
Theses

2012

Filial Relationship, Mercy and limitation in Thérèse of Lisieux: Towards a Thérésian
Theological Anthropology and its Implications

Judith Schneider
University of Notre Dame Australia

Follow this and additional works at: <http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses>



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
Copyright Regulations 1969

WARNING

The material in this communication may be subject to copyright under the Act. Any further copying or communication of this material
by you may be the subject of copyright protection under the Act.

Do not remove this notice.

Publication Details

Schneider, J. (2012). Filial Relationship, Mercy and limitation in Thérèse of Lisieux: Towards a Thérésian Theological Anthropology and its Implications (Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)). University of Notre Dame Australia. <http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses/74>

This dissertation/thesis is brought to you by ResearchOnline@ND. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of ResearchOnline@ND. For more information, please contact researchonline@nd.edu.au.



INTRODUCTION

Context and Purpose of the Study

Towards the end of the nineteenth century from the Carmel of Lisieux, France, Thérèse Martin wrote¹ of her experience of grace in “God’s merciful love toward human weakness.”² Pursuing her desire to be a great saint amid deeply felt limitation, she discovered Proverbs 9: 4, “Whoever is very little, let him come to me,” and Isaiah 66: 12-13, “As a mother caresses her child so shall I caress you,” which resonated with her experience of maternal love. She reasoned, surveying her failures, if by her own efforts she could not “grow up,” then God would have to stoop to her level.³ Interpreting Scripture in relation to her sense of impotence and smallness as these presented themselves,⁴ Thérèse envisioned her relationship with God in terms of who she was and what she was capable of – from wishing to impress God to ‘foolish’ degrees, to receiving God’s potency as her own, and finally, simply content to return his smile.

In *Manuscript A*,⁵ written in 1895 after suffering many painful limitations, Thérèse returns to her early years where she neither sees nor is concerned with her effort to reap a smile because she looks only at the smile she produced in the other.⁶ In *Man B*, Isaiah 66:12-13 and Proverbs 9:4 affirm the witness to herself as loved in infancy, allowing

¹This writing is comprised of three *Manuscripts: A, B, and C*. Thérèse addressed *Man A* to Mother Agnes of Jesus (her sister Pauline), *Man C* to Mother Marie de Gonzague, and *Man B* to Marie of the Sacred Heart (her sister Marie), at her request. Thérèse of Lisieux, *Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of St Thérèse of Lisieux*, translated by John Clarke, OCD (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1996), xiv-xviii. Hereafter, *Story of a Soul*. Thérèse’s autobiography is generally cited by its title alone, such as Augustine’s *Confessions*.

²A summary of Thérèse’s experience – in the words of John Paul II – in the Apostolic Letter promulgated at the bestowal of Thérèse’s doctorate in 1997, detailing her fulfilment of the *Positio*’s requirements. John Paul II, *Divini Amoris Scientia*, 8, 1997. <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2THERE.HTM> Accessed April 1, 2008.

³ *Story of a Soul*, 207.

⁴ Steven Payne, OCD, *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux: Doctor of the Universal Church* (New York: Alba House, 2002), 193.

⁵ Hereafter *Manuscript* will be abbreviated to *Man*.

⁶ “...the first memories I have are stamped with smiles and the most tender caresses.” *Story of a Soul*, xv, 17.

her to develop her understanding of the dynamics of grace⁷ and make the liberating quality of this image effective.⁸ She recalls the little one's freedom and value; it is free from the weight of self-judgment, and it finds value in the face of its mother. Returning to images of early efforts to please, and how the child's heart begins in life, Thérèse rediscovers her original desire to please (delight) and the irrepressible hope that this desire could be realized.⁹ The question of whether desire and hope alone were of any value could be answered here.

Thérèse saw the felt-limitation of her impotence and insufficiency not as eclipsed or removed by grace, but as the source of the dynamic of God's loving condescension, beginning a dance of mutual self-disclosure. She took the ordinary hindrance of human limitation, a source of self-deprecation in Jansenist piety and disdained by plaster-saint perfection, as the opportunity to partake of the delight of the filial privilege (remembered as a happy child-parent dialogue) offered by God. Symbolizing the poignancy and yet profound hopefulness in humanity's 'predicament', her image may be viewed as a valuable contribution to theological anthropology because "...if one posits that the offer of grace is given universally" (as Rahner does), "then the language of mysticism," to which Thérèse's imagery belongs, "must be seen as offering a possible interpretation of the whole of human experience."¹⁰ Thérèse's sense of filiality as transcendent (affirmed by Isa 66:12-13) made limitation, unbelief, and hope intelligible on an existential level.¹¹

⁷ *Story of a Soul*, 188.

⁸ 'Little' is specified by Thérèse with regard to childhood. *Story of a Soul*, 196-197.

⁹ This is based on Thérèse as already having discovered her "little way" by the time of writing *Man A*, and as here articulating it. De Meester, *With Empty Hands: The Message of Thérèse of Lisieux* (London and New York: Burns & Oates, 2002), 58-64. Pleasing is taken as 'delighting', distinct from 'placating'.

¹⁰ In full: "as offering a possible interpretation of the whole of human experience rather than simply describing particular ordinary experiences." Philip Endean, SJ, "Theology out of Spirituality: The Approach of Karl Rahner." *Christian Spirituality Bulletin* 3/2 (Fall 1995), 6-8, 7.

¹¹ Rahner's approach could be seen as "a kind of transcendental deduction, what must be the case if it is true that we human beings can experience God" – comparable to Kant's question, "what must be the case if every-day experience is to be possible?" Following this, we may view that spiritual experience resonates with dogmatic theology, as "realities implicit in and intrinsic to the reality we call God's self-disclosure [and] self-communication to human beings," articulate "what must be the case if human experience of God... is possible at all." Endean, 7.

