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David Jones

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ON TRAGEDY

Patricia L. Grady

I

In tragedy, as in all aesthetic phenomena, there are no objective criteria. The element of taste makes it impossible to arrive at a set of principles against which a play might be checked to ascertain whether it is indeed a tragedy. Given its elements, tragic plot, tragic hero, and tragic emotion or response, the last offers us our only approach from our position as viewers. And tragic emotion is ultimately a highly subjective matter. Not only may there be some question as to the nature of the emotions involved, but, even if we assume the emotions to be correctly designated as pity and fear, there may still be some question as to the nature of the action which evokes them. We can deny to no one that a particular play has aroused such emotion in him, even though we ourselves have experienced only disgust, say.

Such considerations as these seem to bar every approach to the subject. Yet the complex experience signified by the word "tragedy" remains an accomplished, provocative fact. Although disagreements arise on all sides with respect to particular plays, and to principles whereby they may be explained, we refuse to keep silent. By-passing the correlation of plot and tragic emotion, we continue the search on subterranean levels underlying the plot or on metaphysical levels rising from it. In either case our hope is to discover in tragic plots a principle, the recognition of which evokes the tragic emotion in the viewer. In this broader view, strict plot definition is no longer necessary or perhaps even feasible. Individual plots may be examined for the principle or elements. And conceivably the nature of the plot which embodies the elements may change from generation to generation, from "cultural group" to "cultural group."

The search for principle in tragic plot may be difficult to justify if it is recognized that no theory can exact universal agreement. But if the subject is to be approached at all, the problems of universality in aesthetic judgments and of definition of response must be left behind. Frankly proceeding on the basis of a limited number of plays subjectively judged tragic, one may then attempt to derive the principle behind all of them. Insofar as one is correct, the principle will apply to all plays which are judged to be tragic. The minimal reward for the effort is a basis for conversation on the provocative subject, beyond the simple yes or no of subjective judgment. Seen in this light, theory-making does have value, provided that it accepts its own limitations and does not attempt to use its end-product as an objective criterion for judging plays. We can, then, hope to derive benefit from theory, although it can serve only as a tool for understanding the phenomenon and never as a definition of it.

The theory which will be the focal point of this thesis is the one outlined by Camus in the final chapter of The Myth of Sisyphus. We can justify taking it as our starting point no more than we could justify an arbitrary selection of plays as constituting tragedy. Our object, however, will be to demonstrate its validity and value.

Camus' views on tragedy are presented in an exposition of the myth of Sisyphus. The myth as he tells it is the only proper introduction to his theory:

> The gods had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor.
>
> If one believes Homer, Sisyphus was the wisest and most prudent of mortals. According to another tradition, however, he was disposed to practice the profession of highwayman. I see no contradiction in this. Opinions differ as to the reasons why he became the futile laborer of the underworld. To begin with, he is accused of a certain levity in regard to the gods. He stole their secrets. Aegina, the daughter of Aesopus, was carried off by Jupiter. The father was shocked by that disappearance and complained to Sisyphus. He, who knew of the abduction, offered to tell about it on the condition that Aesopus would give water to the citadel of Corinth. To the celestial thunderbolts he preferred the benediction of water. He was punished for this in the underworld. Homer tells us also that Sisyphus had put Death in chains. Pluto could not endure the sight of his deserted, silent empire. He dispatched the god of war, who liberated Death from the hands of her conqueror.
>
> It is said also that Sisyphus, being near to death, rashly wanted to test his wife's love. He ordered her to cast his unburied body into the middle of the public square. Sisyphus woke up in the underworld. And there, annoyed by an obedience so contrary to human love, he obtained from Pluto permission to return to earth in order to chastise his wife. But when he had seen again the face of this world, enjoyed water and sun, warm stones and the sea, he no longer wanted to go back to the infernal darkness. Recalls, signs of anger, warnings were of no avail. Many years more he lived facing the curve of the gulf, the sparkling sea, and the smiles of earth. A decree of the gods was necessary. Mercury came and seized the impudent man by the collar and snatching him from his joys, led him forcibly back to the underworld, where his rock was ready for him.[1]

In interpreting this myth, Camus disregards the superhuman origin of Sisyphus' suffering and considers it as an image of human activity. If this myth is tragic, he tells us, it is because its hero is conscious. The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. As Sisyphus descends the hill to retrieve his rock he must be aware of the whole extent of his wretched condition. He must feel sorrow, melancholy, and boundless grief as he recalls scenes of life and the earth he loves. Continuing with that melancholy is the very task to which he has been condemned. And he does continue, and conquers it; for even the most crushing truths perish from being acknowledged. He knows the rock to be his personal fate. It belongs to him, created out of a series of unrelated actions, combined under his memory, and soon to be sealed by his death. In that moment of consciousness he knows himself as its creator to be its master. Convinced of the wholly human origin of all that is human, he sees that his fate is a human matter, to be settled by men. He finds the universe without a master neither sterile nor futile and finds the struggle itself towards the heights enough to fill a man's heart. He cannot be dissatisfied.[2]

This view of Camus' is obviously not directly related to the tragedy of the theater. It is a view of life; of the human condition, of man, alone in the universe, struggling with his passion for life and with the futility of living. There is despair in this view; but it is not necessary. A man may be overcome by his

loneliness and the sterility of action which can have no object outside himself; but he need not be. If he is willing to acknowledge that he, acting in complete freedom, is entirely the master of his actions, entirely responsible, he can find the struggle exhilarating. By constant activity he can fashion for himself a fate and a meaning in life which will rid it forever of the threat of sterility and futility. He is supremely himself, knowing himself fully as his own creation, superior to whatever befalls him because of his fidelity to action.

