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The Search for Global Ideology

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**CULTURAL PLURALISM AND THE UNITY OF THE SCIENCES**  
**Kurt Rahnner's Transcendental Theology as a Test Case**

by

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Human thinking, by its inner dynamism and despite occasional protestations to the contrary by philosophers such as S. Kierkegaard, seeks comprehensiveness and universality. Moreover, in its quest for truth, it thrives on and is enriched by the dialectic of dialogue and mutual exchange of ideas and experiences. Modern technologies, from mass media to intergalactic travels, effectively foster an acute sense of unity, interdependence and solidarity among peoples of diverse cultures and religious persuasions, so that for the first time in human history, it may be said without exaggeration, becoming a citizen of the world and organizing a global village are offered as genuine possibilities.

On the other hand, concomitant with the steady decline of Western cultural tradition of European extraction as the dominant and normative model of culture, there is emerging ever more vigorously and pervasively a consciousness of cultural pluralism. As a result a host of problems, hitherto unimaginable within the purview of European thought, clamour for the attention of those who are concerned with perserving the unity of human thinking and the human family.

Prescinding from the numerous questions that this new phenomenon of pluralism raises for different aspects of our life both secular and religious,<sup>1</sup> the present study will focus on the impact of cultural pluralism on the unity of the sciences, understood both as Geisteswissenschaften and Naturwissenschaften, and in particular, on the possible unity resulting from a dialogue between theology, philosophy, and the historical, natural, and social sciences. Further I shall limit myself to the thought of the Roman Catholic theologian Karl Rahner. The choice of this thinker is justified on several grounds. For one thing he is without doubt one of the greatest Christian systematic theologians

of our times and one of the most influential exponents of transcendental Thomism and transcendental theology. For another, he has explicitly discussed the question of cultural pluralism and the necessity of dialogue between Christian theology and the profane sciences.

We will first examine how Rahner views cultural pluralism and its consequences for the unity of the sciences. We will next analyse Rahner's attempt to maintain unity in tension among the different sciences by means of the transcendental method. Thirdly, Rahner's suggestions on the dialogues between Christian theology and philosophy, and between Christian theology and the historical, natural and social sciences will be reviewed and evaluated. Finally, the study will conclude with a few critical remarks on the merits of Rahner's proposals.

## I

### PLURALISM AS A NEW CULTURAL PHENOMENON

In a rare autobiographical remark Rahner confessed that as a young student of philosophy he was inculcated with the belief that somehow one single philosophy, a sort of universally valid and true philosophia perennis, could be constructed out of several past systems and theories.<sup>2</sup> The single philosophy to which Rahner alluded was the neo-scholastic system promoted by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical Aeterni Patris (1879) and imposed upon all Roman Catholic universities and seminaries.<sup>3</sup> Succinctly put, neo-scholasticism held that the key to the successful distinction and unification of reason and faith, philosophy and theology, nature and grace was the Aristotelian metaphysics of substance and accident, later accepted by St. Thomas, which post-Cartesian philosophy has unfortunately abandoned. Aeterni Patris, the

magna charta of neo-scholasticism, therefore, strongly urged for a return to the "Christian philosophy" as developed by the Angelic Doctor both in the education of the Catholic clergy and in the restoration of Christian revelation to its rightful role in the integration of culture, and of Catholic morality to its proper place in the political life and social organization of the modern world.

As a young student of philosophy at the Jesuit scholasticate in Feldkirch and Pullach near Munich (1924-1927) Rahner might have entertained some sympathy for the ideal of a unifying philosophy in the form of neo-scholasticism. However, even then, his interest was already turned elsewhere as his copious notes on Kant and J. Maréchal, whose works he privately read, clearly testified. Rahner's decisive break with neo-Thomism as championed by Aeterni Patris occurred in his doctoral dissertation, Geist in Welt,<sup>4</sup> which his mentor Martin Honegger rejected for not being sufficiently Thomistic. This work which we will discuss at greater length in the next section, develops a metaphysics of knowledge based upon St. Thomas' teaching in Summa Theologiae I, q. 84, a.7. However, St. Thomas was now interpreted under the influence of Kant, Hegel, Maréchal and M. Heidegger.<sup>5</sup> Clearly Rahner had rejected the neo-scholastic position that there was an intrinsic incompatibility between the starting point and method of an authentic Thomism and those of Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy. The turn towards the thinking subject in its conscious activity and the use of the method of transcendental reduction and deduction, limited to cognition in Spirit in the World, was later extended by Rahner to freedom and love in his Hörer des Wortes,<sup>6</sup> in which he attempted to show the possibility of divine revelation in history on the basis of the human being's positive orientation towards God insofar as he is spirit (potentia

obedientialis).

Of course it may be argued that at this stage Rahner had not yet totally rejected the possibility of a unifying philosophy since he still regarded Thomism as a basis for developing a universal theology, even though he had interpreted Thomas in the light of Kantian and post-Kantian philosophies. He even claimed, later in his career, that the very turn to the subject, the hallmark of modern philosophy and allegedly the innovation of Descartes, can be traced back to the Angelic Doctor himself.<sup>7</sup> Cultural pluralism had not hit him with full force. It took Rahner further studies to become aware of the severe deficiencies of neo-scholasticism in major areas of theology, such as the doctrines of the Trinity,<sup>8</sup> the Incarnation,<sup>9</sup> Uncreated Grace<sup>10</sup> and faith.<sup>11</sup> He proceeded to elaborate the famous theories of the symbol,<sup>12</sup> the supernatural existential<sup>13</sup> and anonymous Christianity<sup>14</sup> that form the cornerstones of his theology. Further contacts with contemporary philosophies, with the "knowledge explosion" in the historical, natural and social sciences, and with a vast array of theologies, finally led Rahner to abandon the conviction shared, in principle at least, by Aeterni Patris and neo-scholastic philosophers and theologians that St. Thomas' philosophy of knowledge, man and being could structure a common Catholic philosophy and theology and serve as the integrating focus for the Church's educational, political and social action.<sup>15</sup>

Rahner now came to grips head on with cultural pluralism. First of all, he called our attention to the fact that pluralism is a completely new phenomenon, a peculiar characteristic of our times. This is true, Rahner points out, particularly in theology: "...it is of the utmost importance to recognize that the problem of pluralism in theology really does exist, and that it is new. Even among specialist theologians there is all too often a

failure to recognize both of these facts clearly and unequivocally."<sup>16</sup> Certainly in former times there were different schools and orientations in theology. But these differences, Rahner notes, were in part geographical and due to a sort of intellectual no-man's land dividing different schools from each other. And even when they rejected each other's views, their controversies were conducted with a common acceptance of certain basic principles, methodologies, and terminologies. Furthermore, the opposing parties always assumed that they could understand each other's positions clearly when they rejected them. Today, there is a qualitative difference: "The pluralism... consists precisely in the fact that it is quite impossible to reduce the theologies and their representative theses to a simple logical alternative in this manner, in the fact that they exist side by side with one another as disparate and mutually incommensurable."<sup>17</sup> Theologians can no longer rest assured that they are able to understand clearly and unambiguously the positions of others, especially if these are elaborated in another religious tradition.