Pope John Paul II describes Thérèse as offering a practical path to holiness through hope in “God’s merciful love toward human weakness,” helping to “heal souls of the rigours and fears of Jansenism, which tended to stress God’s justice rather than his divine mercy.”¹² Gradually the depth and fruitfulness of her insights have emerged, so that to constrain Thérèse to the issues of her time fails to do justice to the richness of her thought which addresses the fundamental issue of the nature-grace relationship in a novel way.¹³ While for a century it has been assimilated into Catholic theology towards its renewal, her thought is yet to be converted to a resource for systematic theology.¹⁴ The present research will attempt to do this by deriving a Thérésian theological anthropology from her writing, acknowledging that while it is not a presentation of syllogisms with explicit premises in a systematic analysis, her spontaneous yet purposeful recalling of her life celebrating God’s mercy in *Story of a Soul*,¹⁵ is nevertheless composed of logically patterned inferences, drawn from a reflection on her experience and from consistent motive and instinct.¹⁶

In support of such a project, Rahner argues that the study of Christian spirituality ought to be considered as a “resource for the renewal of fundamental theology.”¹⁷ Rahner cautions that Christian spiritual experience cannot represent an emancipation from theological dogmas, because in order to have, name, or study Christian experience there

¹² Thérèse contemplates that in God’s mercy “even his justice... seems to me clothed in love.” John Paul II, *Divini Amoris Scientia*, 8, 1997. “What a sweet joy it is to think that God is *Just*, i.e., that He takes into account our weakness, that He is perfectly aware of our fragile nature.” *Story of a Soul*, 180.

¹³ De Meester, *The Power of Confidence: Genesis and Structure of the “Way of Spiritual Childhood” of St Therese of Lisieux* (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1998), XXVIII.

¹⁴ Payne, *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux: Doctor of the Universal Church*, 219- 220. In her review of Payne’s book, Thérésian scholar Mary Frohlich states that Thérèse’s “core insight [‘the gradual recognition of her own radical weakness as creature and her accompanying “rediscovery” ... of a God who is all Merciful Love, who calls her to reciprocate that love “infinitely” by surrendering with love and confidence and “abandonment” of a child to the activity of God’s love within her, in the smallest details of her life’]... has yet to be fully received and reflected upon by systematic theologians.” A review for Alba House by Mary Frohlich RSCJ, from “Catholic Theological Union,” *New Theology Review*. <http://www.albahouse.org/Therese.htm> accessed on January 26, 2008.

¹⁵ De Meester, *The Power of Confidence*, LIV-LVIII. At LIV, “...with Thérèse, there is a correlation between testimony and existence.”

¹⁶ Payne, *Doctor of the Universal Church*, 194- 195,169.

¹⁷ The study of Christian spirituality ought not be isolated from Christian dogmatics but ought to be considered as a “resource for the renewal of fundamental theology.” Endean, “Theology out of Spirituality,” 6-8.

must be a commitment to a coherent theology.¹⁸ A “theological account of an experience insists that it be interpreted in terms of the triune God’s self-gift to the creation,” but what form that experience should take and how God is active in it emerges from the unstraightforward process of learning from experience – a sphere of activity represented by Christian spirituality.¹⁹ Due to the developing nature of human experience, what is known about God is permanently a preliminary knowledge, an incentive to explore further the reality of God.²⁰ We suggest that the developing nature of experience itself reflects God, thus its (psychological) dynamics should be brought into conversation with theology.

This study aims to explore Thérèse’s experience of God, reflecting an existence originating in God. It also aims to describe an understanding of grace where human limitation, experienced as *weakness* and *inability*, is attributed intrinsic value inasmuch as these are precisely the characteristics that enable a bond of filial love to flourish between the human parent and child. It hopes to confirm that human limitation is not a mark of deficiency, but that it is limited in order to be awakened to the privilege and delight of utter dependence on God who is merciful love, the occasion for turning to God in love and trust. A model of grace, based on Thérèse’s understanding of *capax dei*, unique in the use of her ‘child self’ as its image, will offer something new to fundamental issues in the grace-nature relationship.

Thus, we will examine the early experiences that Thérèse recounts, and characteristics of parental care toward the child, viewing these as informing her image of filial love in the God-human relationship. Suspecting that felt merciful care in infancy critically informs Thérèse’s analogy, we will seek to demonstrate that the consoling and liberating quality of Thérèse’s thought emerges from the primordial experience of herself as, before all else, loved, and that this serves to correct a lesser view of God’s concern for humanity (found in Jansenism). In parallel to early childhood experience, Thérèse trusted that God, as the origin of her desire, would also fulfil it. God himself was her potential to love. And since the desire to love underlay the desire to please,

¹⁸ Endean, “Theology out of Spirituality,” 7.

¹⁹ Endean, “Theology out of Spirituality,” 8.

²⁰ Endean, “Theology out of Spirituality,” 8.

failure to please God did not amount to failure to love God.²¹ God was her potential to love, and its opportunity was to be found in her limitation.

Methodology and Structure of the Thesis

In considering the methodology for this project, it must be remembered that the study of Christian spirituality is a relatively new academic discipline. Contributing significantly to its development are writers such as Walter Principe, Sandra Schneiders, Philip Sheldrake, and Kees Waaijman, and its standing as a discipline is represented by publications such as *The New Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, *The New Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* and the journal *Spiritus*.

Principe outlines Schneiders' thought on what is integral to the study of Christian Spirituality: via an interdisciplinary approach, particular Christian transforming experiences are described, analyzed, and constructively appropriated through a hermeneutic theory, to equip the student with knowledge of the examined transformation, to heighten their own experience of transformation, and to make this available to others.²² Mary Frohlich states it as: "the living and concrete human person in dynamic transformation toward the fullness of life."²³

Developments in Christian Spirituality as an academic discipline were also influenced by Bernard Lonergan's seminal work *Method in Theology*. *Method* approached the problem of a method for studying inner processes from the perspective of "intentionality analysis," based on the phenomenon of re-orientation in conversion.²⁴ Lonergan's thought regarding re-orientation in conversion was elaborated on by writers such as Robert Doran in *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation of the Human Sciences*, Mary Frohlich in her essay "Critical Interiority,"

²¹ The premise "God does not inspire unrealizable desires," is from St John of the Cross. De Meester, *The Power Of Confidence*, 98.

²² Walter Principe, "Christian Spirituality" in *The New Dictionary of Spirituality*, 938, 936.

²³ Mary Frohlich, "Critical Interiority," *Spiritus* 7 (2007), 77-81. 7, 78.