* * *

If this is indeed a meaningful understanding of tragedy, it should bear some relation to the theater. Tragedy, says Aristotle, "is essentially an imitation of action and life, happiness and misery. All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality."[3] There are many differences between Aristotle's notion of that certain kind of activity for which we live and the one held by Camus. Nonetheless, if the tragedy of the theater is indeed an imitation of human action and life, it is only right to seek some correspondence between a tragedy which is inherent in that action and life and one which is an imitation of it.

In seeking such a correspondence, we will ignore the problems pertaining to tragedy as an art form. Stripped of these considerations, Aristotle's task seems to be primarily one of defining tragic emotion and outlining the plots or actions which most perfectly stimulate that emotion. On the basis of his experience of the Greek theater, he defines tragic response as pity, fear, and similar emotions. His conclusion with respect to plot may be roughly paraphrased thus: A man (better than we) in enjoyment of great reputation and good fortune, but not pre-eminently virtuous and just, through an error in judgment goes from happiness to misery by meditating or perpetrating some crime within his family -- either meditating in ignorance and discovering the relationship in time to stop, committing it in ignorance of the relationship and discovering it afterward, or committing it knowingly and consciously.[4]

Ideally the plot contains both peripety and discovery, a change from happiness to misery accompanied by a change from ignorance to knowledge. Although Aristotle lists very specific discoveries - discoveries of persons -- it is clear that they are the means by which the family relationship, and thus the fact of the crime committed or about to be committed, is revealed to the hero. Since he cites Oedipus as the finest example of the combination of peripety and discovery, we may assume that in its ideal form the peripety is fully accomplished when the discovery occurs. The hero may be miserable in his actions, but his misery is complete only when he knows what he has done. In general, it seems that Aristotle's entire theory has as its keystone the combination of peripety and discovery. The other qualities of the plot chiefly heighten or insure the tragic effect. The closeness of the relationship within which the crime is committed,for instance, serves chiefly to heighten whatever horror is inherent in the plot. And the character of the hero is carefully sketched so that his change in fortune will arouse no feeling of distaste which might distract from pity and fear.

Basically, then, there seems to be no opposition between Aristotle and Camus in spite of totally different approaches. The former remains fairly specific as he outlines discovery and the forms it may take within the plot. However, his term "discovery" may certainly be interpreted to mean understanding the crime in its fullest implications and seeing the chance, blind roots from which it sprang. This is not far from Camus. It is even closer if we examine the implications of the sort of crime that Aristotle concerns himself with and what its roots might be. The Greek phrase δι' ἁμαρτίαν τινὰ τῶν ,which accounts for the action, has been variously translated, for example, as "some error in judgment" and "through some flaw in him."[5] These translations have led to searches for a "fatal mistake" on the part

of the hero, prior to which he might have been able to retrieve himself guiltless from the action; or for some shortcoming in his character which precipitates him into guilty action or, in itself, renders him guilty. However, such searches are usually futile or arrive only at far-fetched conclusions. For the most part there is no discernible error in the faculty of judgment; it seems to lie, rather, in the grounds upon which the judgment is made. As for flaws in character, they seem to be reduced to a too passionate devotion to something in itself good. More generally, however, ἁμαρτία may be translated as a failing. And, in light of Camus, it may be considered as the basic human failing, the ground of all ignorance. This understanding provides a basis for the other two. It makes intelligible both the basic error of all judgment and the mistake of passionate devotion to any one thing. Man's knowledge is unavoidably imperfect. All of his actions must proceed on blind faith that he knows what he is doing, that he knows where his actions will take him, and that he knows where he wants to go. In order to act at all, he must hide from himself his profound ignorance of the true nature of every possible ground of action.

It is in this ignorance that the action has its roots. The discovery, while it reveals the wretchedness of the crime, necessarily reveals to the hero the wretchedness of his human necessity to act in blindness. That this discovery is consequent upon violation of a blood tie or a moral tie only serves to impress upon him the depth of his ignorance.

