacted strongly against what he took to be the rationalism of eighteenth-century Protestantism. He sought to reconstruct Christian faith on the basis of an intuition or feeling of absolute dependence. Hermes, on the other hand, thought that theology must begin with methodical doubt of everything, including religion and religious experience. While Schleiermacher appealed to the indubitability of a certain feeling, Hermes started from Cartesian scepticism in order to demonstrate something of which we may be rationally certain. That is why his writings were condemned (posthumously)—although his followers occupied chairs of theology in the Catholic Rhineland for many years afterwards.

Some twenty years later, in 1857, the works of Anton Günther were condemned. Working in Vienna, with a circle of disciples also, he sought to reconstruct Catholic theology in the light of the Romantic philosophy of Hegel and Schelling. The writings of Hermes and Günther are part of the background to the debates at Vatican I which issued in the decree *Dei Filius.*

It might be said that Vatican I was the first collective attempt by the Catholic Church to respond to the challenge of the Enlightenment. In the decree *Dei Filius* the need for rational argument in natural theology was reaffirmed—while stopping short of rationalism. The decree *Pastor Aeternus,* on the other hand, insisted on the primacy of the ecclesiastical community over the religious experience of the individual. It is not difficult to see the Cartesian effects which these two decrees are intended to neutralise. The Fideism rejected by *Dei*

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Filius comes from that radical scepticism about the reality of the external world that is supposedly refuted by the argument that we infer or adopt the belief that it exists. The idea that there can be no authority in religious matters except the individual's personal experience goes with the Cartesian privilege awarded to the private consciousness that one allegedly has of oneself.

Aristotelian Thomism was supposed to keep such Cartesianism out of the system. It collapsed in 1962. There must be several reasons for this sudden failure. But the deepest reason for the unexpected failure of the long official attempt to resist the influence of Cartesian philosophy is surely that the resistance never went deeply enough. We prepared students of Catholic theology to refute other people's Cartesianism; we failed to identify the latent Cartesianism in every pious western Catholic's mind.

CARTESIAN EFFECTS IN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

The list might easily be extended, but consider the following examples of how deeply Cartesian much Catholic theology today evidently is.

1 Mentalism in prayer

The philosophical pictures immanent in theology sink very deep roots in people's sensibility. Very often, when devout Catholics say that they do not pray, it turns out after some discussion that mental prayer is the only real kind of prayer which they recognize—and their idea of mental prayer is tied to the picture of a steady stream of pious images passing before the mind's eye. When they are reminded of the plain fact with which they are of course perfectly familiar—that there are ways of praying in which what is going on inside the head may be of little or no importance—they are relieved to be delivered from this Cartesian picture of the mind at prayer. They come back into their bodies, so to speak. They remember that praying, in the sacramental liturgical Catholic tradition, whatever it may be elsewhere, is essentially corporeal and corporate—*incarnate.* Solitary meditation is as dependent upon physical participation in common prayer as private reflection is upon language. This Cartesian picture of the mind is not the only obstacle to the life of prayer, but its hold certainly shows how philosophy inside theology can affect ordinary people's lives.

2 Interiorist volitionism in moral theology

Let us quote Anscombe again.[8] She has insisted, in a paper published in 1961, that the principle of double effect is an essential part of Christian moral teaching. We are not always answerable for a predictable consequence of some action that we perform. There is a distinction between the *intended,* and the merely *foreseen,* effects of a

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voluntary action. At the same time, however, as she insists, "the principle has been repeatedly abused from the 17th century up till now". She continues as follows:

> "The causes lie in the history of philosophy. From the 17th century till now what may be called Cartesian psychology has dominated the thought of philosophers and theologians. According to this psychology, an intention was an interior act of mind which could be produced at will. Now if intention is all-important—as it is—in determining the goodness or badness of an action, then, on this theory of what intention is, a marvellous way offered itself of making any action lawful. You had only to 'direct your attention' in a suitable way. In practice, this means making a little speech to yourself: 'What I mean to be doing is...'".