Which are, in Rahner's view, the contributing factors to this perplexing pluralism? There is of course first of all the fact of 'knowledge explosion' in the so-called hard sciences which prevents one from forming a general world-view on the basis of the information gathered. In previous ages, until roughly the end of the nineteenth century, Rahner points out, an educated person could himself have at least an approximate over-all view of the whole field of insights and questions relevant to a world-view and so was able to form more or less adequately direct judgments about world-view questions. Today, however, "every science--even in what is significant for a world-view-- is so many-sided and difficult, so complicated in its methods, so vast in its

field of research, that at best a single person may still understand something of one science while being and remaining a dabbler in all others."<sup>18</sup>

Secondly, there is a tremendous growth in the historical sciences. An average believer, even a theologian, is no longer able to acquire a basic knowledge of historical facts in, for example, the history of religions, biblical criticism, the history of primitive Christianity, archeology, etc., in order to make a reasonable judgment about the validity of a particular world-view.<sup>19</sup>

Thirdly, philosophy has become pluralistic. There are today many philosophies which we cannot understand and hence can neither accept nor reject. Rahner states quite bluntly: "I at least would regard it as both naive and presumptuous if nowadays a philosopher were still to behave as though he could know and did know all the essential answers in philosophy as it is de facto being studied. Philosophy as a whole has grown to enormous dimensions. It has become planet-wide. It is no longer the prerogative merely of one particular culture, and precisely for this reason a whole range of philosophies has emerged, too many to be brought together in one mind, even though all possible efforts still can be, and are, brought to bear in this direction."<sup>20</sup> In this connection, Rahner remarks that the late attempt to make neo-scholasticism the one single homogeneous philosophy for theology was doomed to failure and is no longer possible.<sup>21</sup>

Further, a totally new fact has emerged in the relationship between philosophy and theology. Today, Rahner points out, philosophy, or the philosophies, no longer function as the only and adequate partner in dialogue with theology through which theology comes into contact with our secular knowledge and self-understanding. In former times theology had a single

philosophy, united in spite of all its internal differences and controversies, as its official conversational partner. The other 'sciences' were subordinated to philosophy, and to the extent that there were sciences in the medieval 'Universitas litterarum', they were considered as subalternate sciences and had scarcely any theological relevance. Nowadays, on the contrary, the sciences no longer consider themselves as tools and handmaids of philosophy; they have their own independent fields of research and proper methods of operation. And yet, they are tremendously relevant to faith and theology. "In the future," says Rahner, "theology's key partner-in-dialogue .... will no longer be philosophy in the traditional sense at all, but the 'unphilosophical' pluralistic sciences and the kind of understanding of existence which they promote either directly or indirectly."<sup>22</sup> Thus theologians must necessarily enter into dialogue with a pluralism of historical, natural and social sciences, a dialogue no longer mediated by philosophy.

All this makes the unification of knowledge an unachievable dream, if not a crippling nightmare. And as regards theology, whose business is to reflect on matters of ultimate concern, its task is made immensely difficult. Again Rahner describes it very well: "This makes the difficulty of a scientific theology very evident. Theology itself has become a vast number of individual sciences. It must be in contact with so many different philosophies in order to be able to be scientific in this immediate sense. But it must also have contact with the sciences which no longer admit of philosophical interpretation. Finally, there must be added all the various non-scientific manifestations of the life of the spirit in art, in poetry, and in society, a variety which is so great that not everything which appears there is mediated either by the philosophies or by the pluralistic sciences themselves, and yet it represents



a form of the spirit and of human self-understanding with which theology must have something to do."<sup>23</sup>

This state of unconquerable cultural pluralism Rahner calls "gnoseological concupiscence." By it he means "the fact that in human awareness there is a pluralism between the various branches of knowledge such that we can not achieve a full or comprehensive view of them all together, and that they can never be integrated in a unified system by man in a way which makes them fully controllable or comprehensible to him."<sup>24</sup> Pluralism, then, is not for Rahner a mere historical accident, which has become a particularly acute crisis due to our contemporary epistemological situation; it is rooted in our moral condition of self-alienation and division<sup>25</sup> and ultimately in our plural metaphysical structure of spirit and matter, in spite of our fundamental and original unity.<sup>26</sup>

If pluralism is inevitable and the attempt to eliminate gnoseological concupiscence by means of a homogeneous philosophy unsuccessful, should we then in despair renounce the ideal of intellectual unity and integrity and resign ourselves to a potpourri of interesting but unrelated ideas? Or to vary the metaphor, should we give up the vision of a manicured garden, with symmetrical rows of trees and neat beds of blooming flowers, and accept allotments where, as Rahner expresses in colorful terms, "neighbors good-naturedly exchange a few onions over the garden hedge, or mischievously throw their weeds over, but there is no longer any large, grandly-conceived and well-planned garden in which every kind of plant can be found growing?"<sup>25</sup> Having dedicated more than fifty active years of his life in the search for ultimate truth and yet quite chastened in his enthusiasm for a comprehensive system of thought, Rahner cautiously suggested two avenues for achieving some

provisional order and unity in thought: the transcendental method and the dialogue among the various intellectual disciplines. To them we now turn in the next two sections of our article.

## II

### THE TRANSCENDENTAL METHOD AND THE THEOLOGY OF THE FIRST-LEVEL REFLECTION

It is of course not feasible to expound in detail here Rahner's metaphysics of knowledge and his metaphysical anthropology, or what is often known as his transcendental Thomism. Descriptions and critical evaluations of these are readily available.<sup>28</sup> I shall simply limit myself to those aspects of Rahner's philosophy which are directly relevant to his transcendental method and to what he terms the theology of the first-level reflection (Theologie der ersten Reflexionsstufe).<sup>29</sup>

Ever since Kant the term 'transcendental philosophy' is used to refer to the investigation of the conditions of philosophical and scientific knowledge, the search for its a priori conditions of possibility. Its object is neither being nor thought, neither the subject nor the object, but the actual unity of consciousness and being given in each act of intellect and will. Transcendental Thomism, adumbrated in Blondel's philosophy of the will (volonté voulue and volonté voulante) but systematically elaborated by J. Maréchal in his master work, Le point de départ de la métaphysique, especially the fifth cahier, entitled Le thomisme devant la philosophie critique, accepts Kant's own starting point--the knowing subject--for the construction of a critique of knowledge. However, it insists against Kant that the act of judgment is not a synthesis of two concepts but an act of affirmation, at least implicit, of

absolute reality in virtue of the dynamism of the intellect. Maréchal contends that Kant on the one hand misunderstood the nature of judgment which necessarily and implicitly affirms the relationship of the categorical synthesis to being in general, and on the other hand ignored the dynamic aspect and finality of human consciousness which is innately driven to being as absolute and really existing.

Rahner accepts both of these Maréchal's theses as the basis of his metaphysics of knowledge in his Spirit in the World and Hearers of the Word. Taking a cue from St. Thomas' teaching on the necessity to turn to the images ('phantasms') in every act of knowing (S.Th. I, q.84, a.7) Rahner argues that humans are spirit in the world and that knowledge is a being's presence to being. As spirit, that is, as intellect, the knower is present to himself; knowledge, therefore, is self-presence. But as materialized and embodied spirit, that is, as sense, the knower is absent to himself; sensation, therefore, is self-absence. Because human knowledge is intellectual knowledge mediated by sensation, humans are spirit whose self-knowledge is first self-absence (as matter), presence-to-other (as sense), and only becomes self-presence in and through this other. In terms of questioning, humans are spirit because they can question, but they are finite spirit because they must question.<sup>30</sup> Further, Rahner points out, there is an original unity between being and knowing, indeed, an identity between them: "Knowing is the being-present-to-self of being and this being-present-to-self is the being of the existent."<sup>31</sup> Consequently, the beingness (Seiendheit) or the intensity of being (Seinsmichtigkeit) of an existent is proportionate to its capacity to be present to itself (reditio super seipsum).

