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

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **A Review of Theological Anthropology**

Chapter Six concluded with suggesting that Thérèse's analogical interpretation of her experience of God's mercy toward her limitation, felt to be transcendent, may be extended to existential dimensions toward a theological anthropology reflecting Thérèse's particular attention to grace and mercy. Our investigation began with whether Thérèse first felt mercy as a child, to find whether this influenced how she experienced God. It was determined that caregivers in acting graciously toward the limited one in their care, show mercy. Being engaged with, guided, lifted, and carried by a more able other underlies the sense of religious grace, just as primal-trust faith underlies religious faith. Both first develop in physical terms, in an archetypical, generic, form. Experienced grace between the self and projected other is internalized, taking on specificity when it is felt between self and God. Limitation is a necessary condition for grace: developmental limitation calls for generic grace, and existential for religious grace. In the psychic dimension, grace is conveyed throughout self-becoming, beginning concretely, then through inner psychic constructs, to become prayer.

Chapters Two and Three explored parental grace (generic), in mercy toward the child, through Sroufe's theory of *Emotional Development*, which holds that emotion, an intrinsically relational event, facilitates cognitive and physiological advancement. The parent orchestrates affective engagement in their child to organize their emotion, needed to function as a self in relation. A dialogue forms a secure parent-child (dyadic) bond from which to explore, and from which to become a valued other/self capable of other relations. When any intermediate goal that serves this overall goal is hindered, it is returned to and repeated. Behavioural research shows parental care toward their infant as sensitive (merciful and gracious), and mimetic response as central to the infant's learning.

Having explored grace and mercy from the perspective of psychological development, Chapters Five and Six examined Thérèse's spiritual self-understanding in *Story of a Soul*. The grace and mercy she experienced between herself self and primary others (becoming the expectation blueprint for other relations) Thérèse now feels with God,

and saints, who defend her self-becoming. Using Winnicott's True Self/False Self paradigm, it was found that Thérèse's assertion of a True Self ensured the continuance of grace and mercy in the self, within the "I-Thou" of self and God. Hebrew Scripture records experiences of graciousness toward the limited one, where God is felt, like a parent, as an advocate for the weak and threatened self. Limitedness appears to be an essential characteristic in the God-human dyad, which recalls God's initiative in calling (engagement) and sustaining.<sup>1</sup>

It was shown that affective interaction between persons is the building block of all development, inextricable from cognitive and physiological advancement, and that mercy and grace lie between persons at a primordial level. On this foundation, we will derive a theological anthropology from Thérèse's thought in two phases, historical/contextual (Chapter Seven), and epistemological (Chapter Eight). Thérèse's interpretation of her own experience will be incorporated into the language and conversation of theological anthropology, by naming some of her premises and the direction in which she moves to arrive at her conclusions. This requires a review of theological understandings of grace. A review of grace in Judeo-Christian history will be followed by Stephen Duffy and Neil Ormerod's summaries of the problem of extrinsicism, William James' thought on religious feeling and scholastic abstraction, and, finally, John Macmurray's thought which re-opens the way for grace as between persons (evidenced by Thérèse), leading to a reintegration of disparate notions about grace.<sup>2</sup> In Chapter Eight, we will examine Thérèse's experience of God next to the anthropological formulations of some post-Thérésian theologians, with a particular focus on Lonergan. We turn to human-identity and God's grace as it has been understood in history.

### **1. God, Grace and Self-understanding in History**

The following overview will concentrate on three broad perceptions of the God-human relation in Judeo-Christian history, leading to Thérèse's (Modern) time. In the Hebrew

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this sense of an other calling, and sustaining us, is common to all, accessible from one's experience-memory.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Duffy, *The Graced Horizon: Nature and Grace in Modern Catholic Thought* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992); Neil Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption* (Maryknoll, New York, USA: Orbis Books, 2007).

Scriptures to which Thérèse turns, God is felt as gracious toward the needy one. In the New Testament, writers witness to Jesus as gracious in his healing and forgiveness. Paul of Tarsus states that he experiences this for himself in conversion, and conveys to others God's graciousness (Eph 3: 2-3) in redeeming humanity from the Law/sin and death. Later, in a similar way, Augustine of Hippo experiences healing and forgiveness in conversion, feeling that God's surmounting his rebellious/subverting will carries him almost irresistibly to God. Finally, in the Thomistic scholastic tradition, grace is defined in terms of objective states, entailing such as merit and loss, and healing and elevation. These states were encountered in Arminjon. While Thérèse is taught Thomistic doctrine, she is immersed in a Jansenist impression of grace as a force carrying one towards one's destiny (taken by some as fate).<sup>3</sup> We review those trends.

The above may be viewed as thematic clusters. Two are fundamentally experiential. (i) In Hebrew Scripture various (archetypical) experiences are held in tension, an extant one being a conversion of heart, wherein God is felt/remembered to graciously favour the poor/weak one. (ii) In the self-examining writings of Paul and Augustine, we find experiences of God's rescue and of conversion. This entails not just change of heart, but a content of faith (the risen Jesus as the new law, Rom 8: 1-2; for Augustine from Manichaeism to more Biblically-based thought), and an increasing awareness of sin's enslaving power hindering their response to God. The third, (iii) beginning with God as utterly other (classical theism), is not experiential.<sup>4</sup> Concerned with proofs and science,<sup>5</sup> conciliar metaphysical solutions against heresies, and supplying the material for sacramental formulations, it entails conceptual, unfelt, categories. Here, adopting

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<sup>3</sup> Here fate (*fatum* – an oracle) is taken to mean something fixed, while destiny (*destinare* – to secure, to which has been added (in *destination*) devotion to a direction and plan. While fate is linked to the word of the gods, destiny is linked to action, to “a preordained path that man can fulfil.” See discussion on fate and destiny in Richard W. Bargdill, “Fate and Destiny: Some Historical Distinctions between the Concepts,” *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, Vol 26, 2006, pp205-220, 205-206. [\\server05\productn\T\THE\26-1-2\THE1203.txt](#) accessed on 26/02/2007.

<sup>4</sup> Classical theism, Macquarrie argues, assigns a purpose to God (as necessary for the existence of all things); making God a necessitous being, distancing and reducing God. Creation is made from material outside of and unrelated to God; God and creation are of different substances and orders; the act of creation as arbitrary may be felt as capricious. This monarchical being does not describe the Christian God, who is not indifferent to human being, but relates to process, temporality and history. John Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity: An Essay in Dialectical Theism* (London: SCM Press, 1984), 33-41.

<sup>5</sup> Aquinas' writing on grace, a “synthesis” of Aristotle's method and Augustine's traditional datum, is “dispersed” throughout his work. Edmund J. Fortman, *The Theology of Man and Grace: Commentary* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1966), 181-182.

Aristotle's epistemology,<sup>6</sup> Aquinas describes God as "simple being" (pure act), as essential, non-material substance, and human existence as composed of contingent designations in form and matter.<sup>7</sup> Further, universal qualities, consistent with Augustine's platonism, exist in the pure spirit of God.

## 2. Theological Anthropology: A Working Definition and Historical Overview

In Hebrew Scripture, persons experience God as calling, leading, and accompanying them, choosing them as his own and covenanting himself to them,<sup>8</sup> promising his blessing.<sup>9</sup> In his nurture, defence and leading, God is felt as mercifully loving, loyal and compassionate. In the Christian witness, 'grace', deriving from *gratia* (Latin) and *charis* (Greek),<sup>10</sup> words chosen to convey three distinct Hebrew meanings,

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<sup>6</sup> L. Matthew Petillo, "The theological problem of grace and experience: a Lonerganian perspective," *Theological Studies* 71.3 (2010) 586+. Accessed 6 Sept 2010, 5.

<sup>7</sup> See Thomas Aquinas, "On Being and Essence" in *Selected Writings of Thomas Aquinas*, translated by Robert P. Goodwin (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1965). The later carve-up of Aquinas's work into dogmatic theology emphasised this metaphysical entry point, further sharpened when later scholastics turned this into a system of tracts, emphasized it even more. Thomas Marsh, *The Triune God: A Biblical, Historical and Theological Study* (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-third Publications, 1994), 145-146. While the substance of Aquinas's discussion uses metaphysical categories, in the *Summa Theologiae* (I-II. 112. 5) he does address how grace is experienced, what signs to look for and what level of certainty we can have about it.

<sup>8</sup> Klaus Berger translates Hebrew Scripture's early meaning of *חסד* (loving kindness) as "unfailing duty of reciprocity between relatives, friends, sovereigns, and subjects, and ...the contracting parties in a covenant, since the covenant implies the obligation of *חסד*" This is often used in combination with an adjective denoting 'love', 'justice', or 'mercy', with the predominant meaning for *חסד* in connection with covenantal favour as 'loyal love'. "The relationship called for by the covenant in Ex 20:16, Deut 7:12, Hos 6:4 is *חסד*, and the covenant bestowed by God is identical with the *חסד* he has promised. Israel's appeal to God's "loyalty to his covenant," to love his people, after repeated failure to uphold its part, more and more resembles a plea for mercy. God's *חסד* is hoped for in the future by the faithful, as they recall its presence in the past. Louis Bouyer writes that *חסד* refers to "a favour accorded to someone," which in relation to the favour God shows to his elect in the Hebrew Scriptures is "accompanied by a ...motherly compassion (*rahamim*), and is manifested first of all in his loving kindness (*hesed*) and then in his faithfulness (*emet*)..." Klaus Berger "Biblical Grace" in Karl Rahner, Editor, *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi* (London: Burns & Oates, 1975), 584-585.

<sup>9</sup> George E. Menderhall and Gary A. Herion, "Covenant," in D. N. Freedman (ed), *Anchor Bible Dictionary: Vol I*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1191.

<sup>10</sup> A second word *חסד* (grace), meaning 'favour', rendered theological through St Paul use of it in Rom 4:16, is used in relation to God finding favour with the Patriarchs and bestowing his favours on the lowly. *חסד* in relation to God as sovereign "is closer to compassion and consideration for weakness than to the notion of loyalty to a covenant." Grace to the elect was symbolized as the undeserving (not the natural offspring) receiving the favour given to a natural child through an adoptive bond - consistent with the role of grace (as favour) in relation to election (as adoption). *חסד* (loving kindness) which translates into *ἐλεος*, when transferred into the New Testament is translated into *χάρις* where the concept of *חסד*, of favour, is mostly meant. Rahner, *Encyclopedia of Theology*, 585. John Hardon, in *History and Theology*

“condescending love, conciliatory compassion and fidelity,” is pivotal to describing a self-revealing God in Jesus, faithful to those who hope in his saving power.<sup>11</sup> God is felt as graceful (adjectival) and as supplying grace (substantial) to those in need of grace – in revelation, salvation and redemption.<sup>12</sup> Grace pertains to relation; it describes that God loves humanity, the nature of that love, which entails how God deals with humanity.<sup>13</sup> A working definition of theological anthropology may be “an understanding of human existence in relation to God in the light of [Judeo] Christian experience,”<sup>14</sup> embracing creation, covenant, Christ as realisation of the human being created in the image and likeness of God, the notion of sin, nature/grace, personhood, and salvation. We discuss the continuity between Judaism and Christianity.

*a. Continuity between Judaism and Christianity*

Amongst Catholic writers on grace, there has been a trend to begin with a brief mention of Christian faith originating in Christ, some Pauline texts, then lengthy treatments of Augustine and Aquinas (an apologetic of Thomist doctrine, the institutional Church, its councils and its dogmas).<sup>15</sup> However, passing over the continuity between Judaism and

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*of Grace: the Catholic Teaching on Divine Grace* (USA: Sapienta Press, 2005), 1-2, refers to χάρις as “a person or an object [having] the power to give joy to the hearer or beholder,” noting, “Since to a Greek there was nothing so joy inspiring as grace or beauty, it implied the presence of these,” not merely conveyed by passive qualities, but also in their operation. As *charis* described in Aristotelian ethics a favour freely conferred, in a spirit of “free-heartedness” “without claim or expectation of return,” Christians took it up to describe their “doctrine of divine condescension.” Bouyer describes St Paul’s use of *charis* (a translation of חסד), the favour of forgiveness “accorded to sinful mankind through Christ’s death,” culminating in adoption as “children of God in the risen Christ through the Spirit,” as “pregnant” with the associations of motherly compassion (*rahamim*), loving kindness (*hesed*) and faithfulness (*emet*). Louis Bouyer, *Dictionary of Theology*, translated by Charles Underhill Quinn (New York: Desclee Co, 1965), 173.

<sup>11</sup> Roger Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace* (New York, Toronto: Paulist Press, 1979), 6.

<sup>12</sup> Haight states that noting this different usage does not resolve the confusion it causes, and circumscribes the study he presents. Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 6-7.

<sup>13</sup> Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 7-8.

<sup>14</sup> Roger Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 9. At 8, Haight’s investigation begins with Augustine. “Judeo” (added by author) acknowledges a continuity, asymmetrical as it is, with the Christian experience. See Frans Josef Van Beek SJ, *Loving the Torah More Than God: Towards a Catholic Appreciation of Judaism* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, ),

<sup>15</sup> For example, Piet Fransen SJ, *Divine Grace and Man* (Belgium: Desclée Co, Inc, 1962), and John Hardon SJ, *History and Theology of Grace: The Catholic Teaching on Divine Grace* (An Arbor, MI: Sapienta Press, 2002, 2005). Fransen simply states scripture as God speaking to humanity in history pointing to Heb 1: 1-2 (“God, having spoken of old to our forefathers through the prophets, by many degrees and in many ways, has at last in these days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the world”), showing a greater concern to describe its relation

Christianity neglects the fact of their historical connectedness, that the second draws its meaning of grace from the first.<sup>16</sup> Hans Walter Wolff in “The Kerygma of the Yahwist” writes

in the New Testament the Old is cited at every turn, either directly or indirectly... in the form of atomized quotations. ...The New Testament recourse to these documents is not only frequent it seems to be indispensable. Even in the gospel of John people refuse to accept who Jesus is except upon the testimony of the “Scriptures.” That Jesus is the righteousness of God comes to light... cannot be explained without adding “the Law and the Prophets.” What takes place in “faith” must in some sense parallel what happened to the Patriarchs of Israel... Without the Old Testament, who Jesus is apparently remains hidden....in order to understand fully what it is to which the New Testament bears witness, we will we will have to recognize the Old Testament anew, in its own function as a witness, and the pertinence of that to our times.<sup>17</sup>

Wolff proceeds to investigate the Yahwist’s kerygma (*Verkündigungswille*), the oldest Israelitic tradition. He finds the kerygma is to describe Israel as a blessing on all people. “[T]he fullness – ‘all the families of the earth will gain blessing in Israel’ – is for now only in the promise, and is placed before Israel as a task...,”<sup>18</sup> a promise and task that reaches into the New Testament. Paul quotes through the tradition of the prophets, “God who had set me apart before I was born [still in my mother’s womb] and called me through his grace... so that I might proclaim him” Gal 1: 15 (*cf* Isa 49:1) to announce the Yahwist kerygma, “the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the Gospel beforehand to Abraham by saying ‘All the gentiles shall be blessed in you’.” Gal 3: 8 (*cf* Gen 12: 7ff). Significantly, this blessing resembles the unconditional grace/covenant, preceding its restatement as conditional, where

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with Tradition (the hierarichal institutional Church built on infallible dogmas, liturgy and seven sacraments); Scripture is the Holy Spirit’s “inspiration,” while Tradition is its “assistance.” (Fransen 20-25). Duffy, *The Graced Horizon* begins with Augustine.

<sup>16</sup> The Christian Church cannot understand itself except in relation to the Hebrew story and the election of Israel. See John Thornhill SM, *Sign and Promise: A Theology of the Church for a Changing World* (Blackburn, Vic: Collins, 1998), 14-64.

<sup>17</sup> Hans Walter Wolff, Trans Wilbur A. Benware, “The Kerygma of the Yahwist,” *The Vitality of the Old Testament Traditions* (Atlanta: John Knox traditions, 1975), 41-42.

<sup>18</sup> Wolff, “The Kerygma of the Yahwist,” 63.

divine grace precedes and becomes the foundation for human obedience to the divine will, a will that is revealed most clearly in the experience of “grace” itself and not in some fixed code of social and legal norms. Morally and psychologically, it implies that persons under the covenant are capable of recognizing ... they have received benefits in their past that they have in no way earned. ...that it is the good things in life that they have received in the past (and not some politically determined, legally defined, and socially enforced set of formal patterns of behaviour)... that provide the basis for defining the good they hope to realize in their future...<sup>19</sup>

Such a feeling, and hope, was pronounced by the “unsophisticated” prophets (Amos, Micah, Jeremiah), who were neither “historiographers” nor systematic theologians outlining the formal elements of premonarchic Israel covenant theology.<sup>20</sup> They embodied the dialectic of a people repenting of haughtiness, receiving protection from God when humbly acknowledging their dependence on God – grace first being “the benevolence” experienced in the “struggle to survive”<sup>21</sup> – in tension with a later voice who feels there will be a resumption of order only when laws and customs are obeyed.<sup>22</sup> We resume our overview.