She goes on to say that moralists who know that they are forbidden to justify the direct killing of the innocent argue that the devout Catholic pilot of the nuclear bomber can get round having to kill so many innocent people by assuring himself that he is doing so *praeter intentionem* —"I know a Catholic boy who was puzzled at being told by his schoolmaster that it was an *accident* that the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were there to be killed".

We can keep our interior intentions pure if we concentrate hard, even if the actions that we are performing seem pretty nasty and even downright wicked to people who "only see the outside". This "perverse doctrine", as Anscombe calls it, "has occasioned repeated condemnations by the Holy See from the 17th century to the present day". She gives examples from the errors of Laxism as condemned in 1679. But this "Cartesian psychology" is exactly what Brian O'Shaughnessy identifies as "interiorist volitionism"—and he has to argue very hard and with immense ingenuity to expose the source of the plausibility of the idea. It is a theory which helps to excuse the grubby self-deceptions of ordinary life. It is also very difficult to explain the theory of nuclear deterrence without invoking interiorist volitionism at some point. Philosophy in theology is not innocuous.

3 The post mortem "human I"

The Holy Office issued a letter in 1979 on some eschatological problems.[9] Inter alia, we were reminded that the Catholic Church is committed to the "continuation and subsistence, after death, of the spiritual element, endowed with consciousness and will, in such a way that, although lacking the complement of its own body for a while *(interim)*, the 'human I' itself subsists"—the "humanum ego" is placed in scare quotes in the original text. This is, of course, a question that interests and troubles ordinary people—what happens to

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us when we die? We cannot simply dismiss the question by telling them (ourselves) that we have no idea, it is all a mystery, etc. If the Holy Office theologians are reacting against theologians who prefer to eliminate the question, then their intervention is understandable. But the language just quoted, by which the Holy Office affirms our Catholic understanding of our destiny, is extremely difficult to interpret in any but a very Cartesian way.

For a start where did the Holy Office get the phrase "humanum ego"? Is this the Latin version of some French theologian's "je humain"? Did anyone think of such a phrase earlier than the 17th century? Thomas Aquinas, in his commentary on I Corinthians 15, argued that it is very difficult to defend the immortality of the soul if you prescind from faith in the resurrection of the body. "The soul, being part of a man's body, is not the whole man"—"anima autem, cum sit pars corporis hominis, non est totus homo". Thus St. Thomas continues: "My soul is not I"—"anima mea non est ego". His conclusion is as follows: "Even if my soul were to find salvation in some other life, neither I nor any man would do so"—"unde, licet anima consequatur salutem in alia vita, non tamen ego vel quilibet homo". On the face of it, then, the Holy Office's "human I" does not seem to be Aquinas's "I". But in any case—why the "*human* I"—as opposed to what other "I"? The non-human "I"?

Every Catholic theologian makes straight for the *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* when he or she is at a loss. As usual, the journey is worth the reward. The entry "Ich", by a certain A. Vetter, provides the following information, somewhat abbreviated and roughly translated. The "I" is "the centre of human (self) consciousness...as subject of intentional thinking and willing it can be distinguished conceptually from the soul, in the sense that the soul also includes states of feeling". We are finally referred to German Idealism but not before the following remark: "With Descartes, the 'I' conceived itself independently of the divine 'Thou' as autonomous act-centre of consciousness, excluding the external world together with its own body...with the Cartesian principle *cogito ergo sum* there is a dichotomy between inside and outside that is decisive for the whole of modern times". The writer goes on to mention Kant's transcendental ego as well as Fichte's self-positing ego, but, one way or another, the Cartesian Self emerges from the dehiscence of inside and outside as the greatest boon of modern times.