In his detailed analysis of intellectual knowledge Rahner affirms, as

Maréchal did, that the judgment, as an affirmation, and not simply as an enuntiabile, does not merely discover being but asserts the real beingness of the object represented in the concept and situates that being in the spectrum of analogical being.<sup>32</sup> Further, and more importantly, Rahner argues that the intellect (the "agent intellect" in Thomistic language) in its act of knowing implicitly but necessarily stretches out toward or anticipates (Vorgriff) absolute esse. This absolute esse is not known as an object but as the horizon of all possible objects, the fullness of being, non-objectively and unthematically co-known in the knowing of categorical objects. This experience of self-transcendence of the human spirit, of its reaching out toward the absolute being and yet not grasping it as an object, in other words, of a unobjective, unthematic and implicit 'knowledge' of absolute esse in every act of knowing a particular object, Rahner discerns it in the process of abstraction performed by the agent intellect<sup>33</sup> and identified this Vorgriff with Thomas' notion of excessus.<sup>34</sup>

Can one identify this absolute esse with God? Despite an initial hesitation to equate 'esse commune' with God, Rahner in his later writings practically speaks of esse commune, esse absolutum, holy mystery, God interchangeably.<sup>35</sup> It is important to note that Rahner does not intend to prove God's existence by means of the Vorgriff of the intellect. As J. Donceel clearly points out,<sup>36</sup> these transcendental reflections are not syllogistic demonstrations, they do not arrive at a being with particular attributes, they do not make a deductive leap from the finite world of sensible experience to the existence of an infinite being, they do not rely on the principle of efficient causality as the first three ways of St. Thomas, and they do not argue from the concept to the real existence as in the ontological argument.

Rather they are vindication by retortion (ostensive, not probative) of the existence of God as the condition of possibility and intelligibility for the performance of the act of knowing.

In his later work, Hearers of the Word, Rahner extends his transcendental analysis to freedom and love. In fact, he makes it clear that genuine knowledge is possible only if it is rooted in love. There is necessarily a volitional element in knowledge. "In final analysis," says Rahner, "knowledge is but the luminous radiance of love."<sup>37</sup> This is supremely true of the knowledge of God. But if God is co-known in every act of knowing, and if knowledge of God is possible only through love, then the love for God is implicit in every act of cognition and freedom. This is one of the most important conclusions Rahner has drawn from his transcendental analysis of knowledge and freedom, and one that has profound and extensive ramifications for our topic at hand:

This means that at the heart of the finite spirit's transcendence there lives a love for God. Man's openness towards absolute being is carried by his affirmation of his own existence. This affirmation is a voluntary attitude of man with regard to himself and, in final analysis, a reaching out of finite love for God, because, as love of the spirit, it can affirm the finite only as carried by God's affirmation of his own being. This implies that man's standing before God through knowledge (which constitutes man's nature as spirit) possesses as an inner moment of this knowledge a love for God in himself. Man's love for God is not something which may happen or not happen once man has come to know God. As an inner moment of knowledge it is both its condition and its ground.<sup>38</sup>

When this epistemological and metaphysical conclusion is coupled with the Christian affirmation, and hence theological statement, that God wills to save all human beings and that he has graciously bestowed himself to humans in Jesus of Nazareth, then it becomes clear how Rahner can maintain that all human beings de facto exist in grace, at least in the mode of offer (his

theory of "supernatural existential") and that all persons who respond positively to this offer of grace, even implicitly, are "anonymous Christians." It also becomes apparent how Rahner can construct a dialogue between theology and the other scientific disciplines, between Christianity and other religions, on the basis of these principles and proffer the hope of arriving at some reasonable and provisional unification of the sciences and religions despite the irreducible and unconquerable cultural pluralism we discussed above.

At the center of these reflections lies the "transcendental method." Contrary to B. Lonergan who has persistently and painstakingly attempted to formulate the transcendental method,<sup>39</sup> Rahner demonstrated the method not theoretically but in his "performance" of it. More recently, however, in three lectures,<sup>40</sup> Rahner has explicitly reflected on the question of method, and theological method in particular. For him, "a transcendental line of enquiry, regardless of the particular area of subject-matter in which it is applied, is present when and to the extent that it raises the question of the conditions in which knowledge of a specific object is possible in the knowing subject himself."<sup>41</sup> In any act of cognition the object known and the knowing subject mutually condition each other so that investigations into the conditions of possibility of knowledge in the subject and its nature (phenomenological analysis and transcendental reduction) also shed light on the nature of the object known (transcendental deduction) and vice versa. This method represents a move from moderate realism to critical realism. Its starting point and most peculiar characteristic step is the questioning, the seeking after the ultimate condition which makes knowing and loving possible, the searching for an a priori linkage between the knower and the known. This is the properly methodological aspect of transcendental thought. The

condition sought after, the ultimate horizon which makes cognitional and volitional acts possible in the subject, for Rahner, is God. This is the theological aspect of transcendental Thomism. The conditioned, the knowing and loving subject for whose spiritual activities God is the condition of possibility, is the human being, who is discovered to be spirit in the world. This is the anthropological aspect of transcendental thought.

As spirit, the human being can question being, and as spirit in the world, he must question being. Thus man is ceaselessly driven to question everything except the very fact of questioning. But this heuristic character of consciousness is inexplicable unless one admits some sort of a priori "Vorgriff" of what it is that the question seeks. One cannot ask "what it is" without betraying some kind of unthematic and implicit anticipation of the whole range of being. Being is the horizon of our questioning, knowing and loving. Thus man is the being that keeps the question about being open. It is also clear that in transcendental Thomism God and man, theology and anthropology are indissolubly bound together.<sup>41</sup>

Rahner believes that the transcendental method is most appropriate for achieving some kind of intellectual integrity in a time of cultural pluralism. Precisely because it is now no longer possible to master the mass of complex information provided by a multiplicity of sciences and to perceive their interconnections, it is necessary, if any kind of intellectual unity is to be achieved at all, to investigate into the condition of possibility that makes the knowledge of these diverse and disparate facts possible. The center of unity is shifted from the objective contents which are too varied and difficult to unify into one single system to the unity of the consciousness in the knowing subject. The advantage is threefold. First, one can bypass but not

ignore the myriad of details in particular sciences; indeed one examines them at a more radical level, namely, that of their condition of possibility. Secondly, one preserves the rigorous scientific character of the investigation. Of course one cannot work "scientifically" through all the fragmented and pluralistic philosophies and other sciences, but when one reflects upon the consciousness of the knowing subject, one can and must do so with all exactness and rigor, and hence in a scientific way. Thirdly, in correlating the contents and their condition of possibility, or in terms of Christian theology, man the question and divine revelation as the answer, the question creating the condition for really hearing and the answer bringing the question to its reflective self-presence, an intrinsic unity between reason and faith is made clear and can serve as the basis for a reasonable assent of faith.<sup>43</sup>