*b. Jesus, a Developing Faith Tradition, and the Reformers*

Beyond perceptions of covenant, as conditional and unconditional, the experience of God’s grace is described through a diversity of metaphors. In the Christian scripture, Jesus calls God “*Abba*.”<sup>23</sup> He speaks of being gifted by his *Abba*/father in the

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<sup>19</sup> Freedman, (ed.), *Anchor Bible*, 1191.

<sup>20</sup> Freedman, (ed.), *Anchor Bible*, 1190.

<sup>21</sup> Grace in Hebrew Scriptures is felt as God’s way of acting in “fidelity, justice, uprightness, and magnanimity above and beyond any human legalistic criteria,” toward one’s ancestors and one’s self. Leonardo Boff, *Liberating Grace* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979), 8-9.

<sup>22</sup> Freedman (ed.), *Anchor Bible*, 1191.

<sup>23</sup> Mk 14: 36 Under great duress in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus quotes Ps 42: 6, 12 and follows it with “*Abba*, Father, for you all things are possible,” concluding in (14: 38) with phrases that resemble the Lord’s prayer (which borrows from the Jewish *Kaddish*, prayer upon death) Paul uses “*Abba*” in Rom 8:15a-16 (“When we cry ‘*Abba*! Father’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God”) and Gal 4: 6 (“God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying ‘*Abba*! Father’ so that you are no longer a slave but a child.”) referring to Jesus’ experience as a vivifying principle of the Spirit of the risen Son. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ, “The Letter to the Galatians” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds Raymond E. Brown SS, Joseph A Fitzmyer SJ, Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc, 1990, 1968),787-788.



metaphors of his parables, as a father to his children (Mk 10: 24; Jn 21:5).<sup>24</sup> Paul adopts Jesus' "Abba" experience, addressing his communities of converts as brothers and sisters as they are all now God's children (e.g., Rom 10:1; Cor 2:1; Php 1: 14). In proclaiming Jesus, the originator of grace who frees one from the yoke of the law (Mt 11: 29, 30; Gal 5:1; 1Tit 6:1) Paul is now a conduit for grace (Eph 3:2-3), "a saving way of acting" which arouses eschatological hope.<sup>25</sup> In Greek theology, grace deified humanity: as God entered human form in Jesus of Nazareth, so human form is made divine.<sup>26</sup> In the fourth century, Augustine of Hippo, from an experience of compromised freedom (felt as rebelliousness), unable to *will* what he desired, wrote in "amazed gratitude" of grace as "healing and liberation;" Pelagius, a contemporary, objected to this, asserting that humanity *was* equipped with freedom and ability.<sup>27</sup> They came to represent persisting polarities.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The use of "Abba" is significant to Jesus' sense of his identity (as based on gift from, and relationship with, his Father). See Matt. 11: 25-27; John 3: 33-36 and 8: 25-29. See Brendan Byrne's footnote on Mk 14: 36. Jesus' "striking" use of Abba to describe his intimate experience God as a father makes a deep impression upon his disciples and is hence kept in the memory of the early Church communities. Brendan Byrne, *A Costly Freedom: A Theological Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Collegeville, Minnesota, Liturgical Press, 2008), 224.

<sup>25</sup> Boff, *Liberating Grace*, 9.

<sup>26</sup> Athanasius (295-373) used *theopoiein* (to divinize) "to express the work of sanctification performed in us by the Logos through his Spirit." He taught that divinization is a "participation in the Word," where "we are created in the image," and "rendered capable of sharing in the knowledge that the Logos-Image has of the father, and thus the living life of God." "Deification" is used to translate the Greek *theosis*. Peter Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1988), 132. Andrew Louth notes that it is broader than redemption and is, rather, the fulfilment of creation. *Theosis* represents "what is and remains God's intention: the creation of the cosmos that, through humankind, is destined to share in the divine life, to be deified." See Andrew Louth, "The Place of *Theosis* in Orthodox Theology" in Michael J. Christensen and Jeffrey A. Wittung (Eds.), *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic): 32-44, at 34-5.

<sup>27</sup> Pelagius struck upon a contradiction within Augustine's disposition of "amazed gratitude." In Augustine's "unbounded rejoicing in the generosity of God showed in saving us," he "seemed to imply that we could not save ourselves." Without help to live a good transformed moral life, how could God punish us if we fail? Therefore, to be logical, we must be able to live a moral life. Augustine asserted oppositely; "without Christ we can do nothing." Quentin Quesnell "Grace" in, Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, Dermot A. Lane, Editors, *The New Dictionary of Theology* (United States: Liturgical Press, 1987, 1991), 438-439.

<sup>28</sup> Komonchak, *The New Dictionary of Theology*, 438- 439. The Church at this time was occupied with "inner Church controversies... on sin and forgiveness, the need for infant baptism, on predestination and foreknowledge" ... for the most part the focus... remain[ed] practical, sometimes juridical." Persecution, sickness, and apostasy led to a need to articulate a theology of grace. During Augustine and Pelagius's dispute, the word "gratia" became a technical term which began to demand definition ("causes, properties, efforts and rules of operation").

In the twelfth century (alongside the Church's increasing legal responsibilities, and the "efficacies" of sacramental life in relation to sin) through Anselm, grace acquired a legal dimension: the terms of "right and obligation."<sup>29</sup> Also in the twelfth century, supporting conciliar metaphysical (substances) and ontological (states of being) definitions of God, Peter Lombard wrote of "uncreated grace" (the Holy Spirit/Charity)<sup>30</sup> in relation to an earlier notion of "created grace." In the thirteenth century, Aquinas defined the relationship between God and human nature in terms of Aristotelian science: "actual" and "operative,"<sup>31</sup> including "created" and "uncreated grace" in his categories,<sup>32</sup> building on the foundation of 'five ways' for the existence of God.<sup>33</sup> To elevate humanity to a supernatural end – the fulfilment of desire for God evidenced by Augustine – God supplies "sanctifying" grace. Proofs, teleological,

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<sup>29</sup> Mark McIntosh, *Divine Teaching: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Malden MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2008), 91-94. See also John Thornhill, "Changing Horizons of Community Awareness" in *Sign and Promise* (London: Collins, 1988), 57-60.

<sup>30</sup> "Created" and "uncreated grace" were scholastic concepts Aquinas took up. Peter Lombard held the Holy Spirit as "created grace." *Sententiae*, Liber 1, d.18, c 2. See also *Sententiae*, d, 2, d.27, c7, [QL 1: 448] in Bernard J. F. Lonergan, Frederick E. Crowe, Robert M. Doran, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in Thomas Aquinas* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2000), 24. See also Karl Rahner, "Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace" in *Theological Investigations*, Vol 1, E.T. (London 1961), 319-46. Cited by Walter Hilton, John P. H. Clark, Rosemary Dorward, *The Scale of Perfection* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1991), 317-18.

<sup>31</sup> Petillo offers an evolving human perception of grace, based on developing cognition and self-awareness, on evolving consciousness in history. He notes that a shift occurred from "soul" to "subject" through the empirical method. Petillo, "The theological problem of grace and experience: a Lonerganian perspective," 1.

<sup>32</sup> "... thus grace is said to be created inasmuch as men are created with reference to it, i.e. are given a new being out of nothing, i.e. not from merits, according to Ephesians 2:10, "created in Jesus\_Christ in good works." *S.T.* I-II, 110, 2 ad 3. For 'created grace' in Aquinas, see *ST*, 1. 103, 2 ad 2; *ST* 1, 112.1. See also Peter Phan (editor), Michael Scanlon in *The Gift of the Church: A Textbook Ecclesiology in Honour of Patrick Granfield OSB* (Collegeville Minnesota: A Michael Glazier Book, The Liturgical Press, 2000), 207-208.

<sup>33</sup>"The existence of God can be proved in five ways." *Summa Theologica* I-II. 1-3 (New York: Benziger, Bruce & Glencoe, 1948), 13 -14. Hill argues that Aquinas "seeks out ... ways (*viae*, not 'proofs', 'arguments', or 'demonstrations') by which the human ... might ascend to an affirmation of God ... who has already addressed his word to man." William J. Hill, *The Three Personed-God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 63. Schussler Fiorenza and Galvin note that in the nineteenth century Aquinas's ways were organized in Neo-Scholastic manuals toward an apologetic (beginning with the tract *De Deo Uno*) "to defend both the legitimacy of Christianity and the objective certainty of supernatural revelation against the criticisms levelled by modern natural religion." Francis Schussler Fiorenza and John P. Galvin, *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives* (New York: Fortress Press, 2011), 137 -138.

taxonomic, and essentialist concerns<sup>34</sup> eclipsed the pre-eminence of God and humanity as subjects in relation.

Consonant with the “turn to the subject,” in the sixteenth century Martin Luther protested against Anselmian legality,<sup>35</sup> re-interpreting grace interpersonally as God (in Jesus) liberating persons by addressing them with forgiveness.<sup>36</sup> Concerned with grace as between persons in relation, Luther saw redemption as the restoration of friendship with God and fraternal fellowship with Jesus. John Calvin followed Luther’s protest, reinstating ‘covenant’ as a systematizing principle for understanding grace, somewhat leading away from relation.<sup>37</sup> In an atmosphere of disenchantment over grace traded as a commodity (using scholastic substantialist definitions) in what was judged as pragmatism and Pelagian optimism, an Augustinian strain of Catholicism arose. Before we take this up, our discussion returns to perceptions (ii) and (iii), Augustine’s experience, and non-experiential scholasticism.

### 3. Implicit Self-Perceptions Contributing to Perceptions of Grace

While (i) encompasses a plurality of self-perceptions,<sup>38</sup> there is a consistent sense of God as “one,” on “our side,” against those who menace, protecting the vulnerable, or

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<sup>34</sup> To make faith a science, Aristotelian categories were followed. Aristotle developed principles in relation to motion, causation, place and time, from the desire to construct a “natural” philosophy of physics (which he felt was a “*first philosophy*”) made into a “second philosophy” by virtue of the previousness of metaphysics. Thus he constructed his metaphysical philosophy by a “metaphysical investigation of physical entities.” “Four causes” explained the necessities of matter (rather than God as God for God’s purposes). Unmoved movers lead to one unmoved mover. He devised an inner principle (“nature”) of change and being at rest, and external principles of change and rest (active powers or potentialities), which require considerable qualifications (the problem inherent in systematizing complex organic development), leading to an interplay of categories (in “nature,” “motion,” “causation,” and “movers and unmoved movers”) and subcategories. He lists categories, from the general to the particular (qualifications expanding the particular). Istvan Bodnar, “Aristotle’s Natural Philosophy” (2012) <http://stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-natphil/> accessed 7/02/2012.

<sup>35</sup> G.R. Elton, G. R. *Reformation Europe: 1517-1559*, (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1963), 15-17.

<sup>36</sup> Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 25.

<sup>37</sup> Luther’s theology of grace and redemption addressed his distress over legality as the measure for religious faith (and the problem of nature and sin). Calvin rearranged this to a systematic treatise around the Hebrew covenants. See Chapter One.

<sup>38</sup> (i) In Hebrew Scripture various (archetypical) experiences are held in tension. An extant one is a conversion of heart: recalling the feeling that God graciously favours the poor/weak one.

the proud who humble themselves, which points to being under threat. What self-perceptions contributed to the positions taken in (ii) and (iii)?

*a. Augustine*

Augustine, in (ii), allows us access to his self-experience in his *Confessions*, an affective prayer conversation recalling the conversion of his will and cognition. Exploring his formative development through his present feeling, he ‘recalls’ God supplying him (metaphorically) with his mother’s nourishing breasts, his speech development,<sup>39</sup> and his resistance to God, in school incidents revealing apathy/distaste toward learning, and, later, succumbing to sexual chaos. Informed by others, Augustine observes developmental states (“I knew how to suck, to lie quiet when I was content, to cry when I was in pain: and that was all I knew. Later I added smiling to the things I could do, first in sleep then awake”).<sup>40</sup> He then describes “rage,”<sup>41</sup> in what seems to be developing intentionality (individuation).<sup>42</sup> Sent away to school at eleven,<sup>43</sup> he prays that he might not be beaten, and endures his parents (“who wished no harm”) treating “my stripes as a huge joke, which they were very far from being to me.”<sup>44</sup> In spite of this, he writes of ‘deserved’ beatings (over five pages), analogous to needed

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<sup>39</sup> His account of speech development, and later of memory, demonstrates a platonic view. Robert J. O’Connell, *Images of Conversion in Augustine* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1996), 18-19. At 118, O’Connell notes, as we have noted with Thérèse, that his chronology serves his meaning, and his motive for saying things influences his recollection of events.

<sup>40</sup> Augustine, *Confessions of St Augustine*, translated by F. J. Sheed (London: Sheed & Ward, 1960), 4.

<sup>41</sup> “Gradually I began to notice where I was, and the will grew in me to make my wants known to those who might satisfy them; but I could not, for my wants were within and those others were outside; nor had they any faculty enabling them to enter my mind. So I would fling my arms and legs about and utter sounds, making the few gestures in my power – those as apt to express my wishes as I could make them: but they were not very apt. And when I did not get what I wanted, either because my wishes were not clear or the things not good for me, I was in a rage – with my parents as though I had a right to their submission, with free beings as though they were bound to serve me; and I took my revenge in screams. That infants are like this, I have learnt from watching other infants” Sheed, trans, *Confessions of St Augustine*, 5.

<sup>42</sup> “In Mahler’s terms (parallel to Ainsworth’s), a symbiotic (close) relationship in infancy paradoxically supports the movement toward autonomy or “individuation.” Sroufe, *Emotional Development*, 205.

<sup>43</sup> Augustine was sent to school twenty kilometres away. Andrew Knowles and Pachomios Penkett, *Augustine and His World, IVP Histories* (InterVarsity Press, 2004), Chapter 2.

<sup>44</sup> “...my parents seemed to be amused at the torments inflicted upon me as a boy by my masters” *Confessions of Augustine*, 9.

correction from God. Augustine points to infancy “rage” and “writing or reading or studying less than my set tasks” because the “one thing I revelled in was play,” as signifying “inherent sinfulness:”<sup>45</sup>

You made man but not the sin in him. ... in Thy sight there is none pure from sin, not even the infant whose life is but a day upon the earth. ...what then were the sins at my age? That I wailed too fiercely for the breast? For if today I were to make as gluttonously and clamourously ...for the food I now eat, I should be ridiculed and quite properly condemned. This means that what I did then was in fact reprehensible...<sup>46</sup>

“Reprehensible,” meaning ‘culpable’, ‘objectionable’, suggests early crying, “sin”, was not from God. From whose perspective, however, is it culpable, or objectionable? Able only to mirror his mother’s care, noted earlier through Sroufe, it is the role of the caregiver to organize the infant’s affect, a task which reaches well into toddlerhood.<sup>47</sup>

Augustine examines himself (his developing behaviour) as a being-in-isolation, as a solitary will, apparently unaware that his disposition and ability are the response-product of a dyadic partnership (reflecting the quality of care given). As such, he does not tend toward sin as victimhood. We explore this, using Marjorie Suchocki’s *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology*.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Confessions of Augustine*, 5, 9. See Ormerod *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 71.

<sup>46</sup> Italics in original text. *Confessions of Augustine*, 6-7. “This means that what I did then was in fact reprehensible, although, since I could not understand words of blame, neither custom nor common sense allowed me to be blamed.” “Surely it was not good, even for that time of life, to scream for things that would have been thoroughly bad for me; to fly in a hot rage because older persons - and free, not slaves - were not obedient to me; to strike out hard as I could with sheer will to hurt, at my parents and other sensible folk for not yielding to my demands...” “...the innocence of children is in the helplessness of their bodies rather than any quality in their minds. I have seen myself a small baby jealous...too young to speak... but it was livid with anger as it watched another infant at the breast...Mothers and babies will tell you that they have their own way of curing these fits of jealousy.” This behaviour, if large and consistent, is reflective of a child being refused, or goaded, as if the adult is threatened by, or in competition with the infant, as if the adult is unable to understand their role as calming the child (organising their affect) -- understandable if these women are nurses and not the natural mother of a wanted child.

<sup>47</sup> “Within certain boundaries, the toddler is much more able than the infant to regulate affect – for example, fighting down tears or meting out angry feelings in subtle or indirect ways. But as stronger feelings, impulses, or desires arise, the toddler’s emerging capacities for self-regulation are easily overwhelmed. An important issue becomes whether the caregiver can continue to provide guidance and support. Despite the intentionality and wilfulness often characteristic of the period, toddlers do not yet have the capacity of self-management in a wide range of circumstances.” Sroufe, *Emotional Development*, 213.