²⁴ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

and Joann Wolski Conn and Walter E. Conn in their essay “Conversion as Self-Transcendence Exemplified in the Life of St Thérèse of Lisieux.”²⁵

Schneiders and Waaijman, in their methodology for spirituality, incorporate Aristotelian categories of ‘material object’ (the *what* being studied – here ‘Spirituality’), ‘formal object’ (the *perspective from which* something is being investigated), and ‘how the object must be studied’ (linked to the *what*), consistent with those used in *Method* – tools used in substantialist ontology.²⁶ Analysing Spirituality by a process of categorizing, Waaijman develops a massive taxonomy. He identifies the forms to be found (Lay, Schools, and Countermovements), and then makes a “foundational investigation” into those forms, acknowledging and exploring past and present activity of spiritual reflection and study – needed “for the definition of the material and formal object of the study of spirituality and for the development of [a] methodology which fits this object.”²⁷ This leads to a methodological design based on three steps: starting with the Aristotelian epistemology of *diakrisis* and *phronèsis*, he chooses the science of phenomenology, which leads to four lines of research, Form-Descriptive, Hermeneutic, Systematic, and Mystagogic.²⁸

Under “Form-Descriptive Research,” for example, Waaijman lists three kinds (The Spiritual Biography, In-depth study of the three levels of description, and Descriptive research). In each, he offers examples followed by analytic commentary. Under “Spiritual Biography,” he gives the profile of the saint, and follows with how they

²⁵ Robert Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation of the Human Sciences* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, 1981); Joann W. Conn & Walter E. Conn, “Conversion as Self-Transcendence Exemplified in the Life of St Thérèse of Lisieux,” *Spirituality Today* 34/4 (1982), 303-311. The development of method with regard to psychic conversion is discussed by Tom Ryan, “Psychic Conversion and St Thérèse of Lisieux,” *The Australasian Catholic Record* 22/1 (2005), 3.

²⁶ Lonergan use of these categories preserves continuity with methods used in Catholic Tradition. See Schneiders’ use of “form” and “material” in Sandra Schneiders, “The Study of Christian Spirituality: Contours and Dynamics of a Discipline,” *Christian Spirituality Bulletin* 6 (Spring 1998), 3. Waaijman writes of defining spirituality in terms of its “material and formal object.” He suggests its “forms” as Lay, Schools of Spirituality, and Countermovement. They may be further categorized: in the light of praxis; viewed from within the discipline; Divine-human transformation its object; Discernment: a blueprint for its method; and Plan for its discipline. He lists Descriptive, Hermeneutic, Systematic, or Mystagogic, for its “how”, or “Method.” Waaijman, *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods*, 6-7.

²⁷ Waaijman, *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods*, 6.

²⁸ Waaijman, *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods*, 593.

reflect their context, epitomize elements of their time, or connect with a point of origin valued here, thus, ‘speaking’ to persons of that time.²⁹ He completes his analysis by noting that the profile material presented leads to the saint’s interior dimension: the figure described “is interpreted in terms of their relation to God. An attempt is made to lay bare the working of God in their life to make it accessible.”³⁰

Waaijman’s categories and subsequent analytical commentaries are of immense value and offer the background context of this study. This research method will follow his categories in broad lines in that it seeks to be familiar with the context of Thérèse’s spiritual writing, applies a scientific method which includes a phenomenological approach, notes accompaniment in psychological terms (the subject of “Mystagogy”)³¹ and relates its findings to systematic theology, and its praxis.

a. Research Question and Structure

In the light of these introductory considerations, we are in the position to articulate the research question guiding this project is:

What are the implications of Therese of Lisieux’s experience of filial love, mercy and limitation, psychologically, autobiographically and theologically?

Its methodology will be based on ‘filial love’ as an integrating principle in Thérèse’s thought, in the form of a core metaphor, intuitively employed as both its hermeneutic lens and investigative tool.³² Filial love [and its components of grace/mercy and

²⁹ Waaijman, *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods*, 602-621. At 617, Waaijman’s lists these as (1) a profile of the life to be described; (2) the contextuality; (3) the interior of the *vita*.

³⁰ Waaijman, *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods*, 621.

³¹ See Waaijman, *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods*, 869- 942. Here the accompanist will be a component of Thérèse’s self; her “True Self.”

³² The expression ‘core metaphor’ is used by Ormond Rush to describe an integrating principle. The core metaphor of “reception,” for example, uses “reception” as both a hermeneutic lens and an investigative principle, to uncover “reception” as an integrating principle, and to further open up new ways of understanding “reception.” See Ormond Rush, *The Eyes of Faith: The Sense of the Faithful and the Church’s Reception of Revelation* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 5-7.

limitation] will be applied in three forms, a process that provides the basic design of the study:

- a] *Psychologically*, using the models found in Sroufe, and McDargh,³³ and informed by Nevin's research [Chapters 2 and 3]; in addition the influence of Arminjon³⁴ will be explored [Chapter 4], as containing symbols Thérèse adopted, ones needing correction;
- b] *Autobiographically*, where it is the interpretative window through which Thérèse comes to understand God in the light of her life experiences [Chapters 5-6];
- c] *Theologically*, as a tool to explore the implications of Thérèse's interpretative account in terms of the theology of God and of the human person [Chapters 7-8].

The present research adopts a phenomenological and an interdisciplinary approach in investigating in what ways Thérèse draws from early experiences of mercy in childhood. It will draw on psychological theory, and include a component situated in systematic theology, where the findings from the phenomenological investigation will be interpreted – Thérèse's described will be experience explored in existential terms. The research, thus, is situated in the arena of Christian spirituality as delineated by Kees Waaijman, namely, the study of the "dynamic process" of one's "inner core" in relation to "ultimate reality" fostered by means such as "prayer," and the intersection of this activity with other social disciplines such as psychology and theology.³⁵

As the research will first try to show a connection between Thérèse's early childhood experience of mercy and her little way, its primary focus will be on Thérèse's

³³ Alan L. Sroufe, L. *Emotional Development: The Organization of Emotional Life in The early Years*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. John McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion: On Faith and the imaging of God* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983).