Anscombe's famous lecture on "The First Person" has been mentioned above. It is easy, as she suggests, to imagine a language without any first person inflexions. We could each use his or her own name, as indeed children are said to do. A sense of one's own identity would then come, not from any supposed developing "I"-consciousness, but from the impact upon one, day after day, of an endless

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variety of stimulations, caresses, threats, schooling, civilisation, etc. The temptation to say that one's identity springs from some inner private deliverance withers away. Peter Geach has argued, in his brief and beautiful paper on "Immortality", that a disembodied mind without sensuous experiences would not be a surviving human person—"anima mea not est ego". His conclusion is that there is no reasonable hope of surviving death unless we hold the Judeo-Christian hope of resurrection of the body.[10] Without our bodies we are simply not ourselves. It is our bodies that individuate us. Without our bodies we should not recognize one another. Without my body I could not be aware of myself. Such thoughts are, of course, open to argument—but the importance of explaining the Catholic doctrine without relying on a Cartesian (or Platonic) picture of the soul is surely incontestable.

4 Hans Küng's Cartesian presuppositions[11]

"The history of modern epistemology from Descartes, Hume and Kant to Popper and Lorenz has—it seems to me—made clear that the fact of any reality at all independent of our consciousness can be accepted only in an act of trust"—this amazing statement is to be found towards the end of Hans Küng's latest book, *Eternal Life?*[12] He is arguing at this point that it is not very strange for us to have nothing better than trust to found our belief in the existence of God upon—because, after all, we have nothing better than trust at the basis of our belief in the existence of anything outside our own minds. This is the line that Küng takes in his earlier book, *Does God Exist?* But surely there is something far wrong with the idea that it is up to me to make a decision in favour of the world's existence: this is radical scepticism, innocently but not innocuously.

Küng refers to Wittgenstein and other philosophers in the Anglo-American tradition, but he shows no sign of comprehending the anti-Cartesian programme which they have been conducting for nearly fifty years now. Deeply tempting as the thought may be, there is no room for us to *decide* in favour of the reality or intelligibility of things and people around us. If one is together with others in building a common life, collaborating on shared physical tasks, etc., from the very outset, the question of whether the external world really exists never has room to arise. But we are inclined to resist the idea that we depend so radically upon others. Many Catholic readers happily accept Küng's Cartesian presuppositions.

5 Peter Chirico's Cartesian epistemology

Peter Chirico's book, *Infallibility: The Crossroads of Doctrine*[13], is intended as a refutation of, and an alternative to, Hans Küng's writing on the subject. It is certainly one of the most enterprising

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works of speculative theology to have appeared recently. The subject interests people and is of great ecumenical importance. But consider the following two passages. When Chirico begins to set out the philosophical foundations of his theory he writes as follows (page 58): "No man can be more certain of anything than he is of his own self-awareness. The standard or limit of human certitude and human infallibility is that consciousness which one has of oneself". This thought comes straight from the final paragraph of the Second Meditation—'there is nothing more easy for me to know than my own mind". The name of Descartes is never mentioned in Chirico's book but the Cartesian presence haunts the text. Much of the best effort of analytical philosophy since Wittgenstein returned to Cambridge in 1929 has been concentrated on trying to persuade us that this certainty of one's own consciousness, far from being the initial datum, is the product of one's certainty of a whole variety of other things, such as that you will not fall through the floor when you open your bedroom door and the like.

Later on (page 76) Peter Chirico makes an even more Cartesian statement. He is explaining why the risen Christ is "unrecognizable as risen in our experience". By this he means that the Church "cannot identify the risen Christ present in its experience because the risen condition and mode of operation makes Christ inaccessible to human awareness". However *that* may be, it is the principle to which Chirico appeals that is so amazing—there is nothing odd about our being unable to recognize the risen Christ as risen—because "We never recognize or see another being in itself; we only recognize directly the effects of its activity towards us, activity that occasions the actualization of our experiential continua in a way we can consciously detect and isolate. Hence, for example, we identify the change in us as caused by the visible appearance, the barking, and the furry softness of the dog that enters the room". That is also very reminiscent of the same closing paragraph of the Second Meditation—"properly speaking we perceive bodies only by the understanding which is in us and not by the imagination or the senses...we do not perceive them through seeing them or touching them, but only because we conceive them in thought". Thus, when the doggy shape, the canine sound, the furry softness, enters the room, a change comes over one...But this is Bertrand Russell circa 1910, it is his godfather John Stuart Mill in 1843—material things as "permanent possibilities of sensation".