* * *

With Hegel, the moral problem again makes its appearance as the basic one in tragedy. In his eyes, tragedy is a particular example of conflict in spirit as it moves toward its ultimate embodiment in a moral order which is at once universal and subjective. It is realized in a society where individuals have attained full self-consciousness and thus act in complete freedom and in accordance with reason. Tragedy occurs prior to that state while spirit, still striving through individuals toward perfect formulation of that moral order, still contains contradictions within itself. These contradictions can only be worked out by the opposition of thesis to antithesis, with eventual resolution in a synthesis. Tragedy is a particular example of this conflict in spirit or ethical substance. The essential tragic fact is intestine warfare in ethical substance -- the war of good with good, each wrong because it demands absolute sway. Tragedy is the story of unhappiness caused in this collision of good with good. Its hero is an individual who is entirely committed to one power from which all his actions proceed and in which he finds his greatness. His doom is the resolution of the conflict through denial of the exclusiveness of either claim in the synthesis. The resolution may be effected in one of several ways: through reconciliation as in the Eumenides; through a soft ening of one demand as in the Philoctetes; through self-condemnation by the hero with renunciation of the absolute claim as in Oedipus at Colonus; or through catastrophe as in Antigone. Pity and fear are excited in the spirits of the individual viewers by the spectacle of tragic conflict and its attendant sufferings, since tragic conflict is indeed a conflict of spirit which exists in the individual viewer as well as in ethical substance and the heroes who further its progress.

This theory possesses far greater generality than that of Aristotle in virtue of Hegel's whole philosophy of history and societies. For the same reason, however, it possesses far greater preliminary difficulties. The nature of spirit, a persistent problem in Hegel, is deeply involved here. Spirit is defined in The Philosophy of History as self-contained existence, Freedom, and self-consciousness.[6] Its material is human personality, and as reason it attains its positive existence in human knowledge and volition. Its effective springs of action are human passions. In short,

it is a transcendent being whose immanent existence is the knowledge, passions, and volition of the individual. The idea is the inner spring of action, passion effects the practical realization, and the state is the actually existing embodiment of reason or the idea. Through individual men the idea struggles toward ever more perfect expressions in an ever more perfect state or moral order. Its ultimate realization would appear in a state where the self-conscious individual's volition was in complete accordance with reason, precluding the possibility of further conflict and resulting in universal self-obedience or freedom. Thus the ultimate goal of spirit is a union of its subjective embodiment in the individual with its objective embodiment in the moral order -- union in reason, self-consciousness and freedom.

The function of art in this process is to aid in the progressive liberation of spirit by presenting to the individual mind the truth, or spirit itself, in sensuous form. One can easily see it perform part of this function in tragedy, as it presents the activity of spirit in affirmation, negation, and synthesis in the ethical conflict of "the essential, universal, rational interests of humanity." [7] However, there is a further requirement. Apart from depicting the activity of spirit, art must represent the essential nature of spirit as free and self-conscious. Hence,

> in epic and dramatic poetry, it is necessary that the characters should appear essentially free and self-determined. They must be independent beings whose entire activities issue out of themselves and are not imposed upon them from the outside . . . . Where art depicts its characters as subject to pain, suffering and disaster, it will, nevertheless, never exhibit them as wholly overwhelmed thereby. Their essential liberty and freedom must not be crushed out of existence. Amid all suffering they will remain masters of themselves and assert their freedom. . . . . It may be that, as in tragedy, the conflict and suffering end in the destruction of the mere physical lives of the characters - but not in the destruction of their spiritual freedom. They remain true to themselves, and to their essential being. They accept their fate as itself a necessary outcome of their actions, and therefore as issuing from their free-will." [8]

No matter how much one may doubt the existence of a transcendent spirit actualizing itself in time, there may be no denial of the phenomena of the immanent world observed and accounted for in this theory. And since it is the immanent world, the world of the individual, that we are concerned with, let us try to express Hegel's theory solely in terms of it: His presuppositions must necessarily be that man is free and that he is constantly striving toward greater self-knowledge. This progress toward self-knowledge is marked by an evolution in the moral and legal codes which he fashions for himself as he understands himself. Often two or more men come forward with conflicting ideas as to what the nature of the governing code should be; or one man attempts to change the existing order to conform with some new idea he has. In their unfinished state of evolution, it is impossible to determine which idea is better. However, each clings to his own idea and, in the resulting collision, one of these claims must yield or be destroyed -- and insofar as either yields, it is destroyed. Any resolution will necessarily involve some destruction. Yet the individual's freedom in maintaining or yielding the position cannot be destroyed. If he yields, he yields willingly; if he is destroyed, it is in freely and consciously accepting the consequences of actions and position. Insofar as art represents the truth of man's spiritual nature, it will represent him in this light of freedom and self-consciousness.

Again, there is a certain correspondence between this view and that of Camus. Indeed it stands somewhere between Aristotle and Camus in presenting a rationale for human existence as well as for the theater. The necessary conditions of man's

spiritual existence, either in or out of the theater, are freedom and consciousness of self. As the individual becomes aware of himself in reason, he strives to embody that reason or understanding in art, law, morals, religions, or science. Hegel sees this striving as having a goal: the perfection of man's understanding of himself, which will be mirrored in a perfect and perfectly free moral order. The collisions which arise in the course of the struggle toward perfection are only natural to the organic process. It is only natural that individuals, who partake in both sides of the struggle to the degree that they are conscious, should be affected by its representation in drama. But, we ask, what of the individual who is destroyed by or must yield that position to which his own self-consciousness and reason have led him?