³⁴ Charles Arminjon, *The End of the Present World and the Mysteries of the Future Life*, translated by Susan Conroy (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press), 20008.

³⁵ Kees Waaijman, *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods*, translated by John Vriend (Leuven, Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2002), 4-5.

autobiography and correspondence.³⁶ Attention will be given to John Clarke's 1996 translation of Thérèse's autobiography comprised of the three manuscripts, A, B, and C.³⁷ This text will be supplemented by Thérèse's letters.³⁸ Her "last conversations" recorded by her sisters Pauline and Celine will be treated as a secondary source.³⁹ Biographies recounting Thérèse's family life and the chronology of her life events will be used to contextualize Thérèse's psychic and spiritual development, namely by Nevin, Görres, Piat, and Furlong.⁴⁰ These studies reconstruct her activity in the light of her reflection and examination of a lived life, her thought and spiritual teaching.

b. Use of French-Text Sources

With regard to the language of sources, three practices may be observed in Thérésian scholarship. Scholars, such as Mary Frohlich, Constance Fitzgerald, and Joann Wolski Conn, writing for English audiences, use Clarke's English translation of Thérèse's autobiography and letters. French speaking authors such as Conrad de Meester, Jean-Francois Six, and Guy Gaucher, writing to a French audience, use her original French text. The English translations of their works, however, retain none of Thérèse's French text. Classicist scholars such as Thomas Nevin and Richard Burton, interested in

³⁶ Poetry will be drawn from *The Poetry of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux* translated by Donald Kinney (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1996).

³⁷The research will use John Clarke's English translation of the 1996 edition of Saint Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Saint Face, *Histoire d'une Âme: Manuscrits Autobiographiques* (France: Éditions du Cerf & Desclée de Brouwer, 1972), and will use this French edition when looking at the original French text.

³⁸ *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux: General Correspondence Volume I, 1877-1890*, translated by John Clarke OCD (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1982); *Letters of Thérèse of Lisieux: General Correspondence Volume II, 1890-1897*, translated by John Clark (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1988).

³⁹St Thérèse of Lisieux, *Her Last conversations*, translated by John Clarke (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1997). Six argues that Mother Agnes' compilation of Thérèse's words in *Last Conversations* is Mother Agnes' own accentuation of Thérèse's words which conforms to Mother Agnes' spirituality. Jean-François Six, *Light of the Night: The Last Eighteen Months in the Life of Thérèse of Lisieux*, translated by John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1995), 5, 1-18.

⁴⁰ Ida Gorres, *The Hidden Face: A Study of St Thérèse of Lisieux* (New York: Pantheon, 1959); Stephan-Joseph Piat, *The Story of a Family: The Home of the Little Flower* (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1947); Monica Furlong, *Thérèse of Lisieux* (USA: Pantheon Books, 1987); Thomas R. Nevin, *Thérèse of Lisieux, God's Gentle Warrior*. Oxford; New York: University Press, 2006). Further biographical material is taken from *Celine Sister Geneviève of the Holy Face: Sister and Witness to St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus* by Stephane-Joseph Piat, OFM (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997); *Light of the Night* by Six; *The Passion of Thérèse of Lisieux* by Guy Gaucher (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2006); *Storm of Glory* by John Beevers (London: Sheed & Ward, 1949); *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux* by Kathryn Harris (Great Britain: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2003); Peter Thomas Rohrbach, *The Search for St Thérèse: A Study of the Life, the Legend, the Mystery of Thérèse of Lisieux* (New York: Hanover House, Doubleday, 1961).

exposing their reader to the French text, devote considerable space to placing French and English texts side by side. This research will use Clarke's English editions of Thérèse's writings, and include her original French words, phrases, and sentiments, where a nuanced sense is critical.

Literature Review

*a. Developing Thérésian Scholarship*⁴¹

Much was written in response to *Story of a Soul* at a "time when Thérèse's writings were not accessible "in their original version," often satisfying instead the hagiographer's own motive and piety.⁴² The 1949 critical edition of Thérèse's letters gave rise to a response more in tune with her intended meaning resulting in a fruitful and more authentic Thérésian theology. In 1956 the complete original text of the three autobiographical manuscripts brought about a turning point in Thérésian studies while prompting responses with two extremes.⁴³ The first saw changes in the new text as so insignificant that they would have no real impact on Thérésian thought.⁴⁴ Alternatively, what was said previously regarding Thérèse was seen as simply incorrect, a position taken by Jean-François Six who argues that Pauline (Mother Agnes) superimposes her own spirituality in her corrections and assemblage of *Story of a Soul*. De Meester adopts a middle position (he suggests) which holds that Pauline's censorship left Thérèse's message substantially unchanged, but added a "wealth" of historical and psychological detail.⁴⁵

Before exploring the far-reaching effects of this wealth of material, we note two significant post-Second World War works by Görres and von Balthasar that involved a phenomenological examination of Thérèse's life, addressing her as theologically

⁴¹ This summary draws from De Meester's review. De Meester, *The Power of Confidence*, XIII-LXV.

⁴² De Meester, *The Power of Confidence*, XXXIV.

⁴³ De Meester, *The Power of Confidence*, XXXV.

⁴⁴ De Meester suggests Görres as an example of this second position. De Meester, *The Power of Confidence*, XXXV-XXXVI.