<sup>48</sup> We will refer to Suchocki’s composite of Augustine’s position, drawing from *City of God*, Books 11 to 14, *On the Freedom of the Will*, *On the Deserving of Sinners and their Forgiveness*, and *On Rebuke and*

Interpreting “the human condition,” through a “mythic structure,”<sup>49</sup> Augustine roots sin in human pride.<sup>50</sup> Adam and Eve’s disobedience replicates a prior heavenly defection through pride (“preferring to rule rather than to be another’s subject”) before the creation of earth.<sup>51</sup> “Angelic beings, created for the purpose of praising God, and enjoying the bliss of such praise forever, [turn] from their necessarily total dependence upon God to rely on their own created capacities.”<sup>52</sup> To praise God is “bliss because through praise... beings are actively and positively participating in the divine being that this is their very source of one’s being;” praise is “knowing,” and “knowing God” is to be “connected to the source of one’s being that is the very source of life;” praise is not “flattery needed by the divine ego” but enjoying the “graciousness and generosity of God as the sustainer of creation.”<sup>53</sup> Augustine’s imagery parallels the quality of infant-parent relation: when angels turn away, it is not just from the source of bliss, but from sustenance.<sup>54</sup> The first human pair can remain in bliss if they agree in “unbroken willingness” to “depend on God” (not question the limits of one’s existence, which is to assume the prerogative of the creator).<sup>55</sup>

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*Grace*, particularly Books X and XI, Marjorie H. Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology* (New York: the Continuum Publishing Company, 1994), 19.

<sup>49</sup> Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 19.

<sup>50</sup> Augustine, *On True Religion*, XI.23. Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 19.

<sup>51</sup> Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, translated by Marcus Dods, (N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), 458. Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 19.

<sup>52</sup> Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 19. “1, ...[man] desires to praise Thee. ...Grant me, O Lord, to know which is the soul’s first movement to Thee – to implore Thy aid or to utter its praise of Thee; and whether it must know Thee before it can implore. For it would seem clear that no-one can call upon Thee without knowing Thee...” *Confessions of Augustine*, 1.

<sup>53</sup> Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 19-20

<sup>54</sup> To guard against Manichaenism, Augustine avoids humans as falling from spirit to embodiment (what God created is good), but as replicating angelic rebellion in the embodied human sphere. While embodied, Augustine views humans (created in the image of God) as having the capacity of “sustaining communion with God.” “Obedience in such a setting is neither hardship or contradiction to the human nature... but a fulfilment of human nature, establishing a communion with God that issues into social communion with one another, and harmonious communion with the rest of created order.” Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 20

<sup>55</sup> Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 20-21.

(i) *The Problem of Rebellion as Analogous to Individuation*

If Augustine's 'praising' and 'pride' are analogous to early development, (reaching for sustenance, or rebelling) we are confronted with a problem. Infant dependency is good, but so is establishing a separate will, a new separate self (needed for free loving response). Individuation cannot be sinful.<sup>56</sup> Further, dependence and individuation occur in a particular human relation that the infant has no power to surmount. Augustine sees the consequence of sin as being disconnected from one's source of sustaining power<sup>57</sup> – but what causes this disconnection?<sup>58</sup> Augustine explains that the angel and Adam disobeyed God because they were "secretly corrupted" by pride, "the craving of undue exaltation" aiming to become "a kind of end itself."<sup>59</sup> Holding to Plotinian thought, he argues that this was due to a corrupted will; there was no "efficient cause" acting on the will, but a "deficient cause,"<sup>60</sup> because the "nature" of the proud angel and Adam were "made from nothing."<sup>61</sup> As such, they are mutable, and their will is defective: Adam falls away from God, not to nothing, but "being turned towards himself, his being [simply] became more contracted than when he claved to Him

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<sup>56</sup> Irenaeus, albeit from a gnostic perspective, accepts this: "... created beings are... but babes; and to the extent that they are babes, they are unaccustomed to and unpracticed in perfect conduct. ...a mother may well give grown up food to an infant, but the infant itself is not yet able to take food that is too strong for it ... God was certainly capable of giving humans perfection from the beginning, but they were incapable of receiving it, because they were still infants (*Adv. Haer.*, IV, 38, I). "How would people have learned that they are weak and mortal by nature, and God powerful and immortal, if they had not learned by experience (*experimentum=peira*) the meaning of both these conditions?" (*Adv. Haer.*, V, 3, I). Peter Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1988), 50, 56.

<sup>57</sup> Suchocki writes that Augustine names it as "desire to transcend one's creaturely limits and be like God." See her discussion on Reinhold Niebuhr's resolution of this in Chapter Eight. Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 21.

<sup>58</sup> Suchocki reports *pride* leads to disobedience, representing both "the initial action and its effects." This leads to a loss of "original communion with God," "a lust for created things in and for themselves, a darkened understanding with respect to true knowledge of God, self, or world, and the invariable movement from birth to death [to] henceforth mark all human life." Augustine names rebellion as every human's story, in two ways (i) by biological means. Aristotelian in his thought, he saw rebellion infecting the whole of Adam's being including his semen, (ii) in *Against Julian*, through conception involving carnal intercourse (as different from Adam and Eve's non-carnal origin), entailing lust (desire for created things in, and for, themselves) as most present here. As intercourse taints the nascent person, persons are "already corrupted without our individually conscious consent." Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 21-22.

<sup>59</sup> Eve, 'as weaker' (being woman), Augustine held as merely 'deceived'. Augustine, *The City of God*, 458-460.

<sup>60</sup> Augustine struggles with the cause of sin over pages 385-387. Augustine, *The City of God*, 387, 460.

<sup>61</sup> Augustine, *The City of God*, 387-388.

who supremely is” (immutable God).<sup>62</sup> Is Augustine’s Plotinian world view compatible, analogically, with the child expressing an independent will (individuation)?

Individuation is necessary for identity formation, and its success is dependent on sensitive, responsive (gracious) caregiving.<sup>63</sup> To view individuation as mere disobedience is to reduce it. Distinct from positive independent assertions, chronic obstructiveness in childhood reflects frustrated self-becoming, a reaction to poor caregiver-response to bids for autonomy (e.g., to caregiver resistance, suppression, ignoring, and provocation in the face of their intention). Augustine’s illustrations of initial and recurring self-interested contrariness, developing a theme of an unruly will, fails to acknowledge the caregiver’s part, nor differentiates between healthy individuation and thwarted self-becoming.<sup>64</sup> For human behaviour to be analogous to the God-human relation requires a sound understanding of human development, otherwise there is a danger that sin (fault) is placed where it does not belong: at healthy, *necessary*, normative behaviour, or at *victims* of inadequate care-giving. This will lead to a culture of suppressing individuation (becoming an authentic self), and simmering, irrepressible, frustration (Augustine’s predicament).<sup>65</sup> Is supplying help after neglect (hurting then healing), grace? Augustine’s sense of the will in a precarious state, rather than suspended by the parent’s watchful care, seems to require the child to cling.

Toddler individuation – saying ‘I am other’ – while revisited in puberty and adulthood, requires frequent vigorous revisiting when it is unsupported by the care-giver (Augustine revisits it often and strongly). Asserting a separate self does not involve pride (an adult value-emotion), but “cockiness” – the audacious confidence Thérèse

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<sup>62</sup> Augustine refers to Scripture’s naming persons as “self pleasers.” Augustine, *The City of God*, 460.

<sup>63</sup> We leave aside transmission of sin through semen and lust (Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 21), an idea that appears to follow Aristotle’s principle of “causational symmetry:” “that a sleeping pill does not merely induce sleep, but needs to also be slumbering itself.” For corruption to be transmitted, semen (and the intercourse that accompanies it) is somehow itself corrupt. Bodnar “Aristotle’s Natural Philosophy,” 7 <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-natphil/> accessed 7/02/2012.

<sup>64</sup> Breast milk, 4; learning to speak, 8; beaten at school for “idleness,” preferring to play with a ball, 9, 11- 15; grammatical pretension the value most absorbed in boyhood, 15-18; his parents ambition, 23; Monica’s dissuasion against adultery, 23; stealing pears, 24-25; captive to sexual desire, 97-99, *Confessions* .

<sup>65</sup> Augustine seems oblivious to the helplessness of his absorption of poor values (in infancy), of pride, artifice and competition. There is a sense that he feels that he might have had the strength to resist these values.



expresses, the desire to be other, so to initiate, to explore. Lack of early emotional-guidance, and poor parental values, shallow ambition, using persons for self-gain, showing off, rivalrous competition, result in repetition of these values and lack of control over impulses. Augustine wanted encouragement to act well (to marry), and to have his bold showing-off curbed, feeling himself almost compelled to sexual impulsivity.<sup>66</sup>

Augustine's self-perception leads to a difference between his and Thérèse's theologies. Both Monica and Zélie's caregiving is flawed, but Thérèse views God (through Zélie's letters) as a mother who welcomes hungry "clamouring" for the breast (Rose).

Augustine observes himself, vociferous in frustration, suggesting a lack of affective guidance, even provocation<sup>67</sup> from a threatened, disrespected (used?), mother/nursemaid's view, perhaps interpreting infant self-assertion as rejection or commandeering, i.e., taking her for granted. A care-giver who regards the child through charity and confidence will view the child as meaning well, desire to know what ails them to ease their frustration, and help them become a new other. In the light of Thérèse's writing, we propose "original sin" represents not individuation, but amassing and inserting 'objective' knowledge in place of the activity of being in relation (relation is feared).<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> "My family took no care to save me from the moral destruction [many sexual liaisons] by marriage: their only concern was that I should learn to make as fine and persuasive speeches as possible." "My longing then was to love and be loved, but most when I obtained the enjoyment of the body who loved me. Thus I polluted the stream of friendship with ...desire...and...lust." *Confessions*, 21, 30.

<sup>67</sup>The caregiver who is confident of their otherness, will not interpret their child's bid for independence as refusal, rejection, resentment, slighting, or dispensing with, as comparable with 'mature' negative values.

<sup>68</sup> Augustine's Plotinian position begins well, if it is thought of in relational terms: nearness to the One corresponds to the benefits of relation. To the degree that we are near to the other (affectively engaged by sensitive carer in infancy), to that degree we are spared from affective disorganization. However, a problem remains. The infant's will does not simply arrive as a fact (*City of God*, 387, 460) but develops: effectiveness of its will (sense of potent impact) depends on parental response to its initiatives. (Augustine implies that the infant is responsible for its own development.) A parallel with the position proposed above is found in William Johnson. He notes that both Thomas Merton and the Zen scholar Dr. D.T. Suzuki saw the Genesis story as an "important link in the dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity." It is man and woman *in-relationship* who are created in the image of God, one that includes harmony with each other, with humankind, God and all creation. Their 'separation' from each other led to different levels of division – with God, with others and with the created world. In their state of 'original justice', knowledge was immediate, non-discursive through the union of contemplation. The 'Fall' brought with it recourse to discursive, discriminating (objective) knowledge which is 'ignorance' rather than 'contemplative wisdom.' See William Johnston, *Being in Love: The Practice of Christian Prayer* (London: Harper Collins, 1988), 102-3.

(ii) *Is Augustine's Sense Universal?*

“...Augustine’s arguments [his “exploration of “concupiscence” blurring “sinfulness and finitude”] carried the day...,”<sup>69</sup> but was his sense of an unsteady (affectively disorganized) will shared by care-givers, spouses/lovers whose circumstances were different?<sup>70</sup> Caregiver-infant dyads are flawed to different degrees; some are positively healthy (full of grace), encouraging self-becoming.<sup>71</sup> Augustine’s Manichaeism represents a particular experience, a felt reality of inner “manyness” (‘fragmentation’ rather than integration),<sup>72</sup> a lack of control over the will. The Manichaean view (rather than representing a ‘primitive self-view’) images this experience.<sup>73</sup> Augustine yearns to be free from his felt sexual chaos, attraction to pretensions, and most from contrariness, from resisting “God” After an experience (“take and read”)<sup>74</sup> Augustine becomes willing to learn from God. Healing is felt in relation to the will and to learning (artificial values are dispensed with; now he desires to know the one he is in relation with), suggesting that the trusting-learning process (originating with the care-giver in infancy), was somehow hindered.

(iii) *Augustine and Human Nature*

Augustine senses God as within, but struggles to name where he senses God, leading to an excursion into his memory where God is felt as present in truth.<sup>75</sup> Though he feels

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<sup>69</sup> Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 71.

<sup>70</sup> Augustine’s conception of original sin has traces of Manichaeism (a belief held when a young man), where embodiment incarnates the turmoil of many wills reflecting a battle of light and dark forces. *Confessions*, vii- ix.

<sup>71</sup> Beyond different abilities in parental giving, there is limitation: a child can make more demands than a parent has in reserve.

<sup>72</sup> A problem described by H. Richard Niebuhr. See 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), 24-33.

<sup>73</sup> While Augustine’s return to Monica is religiously productive (resolving some of his manyness) it is not altogether healthy. See Ana-Maria Rizzuto, *The Psychological Foundations of Belief in God*, 15.

<sup>74</sup> *Confessions*, 135-139; “take and read” at 141.

<sup>75</sup> Augustine speaks of God’s entry *within* his memory. *Confessions*, 186-187. “When this view of memory is turned towards knowing God, in Book 14, Augustine relates our ability to be aware of the role

God arrived late into his memory (“For you were not in my memory, before I learned of you”), he affirms God was always within; it was he who was away from his self (“late have I loved thee! For behold Thou wert within me, and I outside... Thou wert with me and I was not with Thee.”)<sup>76</sup> Augustine did not feel God when he acted pretentiously. When he is relieved of the pretensions (False Self) involved in teaching rhetoric (encouraged by his parents for the sake of appearance), he is able to become himself, and fall in love with God. Whilst not referring to grace as between concrete persons, Augustine, nevertheless, conveys grace toward himself, in returning to ‘inhabit himself’ (in finding his True Self, he finds God).<sup>77</sup> Nature, for Augustine (representing his personal dilemma), encompasses his struggle to conquer a will not in his control apart from God’s grace. Indeed, grace was needed in his early life to “organize” his affect – loving restraint by another on his behalf.

Augustine is occupied by the mechanics of cognition, and with advancing neo-platonic ideas (humans as emanations from the One – though *from* the One, Light, we are at a distance, light is diminished light in us<sup>78</sup> – a helpful correction to Manichaeism).<sup>79</sup> Distance from God the stable One results in sinking into darkness, but the light of God’s spirit lifts him to God.<sup>80</sup> Augustine expresses affection for God, responding to God as teacher parent who he strains to reach. He expresses gratitude that God (“Mercy” itself) did not “forget” him when he “forgot” God; God is “whom I owe that I am a being capable of happiness,” which is only found in God.<sup>81</sup> Grateful to find God

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of memory in sheer self-presence to our awareness of God. In like manner, in relation to God, our awareness is of discovering something that we have always known, yet failed to articulate. We are recalling what is always present, like the memory, but seldom brought to awareness by an act of knowledge.” Edward Howells, “Appropriating the “Divine Presence: Reading Augustine’s *On the Trinity* as a Transformative Text,” *Spiritus* 11-2, 2011, pp201-223, 218. <http://muse.jhu.edu> accessed 11/17/2011.

<sup>76</sup> The imprint of God (*imago deo*) is felt as within. *Confessions*, 187-188.

<sup>77</sup> He feels God through sensory metaphors: “Thou didst breathe fragrance upon me...I tasted Thee, and now hunger and thirst for thee: Thou didst touch me, and I have burned for Thy peace.” *Confessions*, 188-189.

<sup>78</sup> See Plotinus, *The Enneads*, translated by Stephen McKenna (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1930), 369-402.

<sup>79</sup> See *Confessions*, 259-263.

<sup>80</sup> *Confessions*, 263. See also Petillo, “The theological problem of grace and experience,” 3, 5.

<sup>81</sup> *Confessions*, 259.

“immutable,” knowing all on his behalf, and saving him from sinking into loss of power over his own will,<sup>82</sup> he cries out

Give Thyself to me, O my God, give thyself once more to me. I love thee: and if my love is too small a thing, grant me to love more intensely. I cannot measure, to know how much my love falls short of sufficiency, that my life should run to Thy embrace and never be turned away until it is hidden in the secret of Thy face. This only do I know, that it is ill with me when thou art not with me – I do not mean by me, but in me; and all that is abundance which is not my God to me is neediness.<sup>83</sup>

Augustine follows with making sense of scripture by interpreting it symbolically, by comparing it with what he senses as true.<sup>84</sup> In speculating about a nature (from nothing) that suffers concupiscence, Augustine remains focused on his troubled “I,” seeking to realize desire for God in the face of an unruly, unstable, will.<sup>85</sup> We turn to Aquinas.

*b. Aquinas*

What lies beneath Aquinas’ scholastic corpus? (For our argument, we focus on his incorporation of Aristotelian metaphysics, as taken up by nineteenth century Neo-Scholastics.) Aquinas advanced on Augustine, Petillo argues,<sup>86</sup> by prescinding from

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<sup>82</sup> *Confessions*, 262, 264 -265.