III

Within Hegel's system, there is nothing said directly concerning the experience and fate of the tragic hero. We are left to imagine what happens to him at the point when the conflict becomes resolved. The term "resolution of a conflict" carries with it nothing human. It says nothing of the man who freely and passionately commits his whole self to a single power or good only to have it rejected or found false. As Hegel himself discusses the sources of human action he remarks that it is a rare man whose passions go beyond his personal interest, who devotes himself to an idea. It can be of no consolation to the hero that he is sacrificed to the future, greater good. Right here and now he has devoted his entire energy and life to what he thought was a certainty, to what he thought was right. Forgotten by Hegel with his interest in the future he too must have his discovery. He too must come to see the necessary blindness of human action. For him there is no certainty of a brilliant future for mankind. With no certainty in the present how can he thread a path to the future? His self-consciousness has taken a deeper turn than Hegel ever dreamed. He no longer sees the imprint of his own reason all about him; instead he sees that reason is exclusively his and ultimately bears no certain correspondence to anything else. In the conflict which Hegel presents as the essential tragic fact, the self-consciousness must take the bitter turn to recognition of the basic human failing, of ignorance and blindness.

Left with this prospect alone, the hero could not avoid despair. And Aristotle gives us no reason to suspect that he does. He states the peripety from happiness to misery, fulfilled in the discovery, and leaves the hero in his miserable state. Yet we know Oedipus is not abject as we leave him. He has not yet learned to bow his head to fortune. There is a strength about him which does not arise entirely from the fact that he is a king. One essential condition for tragedy, overlooked by Aristotle and noted by Hegel, is that his hero is a free man. Despite the shocking errors the hero may have found in his actions and presumptions, the fact remains that they issued from his own free will and he must accept his fate as a necessary outcome of them; accept his fate, not passively resigned, but actively carrying it out to its natural conclusion.

* * *

There are, then, two main elements in tragedy: the tragic action committed in freedom and ignorance; and the tragic vision occurring in a moment of discovery or self-consciousness, precipitated by the action and in virtue of which the action is tragic. The former concerns the hero alone; the latter may include an audience.

The tragic action consists essentially of a series of spontaneous and unrelated acts on the part of the hero. On the surface, they often appear to be completely ordinary actions which might have been committed by anyone for any reason or no

reason. Since they have their source in a completely free individual, there may be no apparent connection between them. Imagine how easy it was for Oedipus to forget and discount the killing of a stranger on the road, as absolutely unrelated to his solving the riddle and marrying the queen of Thebes; or for him to make absolutely no connection between the stranger and the oracle he was fleeing. Yet it is out of a series of such seemingly inconsequential acts that irrevocable commitments and the fabric of a life are formed. Each man fashions his own fate, and sometimes his guilt, of such actions. They are not in themselves tragic. They are only the material, and, on occasion, the efficient cause of tragedy. Like all human action they proceed on the assumption of more than human knowledge. Perhaps they arise in passionate devotion to some one idea, principle, or person, as in the case of Phaedra; or perhaps in some cherished hope, as in the case of Lorca's Yerma; but probably they come of sheer coincidence, as in the case of Oedipus. And most probably they will never come to light, or, being noticed, will pass for no more than they seem and be thus no more than they seem.

How, then, is this day-to-day pattern of action, sometimes violent, most often peaceful, suddenly metamorphosed into the stirring experience of tragedy? Does it not require some extraordinary man, an extraordinary deed, to break through the common routine to the exalted height of tragedy? Surely no common man can rise from his petty faults and mistakes to such stature in despair and victory. Indeed it seems that it always takes some extraordinary action to bring the truth of things to light. Small mistakes do not jolt a man into awareness of his limitations, of the falsity of his life. The error and the undeceiving must involve the whole fabric of his life before he is forced to understand the weakness of his position. In this sense the action is extraordinary and the man no common one. Few men can whole-heartedly commit themselves to a single way of life and action; and once the commitment is made, fewer actions can undermine their faith. The conflict outlined by Hegel, in which the hero, wholeheartedly espousing the rejected principle or power, must come to see the falsity of his understanding, is one way in which this undeceiving may come about, albeit with some violence. The family crimes which Aristotle speaks of are a still more violent means of being undeceived; for, should there be anything more horrifying than being completely deceived in moral precepts, it is the combination of ignorance and sin, recognized. But these are not the only ways in which the awareness is precipitated. For one who clings most tightly to one path and adheres to it alone, that path reveals its own falsity. This is precisely what occurs in Lorca's Yerma.

The sole matter of importance in Yerma's life is bearing children. There is no other reason for her coming to womanhood, marrying, and continuing to live after that. Bound irrevocably to a husband who will give her no children, she feeds her self-deception on the cheering remarks of friends and the promises of charlatans. Honor bound, she clings to this one man as her salvation and fights to keep her illusion alive in the face of the fact that she is certainly doomed to barrenness. Yet in that very fight she necessarily reduces every source of false hope to hopelessness. She is forced to recognition of the illusion on which she has built her life. In yielding to the way things are, she destroys at once her hope and source of hope, her son and husband in one act.