⁴⁵ De Meester, *The Power of Confidence*, XXXV-XXXVI.

substantial.⁴⁶ Görres sought to “extract” Thérèse “from the kitsch and [restore] her to the truth,” while von Balthasar strove to identify Thérèse as exceptional by virtue of her realizing a theological mission which though expressed in her own person urged her to go beyond herself.⁴⁷ Von Balthasar argued that Thérèse responded to a call to mission which transcended her person.⁴⁸ Görres, concerned with Thérèse’s unfolding path in terms of “fidelity to [her understanding of] sanctity” and ‘hiddenness’, provides psychological insights with regard to experience, symbol, and fidelity. Von Balthasar, however, argues that Görres does not emphasise enough Thérèse’s deeply and urgently felt theological mission and the significance of the spiritual way she lived and wanted to make known (his focus). Nevertheless, their works converge in von Balthasar’s observations: “Truth is the touch stone of Thérèse’s love... a witness to the light of God illustrating the farthest reaches of one’s being. Her whole life becomes an exposition to the unique truth within her.”⁴⁹

As noted earlier, De Meester and Six responded to Thérèse’s authentic text. De Meester states he undertook to find the origin of Thérèse’s “way,” because previous studies, primarily aiming to nourish piety, were not committed to uncovering its structure and fell short of analysing it comprehensively.⁵⁰ He then attempts to show a historical progression in Thérèse’s thought, tracing her searching and the formulation of her “little way” as a cohesive journey, linking events and ideas through attention to chronology, context, textual accuracy – ascertaining a ‘way’ continuous at least from the end of 1894.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Thérèse: The Story of a Mission* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1954). In his introduction, von Balthasar writes that Görres does not treat Thérèse as theologically substantial in *The Hidden Face*, finding her psychological approach lacks a theological perspective. Rohrbach argues that Görres allows her German cultural bias to colour her interpretation of Thérèse in viewing her strength as transcending her stifling French context. Görres “is disenchanted with... French Catholicism of the late nineteenth century,” and attributes Thérèse’s greatness to a “breakthrough,” to “a radical departure from French thinking.” Peter-Thomas Rohrbach, *The Search for Saint Thérèse*, 22, 24.

⁴⁷ De Meester, *The Power of Confidence*, XXXV; Von Balthasar, *Thérèse: The Story of a Mission*, xxi.

⁴⁸ Oakes and Moss, *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 81.

⁴⁹ Von Balthasar, *Thérèse: The Story of a Mission*, 3, 4.

⁵⁰ De Meester, *The Power of Confidence*, XXXVI.

⁵¹ De Meester, *The Power of Confidence*, 268.

De Meester finds Thérèse's "little way" – developing as awareness of her powerlessness increased – is characterized by audacious confidence in God's mercy toward littleness (her felt impotence and insufficiency).⁵² God supplies (her) love for God.⁵³ By experiencing the chasm between her desire to love and its expression, Thérèse was exposed to the radical poverty of human love.⁵⁴ Despite suffering the helplessness of this, she was not overcome by self-dissatisfaction, but she offered God "her empty hands," confident in divine mercy.

Though affirming Thérèse's bold confidence in mercy, and noting this as characteristically filial, de Meester does not explore any connection between Thérèse's childhood and her filial imagery.⁵⁵ Instead of the image of herself as child, which this research project will argue is pivotal in conveying the dimensions of condescension toward the weak one, de Meester employs the symbol: "two pillars of a bridge."⁵⁶ Despite describing Thérèse's way as "the abandonment with total confidence to infinite mercy," as "the surrender of the little child without fear in its Father's arms,"⁵⁷ and asserting that the little one "must act with a 'loving audacity,' with an entirely filial confidence,"⁵⁸ he invokes Péguy, John of the Cross, Thomas Aquinas, and Paul's writing on the nature of confidence, where, in an absence of it as a *filial* dynamic, he

⁵² De Meester, *The Power of Confidence*, 230-231, 285.

⁵³ De Meester, *The Power of Confidence*, 351. De Meester describes the following process. Believing for love to be love it must be expressed, Thérèse strove to love God by offering God her goodness, but came to discover she had no goodness other than her desire to love God. She held that "love is repaid by love alone," (*Story of a Soul*, 195), however her desire to repay Jesus' love was of an infinite proportion and could not be realized by her own power. Determining that her desire for God was God's own aim in her, Thérèse looked to God to supply what was necessary to bring it to fruition, "He [God] will be very much embarrassed in my case. I haven't any works. Well then. He will reward me according to his own works." De Meester, *With Empty Hands*, 59, 114.

⁵⁴ "From desire to despair that is the fate of all men." Bernard Bro, *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux: Her Family, Her God, Her Message* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996) 179-180. Six applies this sequence to the experience of *belief*.

⁵⁵ De Meester states, "Thérèse looks at the image of the child through her own experiences of a very good and well-behaved child. To analyze this image would take us afield." De Meester, *Power of Confidence*, 339.

⁵⁶ De Meester, *Power of Confidence*, 227.

⁵⁷ De Meester, *Power of Confidence*, 273.

⁵⁸ De Meester, *Power of Confidence*, 275. *Letters of St. Thérèse: Volume II*, LT 247, 1132-1134.

simply explains that confidence is not static.⁵⁹ Thérèse's image of herself as child, a present example of this dynamism, is passed over.

Six, alternatively, centres on Thérèse's experience of doubt as to the existence of heaven and how, through this, she comes to participate in the drama of the atheistic humanism of her time, to discover the true enemy, and the cause of Godlessness. Six argues that her experience enables her to challenge "the vague and deceitful categories that people try to establish: bad believers, agnostics, the indifferent."⁶⁰ This experience, he asserts, representing the universal experience of doubt,⁶¹ was made possible from within the shelter of Carmel because doubt can only occur in the believer.⁶² It should not be said, "Thérèse does not doubt, but rather believes;" instead, it should be said, "Therese doubts *and* believes," for it is precisely in the face of doubt that "her stubborn trust, her obstinate abandonment, her love and [her] joy remain."⁶³ Six views an existential experience of unbelief as representing the helplessness that Therese endures for the sake of love; it is to this that she applies God's mercy, and it is from this that trust in God's acceptance of human insufficiency wells up within her. For Six, a focus on 'child' follows a secondary aspect of her thought which, without paying due attention to the implication of Thérèse's trial of the night of faith, cannot properly reflect the Christian hope which it claims to reflect.⁶⁴ He prefers a sustained attention to her trial of doubt, finding Thérèse's expression of faith and charity in the midst of an experience of unbelief the "verve" and newness which overturns Pauline's more traditional spirituality.⁶⁵

Six asserts that Thérèse's "indifference to reward or punishment" in the midst of her night of faith demands a radical interpretation of her way:⁶⁶ in surrendering herself to

⁵⁹ De Meester, *Power of Confidence*, 313-321.

⁶⁰ Six, *Light of the Night*, 176.

⁶¹ Six, *Light of the Night*, 174.