CARTESIANISM IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

Philosophers might be delighted to have such clear examples for the Cartesian *sottisier*. When you read the current literature on epistemology, you begin to wonder if it isn't all somewhat exaggerated—surely to goodness we have got over Cartesianism by

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now! And then you hit upon one more example, nestling inconspicuously in some unexpected place. The philosophy that many Catholic theologians rely on when they expound Catholic doctrine is often quite naively Cartesian. But Cartesianism is alive and well in the lush tracts of Anglo-American philosophy today—far away from any overtly theological concerns.

The "New Cartesianism", as John McDowell[14] has called it, far from being associated with self-consciousness, the egocentric predicament, the immateriality of the soul, etc., flourishes rather in the currently luxuriant debates about the prospects of "Cognitive Science", promoted by the "Artificial Intelligence" lobby. The internal states of information-processing machines have become the model for the mental states of creatures such as ourselves. Descartes conceived our minds on the model of angelic intellects (as Maritain noted long ago); the neo-Cartesians today compare them rather with electronic brains. The ghost in the machine has given way to the machine in the animal. If our mental activities once seemed a defective form of angelic intuition, they have now become an inefficient kind of calculation.

This new wave of philosophers expect dramatic progress in our understanding of cognition. They work closely with psychologists. They share the intellectual excitement of scientists who are engaged in building unbeatable chess programs into the most advanced computers. The "Defence Community" takes an interest in these advances in the "Artificial Intelligence Community". After all, a computer that plays chess unbeatably would also be good at missile control. Philosophy is no joke.

Representative works, both with ample bibliography, are *Thought and Object,* edited by Andrew Woodfield, and, at a more popular level, *The Mind's I,* edited by Douglas R. Hofstadter and Daniel C. Dennett (Dennett gave the John Locke Lectures in Oxford last year).

The story goes roughly as follows[15]. Mental states are simply computer states. Any system whatever that had the right program wired in would have mental states and processes in the same way as human beings have. Human brains just happen to be among the indefinitely large number of kinds of computers. The mind should be regarded as software—an abstract sort of thing whose identity is independent of any particular physical embodiment. Actual biological facts about actual human brains are irrelevant. You don't have to read very far in the characteristic writings of the new theorists of consciousness to meet strong feelings of dislike for the fleshy, palpable, easily pulpable things that human minds are. You feel that these philosophers would much prefer bodiless minds—computers that don't have to run on blood. Marvin Minsky speaks of human

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beings as "meat machines". The sooner we can do without the meat, and all the rest of the squalid human mess, the more successful our mental activities will be. The astonishing thing is that some of the finest of the younger generation of philosophers have to argue hard against the exponents of the New Cartesianism. The dominant view is, incredibly, that "mentation" is "independent of any particular embodiment". Such ideas could easily be documented. In fact it is unjust to Descartes to place them under his shade. When he wrote of his *cogitationes* he certainly meant far more than simply calculating and computing. He may have disembodied the mind but at least it was the mind that he disembodied.

But should Catholic theologians be surprised at the continuing attractions of this Cartesian view of the mind? Isn't it the ancient dream that intelligence is superhuman? Cognitive science is a theory of mind based on artificial intelligence—a philosophy of mind, then, that takes non-human intelligence as its paradigm. But is this not the old idea that thinking is something that happens independently of mortality, free of time and space, in some incorporeal metaphysical zone into which our muzzy brains barely rise? Right in the middle of one of the most contested areas in current Anglo-American philosophy one detects the age-old desire to get away from the way that every human body is endlessly dependent upon other human bodies, desiring them, feeding them, etc. The desire to think away the corporeal and the corporate—the deplorable incarnate plight—remains as powerful in our culture as ever. It is not only Catholic theologians who need to submit their thinking to the anti-Cartesian critique. If they were to remember their long struggle against Gnostic temptations, in one generation after another, they might even be well placed to play some small part in current philosophical debates.