This transcendental method when specifically applied to the search for the unity of the sciences amidst irreversible cultural pluralism is called by Rahner the "indirect method"<sup>44</sup> and "first-level reflexion."<sup>45</sup> Not content with dispensing methodological recipes, Rahner has attempted in his classic Foundations of Christian Faith<sup>46</sup> a transcendental justification and explication of the Christian and Roman Catholic faith, or what he calls "fundamental theology." The first-level reflection, not unlike John Henry Newman's use of the "illative sense" and to be distinguished from the second-level reflection where the pluralistic theological sciences, each in its own field and with its own specific method, give an account of themselves, starts first of all from man as the philosophical question, and secondly reflects upon the transcendental and the historical conditions which make the divine revelation possible, thereby correlating philosophy and theology, and thirdly examines the fundamental assertions of Christianity as the answer to the question which



man is, and therefore theologizes in a proper sense.<sup>47</sup>

As a result of this indirect method Rahner is able to claim that Christian faith, and hence Christian theology, is absolutely simple insofar as all Christian beliefs can and should be reduced to the one and only mystery, God who has bestowed himself as grace in the most intimate dimension of human existence (Spirit) and in the realm of human history (Incarnation).<sup>48</sup> To this extent, says Rahner, "to be a Christian is simply to be a human being, and one who also knows that this life which he is living, and which he is consciously living, can also be lived even by a person who is not a Christian explicitly and does not know in a reflective way that he is a Christian."<sup>49</sup> Whether Rahner's attempt at providing a transcendental basis for the unity of reason and faith and for the unification of the sciences is successful or not can only be determined upon a close analysis of his arguments, but no one can complain that he is a mere methodologist.

### III

#### THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY AND THE SCIENCES

Cultural pluralism not only forces theology to adopt a new method but also to conceive its relation to philosophy and the sciences in a way different from the traditional one. I have already alluded above to Rahner's remark that today theology no longer has one ready-made, homogeneous philosophical system upon which to construct its own Anschauung but must confront with a plurality of philosophies and that it has to enter into dialogue with new partners, namely, the sciences. In this part I shall examine how in Rahner's view such a dialogue has to be carried out.

## 1. Theology and Philosophy

Consistent with his transcendental anthropology which demands that the order of grace and redemption must include the autonomy of the natural order as an intrinsic moment within itself, Rahner maintains that philosophy must always be an inner moment of revelation and hence of theology which is a critical reflection of faith in revelation upon itself. Philosophy, in this context, is taken to mean a transcendental as well as historical self-understanding of the person who listens to God's historical revelation of which philosophy in the technical sense is but a methodical, critical, and systematic articulation. This previous philosophical self-understanding functions as the context in which revelation is perceived and provides the conceptual categories with which revelation is expressed in a theological system. But when this philosophy is assumed by theology, it maintains its identity and autonomy as the condition of possibility for theology, as its "other," and is not destroyed or transmuted by it. In other words, theology includes philosophy as a moment within its own being, as something other than itself and at the same time as the condition of possibility for its own being. How is this possible?

Rahner's transcendental anthropology and his theology of revelation provide an answer. First, in his anthropology, nature and grace are not related to each other extrinsically, as two layers of reality superimposed one upon the other, as is found in neo-scholastic theology. Rather, because of God's free gift of himself to man, in the real, historical order there has never been a "pure nature" (natura pura); human nature, on the contrary, is always summoned to grace and required to accept God's offer of himself. This self-communication of God creates a permanent supernatural ontological

modification in the human nature (the "supernatural existential") which transforms its natural dynamism into an ontological drive to the God of grace and glory. Nature then is included as an intrinsic moment within grace, and yet as distinct from grace and as the condition of possibility for grace to be received.<sup>50</sup>

Similarly, in Rahner's theology of revelation, God's offer of grace, his universal will to save humankind, creates in the depth of the human spirit an a priori, transcendental knowledge of God which is unreflective and unthematic and which is given to all human beings insofar as all are called to grace. This gratuitous, universal self-disclosure of God and the corresponding unthematic, a priori knowledge in the human consciousness can be called transcendental revelation. However, this transcendental revelation can never occur by itself but is always mediated in the world by historical events. Or, more precisely, it is the condition of possibility for receiving divine revelation and salvation in the specific forms of historical existence. This historical self-communication of God in words and deeds in history can be called categorical revelation. Further, this categorical revelation occurs in two forms, first in the history of different world religions which attempt with varying degrees of success to interpret God's transcendental revelation, and secondly, in the Judaeo-Christian history which for the Christian Rahner is brought to its fullness and eschatological definitiveness by Jesus of Nazareth. The transcendental revelation is included in the categorical, historical revelation as its condition of possibility.<sup>51</sup>

It follows from the above considerations that there cannot be any 'pure' philosophy as something produced by humans in their concrete lives. Of course, there is a 'pure' philosophy in the sense that the individual engaged

in philosophy methodically abstracts from the supernatural existential and from its concrete realization in history. But if philosophy is a critical reflection on human life in its concrete historicity and in its wholeness, then the philosopher cannot eliminate from his consideration the element of grace that is inherent in such life. In other words, there is inescapably a theological component present in every philosophy, and vice versa. This is particularly true of Western philosophy since it has often developed in explicit contact with Christian revelation.

The dialogue between philosophy and theology is therefore not one between two total strangers or between two estranged acquaintances or between a maid and its mistress. Rather it is a conversation between two intrinsically related, though methodically independent, moments of the one process of critical reflection upon human history. Both moments investigate the meaning of the divinely graced human existence, implicitly in philosophy and explicitly in theology.

This dialogue, however, is severely perturbed by the contemporary pluralism of philosophies which in turn entails a pluralism of theologies. As Rahner remarks, "...the fact that, prior to any question of truth properly so called, we have to recognize a pluralism of philosophies too great for us to master or control, compels us today to recognize a pluralism of theologies prior to the question of theological truth...."<sup>52</sup> This philosophical and theological pluralism does not mean that a dialogue between the two disciplines is no longer possible or desirable, but that it has to assume certain new features.

First of all, against biblicism and dogmatic positivism whose rejection of philosophy may be heightened by the bewildering pluralism of philosophies,

Rahner vigorously argues for the necessity of philosophizing in theology: "Within theology there must be philosophizing."<sup>53</sup>

Secondly, the theologians must frankly admit from the outset the fact of the uncontrollable multiplicity of philosophies. They must abandon any dream of devising a single, homogeneous and ready-made philosophy to be employed by theology as its handmaid. "Every man and every theologian, although he must philosophize in theology, knows less and less of 'Philosophy', since there are continually more and more philosophies, which no single person can assimilate."<sup>54</sup>

Thirdly, the theologians must also candidly admit the fact of the pluralism of theologies and courageously accept its consequences. As it is impossible today to formulate one single, unified philosophy, so it is impossible to reduce different theologies to a single theology which the Church then declares as its "official" theology. "The future theology of the Church," declares Rahner, "will become less and less that which it formerly has been, namely the theology of a society which is culturally and regionally homogeneous. In other words, the theology of the Church (or the Churches) will be the theology of the world Church, yet one which will never again be in a position to find any obvious basis for itself in any one specific culture, and which will never again simply constitute an obvious social and cultural phenomenon belonging to a particular region, one which is guarded by the society concerned as its own special possession and its own tradition."<sup>55</sup> Such necessarily pluralistic theology will be ecumenical, interreligious and global. Not only should it learn from the traditions of other Christian Churches but also those of non-Christian and non-Western religions.<sup>56</sup>