<sup>83</sup> Italics in original text. *Confessions*, 264. This echoes Augustine at the beginning of *Confessions*, in a deeply relational mode. “...if you are already in me, since otherwise I should not be, why do I cry to you to enter me?” (Augustine expresses the need for the loving regard/imprint of the other.) “For Thy mercies’ sake O Lord my God, tell me what thou art to me. *Say to my soul, I am Thy salvation*. So speak that I may hear, Lord, my heart is listening; open it that it may hear thee say to my soul *I am Thy salvation*. Hearing that word, let me come in haste to lay hold upon thee. Hide not Thy face from me. Let me see Thy face even if I die, lest I die with longing to see it.” (He tries to evoke what resembles a presence once had, or he struggled to have, with Monica/his nursemaid.) *Confessions*, 2, 3.

<sup>84</sup> For example, “In goodness of will is our peace. A body tends by its weight towards the place proper to it – weight does not necessarily tend toward the lowest place, but toward its proper place. Fire tends upwards, stone tends downwards... Things out of their place are in motion: they come to their place and are at rest. My love is my weight: wherever I go my love is what brings me there. By your gift we are on fire and borne upwards, we flame and we ascend.” *Confessions*, 264.

<sup>85</sup> In *Confessions*, Augustine feels of himself (his ‘nature’): “What is man that thou should be mindful of him?” In *The City of God*, ‘nature’ for Augustine is to be exile from one’s homeland, eternity’. Though he speaks of the good of peace in an earthly city, it is the heavenly which is his true goal. Matthew Bernard Mulcahy, OP, “Not Everything is Grace: Aquinas’s Notion of “Pure Nature” and the Christian Integralism of Henri de Lubac and of radical Orthodoxy,” Doctoral Thesis submitted to the Australian Catholic University, 2008. [dlibrary.acu.edu.au/digitaltheses/public/adt-acuvp238.../index.html](http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/digitaltheses/public/adt-acuvp238.../index.html). Accessed 25 Sept 2011, 115, 60-62. See also 259.

<sup>86</sup> Petillo argues that this was an advance, following Lonergan’s sense of Hegel’s idealism (a spirit of developing consciousness in history). Petillo, “The theological problem of grace and experience,” 1 (586).

Augustine’s concrete, enabling nature to be thought of through the abstract notion of teleology, and of grace to be conceived of as a “distinct order of being beyond the order of nature.”<sup>87</sup> Was this an advance? Thomas Marsh, in a discussion on Aquinas’s Trinitarian relations (*de Deo Trino*) as treated subsequent to God as one (*de Deo Uno*), describes the effect of the *Summa Theologica*’s *Exitus-Reditus* structure (creation comes forth from God, and then, through God’s redemptive providence, returns again to God – a Neo-Platonic shape).<sup>88</sup> Prima Pars, questions 2-43, considers God as the one divine nature or substance, without envisaging Creation (questions 44-49) or God’s relation to Creation, causing a separation “more explicit than anything heretofore,” between the theological discussion of God as Trinity and “God’s external activity in creation and salvation history and appropriation.”<sup>89</sup> This “commitment to beginning with God as beginning with God in Godself...” imposes a “separation between the concepts of nature and ... God ...which later formal statements to the contrary scarcely negated.”<sup>90</sup> Without Genesis’s anthropomorphisms, relational signifiers (loving, caring), and narrative relating to Adam and Eve, God (as the One source) is devoid of relationality;<sup>91</sup> universal perfections are radiated by a simple, indivisible, necessary, immaterial, uncreated, unmoved mover.<sup>92</sup> This “static conceptualist worldview” views “natures as pre-existing in the mind of God (like Platonic ideas), who then created a world in which to implant these natures.”<sup>93</sup> Confining the reality of God within the

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<sup>87</sup> According to Lonergan “... the fallacy in early thought had been an unconscious confusion of the metaphysical abstraction ‘nature’ with the concrete data which did not quite correspond... [The] achievement was the creation ... of a set of coordinates to eliminate basic fallacies and their attendant host of anomalies.” Petillo, “The theological problem of grace and experience,” 5.

<sup>88</sup> Marsh, *The Triune God* (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-third Publications, 1994), 144.

<sup>89</sup> Marsh, *The Triune God*, 144-145.

<sup>90</sup> Marsh, *The Triune God*, 145-146. The later carve-up of his work into dogmatic theology sharpened this procedure, and, then, the later scholastic turning this into a system of tracts, emphasized it even more. Thomas, in later treatises, builds upon his beginning point with developmentally sensitive statements.

<sup>91</sup> Genesis’s God is inclined toward creation, saying “it is good,” giving the human a task, “be fruitful and multiply” and “subdue the earth,” providing seeds and fruit to eat for humans and animals, and resting after work (Gen 1:28-2:3).

<sup>92</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (NY: Penguin Books Ltd, 1982, 1985), 445-556.

<sup>93</sup> This description is offered with respect to what de Lubac opposed. Neil Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2007), 119.

“immanent” Godhead, Marsh notes, de-personalizes our understanding of God’s relationship with us.<sup>94</sup>

Aquinas’s subsequent God-human analogies (‘craftsmen’ metaphors, following Aristotle) to explain aspects of that relation tend to view human life as a collection of functions. Comparing God’s creating of humanity to a blacksmith choosing iron from which to make a saw for cutting (while iron is best for the purpose, it breaks) to illustrate the relation of weaknesses and mortality to embodiment, is alienating.<sup>95</sup> Saws, unlike human beings, are neither conscious subjects nor relate to others. To shed light on God’s choice of embodiment, at the very least there should be some investigation of embodied animals (of which there are plenty of species). Sensate abilities allowing emotional responsiveness – positively (in nurture) and negatively (in fear of death) – reflect the creature’s need for emotional and physical sustenance. Embodied animals appear to be equipped for relation; relation requires sensitivity for nurture, and life (fear of death) to be available to love.

Further diverting us from relationality (and toward a being’s essence) is God’s addition of the gift of immortality to a composite body and soul which it cannot naturally possess; “God overcame the inherent corruptibility of bodies by endowing Adam and Eve with an added ‘preternatural’ blessing, namely immunity to bodily dissolution.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> “The net result was to reduce ... theology... to a matter of abstract and purely academic interest, somewhat like a problem in pure mathematics.” Marsh, *The Triune God*, 146. A similar concern in relation to the person was raised by Joseph Ratzinger twenty years ago. In the light of Trinitarian debates and the distinction between nature and person (*suppositum*), the person has been predominantly viewed in terms of substance, nature and rationality – what human beings have in common. By starting with the theology of the Trinity and the person of the Word as constituted *to* and *from* relationship with the Father, the unique quality of the person is better preserved. Most importantly, this acknowledges that being-in-relation is constitutive of, and not accidental to, personhood. See Joseph Ratzinger, ‘Retrieving the Tradition: Concerning the notion of person in theology,’ *Communio* 17 (Fall, 1990), 440-454.

<sup>95</sup> *De Malo* q. 5, a. 5: “If one could find iron incapable of breaking or rusting, it would be most suitable matter for a saw, and a blacksmith would seek it. But because one cannot find such iron, the blacksmith takes such as he can find, namely, hard but breakable iron. And likewise, since there can be no body composed of elements that is by the nature of matter indissoluble, an organic but dissoluble body is by nature suitable for the soul that cannot pass away.” Bernard Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace: Aquinas’s Notion of Pure Nature*, 88-89.

<sup>96</sup> Mulcahy uses “supernatural” to describe the preternatural blessing (Aquinas), favours granted by God above and beyond the powers or capacities of the nature that receives them but not beyond those of all created nature. Such gifts perfect nature but do not carry it beyond the limits of created nature. They include three great privileges to which human beings have no title--infused knowledge, absence of concupiscence, and bodily immortality. Adam and Eve possessed these gifts before the Fall. Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 89.

This stage, not described in Genesis, seems unlike the God who *called* humans into being (“in our image, according to our likeness” Gen 1: 26a), or who made flesh from clay and breathed life into them (Gen2: 7). The problem becomes more evident in the idea of “limbo” where life is considered without reference to the parent-child bond, a significant Hebrew metaphor denoting an inviolable bond (child, heir, adoptive privilege).<sup>97</sup>

What is implicit in this portrayal of the human person, influencing the description of grace? Petillo suggests that the development of cognition from infancy and childhood was ill-understood at this time,<sup>98</sup> but development of human life (mothers and babies) were all around. Did the emphasis on the essential, the abstract and the a-historical mean that the notion of ‘becoming’ (and its evidence) was devalued? It would be somewhat difficult to show a link between Aquinas’s self-perception and his theology. Torrell writes that a personal dimension can be detected in Aquinas’ theology.<sup>99</sup> For all

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<sup>97</sup> Mulcahy writes: concerned to show that God was just and would not punish those who through no fault of their own were unable to attain their end, de Lubac proposed that all human existence must intrinsically include the “vision of God,” (because to be denied that vision is tantamount to the cruelty of hell). Aquinas states, even if man “had never sinned, he would deserve the lack of the divine vision, to which one may not come except by grace,” (*De Malo* q. 5 a. 1, obj. 15) and makes a distinction between “defect” and “punishment. “It is one thing not to deserve (which would not be a punishment, but merely a defect), but something else to deserve not to have, which would be a punishment.” We find this distinction inadequate; it fails to picture a dying infant in the arms of its parent – a theoretical mode of existence intrudes into human hope. Mulcahy states, rather limply, we “can only reason about [the unbaptised’s] future from the data of faith and from sound theological conclusions.” That hope is allowed for these to reach heaven “is a speculative theological conclusion inspired by hope: it is not a dogma.” Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 117 – 127. Jesus states in Mk 2: 27, “The Sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the Sabbath;” baptism is made for humankind and not humankind for baptism.

<sup>98</sup> Petillo writes that Aquinas made an advance over Augustine’s existential work, in a “grasp of things not in relation to sense and feelings but of things in relation to one another; its correlations are not based on narrative or doctrinal reason but on necessary or immanent reasons; its insights have a broader implication...” Aquinas enriched Augustine, transcending “the limits of existential description” by transposing his “psychological narrative to the more explanatory context of Scholastic metaphysics.” This “allowed Aquinas to work out a more theoretical and scientific understanding of grace.” “...elaborating an abstract view of nature, even though it never exists outside the context of sin and grace, allows one to understand more precisely the impact of sin and grace on human persons.” While this is true in the form of meaning and its intelligibility of faith seeking to understand Revelation in relation to human experience at the objective, public level, the cost of this was a diminished sense of the meaning found at the existential, subjective level and, in particular, in the realm of relationship and responsiveness. It hardly helped Zélie understand God when her babies died. Though she held onto hope she still suffered torment over such formulation. Petillo, “The Theological Problem of Grace and Experience,” 5.

<sup>99</sup> Torrell observes that Aquinas, in writing on friendship (*S.T.* II-II. 23.1) shows a “delicate sensibility” making it “difficult to think that the man who spoke in this way had nothing but a literary knowledge of

that, what has been said above suggests a need, felt or imposed, to articulate essentially relational matters objectively, to systematize and control them – resulting in a controlling system. Thérèse feels herself having an impact on God, implying a mutual relationship. Alternatively, Augustine and Aquinas seem to stress being impacted on (lifted, enlightened, infused, affected) by contemplating God’s perfections.<sup>100</sup> One wonders whether they had a diminished sense of mutuality (lack a remembered sense of impacting one’s caregiver) due to being in partnership with a parent who they felt they could not affectively impact?

In Marsh’s view, the de-personalizing effect in Aquinas’s writing has its roots in his first giving attention to *de Deo Uno* and second to God as Trinity – persons in relationship. God as ‘non-contingency’, as the “external” first cause, as ‘uncreated’, with us as ‘created’, is foreign to our experience of relation. Whilst Augustine’s sense of his will as corrupt was alienating, it was, at least, an alienation within human self-identification. While Aquinas sees friendship with God as the heart of the moral life and the workings of grace, his language on grace (images and metaphors) often do not connect with our experience of relation,<sup>101</sup> of being a self in relation to God. Our experience of beginning life contingently (created), is relational in its quality; we sense unity with our originator’s body (it creates us from itself). At the matrix of our God-perception is an experience of warmth within and next to our being, in undifferentiation between self and our nourishing originator,<sup>102</sup> becoming an interaction of persons or

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affection.” See Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Vol. 1: The Person and His Work*, (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 283.

<sup>100</sup> For Augustine, God encompasses an immutable objective “Truth” above the experience of our smaller subjective knowledge, to which we only have a limited access. See *Confessions*, 251-253.

<sup>101</sup> For example, “The entire justification of the ungodly consists as to its origin in the infusion of grace. For it is by grace that free-will is moved and sin is remitted. Now the infusion of grace takes place in an instant and without succession. And the reason of this is that if a form be not suddenly impressed upon its subject, it is either because that subject is not disposed, or because the agent needs time to dispose the subject. Hence we see that immediately the matter is disposed by a preceding alteration, the substantial form accrues to the matter; thus because the atmosphere of itself is disposed to receive light, it is suddenly illuminated by a body actually luminous. Now it was stated (112, 2) that God, in order to infuse grace into the soul, needs no disposition, save what He Himself has made. And sometimes this sufficient disposition for the reception of grace He makes suddenly, sometimes gradually and successively, as stated above (112, 2, ad 2). For the reason why a natural agent cannot suddenly dispose matter is that in the matter there is a resistant which has some disproportion with the power of the agent; and hence we see that the stronger the agent, the more speedily is the matter disposed.” *S.T. I-II. 113.7*.

<sup>102</sup> Sroufe offers a theory of differentiation in the emotions which presumes a time of undifferentiation. This argues that there is an order of precursors, “global reactions to broad classes of stimulation”



selves, who, with progressing strength, tolerate distance. While Aquinas does develop the role of love and the affective virtues in human interaction, overall his starting point, focuses “all attention on what is known” and only subsequently coming “to discover the knowing self;” the self being “the remote principle of its own acts,” is perhaps telling.<sup>103</sup> The self as subject is relational - but primarily in epistemological terms and only secondarily in the embodied and responsive sense.

#### **4. The Medieval Problem: the Interrelatedness of Teleology, Taxonomy and Essentialism**

Writing before empirical method and a contemporary concept of ‘personhood’, Aquinas (representing for us the medieval problem) defined “being” in a treatise (humans, contingent to a creator, “exist,” in contrast to God who, as primary, is “being and essence”) in the language of Aristotelian science (a taxonomy of essences and ends),<sup>104</sup> where objectively real things are examined in themselves. A thing is examined for its inherent properties (essences) against accidents (“superficial characters”),<sup>105</sup> to name its end (teleology) so to isolate it from, and relate it hierarchically (*scala naturae*), to other things (taxonomy), which becomes its definition.<sup>106</sup> To differentiate creaturely substances (primary beings), Aristotle used predicates which describe most of the creature, such as “rational animal” (the species), followed by more peripheral

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dynamically lead to “mature forms [that] are precise and often immediate reactions to specific meaningful events.” L. Alan Sroufe, *Emotional Development: The Organization of Emotional Life in the Early Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 58.

<sup>103</sup> Patrick Byrne remarks that “remote” is a pretty odd way of speaking about self-hood; but ... if one follows the method of *De anima*; if one begins metaphysically with [objects and] acts it takes a while to get back to the soul.” Petillo, “The Theological Problem of Grace and Experience,” 6, 7.

<sup>104</sup> See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, translated by Richard Hope (USA: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, The University of Michigan Press, 1952), 169-180.

<sup>105</sup> Aristotle saw the chief distinction between species as “differences of proportion, or relative magnitude...of ‘excess and defect’.” See James G. Lennox, “Aristotle on Genera, Species, and the More and the Less” *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol 13, no 2 (Fall 1980), pp. 321-346, 321.

<sup>106</sup> “Essentialism” is the activity of defining by essentials. Quine offers, as one definition, “the doctrine that some of the attributes of a thing... may be essential to a thing, and others accidental.” (Quine1953b/1976, 175-6) in Teresa Robertson, “Essential vs. Accidental Properties” 2008, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, accessed on <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/essential-accidental/> on 20/11/2011.

characteristics (the genus).<sup>107</sup> Partakers in the God-human relation are categorized under contingency, perfection, inherency, naturalness, infinitude, with grace suffering the same categorization.<sup>108</sup> Dichotomous constituents, echoing the physics of this time (matter made up of indissoluble particles in contrast to insensible substances, matter owning a true, “at rest,” state), failed to reflect the interrelatedness of persons,<sup>109</sup> leading to categorizing persons and their operations as discrete entities (containing inherent properties).<sup>110</sup> Aristotle’s axiom, that A is not non-A, however, does not apply to intersubjectivity – intersubjectivity involves the paradoxical logic, “A and non-A’ as not excluding “each other as predicates of X.”<sup>111</sup> In scholasticism, Christians were confronted with dispersed definitions of grace connected with instances of it in creation, ends as such, and the virtuous life.<sup>112</sup>

The effort to be scientific subverted the aim to describe human *being*. Toward finding a *telos*, things are isolated and observed in linear way to find their ultimate end: is the tree’s end is to be tall and leafy, to flower, to produce fruit, or, through dying, to cast

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<sup>107</sup> Douglas E Rasmussen argues “that a being’s essential properties consist of that which is not accidental,” held by many as Aristotle’s thought, came from the NeoPlatonic philosopher, Porphyry (234-305). Douglas E Rasmussen, *Quine and Aristotelian Essentialism*, reprinted from *The New Scholasticism*, Volume LVIII, 3, Summer, 1984.