CONCLUSION

It would not be enough to decree another return to Aristotle, or to his most celebrated Catholic disciple. Once already, Aristotelian Thomism failed to cure Catholic theology of Cartesianism. The failure might be explored at several levels. No Thomist was more famous than Père Garrigou-Lagrange OP. He died in 1965, having led the Dominican campaign against the "New Theology" of the 1940s and having had a certain brilliant young Polish priest among his pupils[16]. His first great book, *Le Sens Commun,* published in 1909, set out, in that feverishly anti-Modernist climate, the metaphysical principles upon which the rest of his writing and teaching depended. As he generously notes, he had been deciseively illuminated, in his reading of Thomas Aquinas, by what he had learned from a book by a certain A. Spir. The book was *Pensée et Réalité,* and it was the Frenchversion of *Denken und Wirklichkeit,* which appeared in 1873. Afrikan Alexandrovich Spir (1837—1890), the son of a Lutheran doctor in the Russian Ukraine and his Greek Orthodox wife, took part in

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the defence of Sebastopol as a naval cadet but, on inheriting the family money, spent the rest of his life writing philosophy. Towards the end he began writing in French, so we are told, because he wanted his ideas to be appreciated by the people most naturally attracted by clarity. He once said that Hume was the philosopher to whom he owed most. Only a few pages into the preface of his great book, however, we find Spir declaring that, as Descartes showed, "the only truth of experience of which we are immediately certain is the fact of consciousness". The Cartesian proof of the existence of God—"properly understood"—is the only one of any value. What we know as bodies is really only our own sensations, etc. It is astonishing that Garrigou-Lagrange felt so much at ease in the deeply Cartesian atmosphere of Afrikan Spir's writing—but there it is: the doyen of the Thomists owed far more to Christian Wolff, Leibniz, and Descartes than he can ever have realized[17].

Cartesianism lies deeply in our culture: the culture to which we belong. To disclose the Cartesianism inside Catholic theology and spirituality is to bring out our solidarity with the people around us. To practise a certain anti-Cartesian therapy in Catholic theology would be to join with many others in our society to remember the corporate and bodily dimensions of human life without which our humanity is forgotten.

1 "Cartesianism" is, admittedly, a blanket term, not to say a boo word: I mean the conception of the mind according to which thoughts are essentially private to the person who is having them—what we might call the mentalist-individualistic conception of knowledge (MICK for short).
2 Hume's *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, final paragraph.
3 Reprinted in G.E.M. Anscombe: *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind*, 1981, Chapter 13.
4 In fact von Wright pays tribute to Charles Taylor's *The Explanation of Behaviour*, which appeared in 1964.
5 *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind*, Chapter 2.
6 The book to consult might be *Trinity and Temporality*, by John J. O'Donnell SJ, 1983
7 Reprinted in G.E.M. Anscombe: *Ethics, Religion and Politics*, 1981, Chapter 4.
8 *Ethics, Religion and Politics*, Chapter 6.
9 *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, LXXI, 31 August 1979; frequently reprinted in various languages.
10 Peter Geach: *God and the Soul*, 1969, Chapter 2.
11 See, for more detail, my article "Küng's Case for God", in *New Blackfriars*, May 1984.
12 *Ewiges Leben?*, Munich 1982; ET London & New York 1984.
13 London, 1977.
14 In *The Times Literary Supplement*, 16 July 1982, page 774, reviewing the Woodfield volume mentioned below.
15 See John Searle, reviewing the Hofstadter-Dennett volume, in *The New York Review of Books*, 29 April 1982.
16 Karol Wojtyla's book, *The Acting Person*, published in Polish in 1969 and in the definitive English version in 1979, is, of course, quite explicitly anti-Cartesian in its epistemology from the first page of the preface.
17 See the article by M.D. Chenu, "Vérité évangélique et Métaphysique Wolfienne à Vatican II", in *Rev. Sc. Ph. Th.* 57 (1973)

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