Fourthly, despite insurmountable philosophical and theological pluralism, some unity between the two disciplines can be achieved not by a synthesis of their objective contents but by a transcendental method employed by both. In other words, both philosophy and theology, will have to be transcendental in a more explicit way than hitherto, that is, they must reflect more consciously and systematically on the conditions of possibility of knowing, willing and acting in the subject. Without neglecting the necessary historical component of human transcendentalty, the theologian, whenever he or she is confronted with an object of dogma, should inquire "as to the conditions necessary for it to be known by the theological subject, ascertaining that the a priori conditions for knowledge of the object are satisfied, and showing that they imply and express something about the object, the mode, method and limits of knowing it."<sup>57</sup> The linchpin in the dialogue between philosophy and theology is therefore a transcendental anthropology. Only in this way can it be shown that philosophy unavoidably contains a theological element in itself and that theology is necessarily philosophical. Consistent with his understanding of pluralism, Rahner however warns us not to identify transcendental anthropology with a historical form of transcendental philosophy and theology developed by a particular school, e.g. transcendental Thomism. What is required in our contemporary situation is that we should focus our analysis on the a priori conditions of possibility for the activity of the subject, no matter how this analysis is carried out.<sup>58</sup>

Fifthly, a dialogue between theology and philosophy would be incomplete if it is not conducted concomitantly with the sciences. As Rahner has pointed out, the sciences--natural, social and historical--are no longer mediated by philosophy and are therefore the direct interlocutors of theology. By nature

theology ought to be more congenial to these partners than to philosophy since it is primarily concerned with the concrete history of salvation of her mankind.

## 2. Theology and the Sciences

Rahner is acutely aware that the dialogue between theology and the sciences is much more complex and difficult than the one between the former and philosophy. After all, there has been a long tradition behind the conversation between theologians and philosophers. Moreover, whereas philosophy and theology deal with the whole of reality, the sciences, by methodological option, limit their investigation to a particular branch of human knowledge and a well-defined section of reality. Further, the sciences concentrate on the objects themselves and do not take into explicit consideration the subjectivity of the knowing subject; they do not think about thinking itself. Finally, the data with which the scientists concern themselves are so specialized and technical that only scientists working in the same field, and not philosophers and theologians, however competent, can understand their language and subject-matter. One can therefore speak of an "interdisciplinary" dialogue between scientists and theologians only in an improper sense, insofar as they converse with one another not as practitioners of their disciplines but as people concerned with the question of human existence.<sup>59</sup>

One can nevertheless take comfort in the fact that the dialogue between theology and the sciences, however complicated and obscure, has already occurred and indeed has produced appreciable benefits, at least to theology. Think for example, of the contributions that literary, archeological and historical sciences have rendered to biblical exegesis or the light that the

theories of evolution have shed on the doctrine of creation or the profound insights that the sciences of human behavior have offered to moral theology. Of course, as is well known, these benefits have not been reaped without at times severe conflicts between these disciplines and theology.

The benefits should not however only flow from the sciences to theology in a one-way street; theology has some services of its own to render to the sciences as well. Rahner has made some useful suggestions to this effect. First of all, theology with its doctrine of moral and gnoseological concupiscence can and should remind the sciences of the insuperable pluralism of human knowledge. This reminder may at first sight seem utterly superfluous since scientists of all people are constantly made aware of the diversity of their specializations. Nevertheless, as Rahner correctly points out, there is a deep-grained propensity in the individual sciences to absolutistic claims: "Any science, at least as practised in the concrete by the individual scientist, has a tendency to monopolize... every science as such regards itself as autonomous, and yet, in view of the unity of human knowledge, is secretly convinced of the fact that man has only to pursue his own scientific investigations at a sufficiently radical level to be able to identify them with the totality of human knowledge."<sup>60</sup> Paradoxically, it is only with a clear recognition of this irreducible pluralism of human knowledge that some unity between theology and the sciences and between the different sciences themselves can be obtained.

Secondly, in the dialogue with the sciences, since it cannot offer any useful information for the advancement of the sciences (in the way biology and chemistry work together, for example) one of theology's most important roles consists in upholding the human factor which is the hidden element



intrinsic to every science and calling every science in question, compelling it to reach beyond its limits and make contact with all other sciences. As there is no pure philosophy, so are there no pure sciences. Every science is necessarily concerned with human existence, and hence with theology. By offering a transcendental anthropology, theology reveals to the sciences the depth dimension of their objects, the horizon of absolute Mystery within which they necessarily carry out their tasks and with which they necessarily, even though implicitly, confront. As the upholder of this incomprehensible Mystery, theology will help every science to reject the temptation, to which it is liable to succumb, of setting itself up as wholly autonomous and self-sufficient. In this way theology will become the defender of any given science against the imperialism of any other.

Thirdly, as regards the human sciences (Geisteswissenschaften), since they have, at least in the West, developed within and in intimate contact with theology, there is everything to be gained for those engaged in these disciplines to acquire a knowledge of theology in order to understand these disciplines themselves.

Fourthly, as regards the natural sciences and the social sciences, since they contain, implicitly or explicitly, an anthropology, it is the task of theology to ensure that such anthropology is not reductionistic and to remind the scientists of the human responsibilities entailed in every scientific discovery.

#### IV

#### CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Rahner's intellectual journey is a fascinating story, at least to the

historian of recent philosophy. Schooled in neo-scholasticism he came, very early in his academic career, to reject it as the only valid form of Thomism. In due course he developed his own brand of Thomism and attempted on this basis to re-interpret the various Christian doctrines. In the late sixties, however, Rahner was deeply affected by the cultural pluralism that rapidly became universal and irreversible. He quickly realized that not only was there no longer one homogeneous philosophical system (e.g. transcendental Thomism) upon which one could build a comprehensive theological system but also there was not and indeed there would never be a homogeneous theology. Beside philosophical and theological pluralism there loomed the monster of the rampant multiplicity of the sciences, each with its own sophisticated method and field of research, threatening to tear apart the fabric of human thought. It is to Rahner's great credit that despite his acute awareness of cultural pluralism he did not capitulate to its menace but instead harnessed his transcendental method to the task of providing some unity to theology, philosophy and the sciences.

What emerged from this colossal labor is, in the near universal judgment of Rahnerian scholars, an astonishingly coherent theological system. Astute readers will certainly not miss the irony of the fact that a comprehensive system was produced by a man who continually insisted that philosophy and theology would have to be pluralistic! But being pluralistic and self-coherent are not mutually exclusive; a logical thinker will have to be coherent but he or she needs not claim that his or her thought system is the only valid one.