<sup>108</sup> As noted earlier, by starting with the theology of the Trinity and the person of the Word as constituted *to* and *from* relationship with the Father, the unique quality of the person is better preserved, as it acknowledges that being-in-relationship is constitutive of, and not accidental to, personhood.

<sup>109</sup> “‘Relationality’ is now a pervasive feature in the contemporary sense of reality.” Patrick McArdle, *The Relational Person within a Practical Theology of Healthcare*, Doctoral Thesis submitted at ACU, Vic, 2006, 148-149.

<sup>110</sup> Current subatomic physics looks beyond particles toward waves and movement. “This suggests an analogy for considering the human person ... as the intersection of relationships. Similarly, ecological science, and the concerns it inspires, stresses the interactive habitat or ecosphere in which each living being exists.” McArdle, *The Relational Person within a Practical Theology of Healthcare*, 148.

<sup>111</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (New York: Perennial, 2000), 68.

<sup>112</sup> For example an ungraced nature finds a position in relation to substance, attaining virtue, and those who cannot achieve union with God, but do not deserve punishment, such as infants. A “not yet graced” nature described a step in creation where humanity was gifted with such as immortality. In terms of ends “in themselves,” there was a natural one, “happiness and flourishing,” and a supernatural one, “beatific vision.” Augustine’s single desire threaded through these, but it was unclear as to how the two ends interrelated within a person. For Augustine the first was mere peaceful existence (Mulcahy, 58-63). Finally, in the virtuous life, natural ability (cognitive and affective) is altered by supernatural elevation, so that the natural person might live a life of supernatural virtue. Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 88-120.

fruit upon the ground to germinate?<sup>113</sup> However, a tree is not only all of these, but it exists also to cast shade on other flora and animals, feed animals, and beautify the earth, all of which help other ends but at the same time assure its own survival; it is ecologically interdependent. Scholastic essentialism contrasts things as lower and higher in terms of degrees of “perfection” (with immateriality, rational principle, and stasis, of a higher order). In the way God is contrasted with the human, the human is contrasted with other animal beings to show it as higher (in possession of a soul, most rational, emotional and vulnerable at birth). There is something anthropocentric, almost competitive, about it all. To show humans as in possession of superior properties, other species were devalued by predicating them negatively, namely, non-human animals were non-persons, non-affective, less-rational, lacking self-awareness and moral sensitivity, without language, symbol, or culture.

With empirical method, essentialist distinctions were tested.<sup>114</sup> Non-human animals were found to live in interdependent groups, with many mammals noted to be vulnerable at birth, dependent on the affective care-giving of parent animals for survival and learning skills. They were found to communicate, show favour, and ‘concern’ toward ‘family’ members beyond mere functioning for survival.<sup>115</sup> Classifying by valuing most what is familiar to humans, e.g., digital dexterity (superior to other purpose-oriented appendages, such as beak, wings or flippers) reflects something of the

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<sup>113</sup> Mulcahy supplies a meaning of *telos* which shows its unsuitability for describing animate beings in relation. *Telos* refers to the full determination or maturation of a being, “what a given being is when it reaches the status of the defined; the complete; a condition of perfection, completion, fulfilment. ... The principle invoked to explain a being’s kinesis (motion, change) and stasis (rest) is nature. The end of that nature is its good...” Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 94. Can Aristotle’s notion of “at rest” (his physics – we now view ‘matter’ as phasic) be applied to living things, when they are never an unfinished or finished entity: a human’s being in relation, or holiness, is always possible at every point, always becoming, and, by virtue of resurrection never ceases to a deepening participation in God’s dynamic “I am Who I am.”

<sup>114</sup> Rationality, emotion, and self-awareness, were offered in medieval theology as the contrast between human and other animals. Nevertheless, Aquinas, building on Aristotle, discusses the “internal senses” in humans and their presence in other animals – memory, imagination, *sensus communis*, instinct, aestimative power (the capacity to instinctively seek or avoid certain things because they are useful or dangerous). See *S.T.* 1.78.4. Aquinas elsewhere makes the telling comment that, in animals, the sensitive appetite (affective powers) is not obedient/subject to reason (as in human beings). It is guided by “the aestimative faculty, which is subject to a higher reason, namely God’s; and, to that extent, *their emotions bear some resemblance to moral goodness.*” *S.T.* I-II.24.3 ad 3 (italics added). In Aquinas’s mind, one could say that all the “internal senses” can justifiably be described as incipient forms of rationality.

<sup>115</sup> Continuity was found between humans and other animals, such as affect in mammals, and a positive response in the “mirror self-recognition test” in chimpanzees. Sroufe, *Emotional Development: The Organization of Emotional Life in The Early Years*, 196.

competitive strand in essentialism.<sup>116</sup> Humanity's unique end as the pursuit to know the One (by a particular kind of cognition-contemplative) wherein all knowledge inheres, illustrates an epistemological emphasis, implying affective-relational knowing as peripheral.<sup>117</sup> The cost of emphasising the person as a substance and as rational meant that the awareness of what we have in common with the animal world, namely, *embodiment*, was diminished and, with it, the centrality of human relationality and interdependence in its various forms.<sup>118</sup> In the light of this, we turn to its bearing on grace, and specifically to the two Catholic trends that dominate in Thérèse's time, and the perceptions arising through them.

### 5. Trent and Banez – Towards Thérèse's time

Between the sixteenth and the twentieth century, through the consolidation of Thomistic positions against the Reformers,<sup>119</sup> and Banez's commentary, Catholic theological anthropology became a problem of "nature and grace." Bypassing 'how is God experienced as good?' many theologians asked, 'what did God's freedom look like with regard to grace and election', and 'was desire for God (inscribing one's beatific end) and its realization intrinsic to the person, or did it come as a second movement from outside the human person's intrinsic abilities?'<sup>120</sup> Did grace work from within human capacities, or was it added as a second tier, on top of human capacities? Thus, the question moved from, 'given limitation due to sin, how might felt-desire for God be fulfilled (Augustine)?' to 'what power did humans possess in relation to achieving the high end offered by scholastic thought: a new vision "beyond the heart and mind of

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<sup>116</sup> Denis Edwards overcomes this in his model of Trinity where 'relationship' is the primary metaphysical category. Denis Edwards, *The God of Evolution: A Trinitarian Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000).

<sup>117</sup> Aristotle held that the human end was intellectual; "its flourishing therefore requires a properly intellectual fulfilment [all men by nature desire to know] and in order to find the perfect fulfilment of such a desire, we need to know the First Cause and to possess it as ultimate Truth." Aquinas synthesizes Aristotle's "desire to know" with Augustine's thought that humanity is able to be exalted to a supernatural existence, unimaginable in his natural state. Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 116.

<sup>118</sup> This emphasis perhaps relates to fear of the body.

<sup>119</sup> Against Luther's grace alone (*sola fide*, not *and* works), Catholic theologians defended meritorious virtue.

<sup>120</sup> Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 14. "Grace supplements nature by providing power to achieve a cognitive and affective level of activity transcending the natural."

humanity.”<sup>121</sup> Stephen Duffy in *The Graced Horizon* in tandem with Neil Ormerod’s summary in *Creation, Grace, and Redemption* inform our discussion on the scholastic and Augustinian trends, and their arguments.

*a. A Scholastic Trend: Extrinsicism*

“Extrinsicism,” first of all, describes “two tiers of grace” where grace elevates a hitherto natural end to a supernatural one. It also describes the impression of grace as external to persons, as a “bank” accrued by merit, lost by sin, and, without relationality playing a part, as a sort of magical state obtained through “the” sacraments.<sup>122</sup> Where grace was felt, there was a sense of the ethereal.<sup>123</sup> Knowledge of God, and the affect needed to sustain theological virtues arrived in inexplicably *religious* ways. We recall Aquinas’s starting point.

In Aquinas, pure nature existed before God added the preternatural gift of immortality<sup>124</sup> (a part-way stage in God’s creating), producing a “perfect nature”, or a “state of integrity.”<sup>125</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange explains Adam and Eve received *praeter naturam* (such as “immortality, impassability and other endowments”) and *super naturam* gifts (“united to God in a personal communion of love and righteousness”); for him “pure nature” describes humanity’s inherent constituents – having neither grace nor

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<sup>121</sup> A much elevated supernatural end required a supernatural desire, raised by a second grace. Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 115 -118. The end (*telos*) proposed in Thomistic theology was drawn from 1 John, 1 Peter 1:4. “...an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading...” an increasing allusion to platonic ideals, and Paul in 1 Cor 2: 9 (“What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived...”). Here Paul quotes Isaiah 64: 4, where Isaiah speaks of an anthropomorphic portrayal of God, named as father in verse 8, who rewards/forgives those who wait on God, and (in verses 10-12) gives them a spirit that knows God’s thoughts, which in Isaiah 55: 7-13 are about mercy and bounteous sustenance (unlike human desire for revenge) for those who, v 3, “incline their ear, and come” to God. Like the scholastics, Mulcahy aligns this (using Isaiah 65: 17 “I am about to create new heavens and a new earth”) with the wholly-otherness of a new metaphysical order, when Isaiah speaks, rather, of the joy in a physical restoration of Jerusalem. Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 116.

<sup>122</sup> See Patricia Smith, *Teaching Sacraments* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1987), 26-27. In relation to *The Baltimore Catechism*, see also George Worgul, *From Magic to Metaphor* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 126-127.

<sup>123</sup> Grace was felt to belong “to some divine, religious realm above and separate from the human person.” Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 120.

<sup>124</sup> Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 89-91.

<sup>125</sup> See S. T. I-II. 109. 2.

the effects of the fall, it is affected by neither by grace nor by sin.<sup>126</sup> Did one of Aquinas' ends, "perfect" or "imperfect beatitude,"<sup>127</sup> apply to pure nature? It is not clear. Upon the "fall," there arose a "state of corrupt nature,"<sup>128</sup> but a natural desire to seek the "First Cause" persists through both the gifted state to the fallen one. Cajetan interpreted nature as possessing its own enclosed end. He proposed that grace, quite unrelated to that enclosed end, supplied a vision so transcending natural human powers that it required a new "extrinsic superstructure" in proportion to it.<sup>129</sup> This led to a "separation of grace from nature, the sacred from the profane, the religious from the secular, and the spiritual from the mundane."<sup>130</sup> We turn to another trend, Jansenism.

*b. An Augustinian Trend: Jansenism*

In France in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there was amongst Catholics another sense of grace. While identified as Jansenist, this did not entail holding to the propositions of *Augustinus* intellectually, but to a certain sentiment, expressing faith radically and rigorously. Mulcahy quotes the Jansenist orator J-J Douguet:

There is nothing purely human, nothing purely political, in a Christian woman; religion is everything, enters everywhere, has control over everything; it is religion that should rule everything, sacrifice everything ennobles everything. Salvation not only the most important business, but the only one. One must work towards it independently of everything else, and only apply oneself to other matters with reference to that great purpose. Everything must be adjusted to it, everything respond to it; but it must never be adapted to our purposes.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange follows a Plotinian world-view. Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 102. For Aquinas, immortality must belong to human nature, to show that death is a corruption of it. At the same time he held death as natural to the body. Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 74, 86. See 83-84 for Aquinas' treatment of death in *De Malo* q.5 a.5, and *Compendium theologiae et Fratrem Reginaldum*.

<sup>127</sup> In relation to the virtues in *S.T.* I-II q. 5, Aquinas speaks of two ends, one of "one proportionate to his own nature, and this he can reach through his own resources," and "a happiness surpassing his nature, he can only attain by the power of God, by a kind of participation in the Godhead." Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 97.

<sup>128</sup> In *S.T.* I-II.110 Aquinas writes "... in the state of perfect nature man needs a gratuitous strength superadded to natural strength... to do and wish supernatural good," but in the "state of corrupt nature," to, both, "be healed," and to "to carry out works of supernatural virtue, which are meritorious."

<sup>129</sup> For Cajetan, grace supplies a new *telos*; an elevated supernatural end required a supernatural desire, raised by a second grace. Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 115 -118.

<sup>130</sup> Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, Redemption*, 118.

<sup>131</sup> Quoted in Robin Briggs, *Communities of Belief*, Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 232.

This sentiment resembled Calvinism, but Jansenist worship and creed remained vehemently Catholic. It was distinctively both Augustinian and unThomist:<sup>132</sup>

since humanity is ordered to the vision of God, the means required for that end must be given, among them the graces that theology calls supernatural

further, “humanity cannot be found in a state of pure nature,” that is, “in a state destitute of the means of grace necessary to the pursuit of its end.”<sup>133</sup> There was one unfolding God-intended order from conception to salvation, integral to all predestined human persons and their development.<sup>134</sup> A side product of this was that election was often read, retrospectively, as fate (fixed), rather than destiny (open).<sup>135</sup>

### c. *The Positions*

To gain an understanding of what ensued, we follow Duffy’s discussion of the arguments ensuing from these perceptions<sup>136</sup> Z (two tiers of grace) and X (one grace).<sup>137</sup> Not always in agreement with their fellow X or Z holders, proponents crossed over on issues (preserving God’s gratuity as grace-giver, and the value of secular activity) for the sake of internal consistency. Their arguments confused orders (substantialist science, relational phenomenology, and scriptural texts). Arguments became abstruse, leading to misunderstanding, and to a theological anthropology that lacked cohesion. We review some of these arguments, leading us to propose, in the light of our discussion of Thérèse of Lisieux, that human development entailing grace in its generic

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<sup>132</sup> Trent was needed to keep Jansenism at bay as much as Protestantism. “De Gratia” was produced as a systematic treatise on grace,” actual and sanctifying or habitual (which was incorporated into the *Baltimore Catechism*, the staple preconciliar educative tool in the USA). Komonchak, *The New Dictionary of Theology*, 442-443.

<sup>133</sup> This was not with respect to ordination (election), i.e., “not in a condition of non-ordination to vision.” Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 27.

<sup>134</sup> De Lubac held human nature “essentially ordered to the beatific vision, so that it is unintelligible without reference to that supernatural end.” Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 234. See also Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 119.

<sup>135</sup> Bargdill, “Fate and Destiny: Some Historical Distinctions between the Concepts,” *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 205-206.

<sup>136</sup> We will treat these as perceptions, rather than include their many (mechanical) qualifications. We remove J-J Douget’s radical God orientation from X, taking a more philosophical approach, such as God-orientation understood through psycho-somatic signs (such as John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*).

<sup>137</sup> Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 12-49.

form provides an analogy toward a re-integration of theological anthropology in relation to grace.

In Z, humans, as natural, are ordered to a natural end; God offers his creatures a new supernatural end, a share in his divine spiritual being. Without God effecting a change to the human end, they were destined to a good, but mere “flowering” of life.<sup>138</sup> It might be asked of Z: what was our *imago dei* imprint at creation? Why does God create then alter his “good” creature? We are left with an impression that God is not present in the human from the beginning, but arrives later, from outside, as an intrusion,<sup>139</sup> or that God diverts humanity from its original course.

One line of argument (offered by Duffy) traces extrinsicism to Aquinas’s use of Aristotle. Following Aristotle’s theory in “that all intuitive knowledge entails a certain identity of the knower and the known,” Aquinas asserted that “the highest intuition the finite mind can achieve is immediate awareness of itself” and “no finite mind can attain of itself immediate direct knowledge of God.”<sup>140</sup> On these assumptions, a supernatural power is needed to enable cognition of God (“transcend” human “limits”).<sup>141</sup> In the case

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<sup>138</sup> “...in the state of integrity...man by his natural endowments could wish and do the good proportionate to his nature, such as the good of an acquired virtue, but not surpassing good...as of infused virtue.” “... even in the state of corrupted nature it can, by virtue of its natural endowments, work some particular good...yet it cannot do all the good natural to it...just as a sick man can...make some movements...” Nevertheless, “...in the state of perfect nature man needs a gratuitous strength superadded to natural strength... to do and wish supernatural good...” *S.T. I-II. 109. 2.* See also Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 114.

<sup>139</sup> Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 37. See also Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 97-98. Aquinas writes that persons cannot transcend natural sensory knowing “except by a superadded form, as water can only heat when heated by fire;” human understanding is “sufficient for knowing certain intelligible things”... “but higher intelligible things ...the human intellect cannot know, unless it be perfected by a stronger light...” (*S.T. I-II. 109.1*). Beyond assuming Aristotle’s physics (substances “at rest” as their true state), fire heating water, causing it to enter another phase, is a poor metaphor for animal beings as, made from another’s body, we are interpenetrated by what begets us in a way that is *not* entirely other. We sense becoming as occurring through an experience of an other within and surrounding, by umbilical and womb, by breast and arms, by subliminal memory of affective engagement.