Here is a woman who is in no common sense extraordinary. She is not a member of the nobility, nor is she extraordinarily beautiful, cultivated, intelligent. Her stature lies in her single-minded commitment to one desire and hope. There is no dreadful crime to be discovered here. The horror lies not in some terrible act, but in the futility of her striving. But she is not overcome by futility. She rises to it and embraces it as she kills her husband and knows she must live out the rest of her life without hope.

* * *

Thus the tragic vision is generated out of free, but necessarily blind, human action by the inevitable consequences of whole-hearted commitment to -- man never knows what. And in light of that vision, these actions and commitments which gave birth to it become tragic. The vision is tragic not in the horror of what was done, but in the horror that it was done blindly; that the error was not in the faculty of judgment, but in the imperfection of human knowledge. In freedom and ignorance the hero fashions his guilt and fate; in freedom and knowledge he suffers and accepts them. It is in his knowledge that he suffers; for his misery in action is completed in his awareness of it, his knowledge of the futility of his actions, and the resulting despair. Had he not come to know his actions fully, we would have found the play uninteresting or disgusting; for ignorance and sin are common.

It is out of his freedom that he accepts the fate which he fashioned in freedom. Not merely passively resigned, he shoulders the full consequences of those actions in which he was so deeply involved but a few blind moments ago. In this free act, he frees himself from despair. His actions may be futile; but he has created obligations for himself which he freely accepts. And in that acceptance the futility is gone. It is as though he has added to his stature with every measure of guilt or obligation he accepts. Here is the exultation we find in tragedy. Here is the hero, ten feet tall. Had he not accepted his actions and fate with their fullest implications as personally his, we would have found him merely a pitiful, little man, railing against a universe too big and powerful for him to comprehend.

It is perhaps for this reason that we do not find Agamemnon fully satisfying as a tragic figure. In the midst of the enormously prideful act of stepping on the carpet, the only sin he commits within the action of the play, he hides from himself the true meaning of his act and declares it mere acquiescence to the whim of his wife. How much more powerful is Clytemnestra, who admits freely what she has done and, finally confronted by Orestes, comes to understand that it, too, was a crime and her doom, realizing fully the meaning of the curse on the house of Atreus.

The doom which the hero must face, like Clytemnestra's doom, is the act and the knowledge as well as destruction. And it is the knowledge or vision of the hero which makes the act and destruction meaningful. The action is tragic only when it is fully realized that the hero is freely doing what he would not have done otherwise and that his action necessarily calls forth destructive forces. The destruction is tragic only when the combination of innocence and guilt that called them forth is fully understood.

Only the hero with his tragic vision is in a position fully to understand these things. He stands alone in his terrible knowledge. Yet he is usually the last to become aware that something is terribly wrong. We, the audience, are usually the first. At the opening of every tragedy the audience is filled with a sense of impending doom before its source and nature are determinable. Perhaps it comes from the "poetic effects"; a speech from a goddess or from the chorus is enough to warn us that a wrong will be done and suffered for. The chorus or the minor figures in the play are usually next, forewarned by their strong sense of morality and fear of overstepping the bounds of the familiar and fully known. Even the larger figures surrounding the hero are aware before he is; but none are aware to the extent that he is. The princes and heroes are aware, in virtue of their likeness to the tragic figure, that they too might have done the deed; but their awareness is limited by their righteousness, the sense that they have committed no crime. In the chorus, the sense of righteousness is even stronger. With their fear of action, they could not conceivably have committed the crime; they abhor it and can barely bring themselves

to look upon it, much less understand it. With their morality, there is no chance that they could see the hero justified even in his guilt.

* * *

The audience is, in one aspect, even more limited than the chorus because of its distance from the action. The sense of unreality and pretence arising from taking no part in the action, prevents the viewer from having first-hand knowledge of it. Yet this very factor becomes an advantage. By reason of this removal and impersonality we see the unity and spontaneity of the entire action in a way in which even the hero in the impersonality of his view could not. It is this vision which makes us aware of the tragedy long before the hero, and it deepens in the course of the play. We see the freedom, innocence, and ignorance of his acts; and in our knowledge which is greater than his, we see their guilt and what must follow from them. However, it is only in the hero's growing consciousness and ultimate knowledge as he expresses it that we are brought to full understanding of the tragic position. Our tragic awareness and response are consummated in the hero's moment of vision. It is as close as we, the unextraordinary persons, come to a first-person knowledge of the universe and human action in it.

Our knowledge seldom has the character of insight. It is never explicit. We are caught somewhere between our detachment and our involvement. From our detachment we know only what has happened to the hero externally through the spectacle and his words. And our human nature co-operates with these two forms of knowledge to give us a deep, vicarious thrill of understanding. We, too, experience the problems of freedom and imperfect knowledge; but we do not quite know what it is like to experience them as he does. Both our understanding and our emotional response hover somewhere between the impersonal and the intensely personal, fixed by the experience of this man. Just the description of the emotions involved -- pity and fear or terror -- indicates that on one hand we participate in and suffer the action in a very personal way; and, on the other, we view and sympathize with it from the outside. Aristotle's definition of fear does not suffice to show the full measure of our involvement. The misfortunes of one like ourselves are not to inspire fear in us; our fear is for ourselves and may be extended no further than those we love, who are somehow part of ourselves.