Logical self-consistency, though a great virtue, cannot be the only criterion for truth. Even if Rahner's deployment of the transcendental

method is a model of self-consistency, still two questions have to be asked, namely first whether Rahner's explications of Christian doctrines are adequate and faithful to the Christian sources and secondly whether his method is appropriate to the task. To the first question various answers have been given by Rahner's critics. Those who agree with him extol his expert mastery of the Christian, especially patristic and medieval, sources and his superb ability to retrieve them for contemporary men and women. Those who disagree with him accuse him of corrupting the Christian wine into Kantian, Hegelian and Heideggerian vinegar. Be that as it may, it is not my concern here to defend Rahner on this score, since it is not pertinent to the issue at hand.

On the second question, namely whether the transcendental method succeeds in providing some unification of theology, philosophy and the sciences, the reactions are mixed. On the one hand, it must be recognized that the transcendental anthropology as elaborated by Rahner is a powerful tool to forge an indissoluble link between philosophy and theology. It convincingly shows that philosophy is an intrinsic, though independent, moment of theology and that theology and philosophy mutually condition each other as question and answer.<sup>62</sup> Its theology of revelation also provides a solid basis for a dialogue among the religions. As Wilfred C. Smith acknowledges, Rahner's theories of supernatural existential and anonymous Christianity are confirmed by historical studies in religions, even though he takes exception to Rahner's vocabulary.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the transcendental anthropology can rescue the sciences from academic imperialism and philosophical reductionism.

On the other hand, the weaknesses of the transcendental method, especially its alleged inability to deal with the concrete, the historical and the

particular, precisely because of its transcendental character, are especially visible in the dialogue between theology and the sciences. Rahner's strengths, namely his extensive knowledge of scholastic philosophy and existential analysis, are also his limitations. He did not possess the scientific education so as to be able to make the sciences the loci theologici for his theology. Like K. Barth he was deeply interested in the question of the relationship between science and theology and wanted to build a dialogue between these disciplines. And not unlike Barth, he was unable to achieve his dream or offer concrete, helpful suggestions on how to go about achieving it because he had never learnt the sciences and their methods well. The question of science and theology was for both Rahner and Barth, as T. Horvath has correctly pointed out,<sup>63</sup> first and foremost an apologetical question. And for this purpose the transcendental method is quite appropriate. For them, as for the majority of theologians, with the exception of perhaps Lonergan, the sciences have not yet become a source for theological thinking and theological method. This critique of Rahner's use of the transcendental method is not intended to deny its validity or necessity. I am convinced that the transcendental method and its anthropology are a necessary, though not sufficient, bridge between theology and the other sciences. It is to Rahner's immense credit that he has recognized so clearly and expressed so forcefully the necessity to break, to use his own somewhat malicious metaphor, the monogamy between philosophy and theology and expand it into a ménage à trois with the sciences as the third partner. From now on, theology can no longer be the queen of the sciences lost in her ivory tower but must descend into the market place of everyday life and be an active participant, at times at her own risk, in the common enterprise of discovering the meaning

and the purpose of human existence. For Rahner to have pioneered in this enterprise, pointing out the way and showing the method, is no mean accomplishment.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of cultural pluralism and its impact on different sectors of contemporary life, see inter alia H. A. Myers, Systematic Pluralism (1961); J. P. Shaver and H. Berlak, Controversy in a Pluralistic Society (1967); K. Bosl, Pluralismus und pluralistische Gesellschaft (1967); M. Hattich, Nationalbewusstsein und Staatbewusstsein in der pluralistischen Gesellschaft (1966); D. Tracy, Blessed Rage for Order. The New Pluralism in Theology (The Seabury Press, New York, 1975); B. Lonergan, Doctrinal Pluralism (Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, 1971). J. F. Kane, Pluralism and Truth (Scholars Press, CA, 1981); A. Race, Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions (Orbis Books, New York, 1983).

<sup>2</sup> See "On the Current Relationship Between Philosophy and Theology," Theological Investigations, XIII, 70-71. Rahner's writings are voluminous; a complete bibliography of his works and their translations in various languages up to 1979 gives some 3535 items, not counting the writings Rahner continued to produce until his death on March 30, 1984. His most important articles are collected in Schriften zur Theologie, 16 volumes, published by Benziger, Einsiedeln, 1954-1984, of which only 14 volumes have been translated into English by different authors and distributed into 20 volumes under the title Theological Investigations, brought out by various publishing houses but now owned by Crossroad Publishing Company. Schriften zur Theologie will be abbreviated as ST and Theological Investigations as TI.

For an introduction to Rahner's life, work and thought, the following works may be consulted: J. Laubach, "Karl Rahner," Theologen unserer Zeit,

edited by L. Reinisch (Munich, 1960) 222-244; H. Vorgrimmler, Karl Rahner. His Life, Thought and Works, translated by E. Quinn (Paulist Press, New Jersey, 1966); idem, Bibliographie Karl Rahner 1924-1969, edited by R. Bleinstein and E. Klinger (Herder, Freiburg, 1969) 5-7; J. B. Metz, "Karl Rahner," Tendenzen der Theologie im 20. Jahrhundert. Eine Geschichte in Porträts, edited by H. J. Schultz (Stuttgart-Olten, 1966) 513-518; R. Kress, A Rahner Handbook (John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1982) 1-61; H. Rahner, "Eucharisticon fraternitatis," Gott in Welt, II, edited by J. B. Metz and others (Herder, Freiburg, 1964) 895-899; K. Lehmann and A. Raffelt (eds.), Rechenschaft des Glaubens. Karl Rahner - Lesebuch (Herder, Freiburg, 1979) 13-53; M. A. Fahey, "1904-1984: Karl Rahner, Theologian," The Catholic Theological Society of America, Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention, vol. 39 (1984) 84-98. See also Rahner's own comments on his work, TI, XVII, 243-248.

<sup>3</sup> Neo-scholastic philosophy was developed as a system by the Italian Jesuit Matteo Liberatore in his two-volume Della conoscenza intellettuale (Stamperia e Cartiere del Fibreno, Naples, 1957-1958), Del composto umano (Coi Tipi della Civiltà Cattolica, Rome, 1862), and Dell' anima umana (Belfani, Rome, 1875). Neo-scholastic theology, on the other hand, was developed by the German Jesuit Joseph Kleutgen in his two major works Die Theologie der Vorzeit (5 vols.) and Die Philosophie der Vorzeit (2 vols.). For a history of neo-scholasticism, see the excellent work of G. A. McCool, Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century. The Quest for a Unitary Method (The Seabury Press, New York, 1977).

<sup>4</sup> Geist in Welt was completed in 1936 and published in 1939 by Felizian Rauch of Innsbruck. In 1957 Kösel-Verlag of Munich brought out a second

edition of 414 pages, revised and augmented by J. B. Metz. The English translation is done by W. Dych, Spirit in the World (= SW) published by Herder and Herder, New York, 1968. For an excellent study of this work, see A. Tallon, "Spirit, Matter, Becoming: Karl Rahner's Spirit in the World (Geist in Welt), The Modern Schoolman, vol. XLVIII (1970) 151-165.

<sup>5</sup> For a brief interpretation of St. Thomas' teaching on knowledge by Rahner, see his article, originally published in 1938, "Thomas Aquinas on Truth," TI, XIII, 13-31. For a study of the influence of Kant on Rahner and the differences between the two of them, see the excellent article by F. P. Fiorenza, "Karl Rahner and the Kantian Problematic," Spirit in the World, xix-xlv. Of Hegel's influence on Rahner, see M. J. Scanlon, "Systematic Theology and the World Church," The Catholic Theological Society of America. Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention, vol. 39, edited by G. Kilcourse (1984) 13-34; D. J. M. Bradley, "Rahner's Spirit in the World: Aquinas or Hegel?" The Thomist 41 (1977) 167-199, W. Corduan, "Hegel in Rahner: A Study in Philosophical Hermeneutics," Harvard Theological Review 71, Nos. 3-4 (1977) 285-298.