<sup>140</sup> Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 14.

<sup>141</sup> Duffy writes: “God can only be apprehended only mediately, indirectly, inferentially, as ground of being. ... grace supplements nature by providing a power to achieve a cognitive and affective level of activity transcending the natural. Grace renders nature capable ... of a direct relationship with God *in via*...and *in patria*.” Given this understanding of human nature, the introduction of extrinsic ‘superadded’ powers (*habitus* was the Aristotelian category evoked) became...necessity. the elevation of natural powers is a must if one is to be capable of ... activities otherwise impossible.” Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 14. Leonardo Boff, *Liberating Grace*, 10. “Action follows from being” (*Agere sequitur esse*), generated by a prior principle; in virtuous action, *grace* is that principle.



of Thérèse, though she gives assent to this by speaking of “illumination” and “lights,” she *acts* on the assumption that she can know and impact God, based on *feeling* God as consistent with her early relational experience of mercy (generic grace).<sup>142</sup> She creatively interacts with God via an interior landscape (a representational world containing earlier gracious/merciful parental relations, constructed to “carry the assurance of well-being”)<sup>143</sup> to understand the new persons, events, and processes God “sends.” Whilst she confesses that she can only “stutter” about God (objective knowing?), in writing of her experience of God Thérèse is eloquent. Attributing what she learns from God as “lights,” she hints at its operation:

the Gospels sustain me during my hours of prayer. ...I am constantly discovering in them new lights and mysterious meanings. I understand and know from experience that “The kingdom of God is within you.” Jesus has no need of books or teachers to instruct souls... Never have I heard him speak, but I feel that He is feel that He is within me at each moment; He is guiding and inspiring me with what I must say and do. I find just when I need them certain lights that I had not seen until then, and it isn’t most frequently during my hours of prayer that these are most abundant but rather in the midst of my daily occupations.<sup>144</sup>

This activity of knowing leads us to question the adequacy of approaches to God based on objective (analytical) knowing. Thérèse *feels* grace as a gift whose presence is mediated by her early life experience, deepening as she reflects on it, experiencing grace as working in human consciousness. In supplying an inexhaustible dynamic of God-object representations, our psychic operations represent an unfathomable<sup>145</sup> God-knowing, leading us to qualify what is meant by knowing as “finite” with respect of

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<sup>142</sup> Thérèse of Lisieux, *Story of a Soul. The Autobiography of St Thérèse of Lisieux*, translated by John Clarke (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1996), 179.

<sup>143</sup> This refers to Winnicott’s paradigm. See McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion*, 225.

<sup>144</sup> Underlining added. *Story of a Soul*, 179. “Je comprends et je sais par expérience...” St Thérèse, *Histoire D’Une Ame*, 204.

<sup>145</sup> See William Washabaugh, *A life of Response: American Cultural Anthropology*, Chapter 5. [http://www.uwm.edu/~wash/102\\_7.htm](http://www.uwm.edu/~wash/102_7.htm) accessed 9.10.2009. This claim is born out by the nuanced and multivalent layers apprehended in human symbol-operating. There is no limit to our capacity to know and love God in an ever deepening and expanding sense - in John of the Cross, Aquinas, Paul in Ephesians praying that we be filled with the utter fullness of God. Augustine also speaks of his limitless desire transcending limitation and finitude.

God who is “infinite.”<sup>146</sup> If relating to God is connected with the experiencing self, originally, in relation to a nourishing other, forming the ground for further knowing God, then it can be said that transcendent knowing resides within immanent knowing. Further, if we view God (the internalized face, voice, arms that values us) and self-becoming as inextricably entwined, we might view this (encoded memory) as an infinite source of grace within the person. Though the effects of engaging with this felt-knowing (via transitional God-object representations) are *felt* as inexplicable, they are not foreign to the operations of the human person. This is another way of saying that grace builds on, rather than replaces, nature. God speaks the original “it is good...” from within the human person, in a process ordered toward this.<sup>147</sup> McDargh writes,

What if it were the case that the psychic processes by which persons became selves, all the dimensions of the creation and maintenance of the self...linked to the dynamic of faith were... simultaneously the processes involved in the formation and transformation of God? What if both the representation of God and the self... had their origins in the same matrix of relationship, bore the birthmark of the same process of separation and individuation, looked to the same vexed or blessed circumstances of family and culture? Would this not have the consequence of making “God” uniquely available for the processes of faith...? The development of history and process would then belong together... as synchronous and inter-related processes which mutually inform and influence one another.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Aquinas asserts that one might discover the eternal One/First Cause through contemplating essences or “universals” in existent objects. Thomas Aquinas, “On Being and Essence,” *Selected Writings of Thomas Aquinas*, 33- 36. In Thérèse’s activity, we see a shift to the eternal as the ‘inbetween’ of relation. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970), 53-85. Buber speaks of addressing the eternal in the “I-You relation.” In being drawn into a relation with the other, the other ceases to be an “it,” a “thing among things,” nor “consist of things.” “Neighbourless and seamless, he [it] is You and fills the firmament.” The “I,” not an “it,” relates also to the self as a “you.” See Søren Kierkegaard in *The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), 29-30. Kierkegaard speaks of a dialectic with oneself: “The self is a conscious synthesis of infinitude and finitude that relates itself to itself, whose task is to become itself, which done only through the relationship to God.” In “every moment that a self exists, it is in the process of becoming, for the self... does not actually exist, [it] is... that which ought to come into existence.” Eternity, for Kierkegaard, is “to live vividly in the present” in the presence of God; to “live in the finite... from infinite resignation.” Nythamar Fernandes de Oliveira, *Dialectic and Existence in Kierkegaard and Kant*, <http://www.geocities.com/nythamar/kant-sk.html> accessed 16/10/2011.

<sup>147</sup> Genesis 1: 31a. “God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.”

<sup>148</sup> McDargh, *Psychoanalytic object relations theory and the Study of Religion*, 115.

If this is so, there are as many experiences of God as there are human lives; each of them stating a truth about the God they encountered. McDargh writes, where object representation is unavailable for the “integrative processes of faith” it is

because it is too terrifying, too unreliable, loaded with too ambivalent affect, or because it has remained an ...undeveloped childhood companion that cannot be related to under most circumstances in adult life... [A]n examination of that representation discloses much of what is central to [their]... struggle of faith. The God which... cannot [be] believe[d] in, trusted in, relied on may often be as revealing of the vicissitudes of faith as that God which can be consciously affirmed.<sup>149</sup>

Thus, what the theologian implicitly holds about God is of great importance, because he/she indirectly communicates it. How one models prayer is even more important, because, here, false God-representations are re-scripted, and rickety holding frames are re-suspended. Thérèse communicates, in my deepest self, because I want good, am I not, then, good? echoing God’s “it is (you are) good” to her readers. What happens when the theologian holds grace as an abstraction?

The inadequacy of a non-relational understanding of grace is felt in the platonic characteristics attributed to God, by the scholastics, and in the resultant discontinuity of two human ends. While Isaiah 55’s constancy relates to God’s mercy in forgiveness and in the earth’s bounty, God’s constancy in scholastic terms refers to perfection as immutability and stasis, as a completion of knowing, and evenness in charity.<sup>150</sup> To explain humanity’s “end,” in Aristotle and Aquinas’s way of thinking, as the “human

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<sup>149</sup> McDargh, *Psychoanalytic object relations theory and the Study of Religion*, 116.

<sup>150</sup> Lonergan states: “...because man develops, every additional element of understanding and affirming and willing is a further act and reality in him. But the perfect primary being does not develop, for it is without defect or lack of imperfection; and so the unrestricted act understands and affirms and wills contingent beings to be without any increment or change in reality.” Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: a Study of Human Understanding* (San Francisco: Harper and Rowe, Publishers, 1978), 661. Aquinas does write of reaching a point, in this life, when we can only “know” through love (*S.T.*1.64.1.). Through sharing in the divine intersubjectivity, our intentional consciousness and operations share increasingly in those of God, in knowing, loving and responding. (*S.T.*II-II. 45. 2.). Aquinas often uses “contemplation” to mean rational and hence includes knowing, loving and willing (embracing love and desire and will). If he had started his discussion of grace from his treatment of the Trinity and of the centrality of relationship in personhood, it may have offered a more adequate and experientially grounded account viewing “perfect fulfilment” in more relational terms in participating in the Trinitarian life through God’s gift of “consortium divinae naturae” *ST*, I-II. 112, 1.

soul is intellectual...its flourishing must involve... an intellectual fulfilment.”<sup>151</sup> “To find the perfect fulfilment...we need to know the First cause and possess its ultimate truth.”<sup>152</sup> Viewing humanity in isolation, as an intentioning-being, a self-sufficient organism that might flower and fruit, led to disparate ends such as imperfect and perfect beatitude. Viewing humanity as beings-in-relation, however, meets the complexity of “human nature;” it considers development and allows layered and consecutive aims. In non-relational thinking, a state of powerlessness to know all and to act well is posed as a deficiency rather than the occasion of evoking relation, thus discussions of mercy toward limitation, helping toward mutuality (I help you to impact me, as I impact you) are truncated.<sup>153</sup> Yet it is through Isaiah’s *relational* tradition (restoring a community where mercy alone is counted as pleasing sacrifice to God, Isa 60, 65: 17-25, 66) that Jesus responds to God as father (“*abba*”) who provides him with identity, purpose, guidance, and power. Jesus dialogues with God as Abraham, Moses, and the prophets did, indicating an opening for such interaction.

*d. Human Nature, the “Existential,” Freedom, and Election*

We look to see how Thérèse’s activity may be further applied. Duffy introduces the notion of an “existential.” Augustine’s sense of God hollowing out a space in him that only God can fill, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you,” – felt as an unconditioned longing constitutive of his humanity – may be named an “existential.”<sup>154</sup> (This “hollow,” we note, may be aligned with the impression of responses given to Augustine’s bids in infancy,<sup>155</sup> which points to a conditioned response). Such a desire (containing the idea that a human nature is always a graced nature) evoked alarm in z, over God’s free offer of salvation, and its effective

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<sup>151</sup> Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 95.

<sup>152</sup> Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 95.

<sup>153</sup> In his two ends, Aquinas appears to make a distinction between Abrahamic faiths (a first end is to know God as the first and final cause of creation – Islam and Judaism) an imperfect beatitude, and Christian belief (a second end is life in Christ, new and “unforseen”) a perfect beatitude. This leaves aside many other ways of knowing such as non-Abrahamic religions and perhaps even atheism. Mulcahy suggests that de Lubac, by not making this distinction, falls into Arianism. Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 97-99.

<sup>154</sup> Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 19-22.

<sup>155</sup> Augustine remarks that he cannot remember his infancy. *Confessions*, 5.

accomplishment. If humans are governed by a desire they have no power to either turn from or bring to fruition, it appears to affect God's gratuity – is not God obligated to fill their desire? But Augustine and Thérèse's focus is otherwise: feeling that God precedes all they are, they assert God generated their desire<sup>156</sup> to enable the relation God now has with them.

The notion of 'election' appears to preserve God's freedom. Mulcahy discusses the relationship between nature and election. *Nature*, not mentioned in ancient Hebrew Scriptures, appears in Hellenized Judaism (Wisdom and Maccabees) and Christianity to identify the properties of a being.<sup>157</sup> First applied to animate wholes in Aristotle,<sup>158</sup> in the New Testament "nature" (characteristic or normative) supplied a way of being against which to contrast "supernatural" (such as a branch grafted onto a vine, or a new way of acting).<sup>159</sup> The property of 'chosen-ness', Mulcahy argues, is unconnected to nature, belonging rather to God's freedom. It denotes a

choice of a particular people, in specific contexts within the economy of salvation. It emphasizes God's freedom and the transcendent source of God's gifts. God could have just as easily chosen others, or no one. However this difficult doctrine is interpreted... it does not suggest that the divine election extends to human nature as such, as though ... [it] were automatically ... the recipient of divine grace, or of a supernatural destiny.<sup>160</sup>

However, is it not that creation *is* God's act of choosing? De Lubac will later argue: our nature need *not* have been created.<sup>161</sup> Mulcahy suggests that de Lubac's reasoning

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<sup>156</sup> I said to myself God cannot inspire unrealizable desires." *Story of a Soul*, 207. "I call Thee into my soul, which Thou dost make ready to receive thee by the desire that Thou dost inspire in it:... for it was by Thy aid going before me that I called upon Thee; and Thou hadst urged me over and over, in a great variety of ways, to hear Thee from afar off and be converted and call upon Thee who wert calling me." *Confessions*, 259.

<sup>157</sup> The Greek *physis* becoming the Latin *natura*, appears 18 times in the new Testament. Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 32-42.

<sup>158</sup> For Aristotle "*nature* belongs properly speaking, only to natural wholes that move (change themselves)... but not to statues or brick walls... or feet or brains (which are parts of wholes). Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 34.

<sup>159</sup> Mulcahy, *Not everything is Grace*, 38-49.

<sup>160</sup> Mulcahy, *Not everything is Grace*, 48.

<sup>161</sup> Italics added. Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 48.

is a “hurried” passing over of the issue of election, but does not the poor one (Thérèse) cry out to God on that basis: do not separate yourself from me who you have created?<sup>162</sup> While two tiers of grace preserves God’s freedom (by allowing God to further gift life), Augustine and Thérèse, from the depth of their experience, see things another way – without you, I am bereft of what I need.<sup>163</sup> Thérèse, in her True Self, is less concerned with a theoretical shape of God’s freedom than her familiar experience of mercy and belonging. Whilst holding one particular grace as important (conversion at Christmas), she acknowledges grace as flowing on a continuum from birth. Confidence in God’s reply to her prayer for sinners<sup>164</sup> flowed from a sense of already ‘knowing’ God’s mercy.<sup>165</sup>

Ultimately, Thérèse understood “nature and election” through her identity as *in-relation*. The scripture-based metaphors she takes up for self-identification (flower, lamb, infant at the breast, the simple one, bride, Mary Magdalene),<sup>166</sup> beyond describing the particular filial character of her side in relating with God, express dimensions of experience in relation to nature and election. These express felt-dependency, charming toward a response, expecting in confidence, which in turn names God as strong, loving, available, forgiving, as desirous of relating as Thérèse. By taking up Thérèse’s method of self-insertion into these experiences, we are in a much better position to resolve the nature-election problem through her overarching metaphor, the

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<sup>162</sup> In imagining rescue from hell, and orchestrating forgiveness towards herself, Thérèse seeks the face she needs. Thérèse of Lisieux, *Letters of St. Thérèse of Lisieux: General Correspondence Volume II 1890-1897*, translated by John Clarke OCD (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1988), 1226, 1231-1232.

<sup>163</sup> “Give Thyself to me, O my God, give thyself once more to me.... This only do I know, that it is ill with me when thou art not with me.” *Confession*, 264.

<sup>164</sup> Thérèse’s quest for Pranzini’s conversion was an occasion of seeking relation. She sought God’s ‘need’ for her, awaiting God’s reply to her request to reveal her vocation (having filled her with desire to save souls), on the one hand, and a conviction of the potency of Jesus saving mercy on the other: a God-Thérèse-God interaction, where Thérèse feels she impacts God. If Pranzini showed no signs of conversion, however, she felt Jesus would save him anyway. “...to obtain courage to pray for sinners I told God I was sure that he would pardon the poor, unfortunate Pranzini; that I’d believe this even if he went to his death without any signs of repentance or without having gone to confession. I was absolutely confident in the mercy of Jesus. But I was begging Him for a sign for my own simple consolation!” *Story of a Soul*, 100.

<sup>165</sup> She acted towards those in her spiritual care as she felt herself cared for. The enormity of guiding souls, later, in concrete terms, weighed on her (she fled into Jesus’ arms). “I saw immediately that the task [entering into the sanctuary of souls] was beyond my strength.” *Story of a Soul*, 238-9.

<sup>166</sup> Song of Songs 8:7; Isa 40: 11; Isa 66: 12-13; Wis 6:7, Prov 9:4; Lk 10:41. *Story of a Soul*, 188, 258.

parent-child relation. We consider dimensions of the parent-child relation as representing ‘what is the case’ about life, and not an imposed structure.<sup>167</sup> Analogous to the God-human relation (in our “imaging” God, we can justifiably sense something of the parent-child quality), the parent-child relation richly informs us of the nature of God’s gratuity.<sup>168</sup> The parent-child relation involves both a continuum, and a plurality of human experiences of generic grace (shaping a person’s God-image in terms of grace), which parallels possible X (one grace) and Z (two tiers of grace) scenarios.