Much more meaningful is the definition Joyce gives of fear or terror as "the feeling which arrests the mind in the presence of whatsoever is grave and constant in human suffering and unites it with the secret cause." [9] Through the action of the hero we have become acquainted with human suffering; and through his vision we come to see the secret cause. Were we to comprehend it fully, as the hero does, there would be no fear or terror. But we are not the hero; we are removed and limited by our removal. So there remains about it a mystery, an air of the secret, tantalizing but repelling -- frightening. Thus only insofar as we are conscious of, but not fully aware of, the meaning of the action, we fear. We exult because of our commitment to the blind forces which conquer and, perhaps, also because of the hero's own victory in knowledge and freedom in the very midst of his defeat. We pity because as an audience in the presence of human suffering, our mind hovers in that static mid-point between the human sufferer and the secret cause.

IV

We conclude, then, that tragedy consists in a certain view or vision of human life and action. It may be stated, both as a condition of the occurrence of this

knowledge and as part of its content, that man is completely free but by nature possesses imperfect knowledge. In virtue of that basic flaw in his nature, positive judgment and action are inevitably futile and in error. It is the strong individual who asserts his freedom of action positively who is inevitably forced by circumstances arising out of that very action to the tragic vision of the futility and error in all action. As he sees his freedom and the chain of circumstances he has forged for himself, he is forced to decide between complete despair, which arises from his knowledge, and actively accepting and carrying out the conclusions of the fate he has fashioned for himself in the concatenation of his previous spontaneous and unrelated actions. Man's misery consists in his full awareness of the conditions of this choice. His nobility consists in his being able to pick up the obligations he incurred in the ignorant freedom prior to the tragic consciousness, and thereby rid himself of the threat of futility. The action resulting from the tragic vision is thus a wholly human optimism arising out of a profoundly pessimistic vision of the human condition.

The tragic hero, knowing the full extent of his wretchedness, may still conclude with Camus that "The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man's heart."

FOOTNOTES

1. Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays (New York: Alfred A. Knopf,1955), pp. 119-120.
2. This paragraph consists almost entirely of direct and indirect quotations from Camus' interpretation of the myth. It is an attempt to synthesize and epitomize his views.
3. Aristotle, Poetics in The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York: Random House,1941), p. 1461.
4. Ibid., pp. 1467a, 1468, 1469a.
5. Ibid., p.1467a; Aristotle, Poetics (London: The Loeb Classical Library, William Heineman Ltd., 1932),p. 47.
6. Hegel, The Philosophy of History (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), p.17.
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8. Ibid., pp. 447,449.
9. In Portrait of the Artistas a Young Man.

EROS AND AGAPE

Abby Perelman

Of the three theological virtues -- faith, hope and charity -- the greatest stress is laid upon charity both by such systematic theologians as Aquinas and Dante and by the apostle Paul. It is therefore my intention to explore the meaning of love, first in its relation to the other two theological virtues as it is understood by Aquinas and Dante, and secondly, by comparison with the Hellenistic eros and in the light of the New Testament. Last of all, having achieved some understanding of the agape of the New Testament, I shall try to correlate the differences and similarities between Pauline agape and Thomistic caritas.

Dante's political theory as it is stated in De Monarchia consists of the view that the world should be ruled by two powers, a spiritual power (the supreme pontiff) and a secular power (the emperor), both of whom derive their authority from divine appointment. This theory is based upon the premise that man has a twofold end, which in turn is based upon the premise that man is a mean between the corruptible and the incorruptible since he is comprised of two parts, body and soul. Since he is a mean and a mean partakes of both extremes, man exists for a double purpose. As Dante says,

> Twofold, therefore, are the ends which unerring providence has ordained for man; the bliss of this life, which consists of the functioning of his own powers, and which is typified by the earthly paradise; and the bliss of eternal life, which consists in the enjoyment of that divine vision to which he cannot attain by his own powers, except they be aided by the divine light, and this state is made intelligible by the celestial Paradise. These two states of bliss, like two different goals, man must reach by different ways. For we come to the first as we follow the philosophical teachings, applying them accordingto our moral and intellectual capacities; and we come to the second as we follow the spiritual teachings which transcend human reason according to our theological capacities, faith, hope and charity. 1

Dante was evidently following Thomas very closely, as is evinced by the following statement in the Summa:

> The spiritual power and the secular power both derive their origin from the Divine power. 2

Thomas also maintained that the secular power belonged to the natural order and took its origin from the law of nations, "which is a human law." As he says,

> As it was a function of secular princes to issue positive decrees based on Natural Law, with a view to the common temporal good, so it was the function of the rulers of the Church to frame spiritual laws for the general welfare of the faithful. 3

Similarly, if one substitutes natural happiness and supernatural happiness for the twofold goals, it can be seen that Dante did not diverge at all from the theologian's view.