Rahner himself on several occasions explicitly acknowledged his profound debt to J. Maréchal whose Le point de départ de la métaphysique, especially volume 5, proved extremely influential. Rahner attended M. Heidegger's lectures when he studied philosophy at the University of Freiburg i. Br. (1934-1936); however, he suggested that Heidegger's influence on him had been exaggerated. See L. Roberts, The Achievement of Karl Rahner (Herder and Herder, New York, 1967) viii. On the differences between Heidegger and Rahner, see also R. Masson, "Rahner and Heidegger: Being, Hearing and God," The Thomist 37 (1973) 455-488.



<sup>6</sup> The book, originally a series of 15 lectures given in 1937 at the "Salzburger Hochschulwochen," was published in 1941. In 1963 J. B. Metz brought out the second edition Hörer des Wortes. Zur Grundlegung einer Religionsphilosophie (Kosel-Verlag, 1963). Whereas Metz has made very few changes in his edition of SW, his revision of Horer des Wortes was far more extensive, involving more than 1300 changes. The English translation, Hearers of the Word (= HW) by M. Richards and associates is incredibly bad. I make use of J. Donceel's translation of the first edition of HW, partially printed in A Rahner Reader, edited by G. A. McCool (The Seabury Press, New York, 1975) 1-65. For an excellent introduction to HW, see A. Tallon, "Spirit, Freedom, History. Karl Rahner's Hörer des Wortes (Hearers of the Word)," The Thomist 38 (1974) 908-936.

<sup>7</sup> See his introduction to J. B. Metz, Christliche Anthropozentrik (Kosel, Munich, 1962).

<sup>8</sup> See "Remarks on the Dogmatic Treatise De Trinitate," TI, IV, 77-102; The Trinity (Burns & Oates, London, 1970).

<sup>9</sup> See "Current Problems in Christology," TI, I, 149-200; "On the Theology of the Incarnation," TI, IV, 105-120; "Christology within an Evolutionary View of the World," TI, V, 157-192; "Christology in the Setting of Modern Man's Understanding of Himself and of the World," TI, XI, 215-229.

<sup>10</sup> See "Concerning the Relationship Between Nature and Grace," TI, I, 297-317; "Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace," TI, I, 319-346; "Nature and Grace," TI, IV, 165-188.

<sup>11</sup> See "Thoughts on the Possibility of Belief Today," TI, VI, 3-22; "The Foundation of Belief Today," TI, XVI, 3-23; "Foundations of Christian Faith,"

TI, XIX, 3-15; "On the Situation of Faith," TI, XX, 13-32.

<sup>12</sup> See "The Theology of Symbol," TI, IV, 221-252.

<sup>13</sup> See "The Existential," Sacramentum Mundi, vol II (Herder and Herder, New York, 1968) 304-306; "Church, Churches and Religions," TI, X, 30-49 and the articles cited in note 10.

<sup>14</sup> See "Anonymous Christian," TI, VI, 390-398; "Atheism and Implicit Christianity," TI, IX, 145-164; "Anonymous Christianity and the Missionary Task of the Church," TI, XII, 161-178; "Observations on the Problem of the 'Anonymous Christian'," TI, XIV, 280-294; "Anonymous and Explicit Faith," TI, XVI, 52-59.

<sup>15</sup> For a brilliant discussion of Rahner's intellectual journey, see G. A. McCool, "Karl Rahner and the Christian Philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas," Theology and Discovery: Essays in Honor of Karl Rahner, S.J., edited by W. J. Kelly (Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1980) 63-93. Though I am in substantial agreement with McCool's mapping of Rahner's reactions to neo-scholasticism, I believe that he has overplayed the stages of Rahner's rejection of it. See also the comments of P. J. Burns, ibid, 102-104.

<sup>16</sup> "Pluralism in Theology and the Unity of the Creed in the Church," TI, XI, 4.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>18</sup> "A Small Question Regarding the Contemporary Pluralism in the Intellectual Situation of Catholics and the Church," TI, VI, 23.

<sup>19</sup> See ibid, 25-27.

<sup>20</sup> "On the Current Relationship Between Philosophy and Theology," TI, XIII, 71.

<sup>21</sup> See ibid.

<sup>22</sup> "Philosophy and Philosophizing in Theology," TI, IX, 58.

<sup>23</sup> Foundations of Christian Faith. An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity (The Seabury Press, New York, 1978) 8. This is the English translation by W. Dych of Grundkurs des Glaubens. Einführung in den Begriff des Christentums (Verlag Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1976).

<sup>24</sup> "On the Relationship Between Theology and the Contemporary Sciences," TI, XIII, 95.

<sup>25</sup> For Rahner's discussion of the theological meaning of concupiscentia, see "The Theological Concept of Concupiscentia," TI, I, 347-382. Basically, for him, concupiscence is the desire (Begierlichkeit) which directs human freedom towards a partial good antecedently to any decision taken by that freedom and not altogether subject to that decision. Not identical with sin, it is real manifestation of guilt insofar as, even though not vicious in itself, it contradicts the "supernatural existential" so long as it has not become and will never become totally subject to the moral decision of the individual.

<sup>26</sup> For Rahner's theory that every being is at once one and plural and that it can be itself only if it expresses itself in an "other," see his "The Theology of the Symbol," TI, IV, 221-252. He states: "...a being (i.e. each one) is multiple and in this unity of the multiple, one moment in this multiplicity is or can be essentially an expression of another moment in this

multiple unity." (Ibid, 225-226). The English translation has been emended to express more accurately the original German which reads: "...ein Seiendes (d. h. jedes) in sich plural ist und in dieser Einheit des Pluralen--eines in dieser Pluralität wesentlich Ausdruck eines anderen in dieser pluralen Einheit ist oder sein kann." (ST, IV, 279-280). One can easily surmise the extensive implications of this theory for the doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, the sacraments and the relationship between the human soul and body.

<sup>27</sup> "Philosophy and Philosophizing in Theology," TI, IX, 57.

<sup>28</sup> The following works may be consulted: J. Donceel, The Philosophy of Karl Rahner (Magi Books, Albany, 1969); Idem, "Transcendental Thomism," Monist 58 (1974) 67-68; Listening 9 (1974) 157-164; A. Tallon, "Rahner and Personization," Philosophy Today 14 (1970) 44-56; V. Branick, An Ontology of Understanding. Karl Rahner's Metaphysics of Knowledge in the Context of Modern German Hermeneutics (Marianist Communications Center, St. Louis, 1971).

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of the transcendental method, see O. Muck, The Transcendental Method (Herder & Herder, New York, 1967); A. Carr, The Theological Method of Karl Rahner (Scholars Press, Missoula, Montana, 1977); W. V. Dych, "Method in Theology According to Karl Rahner," Theology and Discovery: Essays in Honor of Karl Rahner, S.J., edited by W. Kelly, (Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, 1981).

<sup>30</sup> See SW, 57-65.