X (one grace) is concerned to express life as already graced in possessing a God-orientation. This parallels *anlage*,<sup>169</sup> a potential that anticipates all the stages of its future becoming. Conditioned toward becoming a new self in relation, by originating in relation to a previous other, this is an existential directed toward supernaturalness. The language in a wording of X,<sup>170</sup> “humanity, in principle, does have the means for the graced existence it desires; grace arouses ‘and sustains the activity that one is capable of by nature...’”<sup>171</sup> echoes Sroufe’s description of what the mother offers her infant in sensitive care-giving. The parent’s engaging and sustaining the infant’s affect on its behalf, to realize their capacity to give and receive, act out an intention, and learn (forming a bank of object-relations), leads to the child’s later activity of engaging with these object-relations, representing God-within. The possibility of accessing grace,

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<sup>167</sup>James M. Gustafson notes Paul Lehmann (in *The Decalogue and a Human Future*) views this of Israel’s *halachic* community: “the Ten Commandments are not so much rules for living as accounts of the way the world operates.” James M. Gustafson, “Commandments for Staying Human,” *Christian Century* (Dec 20-27 1995), 1247- 1249, 1247.

<sup>168</sup> As McIntosh points out, theology becomes “joyfully abandoned whenever it can get its hands on a good metaphor (in which one reality is used to provoke our imaginative thought about another quite different from it) or a decent analogy.” Mark A. McIntosh, *Divine Teaching: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Maldon, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 18-21.

<sup>169</sup> *Anlage* (German) is a primordium, the foundation of a subsequent development. . In embryology it is the initial clustering of cells, a bud, from which a structure (body part or organ) develops. We use it here symbolically, as an encoded potential. It See <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/anlage> accessed 19/11/2011.

<sup>170</sup> This is a modification of what de Lubac proposed, that humanity has a natural, intrinsic, desire (*capax Dei*) for “the mode of existence offered by grace” but not the means to fulfil it. Its end is intrinsic to human nature. Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 118.

<sup>171</sup> Eugene TeSelle, in “Nature and Grace in The Forum of Ecumenical Studies” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, VIII, No 3 (1971) 539-559, argues that certain Patristic writers assert this. Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 15.

through its generic representation embedded within the psyche (available as religious or transcendent grace) allows grace to be thought of as intrinsic.

Z (two tiers of grace) is concerned to express the exterior conditions that represent God's freedom to elect, and gift (graciously interact) with the created person. In our analogy where God is the parent and the human person their birth infant, the variables are as follows. A woman may choose not to conceive (no gift of life). She may choose to conceive, resulting in a foetal 'experience of utter nourishment and unity' (first gift of life) yet abort, give birth (gift of biological independence) yet abandon, neglect, mistreat (threaten life's continuance, or reducing life to mere existence), treat as a possession, or raise perfunctorily (thwarting personhood/self-becoming). In contrast, a parent may nurture and value their infant, infusing not mere life, but desire for life to the full (grace).<sup>172</sup> These positions reflect possibilities about grace, intuited by X and Z's God-human positions. By acknowledging a correspondence between sufficient pure nature and "basic trust" (the ground for religious faith) and between grace and "religious faith" (a dynamic elaboration of basic trust), one can preserve a 'this-life' continuity.

God's adoption of creaturely beings points to our being treated as a birth-child, thus understanding what it means to be a birth-child is paramount to our analogy. The child imitates what the parent offers, adopting the parent as much as the parent 'owns' the child. We see this in the child who poignantly clings to a neglecting or abusing parent, who once valued/owned them, in the hope that they might again see that face. The story of Yosl Rakover illustrates this. Amid the horrors of the *Shoah*, Yosl clings to an abusive God:

he reproaches God for His unbounded grandeur and his excessive demands. He will love Him in spite of all that God has attempted to turn away his love. But "You should not pull the rope too tight" is Yosl's cry.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> In short, all humans experience a prenatal symbiosis, but after birth what the mother provides toward future flourishing varies; many babies are nurtured in a perfunctory manner, but not all are brought to joyous life. Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (New York: Harper & Rowe Inc, 1956), 45-46.

<sup>173</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, "Loving the Torah more Than God," in Zvi Kolitz, *Yosl Rakover Talks to God*, Carol Brown Janeway, trans, with afterwords by Emmanuel Levinas and Leon Wieseltier (NY: Vintage Books, Random House, Inc, 1999), 16.



e. *Overall Integration of X and Z*

In the developmental research presented earlier, we examined human desire for God indicative of grace. In-utero union-plenitude is embedded (subliminally) in the human psyche as a common primordial memory.<sup>174</sup> As this is how life begins for all; an affective memory about union as good is intrinsic to all. (This memory, due to conception and gestation in another's body, a universal life condition, describes an already graced nature because it is the matrix for the supernatural life.) Further experiences of being carried, of being valued as an other, are contingent on the parent and other external events. If all is well and the parent loves the infant, graciousness will be felt: sensitized to the child's needs, a parent will *bend* to lift the child, and *turn* to engage its affect, restraining self-directed desires to meet and raise the child. In helplessness, the infant embodies a 'call for mercy', yet in the course of time the parent does not embody mere gratuity, nor the child mere receptivity; the parent's desire for relating rapidly becomes mutual. From a feeling-knowing which is ahead of the child's, the parent, invigorated and enriched by their child's thirsty absorption and growth, stimulates a new self. If God, the original willing parent who proclaims the first "it is good" upon his/her creature's coming into being, is like the human parent, God's freedom is not in jeopardy, but multiplies (goodness is self-diffusive - *bonum diffusivum sui*), like Bonaventure's fount of over-flowing (*fontalis plenitudo*) goodness.<sup>175</sup>

The parallel between parental love and God, at this point, is usually abandoned, for fear that to take this further will put transcendence at risk by confining the process to this-world operations, leading to a mere sum of psychological and historical parts, to a

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<sup>174</sup> "The child even after birth remains psychically fused with the mother...Although it is impossible to know what the child's inner experience.. is...it is hypothesized that it is something like what Michael Balint called the 'the harmonious interpenetrating mixup'. The child is not aware of distinctions between himself and the parenting other, where his boundaries end and the mother's begins." Mc Dargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and The Study of Religion*, 218.

<sup>175</sup> Bonaventure, *What Manner of Man? Sermons on Christ by St Bonaventure*, translated by Zachary Hayes (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), 9-10. See also Zachary Hayes, *Bonaventure: Mystical Writings, Spiritual Legacy Series* (New York: Crossroad, 1999); *The Hidden Centre: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St Bonaventure* (Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1992).

processing panentheistic God.<sup>176</sup> Yet the human process of God-imagining, via the protective union once felt with an encompassing nourishing one, who becomes a primary other, imaging and communicating God, sustaining a positive identity and confidence throughout life, as a God-originated process<sup>177</sup> may be justifiably described as a “supernatural existential,” because through it, God brings God-self to being by imprinting that communion “is good”. In the disclosure of her felt-experience of God, Thérèse indirectly gives witness to this “existential.”

The integrating effect of the parent-child analogy, allows X and Z to be held without contradiction, because both contain a dimension of truth. Thérèse holds to Z, arriving as more, in the extra helps of God’s presence (strengthened character or will, illuminations). However, she predominantly holds to X, where God calls persons to a single Godward end, not because of any theoretical correctness, but because it is the meaning framework she grew with, in association with an enclosed separated life demonstrating love for God, against the world’s flow of self-pleasing shallowness. In this context, Thérèse will choose images of God that harmonize with feeling great love/desire, and feeling under threat. To express great desire, she uses images of the early Christians, when salvation becomes available to all in Jesus,<sup>178</sup> inaugurating a new election. Jesus’ open invitation had a dramatic side: allegiances perceived as anti-Roman Empire (Jesus’ followers) earned death, and death suffered willingly, it was felt, was a witness favoured by God (amplified by Arminjon). Martyrdom became a sign of election. Concerned with election, spiritual bonds, and heroic sanctity, Thérèse’s faith community emphasised a God moved by allegiance to the point of death, wishing to repay great self-sacrifice. In *Story of a Soul*, Thérèse writes that her being a Carmelite

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<sup>176</sup> One cause of this fear is mistaking the felt-object representations of God as a static image, rather than a dynamic inner construct which actively engages with ongoing realities. McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion*, 143.

<sup>177</sup> Ana-Maria Rizzuto, *The Psychological Foundations of Belief in God*, 115, in James W. Fowler and Antoine Vergote, editors, *Toward Moral and Religious Maturity* (Morristown, N.J.: Silver Burdett Co, 1980) pp 115-135.

<sup>178</sup> God looks beyond the family God covenanted Godself to, responding to persons who receive Jesus, as a new “law.” See Hebrews 8: 7-13 and Romans 9: 6-8, in the light of Psalm 40: 8. Thérèse seeks to express her love by martyrdom, *Story of a Soul*, 196-197.

(suffering for love of God) was through Jesus choosing “those whom He pleases” (Mk 3: 13), such as St Paul and Augustine.<sup>179</sup>

While the Carmelite life guides the shape of her response to God as sacrificial, it is through the metaphors from Isa 66:12-13 and Prov 9: 4<sup>180</sup> that she feels her authentic connection to God (God is mercifully loving to the helpless one), allowing her to act toward God with the familiarity of a child who belongs with its mother/father. To validate her being-in-relation with God, she uses images of God as a nursing mother, a shepherd, a teacher for the simple one, the willing caregiver who loves unconditionally, who is dynamically present to those who cry for help,<sup>181</sup> evoking the sense of favour that allowed patriarchs and prophets the courage to bargain and remonstrate with God, using God’s own ethic.<sup>182</sup>

In our discussion, we enter Thérèse’s time, the concluding part of our anthropological review.

## **6. Thérèse and Her Time: A Reassertion of Grace as Between Persons**

In her time, there was still resistance in the Church to Luther’s relational emphasis, and to God’s saving action as definitively felt by faith (formally expressed in Trent),<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Echoing Augustine’s, “For you will have mercy on whom you will have mercy, and You will show mercy to whom You show mercy” (*Confessions*, 170) Thérèse writes, “God will show mercy on whom He will have mercy, and he will show pity on whom he will show pity,” *Story of a Soul*, 13) in reflecting on her election to a Carmelite vocation. In her flower metaphor (p 14) Thérèse has herself as an adornment (a role imposed on her as a young child). The flower, in God’s scheme of things, does not have any purpose but to please God by its beauty. If a flower were to pretend to be other than its naturally pleasing shape, its God-intended purpose, it will fail to please God. (Thérèse feels her purpose is to please by common simplicity.) Thérèse animates her flower, as if her flower might make for itself another purpose, which would be a false one. In spite of the possibility of dual purposes, the real one is the only true one – an X position. “He has created the savage who has nothing but the natural law to guide him,” and the baby who symbolize Thérèse’s present state of simplicity, a graced one not to be advanced on.

<sup>180</sup> *Story of a Soul*, 188. Isa 66:12-13: “As one whom a mother caresses so I will comfort you; you will be carried at the breasts and upon the knees they will caress you.” Prov 9: 4, “Whoever is a little one, let him come to me.”

<sup>181</sup> God is felt by God’s calling persons, keeping promises, delivering from oppression toward life and freedom. See Den Hertog, C. “The Prophetic Dimension of the Divine Name,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 64 (2002), 213 – 228.

<sup>182</sup> For example, Gen 18: 22-32; Ex 32:31-32; Job 10: 1-22, Jer 20: 7-18.

<sup>183</sup> Trent proclaimed anathema upon those who reformers who expressed saving by their felt-faith alone. “If anyone shall say that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins

favouring instead scholasticism's sure method (seen in *The End of the Present World*). In post-revolutionary Europe, the Church reacted to the threat of secularism, nationalist allegiances pulling away from Rome, the Papacy's loss of temporal powers, and to modernity in Leo XIII's preference for Thomism (*Aeternis Patris*, 1879).<sup>184</sup> A range of influences and spiritual writings shaped French Catholicism: romantic feminism<sup>185</sup> where the woman best served God in roles complementing the man, expressed in not so subtle sexual imagery; Jansenist spirituality (a negative perception of the human condition);<sup>186</sup> in Carmel, the mystical writings of Teresa Avila (a progression of interior states) and St John of the Cross (the 'beloved' making room within a person). Influential non-theistic ideas of the God-human relation were proposed and accepted: Marx asserted that God was the tool of the wealthy ruling class to establish and maintain order; Feuerbach held God as "the projection of the race, an ideal form of 'humanity'" as "a matter of social psychology," while Freud saw God functioning as a "father-image."<sup>187</sup> In these ideas, an experience of God was stated in new ways. Not all felt God as grace. Yet, while negative, they still stated something about self-becoming and the experience of God.

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for Christ's sake, or that it is confidence alone that justifies this – *anathema sit*. If anyone shall say that in order to obtain the remission of sins it is necessary for every man to believe with certainty and without hesitation on account of his own weakness and indisposition that his sins are forgiven him – *anathema sit*. (DS 1562-3)" Ormerod, *Creation, Grace and Redemption*, 123-124.

<sup>184</sup> Pius X reacted to Modernism in *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, 1907. Later, with Pius XII in *Humani Generis* (1950) there was criticism of the "*Nouvelle Theologie*." Rondet notes that the "*nouvelle théologie*," pointing to non-Thomistic principles, was originally intended as derogatory, and applied to theologians against extrinsicism. Though accepted into mainstream theological thinking in Vatican II, *nouvelle théologie* was at first treated with suspicion as its theologians turned to Biblical and Patristic sources to explore theology. *Humani Generis* in 1950, "on certain opinions which menace the foundations of the Catholic faith," was concerned with the threat of evolution as an accepted theory (issue of polygenism), unorthodox formulating, and "unwittingly identified Thomist theology with the common doctrine on grace." Henri Rondet, "Nouvelle Théologie" in Karl Rahner et al, eds, *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology, Volume Four* (Basle-Montreal: Herman-Herder-Foundation, 1969), 234-235.

<sup>185</sup> Romantic feminism "stresses the differences between men and women and the complementarity of their roles in society and Church." It "... views women in terms of sensitivity, compassion, purity...[and] complementarity is often viewed in terms of public-private spheres. Men's engagement in the public sphere leaves them more prone to sin, while women are shielded from these forces and hence less fallen than men." Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 58.

<sup>186</sup> Jansenism represented an untypical Catholic position with regard to "original sin." Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, 75.

<sup>187</sup> Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 25.

a. *William James and the Experience of Grace*

Five years after Therese's death, in North America (1902), William James published a study into the phenomenon of religious experience.<sup>188</sup> We quote from *The Varieties of Religious Experience* in response to questions Haight asks: what is the experience of grace, and what is its language?<sup>189</sup> We listen to James reflect on the abstractions of scholasticism, and his feeling that, for a belief to have value, it needed to relate to a concrete aspect of living:

even were we forced by a coercive logic to believe ... [God's metaphysical principles], we still should have to confess them to be destitute of all intelligible significance. Take God's aseity, for example; or his necessariness; his immateriality; his 'simplicity', or his superiority to the kind of inner variety and succession which we find in finite beings, his indivisibility, and lack of inner distinctions of being and activity, substance and accident, potentiality and 'personality', apart from the actuality,...his repudiation of inclusion in a genus; his actualized infinity; his moral qualities which it may comport; his relations to evil being permissive and not positive; his self-sufficiency, self-love, and absolute felicity in himself: – candidly speaking, how do qualities as these make any definite connection with our lives? ... I must frankly confess that even though these attributes were faultlessly deduced, I cannot conceive of its being of the smallest consequence... that any one of them should be true. Pray what specific act can I perform in order to adapt myself the better to God's simplicity? Or how does simplicity? Or how does it assist me to plan my behaviour, to know that his happiness is anyhow absolutely complete?<sup>190</sup>

James' questions reflect meaning as connected to experience which is inextricably accompanied by affect. Thus we return to emotion as integral to religious experience. Collecting and analysing numerous experiences of faith, James observed that they did not involve a particular language, or a type of emotion. There seems

to be no one elementary religious emotion, but only a storehouse of emotions

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<sup>188</sup> William James' study *The Varieties of Religious Experience* in 1902 preceded Freud and Erikson's work on 'self' and 'subconscious'. Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism* was published in 1911. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (NY: Penguin Books Ltd, 1982, 1985).

<sup>189</sup> Haight's questions are "Is God good? And how does one know that God is good?" Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 22-23.