For he says that the natural inclination of man directs him to his connatural end (1) according to reason or intellect, using as the starting point universal principles acquired by the natural light of the intellect -- these principles are for speculative and practical matters -- and (2) according to the rectitude of the will, which tends naturally to the Good as defined by reason. Man's supernatural happiness is achieved (1) according to reason or intellect, upon the reception of certain supernatural principles obtained by the infusion of grace (or the divine light). These are things which are to be believed about, which is faith. And (2) by the action of the will, which directs the person to this end by hope, which is the movement of intention tending to that end as something attainable, and by charity, which is a certain spiritual union whereby the will is, in a way, transformed into that end. It may be said, then, that natural virtue directs man to the good and the theological virtues direct him to God. Or, as Thomas would say, since the supernatural happiness surpasses the power of human nature, man's natural principles which enable him to act well according to his power do not suffice to direct him to this same happiness. Hence, it is necessary for man to receive from God some additional principles by which he may be directed to supernatural happiness. Such principles are called the theological virtues. The theological virtues are so called because their object is God (inasmuch as they direct us rightly to God), and further, because they are infused by God alone. That part of philosophy which considers the highest cause differs from the theological virtues in that the former is an investigation guided by human reason while the latter make their investigation by the power of instilled grace from God. To learn the truth about God with the aid of wisdom alone would be very hard. As Thomas says,

> For the truth about God, such as reason can know it, would only be known by a few, and that after a long time and with the admixture of many errors. 4

Thus, for Thomas, without grace there is no ascent. For grace is the power man needs in order to be able to ascend to God. In other words, what the law (the Old Testament and philosophy) and free will could not do, since our pleasure is bound to earthly things, is done by God's grace coming to meet man with the eternal and supernatural gift. This is a downward movement,but it is only the means to the end, which is fellowship with God. And this is an upward appetitive movement of the will comprised of the two virtues, hope and love. As Thomas says,

> Two things pertain to the appetite, viz., movement to the end, and conformity with the end by means of love. Hence, there must be two theological virtues in the human appetite, namely hope and charity. 5

Thus we must say that although grace makes it possible to win blessedness, virtue must win it. Hence, grace and fellowship with God are two different things: grace is the means, fellowship the end.

Two further questions need be asked: what is the relationship between the theological virtues, and what is Thomas' conception of love?

The relationship between the theological virtues in terms of precedence is presented by Thomas in two ways, that of perfection and that of generation. In terms of genera-

tion (that is, the way in which the three virtues appear as generated in a man) faith precedes hope and hope precedes charity. This view is typically Aristotelian. For, just as matter precedes form, likewise imperfection precedes perfection. For the movement of the appetite cannot tend to anything either by hoping or loving unless that thing be apprehended by the intellect. It is by faith that the intellect apprehends what it hopes for and loves. But in order of perfection charity precedes faith and hope, because faith and hope are quickened by charity and receive from charity their full complement as virtues. One of the Thomistic arguments for the supremacy of charity would rest upon the view that a demon has faith but no love for God and hence has only "formless" faith. Thus charity is the mother and root of all the virtues, since it is the form of them all. Central to Thomas' doctrine of what constitutes perfect virtue is his distinction between "formed" and "formless" faith. For he maintains that faith and hope without charity are "inchoate," but with charity, are perfect virtues. This statement rests upon his definition of perfect virtue. Perfect virtue is, according to him,

> that which gives the ability of doing a perfectly good work and this consists in not only doing what is good but doing it well. 6

To do something well belongs to a power of the will; and since a work of faith is to believe in God and to believe is to assent to someone of one's own free will, hence Thomas would say that to will not as one ought would not be a perfect work of faith. Thus the act of faith requires an act of the will and an act of the intellect. Hope is the virtue that makes faith persevere, but faith precedes it in order of generation, since one cannot hope to obtain eternal happiness unless one believes this possible, since hope does not tend to the impossible.

Thus the reason that Virgil can say to Dante, "Make pleasure now thy guide," 7 is that what Dante ought to do (reason or faith) and what he wants to do (will) are now the same, for the will is whole. Virgil says,

> No word from me, no further sign expect; free, upright, whole, thy will henceforth lays down guidance that it were error to neglect. 8

Or, in Augustine's words, "love and do as you like." The concept held by Augustine and Aquinas that love is the root of all virtues, is certainly not foreign to Dante, nor, for that matter, to any Christian. For the seven deadly sins (that are removed in the seven cornices of Purgatory) are all misdirected forms of love.