⁶² Six, *Light of the Night*, 174.

⁶³ Six, *Light of the Night*, 172.

⁶⁴ Six, *Light of the Night*, 170.

⁶⁵ Six, *Light of the Night*, 184.

the powerlessness of unabating feeling of unbelief, while at the same time expressing hope in God's reality, Thérèse subverts the categories of "bad" faith present in her time, upheld by her sisters. He argues that the sisterly corrections of Thérèse's writing⁶⁷ re-worked notions into her spiritual thought⁶⁸ supporting an insipid theology of redemption which emphasized a fearful and hesitating response to God (reparation for the faults of sinners).⁶⁹ Of particular importance to Six is Thérèse's unhesitating acceptance of unity with sinners (sharing in their unbelief) and Thérèse's desire to bring the sinner home rather than condemn him.⁷⁰

Six and de Meester appear to agree that Thérèse responded to God out of confidence in God's merciful love, rather than out of a spirit of timidity, but they differ in *what* Thérèse saw as weakness, and how radically she departed from tentative hope for a merited heavenly reward which included fear of being denied that reward.⁷¹ Where de Meester treats her "trial of faith" as just one contribution to her 'receiving God as a child' resolution, Six argues that the last eighteen months of Thérèse's life, her "trial," is central to understanding Thérèse's sense of helplessness; her spirituality must be read primarily through this.⁷² In different ways, both writers assert Thérèse as finding that to love God did not mean first and foremost to *be* someone good,⁷³ counteracting "the noble but dangerous illusion of the Stoics and the Jansenists" that it was necessary to be good in order to approach God.⁷⁴ De Meester's description of Thérèse's "little way" as confident hope in God's tender mercy toward human weakness might be brought into conversation with Six's insights, by examining the presence and quality of the child's

⁶⁶ Six, *Light of the Night*, 6-8.

⁶⁷ Görres states: "several thousand cuts." Görres *The Hidden Face*, 25.

⁶⁸ Six, *The Light of the Night*, 7.

⁶⁹ Six, *The Light of the Night*, 184. Six shows this spirituality as subverting Thérèse's by contrasting Pauline's timid reparation spirituality (which he traces to Mother Thérèse of Jesus) with Thérèse's promotion of the law of love which replaces the law of fear. 5, 7.

⁷⁰ Six, *The Light of the Night*, 3.

⁷¹ Six, *The Light of the Night*, 5.

⁷² Six, *Light of the Night*, 21-73.

⁷³ Good as the one who offers "great actions" of sacrifice in Ps 49 rather than "surrender and gratitude." *Story of a Soul*, 188.

⁷⁴ Bernard Bro, *Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*, 179.

audacious trust. A focus on Thérèse's sense of helplessness, resulting in her attitude of "open hands" (de Meester) complements Thérèse's identification with "sinners," and her sense of belonging to their circumstance and sharing with them God's judgment as merciful (Six).

b. Writers in Spirituality: Lonergan and Thérèse's Text

Bernard Lonergan, observing the trend to view the human person as constructing meaning through symbols which unfold historically, set forth a new way of studying a person's interior activity toward ethical action. Lonergan provided a science of consciousness by developing a method based on interiority as the place and process where a person is self-transcendent.⁷⁵ This underlies Mary Frohlich's description of interiority as "self-awareness in the midst of the operations of our consciousness" and "critical interiority" as the organism for transformation.⁷⁶ Elaborations of these principles, in some cases formulated with Thérésian analysis in mind, have been applied to Thérèse's autobiography, (understood as an integration of memories and layers of reorientation toward God). Frohlich offers an important study of symbol in Thérèse's inner conversion⁷⁷ where its use in Thérèse's identification with Jeanne d'Arc is "an event of spiritual self-knowledge occurring in three dimensions: history, memory, and interiority ... History deals with what happened; memory deals with meaning, and interiority deals with communion."⁷⁸ Frohlich shows how Thérèse through the symbol of the story of Jeanne d'Arc reinterprets her mission at different stages in her life.

⁷⁵ Lonergan notes this in Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972). Tom Ryan SM. "Psychic Conversion and St Thérèse of Lisieux," *The Australasian Catholic Record* 22/1 (Jan 2005), 5.

⁷⁶ Mary Frohlich, "Critical Interiority," *Spiritus* 7 (2007), 77-81.

⁷⁷ Mary Frohlich does this in "'Your Face is my Only Homeland': A Psychological Perspective on Thérèse of Lisieux and Devotion to the Holy Face" in *Theology and Lived Christianity* edited by D. Hammond (23rd. Publications, 2000) and "Thérèse of Lisieux and Jeanne D'Arc: History, Memory, and Interiority in the Experience of Vocation," *Spiritus* 6/2 (Fall 2006). Frohlich argues that the Holy Face is the 'root metaphor' unifying the images of Thérèse's spirituality. This particular image of the Holy Face evokes the 'wounds' of absence and the transforming moments of presence in her life and in her image of God. This image certainly has the characteristics of the images and symbols discussed here. See Mary Frohlich, "'Your Face is my Only Homeland,'" 177-205.

⁷⁸ Mary Frohlich, "Thérèse of Lisieux and Jeanne d'Arc: History, Memory, and Interiority in the Experience of Vocation," *Spiritus* 6/2 (2006), 173.

Through this example she discusses the validity of interpreting the past with a “scaffold of meaning which was subconsciously present.”⁷⁹

Studies by Fitzgerald, Wolski Conn, and Astell provide further insights into Thérèse’s use of symbol, and help in the research’s methodology. Fitzgerald’s treatment of a particular symbol, the “regarding” face,⁸⁰ focuses on the image of child as valued by the mother’s mirroring face. Investigating symbols that Thérèse uses which might address the contemporary context, Fitzgerald explores Thérèse’s understanding of God’s love as a ‘mother’s regard’ which Thérèse receives and then gives.⁸¹ Through her (M)Other’s original regard for her, and uniting herself to God’s motherly regard, Thérèse’s benevolent love flows to others.⁸²

Wolski Conn and Astell offer perspectives on the subject of ‘little’ and ‘child’ in Thérèse.⁸³ Wolski Conn, viewing ‘littleness’ as representing maturity in terms of self-transcendence, is concerned to show it as not connected with a facile notion of childhood. Using a paradigm of self-development, she shows Thérèse’s activity (in being ‘little’) reflects spiritual maturity. Alternatively, Astell, takes up Levinas’s concept of responsible “facing.” Seeking a confluence between two ways of facing, she compares Levinas’ view of the child as the other for whom one is responsible, and Thérèse’s idea of the child as one who calls forth responsibility from the other.⁸⁴ Thérèse is prepared to remain facing as a child, her smile a child’s gift, whose value lies

⁷⁹ Frohlich, “Thérèse of Lisieux and Jeanne d’Arc,” 179.