<sup>190</sup> James continues (addressing scholarly metaphysical invention): here is "shuffling and matching of pedantic dictionary adjectives... aloof from human needs, something that might be worked out from the mere word 'God'..." "One feels... they are a set of titles obtained by a mechanical manipulation of synonyms; verbliness has stepped into the place of vision... Instead of bread we have a stone..." James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 445-447.

upon which religious objects may draw, so there might conceivably also prove to be no specific and essential kind of religious object, and no one specific and essential kind of religious act.<sup>191</sup>

Yet a felt-quality (“grace”) was reported as added to emotions; the “Subject” feels

a new sphere of power. When the outward battle is lost, and the outer world disowns him it redeems and vivifies an interior world which otherwise would be an empty waste.<sup>192</sup>

Further, a certain solemnity pervaded religious feeling.<sup>193</sup> These two observations show the presence of, and an entering into, an interior construct which nourishes and preserves the value (and holiness) of the self/person. What then is the relationship between this experience and the dogmatic formulations of religious faith? Religious experience is the primary event and interpretation follows it for the sake of communication. James observes

intellectual operations, whether they be constructive or comparative and critical, presuppose immediate experiences as their subject matter. They are interpretative and inductive operations, after the fact, consequent upon religious feeling, not coordinate with it, not independent of what it ascertains.<sup>194</sup>

Thus faith seeks understanding, and understanding is converted to a communicable system and language to be conveyed to others,<sup>195</sup> but experience precedes it.<sup>196</sup> The

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<sup>191</sup> James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 28. James’ aim is investigative from a psychological perspective. Before his 1901-2 pre-Freud study, many held that creeds preceded religious experience, yet our earliest religious story (Abraham hearing God’s call) is one of experience. This faith develops via accumulating experiences. One of the questions that has emerged since James’ work, is that of the relationship between religious experience and the interpretation and articulation of that experience. Such a discussion is beyond the scope of this present study. Suffice it to say that Thérèse of Lisieux, consistent with the Christian spiritual tradition, attempts to understand and evaluate her felt-experience against the benchmark of her Catholic tradition – her upbringing, Scripture, Carmelite heritage.

<sup>192</sup> James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 47-48.

<sup>193</sup> James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 47-48.

<sup>194</sup> James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 433. In Ch 8 we investigate further the question of faith, in terms of experience and its relationship the various forms of meaning. Can we actually have the experience without simultaneously interpreting it? And is the interpretation just for communication? As we shall see, experience may be interpreted according to different forms of meaning, for instance, constitutive, effective and also in the form of public statements for communication.

<sup>195</sup> Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 76-77.

relation of the experience of faith and its conceptual and verbal articulation (described by John Henry Newman in *Grammar of Assent*),<sup>197</sup> is noted by Haight – the “words of grace... [from] Scripture and the liturgy, in the creed and in doctrine, may be passively received and assented to, but have little in relation whatever to [persons’] experience.”<sup>198</sup> This brings us back to our intuition, supported by McDargh’s research: that though she repeats formal doctrine and allows its influence on her behaviour, Thérèse relies on felt-knowing for her deep truths. Her felt knowing emerges in connection with her sisters, dreams, the relational activity of prayer together with her pondering and interrogation of the Scriptures. James quotes Auguste Sabatier, *Esquisse d’une Philosophie de la Religion* (1897) on the relational character of prayer:

Religion is an intercourse, a conscious and voluntary relation, entered into by a soul in distress with the mysterious power upon which it feels itself to depend, and upon which its fate is dependent. This intercourse with God is realized by prayer. Prayer is religion in act...It is prayer that distinguishes the religious phenomenon from such... neighbouring phenomena as purely moral or aesthetic sentiment. Religion is nothing if it not be the vital act by which the entire mind seeks to save itself by clinging to the principle from which it draws life... [P]rayer ... no mere repetition of certain sacred formulae, but the very movement of the soul, putting itself in personal relation of contact with the mysterious power of which it feels the presence, – it may be even before it has a name by which to call it. Wherever this interior prayer is lacking, there is no religion; wherever, on the other hand, this prayer rises and stirs the soul, even in the absence of forms or doctrines, we have living religion.<sup>199</sup>

Leaving aside the reformer’s apologetic, Thérèse affirms this when she prefers spontaneous prayers (brief exclamations), instead of composed ones and when she feels

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<sup>196</sup> The experience of God as revealing and loving (of “faith seeking understanding”) is developed in the context of a community of faith. Where faith communities threaten and contradict self-becoming, experience of God may develop to correct that community, as seen in the Prophetic literature.

<sup>197</sup> John Henry Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, “Chapter 5 Notional and Real Assent,” 5, p 36 ff. <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/grammar/index.html> accessed 1/12/2011.

<sup>198</sup> Haight quotes from James’ *Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Collier Books, 1961) edition. Roger Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 13.

<sup>199</sup> James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 464. This assumes the communal aspect of religion which names this conversation ‘prayer’ in the first place. Auguste Sabatier (1839 - 1901), a French Protestant theologian promoted biblical interpretation, developing liberal Protestantism and the Catholic Modernist movement by his interpretation of Christian doctrine as the symbolism of religious feelings. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Auguste Sabatier," <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/514951/Auguste-Sabatier> (accessed February 13, 2012).

her “poor little mind” tiring while reading “spiritual treatises on perfection.”<sup>200</sup>

*b. Macmurray’s Relational Paradigm and Thérèse*

The above, “a soul in distress,” seeking help from which “it feels itself to depend” (written in the year of Thérèse’s death) returns us to Thérèse’s relational activity. We ask: if grace is about feeling that God is good, and before anything, humans are relational, is God’s goodness connected with being in relation? Scottish Protestant philosopher John Macmurray (1891-1976), in an “organic,” non-mechanistic, empirical approach, observed relationality as a quality of personhood.<sup>201</sup> He “saw human existence as constituted by personal relationships,” that “the self exists only in the context of relationship with others,” and removed philosophy from “a theoretical orientation” concerned with “the epistemologically objective and independent state of the human individual.”<sup>202</sup> Thus Macmurray takes us away from that problem we encountered earlier in Aquinas, whose Aristotelian starting point led to dual ends in a person (flourishing and union with God), evoking questions such as “does a craftsman operate his craft (toward flourishing) better in a state of grace?” (leading to “What type of grace meant?”).<sup>203</sup> Macmurray views

[T]he mother-child relation as the basic form of human existence, as the basic form of human existence, as a personal mutuality, as a “you and I” with a common life. ...[h]uman experience is, in principle, shared experience; human life, even in its most individual elements, is a common life; and human behaviour carries always, in its inherent structure, a reference to a personal Other. ...[T]he unit of personal existence is not the individual, but two persons in personal relation; and that we are not persons by individual right, but in virtue of

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<sup>200</sup> For spontaneous prayers, see *Story of a Soul*, 77, 87, 179, 217, especially 242-243. “...when I am reading certain spiritual treatises in which perfection is shown through a thousand obstacles... my poor heart quickly tires, I close the learned book that is breaking my head and drying up my heart, and I take up Holy Scripture... I see it is sufficient to abandon oneself as a child in God’s arms. Leaving to great souls, to great minds the beautiful books I cannot understand, much less put into practice, I rejoice at being little...” *Letters of St Thérèse, Volume II*, 1093-1094.

<sup>201</sup> For his “empirical,” approach, see John Macmurray, *The Structure of Religious Experience* (USA, Archon books, 1971), viii.

<sup>202</sup> Patrick McArdle, *The Relational Person within a Practical Theology of Healthcare*, Doctoral Thesis submitted at ACU, Vic, 2006, 154. Patrick McArdle explores personhood as relational.

<sup>203</sup> Mulcahy, *Not Everything is Grace*, 146.



our relation with one another. The personal is constituted by personal relatedness. The unit of the personal is not the “I” but the “You and I.”<sup>204</sup>

Thus, with regard to Aquinas’s investigation into ends and states of grace, Macmurray might offer: Jack taught me to make tables and now I make them (unhappily) for Frank’s & Co; but when I’m praying on the job, things seem to go better, I’m happier. Praying evokes the memory of a happier, *relational*, circumstance in carpentry. Love of carpentry emerged in the affective teaching/learning dialogue between himself and Jack, which resembles his primordial mother child engagement. Re-living that affect serves to make him less irritable with God/the circumstance he finds himself in, leading *toward* ‘a state of grace’, a new co-operative spirit, with respect to persons and tables.

Macmurray’s proposal of the human person as “relationally engaged,” counters “the stance of [the] impartial observer seeking knowledge.”<sup>205</sup> He then adds how the person is relationally engaged. The “essential form” of all relationships is derived from the archetypal relation of “mother and child” which

includes human need, the enablement of a capacity for future relationships and a physical basis. ...The mutuality of interpersonal relationships is the dynamic constitutive of personhood. No person can come into existence except through the relationship with others. The initial relationship between mother and child will develop into more explicit and wider relationships...<sup>206</sup>

While Thérèse does not explicitly construct any theological anthropology, her prayer activity and her choice of images to negotiate life lead to a position similar to Macmurray’s, which we take to be God’s intrinsic presence, or ‘imprint’, in humanity. Her filial metaphor, the mother-child relation, begins with the child’s limitation; that is its locus. McArdle observes that between mother and child there is an asymmetry of power. But while the mother is in a “position of obvious power over the child,” she is

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<sup>204</sup>John Macmurray, *Persons in Relation* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1961). 61. . McArdle, *The Relational Person within a Practical Theology of Healthcare*, 158. At 159, In terms of personhood, Macmurray distinguishes between human and other animals – by asserting that humans are unique in their heightened sensitisation toward, and need for relation. Such an observation does not enhance his argument. For example, mammal calves such as elephants, die soon after birth if they do not receive ongoing affective-tactile contact.

<sup>205</sup> McArdle, *The Relational Person within a Practical Theology of Healthcare*, 160.

<sup>206</sup> McArdle, *The Relational Person within a Practical Theology of Healthcare*, 160-161.

also in a position of vulnerability, “called by the infant into a new relationship, and, in a sense, into a new depth to her personhood” requiring her to limit herself in some ways, and extend herself in new ways.<sup>207</sup> This relation prefigures the relationship that “has no purpose beyond itself; in which we associate because it is natural to human beings, to their experience, to understand one another, to find joy and satisfaction in being together; in expressing and revealing themselves to one another.”<sup>208</sup> Macmurray states,

In ourselves we are nothing; and when we turn our eyes inward in search of ourselves we find a vacuum. Being nothing in ourselves, we have no value in ourselves, and are of no importance whatever, wholly without meaning or significance. It is only in relation to others that we exist as persons; we are invested with significance by others who have need of us; and borrow our real reality from those who care for us. We live and move and have our being not in ourselves but in one another; and what rights or powers or freedom we possess are ours by the grace and favour of our fellows. Here is the basic fact of our human condition; which all of us know...in moments when the veil of self-deception is stripped from us and we are forced to look upon our nakedness.<sup>209</sup>

Thus we return to McDargh’s observation, that the absence of someone mirroring my value either from outside, or from inside, is felt as the most profound threat to the self.<sup>210</sup> Life, as a self, depends on, if not a replying other, an interested watching one. God is the other who mirrors our value (goodness) in a limitless communion, entering at the moment of our receding into nothingness. For some persons, societies, or religious frameworks, the value of being in relation is so eroded that only a mission, purpose, or usefulness in terms of objective profit will suffice to invite/maintain an other. To make a thing of one’s self (take up a False Self), by entering a role, to

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<sup>207</sup> McArdle, *The Relational Person within a Practical Theology of Healthcare*, 163.

<sup>208</sup> John Macmurray, *Reason and Emotion* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1935, 1962), 98. McArdle, *The Relational Person within a Practical Theology of Healthcare*, 163.

<sup>209</sup> Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 211. McArdle, *The Relational Person within a Practical Theology of Healthcare*, 164.

<sup>210</sup> Winnicott relates an insight gained from one of his patients. Feeling “empty, unmet and somehow not alive ... as though there isn’t really a ME,” she objected to Winnicott suggesting that she might relate to God as “I AM,” saying “People use God as an analyst – someone to be there while you’re playing.” The amazing insight was “that for some persons God functions as that all accepting other, who ... is the guarantor and preserver of that background of safety which makes possible play. ...God serves as a transitional object which allows the person to experience and express the True Self.” In her writing, Thérèse surrounds herself with God as an interested watching “background” to all she does. McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion*, 144-5. This is reminiscent of being “regarded,” a symbol Fitzgerald elaborates in “The Mission of Thérèse of Lisieux.” *The Way Supplement* (Summer, 1997), 74-96.

gain/force the reply of an other was the malaise Jean-Paul Sartre wrote of.<sup>211</sup> This, too, was Thérèse's predicament, causing her to swing between a True and False Self. We review our earlier observations.

### **Summary of Observations of Thérèse's experience of God**

In the previous two chapters we found Thérèse concerned with Pauline knowing how God is gracious and merciful toward Thérèse. To ascertain what the experience of God's grace and mercy comprised of, we looked for a primordial experience of mercy, that would represent an authentic state (truth) to which she might return. A concrete experience of mercy/grace was found to exist in Rose/Zelie's valuing of her, an other, which, as nourishing her becoming-a-self, would represent a True Self. Non-gracious (non-merciful) experiences which led her to believe she must diminish herself by acting a self-effacing role, asking for and expecting little to earn affection, would come to represent a False Self (self-becoming is constricted). We found that Thérèse held False Self constructs 'next to' a True Self, but her dialogue with God, which increasingly took the form of her early familiar holding environment, where limitation was tenderly smiled upon and treated graciously, gradually dissolved False Self constructs. We found self-becoming a complex drama of an inner world, projected onto exterior persons and events, the resolution of which was sometimes found by fulfilment of expectations – early childhood events (God/Zelie as abandoning, Thérèse as a stranger in her own family, heaven/'elsewhereness' as family) repeating themselves in different ways.<sup>212</sup>

We concluded that God (her memory of merciful-care as transitional object) was constructively re-engaged with through prayer, with the aim of restoring self-identity toward positive self-becoming (life) for the sake of being in relation with the loving other. By examining Thérèse's spiritual activity, first through Sroufe's empirical model of human development, and, second, through McDargh's psychoanalytic model of self-

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<sup>211</sup> See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), 63-64, 55-56, 59-60.

<sup>212</sup> See John and Paula Sandford, *The Transformation of the Inner Man* (NJ: Bridge Logos Publishers, 1982), and *Healing the Wounded Spirit* (NJ: Bridge Logos Publishers, 1985), who offer insights into dysfunctional personality patterns affecting relationships based on expectations formed in early life, in terms of being victim/sinned against.

becoming, the centrality of ‘generic grace’, mercy, limitation, in the process of self-becoming, and self-being, were shown. ‘Religious grace’, mercy, and limitation, elements of affective-psychic processes show self-becoming, and self-being, as, in hoping for re-generation, also transcendent. Where life becomes stifled, regeneration occurs by reorientation. As one way of reading the Psalms, we wonder whether these intensely “I-Thou” texts, served Thérèse in this way.

Paul Ricoeur shows this in relation to stories in the Hebrew Scriptures and the songs and laments of the Psalmist.<sup>213</sup> Confronted by the collapse of his world order, the Psalmist at first resists his loss. This resonates with “God’s impact” (Iain Matthew), resulting in a disorienting “impasse” (Constance Fitzgerald’s interpretation of St John of the Cross). The Psalmist bargains with God, with offers of greater fidelity. Only after conceding to utter helplessness, does God enter with surprising newness. God restores the spirit, gives a new heart, inspires celebration, providing a new self that is anchored in God, which can no longer be threatened by lies about its deficiency.

## 7. Conclusion

Thérèse’s anthropological sense may be seen as a recovery of a dialectic found in Hebrew Scriptures – a self in need of preservation when confronted by the most primal threat. She identifies with the poor one crying out to God: do not separate yourself from us who you have created. Returning to the experience of God favouring the poor one – as an advocate (defender) for self-becoming – within a relationship, supplies us with a cohesive anthropology. By applying an informed phenomenology of human development and self-becoming to Thérèse’s experience of the God-human relation, we find an analogical God-human conception that integrates the experience of God’s grace as one pervading desire (X), and ‘becoming’ in layers through outside influences (Z). Thérèse’s experience of God as relational, developing and dialogic, transcends X and Z’s confusion of substantial and relational orders. Responding to God on the basis of relation, leads her to view the ends of the “savage,” “feeble child” or “field flower” as serving relation; fulfilling her sensed role, or end, via these images, perpetuates the

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<sup>213</sup> Walter Brueggemann uses Paul Ricoeur, *Conflict* (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1974), *Freedom and Nature* (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1966), and *Freud and Philosophy* (New haven: Yale University, 1970), in Walter Brueggeman, “Psalms and the Life of Faith: a Suggested Typology,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 17 (1980) pp3-32.

possibility for relation with God.<sup>214</sup> Finally, as we will explore in Chapter Eight, Thérèse identifies limitation (lowliness) as central to the transaction of grace. God entering limitedness signifies its importance with respect to love: limitedness (whose potential is via relation) occupies the matrix of the demonstration of love, and “the whole [subsequent] psychic process by which persons become selves.”<sup>215</sup> We turn to Chapter Eight where we recount Thérèse’s specific experience in four forms.

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<sup>214</sup> When Thérèse uses inanimate things to represent her self, such as, flower or brush, she shares Pauline’s images (which focus on the resigned abandon of Jansenism), but, for Thérèse, these represent her particular sense of simplicity and helplessness under the overarching metaphor of ‘child’. They are sub- metaphors that colour what sort of child she is – a three year old: “...even though I have on my conscience all the sins that can be committed, I would go, my heart filled with sorrow... with confidence and love...” *Story of a Soul*, 259. (See letters of May 14, 21, 1877, *Letters of St Thérèse, Volume II*, 1223-1225).

<sup>215</sup> McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations theory*, 115.