<sup>31</sup> SW, 69: "Erkennen ist Beisichsein des Seins, und dieses Beisichsein ist das Sein des Seinden."

<sup>32</sup> See SW, 117-132. "...the meaning of the judgment is not exhausted by

saying that it is a synthesis of two concepts, but that the really constitutive moment of the judgment is the reference of the concretizing synthesis of subject and predicate to the thing itself, the affirmative synthesis."

(Ibid, 129)

<sup>33</sup> See SW, 135-145; 187-236. The same experience may be shown to present in the act of judgment (as Maréchal has done) and in the act of questioning (as E. Coreth has chosen to do in his Metaphysik. Eine methodisch--systematisch Grundlegung (Innsbruck, 1961)).

<sup>34</sup> See SW, 146-187.

<sup>35</sup> For an excellent discussion and resolution of this ambiguity in Rahner, see J. J. Bacik, Apologetics and the Eclipse of Mystery. Mystagogy According to Karl Rahner (University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1980) 118-120.

<sup>36</sup> See his "Can We Still Make a Case in Reason for the Existence of God?" God Knowable and Unknowable, edited by R. J. Roth (Fordham University Press, New York, 1973) 159-186.

<sup>37</sup> HW, 100.

<sup>38</sup> HW, 101.

<sup>39</sup> See his Insight: A Study of Human Understanding (Philosophical Library, New York, 1958) and Method in Theology (Herder and Herder, New York, 1972). In his cognitional theory Lonergan explains understanding as the occurrence of 'insight' allowing for a 'higher viewpoint' on the basis of which concepts, as subsequent objectifications of insight, undergo constant revision. Judgment is an act of reflective understanding in which the intellect judges that the conditions for the verification of the affirmation

involving such concepts have reasonably been met, that is, the judgments are shown to be "virtually unconditioned." Lonergan works toward a new theological method based on the method of science, empirical rather than logical in Aristotle's sense, in which fixity gives way to the on-going process, certitude to probability, necessity to verifiable possibility, knowledge to hypothesis. With this new method Lonergan hopes to build a bridge between theology and the sciences and thereby overcome cultural pluralism.

<sup>40</sup> "Reflections on Methodology in Theology," TI, XI, 68-114. See also his "Transcendental Theology," Sacramentum Mundi, vol. 6, 287-289.

<sup>41</sup> "Reflections....", TI, XI, 87.

<sup>42</sup> See Rahner's article, "Theology and Anthropology," TI, IX, 28-45. "As soon as man is understood as the being who is absolutely transcendent in respect to God, 'anthropocentricity' and 'theocentricity' in theology are not opposites but strictly one and the same thing, seen from two sides." (Ibid, 28).

<sup>43</sup> A parallel between K. Rahner and P. Tillich suggests itself here. See H. D. Schlachtenhaufen, A Comparison of the Theological Anthropology of Paul Tillich and Karl Rahner. Unpublished dissertation, Aquinas Institute of Theology, Dubuque, Iowa, 1973 and E. G. Frick, The Meaning of Religion in the "Religionswissenschaft" of Joachim Wach, the Theology of Paul Tillich, and the Theology of Karl Rahner. Unpublished dissertation, Marquette University, Milwaukee, 1972.

<sup>44</sup> "A Small Question Regarding the Contemporary Pluralism in the Intellectual Situation of Catholics and the Church," TI, VI, 27.

<sup>45</sup> Foundations of Christian Faith, 8. On the necessity and nature of the indirect method, see also "Reflections on the Contemporary Intellectual Formation of Future Priests," TI, VI, 113-138. "The Foundation of Belief Today," TI, XVI, 3-23; "Reflections on a New Task for Fundamental Theology," TI, XVI, 156-166; "On the Situation of Faith," TI, XX, 13-32. It must be stated here that Rahner did not derive his indirect method simply from transcendental Thomism but also from the spiritual teachings of St. Ignatius, especially on choice. Indeed, it may be argued that the primary source of Rahner's theology is not philosophy but spirituality. See J. H. P. Wong, Logos-Symbol in the Christology of Karl Rahner (Libreria Ateneo Salesians, Rome, 1984) 39-73.

<sup>46</sup> This book, though not intended to be a final summary of Rahner's theology, is certainly the locus classicus of his thought with its distinctive style, its consistent application of the transcendental method and its treatment of Rahner's basic and recurrent theological themes. For excellent analyses of this work, see K. Neufeld, "Somme d'une théologie--Somme d'une vie. Le Traité fondamental de la foi de Karl Rahner," Nouvelle revue théologique, 106, no. 6 (Nov-Dec 1984) 817-833 and L. Pearson's critical review in The Thomist, 43, no. 1 (1979) 186-194.

<sup>47</sup> See Foundations of Christian Faith, 11.

<sup>48</sup> For this reductio in mysterium, see "The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology," TI, IV, 36-73 and "Reflections on Methodology in Theology," TI, XI; 101-114.

<sup>49</sup> Foundations of Christian Faith, 430.

<sup>50</sup> Of Rahner's many writings on the relationship between nature and grace, see above all "Concerning the Relationship Between Nature and Grace," TI, I, 297-317 and "Nature and Grace," TI, IV, 165-188.

<sup>51</sup> See Foundations of Christian Faith, 138-175.

<sup>52</sup> "On the Current Relationship Between Philosophy and Theology," TI, XIII, 72.

<sup>53</sup> "Philosophy and Philosophizing in Theology," TI, IX, 47.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 54-55.

<sup>55</sup> "Possible Courses for the Theology of the Future," TI, XIII, 36. For Rahner's important notion of world Church, see his "Basic Theological Interpretation of the Second Vatican Council," TI, XX, 77-89 and "The Future of the Church and the Church of the Future," Ibid, 103-114. For a study of the implications of this notion, see the essays contained in the proceedings of the thirty-ninth annual convention of the Catholic Theological Society of America, edited by G. Kilcourse, Washington, D.C., 1984.

<sup>56</sup> See Rahner's remarks to this effect in "Philosophy and Theology," TI, vi, 80-81.

<sup>57</sup> "Theology and Anthropology," TI, IX, 29. "...every theology of this kind is necessarily transcendental anthropology; every ontology is ontology." (Ibid, 34).

<sup>58</sup> See "Possible Courses for the Theology of the Future," TI, XIII, 45-47.

<sup>59</sup> See "Theology As Engaged in an Interdisciplinary Dialogue with the Sciences," TI, XIII, 81-82; "On the Relationship Between Theology and the



Contemporary Sciences," TI, XIII, 95-97; "Naturwissenschaft und Vernünftiger Glaube," ST, XV, 24-31. It may be noted here that Rahner was very actively involved in discussions with scientific societies, such as the Goerres Society and the Paulus-Gesellschaft.

<sup>60</sup> "Theology as Engaged....", TI, XIII, 83.

<sup>61</sup> See ibid, 91.

<sup>62</sup> See "The World Church and the World History of Religion: The Theological Issue," The Catholic Theological Society of America. Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention, edited by G. Kilcourse, (Washington, D.C., 1984) 52-68. "...I as an historian agree with Rahner theologically but differ from him linguistically." (Ibid, 68).

<sup>63</sup> See "After Rahner What? A Tribute to His Memory and Achievement," The Thomist, 49 (1985) 161.