⁸⁰ Constance Fitzgerald, “The Mission of Thérèse of Lisieux,” *The Way Supplement* (Summer 1997), 74-96.

⁸¹ Fitzgerald takes “regard” from the French *un regard*, following Marianne Hirsch and Ronnie Scarfman’s work, to “mean both the look or gaze, and one’s appearance... one’s face. It further signifies being face to face as if one were looking into a mirror and considering the face on which one gazes and... by extension the word ‘regard’ indicates esteem.” Fitzgerald, “The Mission of Thérèse of Lisieux,” 74-76, 86.

⁸² Chodorovian psychologists in relation to the “dual unity of the female vision” have coined the word (M)Other. We find the word also a useful way to include both Rose and Zelig as Thérèse’s ‘mothers’. Fitzgerald, “The Mission of Thérèse of Lisieux,” 76.

⁸³ Joann Wolski Conn, “Rereading Spiritual Classics Thérèse of Lisieux: Far From Spiritual Childhood,” *Spiritus* 6/1 (2006), 68-89. Ann W. Astell, “Facing Each Other: Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and Emmanuel Levinas,” *Spiritus* 4/1 (Spring 2004), 24- 43.

⁸⁴ Thérèse takes God hostage by expressing confidence in his merciful response to her. Astell, “Facing Each Other,” 29, 32-33, 37-40.

in the hope that God's grace will transform it into potency without a "from above" (adult) understanding of how this will occur.

To explore Thérèse's sense of self, mercy, and God, the research will include studies on 'self' development (developmental psychology), and 'God' development (psychoanalytic object relations theory). Vitz and Lynch dedicate a study to Thérèse's psychological development in terms of Bowlby's "circle of security," needed by the child for normative development.⁸⁵ Listing signs of separation anxiety in Thérèse, they suggest how this was used by Thérèse "as a positive source for motivation in her search for and response to God."⁸⁶ We will examine the quality of "secure" attachments that preceded the losses which may be understood as underpinning (amid Thérèse's radical weakness) the formulation of the little way. This entails noting norms in early childhood development, with particular attention to the dynamic produced by the infant's weakness in relation to the parent. The research will use writings that Vitz and Lynch draw from, especially that of emotional-development researcher, Alan Sroufe.⁸⁷ Sroufe's view that early development is organized and integrated by affect will be used to describe and evaluate Thérèse's developing affective life, in particular, her sense of love and mercy. McDargh's study on religious development (incorporating authors such as Niebuhr, Macmurray, Freud, James, Winnicott, and Rizzuto) will provide the method for analysing how Thérèse's early senses (affective knowing) motivates her search for, and response to, God. Finally, socio-historical psychoanalytic explorations of Thérèse by such as Jacques Maître and Pierre Mabile, will be accessed through Richard D. E. Burton in *Holy Tears, Holy Blood*.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Paul C. Vitz and Christina P. Lynch, "Thérèse of Lisieux from the Perspective of Attachment Theory and Separation Anxiety," *The International Journal For the Psychology of Religion* 17/1 (2007), 61-80. At 61, "Circle of security," used by Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, identifies the shape of primary attachments.

⁸⁶ Vitz and Lynch, "Thérèse of Lisieux from the Perspective of Attachment Theory and Separation Anxiety," 61.

⁸⁷ Alan Sroufe, *Emotional Development: The Organisation of Emotional Life in the Early Years* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Sroufe affirms much of the classic paradigm of John Bowlby. *Volume I Attachment* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1969).

⁸⁸ Richard D. E. Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood: Women, Catholicism, and the Culture of Suffering in France, 1840-1970* (USA: Cornell University Press, 2004), 20-61, draws from these two untranslated French works. Jacques Maître, "L'Orpheline de la Bérésina," *Thérèse de Lisieux (1873-1897): Essai de psychoanalyse socio-historique* (Cerf, 1996), and Pierre Mabile, *Thérèse de Lisieux* (Editions Allia, 1996).

In its evaluation of Catholic anthropology, the research will investigate the writings of Augustine and Aquinas via commentaries offered by such as Stephen Duffy, Roger Haight, Neil Ormerod, William James, observations by Mulcahy (with respect to de Lubac) and McArdle (with respect to John Macmurray). After naming de Lubac, Lonergan, Rahner and von Balthasar as representing post-Thérèsian anthropologies, it will compare Thérèse's thought with Lonergan's and his influence in such as Wolski Conn. It will also compare her thought with Hans Urs von Balthasar's.⁸⁹

Figurative language in Thérèse's Writing

De Meester's list of precautions with respect to chronology, varying meanings for words, and evolving images will be observed,⁹⁰ and for critical terms, the original French will be offered. As Thérèse's writing involves figurative language (peculiar to her religious context), we will define the terms "image", 'metaphor', 'analogy' and 'symbol', focusing on their distinctive characters, as what they entail can overlap in a complexity of ways. All denote a comparison of one thing to another, but in different ways and with varying effects. Each will be illustrated through Thérèse's own figurative use of the flower.

The 'image' evokes through some representation (by any means) the impression of a quality or qualities.⁹¹ In her prologue, Thérèse uses the rose to convey its classical image. In its beauty, size, fragrance, complexity, and depth of colour, the rose is taken to mean the most splendid of flowers; it connotes full fragrant splendour.⁹² The 'metaphor' involves an implicit transfer *metapherein* (the verbal form of 'metaphor') of the incidental qualities of one thing to another (to some degree unrelated) thing.⁹³

⁸⁹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, tr. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991).

⁹⁰ De Meester, *The Power of Confidence*, LIII- LXIV.

⁹¹ For example, Thérèse describes (in her journey to Rome) how her tall and handsome white-bearded father in his dignified bearing gave the appearance of a gracious aristocrat. *Story of a Soul*, 124, 127.

⁹² *Story of a Soul*, 14.

⁹³ *Metapherein* means 'to transfer'. Such a transfer is made explicit in the 'simile'. See Margaret Quane, *The Life and Writings of St Therese of Lisieux: contributions to contemporary understandings of the Relationship between Faith and Sin*, 2008. Thesis submitted for Doctor of Philosophy at ACU, 40

Thérèse uses a field flower to describe a small soul. Though not a flower, in relation to God a small soul is beautiful yet inconsequential, precariously ephemeral, and entirely dependent on the powers of nature; it cannot effect anything of its own accord. The field flower profoundly conveys the small soul's state yet 'flower' cannot be deduced from the small soul's appearance. Qualities beyond what can be seen are accessed through the metaphor.

An 'analogy' is a parallel, or a correspondence, which may have a processing aspect (via either a simile or metaphor) whereby what one thing does or undergoes is transferred to another. Metaphors often also have an analogical quality. Using the previous examples, Thérèse uses the rose and the field flower (evoking different images) as metaphors to describe different kinds of persons.⁹⁴ The small soul has the character of the field flower, simple, unimposing, pleasant but unremarkable, while the great soul has the character of a rose, the height of splendour. Using these flower metaphors, Thérèse draws an analogy, describing a process which parallels another. The flowers represent different types of souls. As the flowers undergo the forces of nature, the sun the rain and the seasons, towards their purpose to bloom on a set day, so do souls undergo what God sends their way to be nourished and brought to spiritual flowering.⁹⁵

Finally, a 'symbol' is something which is participated in. When participated in, the symbol takes the person beyond themselves toward that to which the symbol points. Through its multivalent and tensive character, it provides a knowing 'something more'.⁹⁶ A symbol may make use any of the previous forms, but also from things not of a figurative quality, such as, history, memory, persons or objects. The above field flower, Thérèse uses, furthermore, as a symbol. This means the previous examples also

⁹⁴ *Story of a Soul*, 16-17.

⁹⁵ *Story of a Soul*, 14-15.

⁹⁶ Margaret Quane, *The Life and Writings of St Therese of Lisieux*, 40. See also Tom Ryan SM "Psychic Conversion and St Thérèse of Lisieux." *The Australasian Catholic Record* 22/1 (Jan 2005), pp3-18, 10-11. Ryan refers to Avery Dulles SJ, *Models of Revelation* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983), and to Avery Dulles, "The Symbolic Structure of Revelation," *Theological Studies* (March, 1980), 61, where he observes that a symbol gives "not objective, but participatory knowledge...an environment to be inhabited. Symbols are places to live, breathing spaces that help to discover the possibilities that life offers."

share the quality of symbol, but the most distinctive aspect of symbol is demonstrated in her particular use of the flower just before she enters Carmel. Her father plucks a field flower with its root inadvertently still attached and gives it to Thérèse after she has disclosed to him her desire to enter Carmel.⁹⁷ The metaphor of Thérèse as a field flower, and the event of the plucked still rooted flower, becomes a symbol for Thérèse's movement from Buissonnets to Carmel. She is the flower; the root as the flower's means for absorption symbolizes her means of absorbing spiritual nutrition, her childhood at Buissonnets with Louis. So functional at home, this 'root' is taken with her to Carmel, with the approval and help of her father who enables it. This is her experience. The flower (Thérèse), in moving with root still intact, finds this state allows, indeed favours, absorption from another soil. By being the flower who is now replanted in Carmel and taking up nutrition, Thérèse participates in the experience of the 'more' that God gives: a wellspring of meaning about what God has given her in the past, what he is giving now, and what he is going to give – based on the extraordinary care and foresight shown in the past.

The research will take the view that Thérèse uses the metaphor of the child in a dynamic relationship with its parent, based on the narrative of her childhood, to characterize 'filial love' between humanity and God. This will be considered her core metaphor. She gives this metaphor an analogical dimension by corresponding her own childhood activity of love and trust to spiritual dispositions. The research will investigate the role of the metaphor of filial love as integrating all of Thérèse's symbols and imagery toward an *ontological* state, and ultimately, a theological state of filiality. As noted earlier, the expression 'core metaphor' is used by Ormond Rush in an investigation of 'reception' to reveal an integrating principle, which uses its hermeneutic lens as its investigative tool. As this research is investigating the core metaphor of 'filial love' in Thérèse's writing, it will similarly treat "filial love" as an integrating principle in her thought, employing it as both its hermeneutic lens and investigative tool.

⁹⁷ *Story of a Soul*, 108.

It will maintain that her filial metaphor (images of herself as child receiving merciful love from her parents describing her relation with God) is a sustained one. ‘Limitation’, foundational in Thérèse’s experience, in her spiritual interpretation of it and in the theology implied in it, will be understood in the first instance as a child’s physical weakness, impotence, and insufficiency. It will then be understood as ontological limitation, the limits of human existence, the very means by which Jesus through embracing them in his incarnation received the fullness of the Father’s love, expressing love for his creation and divinizing it.⁹⁸ Thérèse’s insights regarding filial love are to be found in her experience of God gazing at her with love, inspiring audacious trust, especially during her experience of doubt. A model of grace will be proposed based on the study of this core metaphor, in the light of Avery Dulles’ concept of the model (in contrast to a system based on philosophical *a priori*) accompanied by a discussion on its corrective character.⁹⁹

Having explained the investigation’s rationale, aims, methodology, relevant literature and key aspects of language, we proceed to the first phase in addressing the research question.

⁹⁸ See Mark McIntosh, *An Introduction to Christian Theology: Divine Teaching* (USA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 101-105.

⁹⁹ Joseph Komonckack comments on the need for theological anthropology to be based on criteria (such as “reception”) other than “a priori” philosophical or scientific criteria. In Ormond Rush, *The Eyes of Faith*, 6.