For Thomas as for Augustine all love is fundamentally acquisitive. Love corresponds to the acquisitive will and this latter to the natural quest for happiness. As certainly as everyone loves himself and wants his own happiness, so must everyone be disposed by nature and in accordance with reason to love God above all things. The reason that we love God at all is that we need him for our bonum. Indeed, Thomas does not hesitate to say:

> Assuming what is impossible, that God were not man's bonum, then there would be no reason to love Him. 9

Thus, self-love is, for Thomas, the root of love and reveals to man his true nature and goal and thereby directs his love towards God and the eternal. The cause of love is expressed by Thomas thus:

> From the fact that a man thinks he can obtain a good through someone he begins to love him. 10

And,

> In like manner, a man loves a thing because he apprehends it as his good. Now from the very fact that a man hopes to be able to obtain some good from someone, he looks on the man in whom he hopes as a good of his own. Hence for the reason that a man bases his hopes in someone, he proceeds to love him. 11

But charity, according to Thomas, is not just any kind of love of God, but that love of God by which He is loved as the object of beatitude, to which we are directed by faith and hope. Thus, one may say in summary that Thomas' conception of love is that it is a striving, acquisitve action of the will whereby man hopes to obtain his "summum Bonum."

The problem now is to define both eros and agape. Probably the most complete account of Hellenistic eros is the one given by Socrates in the Symposium. Central to the Socratic notion of eros is the notion that love desires what is good and beautiful because he lacks these very things. On account of this, love cannot be a god, because gods are happy and beautiful and hence in secure enjoyment of what is good and beautiful; and since love is a being who has no share of the good and the beautiful, he cannot be a god. No god, in the Platonic view, is a lover of wisdom or desires to be wise, because he is wise already. On the other hand neither do the ignorant love wisdom or desire to be wise; for the ignorant man, who possesses neither beauty, goodness nor intelligence, is perfectly well satisfied with himself, since he does not believe he lacks anything. Hence love is somewhere between ignorance and knowledge: eros has a dual nature. He is a daemon, a spirit which is neither mortal nor immortal but something intermediate between having and not having; he is the son of poverty and energy, and his function as an intermediate nature is to bridge the gap between gods and men.

Eros is the movement of that which is lower in power and meaning to that which is higher, and consequently, gods cannot possibly love in terms of a definition such as the following:

> Man loves and desires only that which he wants and has not got, for who in the world would desire what he already has? 12

Thus eros is an acquisitive love which is conscious of a present need, and it is the effort to find satisfaction for it in a higher and happier state: eros is the love for the good and the beautiful. Thus eros directs itself to an object which is considered valuable. The divine is unmoved, and eros as activity and movement belongs exclusively to man's side.

Thus there is a two-fold presupposition for eros: the recognition of value in the loved object and the consciousness of needing this value. Since eros is motivated by the qualities in his object, it is therefore dependent on contingent characteristics which change and are partial. It is dependent upon repulsion and attraction, on passion and sympathy. Eros does not seek the neighbor for himself; it seeks him in so far as it can utilize him as a means for its own ascent to the summum bonum -- the good and the beautiful. Eros can utilize the neighbor only in so far as he is a creature who is participating in this bonum, though in an imperfect way. Thus objects are stepping-stones to higher things and must be left behind as one advances further in the ascent. One expects that the logician or mathematician is wholly detached with respect to his subject, since the nature of his subject does not involve the question of his existence. But even in the construction of geometrical figures there is an element of involvement, for the logician and mathematician are driven by eros, including desire and passion, since there is a beauty in mathematics though it be one of the higher stepping-stones.

Unlike the Platonic gods, the God of the New Testament works toward the fulfillment of every creature and toward the bringing-together into the unity of His life all who are separated and disrupted. Christ is the supreme sacrifice and example of divine love. These two statements lead to the assertion that God is love. That is, the divine love is an ontological concept; this means that the divine love has the character of love but beyond the distinction between potentiality and actuality. Hence, this kind of understanding becomes a mystery for finite understanding. For one must assert that love in general includes desire and a certain longing for reunion (in the sense that in Christianity the individual longs to return to the unity to which he belongs, in which he participates in his ontological being). One must also say that all love is directed toward a definite object with whom it wants to unite the bearer of love. Love wants the other being. The New Testament uses the word agape to signify the divine love but it also uses this word for man's love to God and to his neighbor. But so far this general understanding could be applied equally well to either eros or agape. We must see now in what sense agape differs from eros. Unlike eros, when we say that God is love we are not affirming anything about the nature of the object to which this love is directed; that is, this is not a judgment upon what man is like but what God is like: that it is God's nature to love. Hence God's love is not dependent upon the contingent characteristics of the object. It is an unconditional affirmation. It is indifferent to value because God loves sinners (God's grace, or love, is in a human sense, paradoxical, since he accepts that which is unacceptable). No one with whom a relationship is possible is excluded, nor is anyone preferred. Agape is the love "in spite of" which is the decisive message of Christianity; that is, it is the Christian message of "simul peccatur, simul justus," the doctrine of justification for which the Pauline sentence is "justification by grace through faith." This is a statement expressing a notion which is in no way dependent upon man. Agape must then be spontaneous, unmotivated and universal (that is, independent of any qualities or value such as higher or lower in the object), for how else can Jesus' exhortation to love one's enemies be understood? For Jesus says in Matthew:

> But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 13

This divine agape which man must imitate in his relationship with other men must needs be the desire for the fulfillment of the longing for reunion of the other being, for his as opposed to the lover's fulfillment. Kierkegaard's exposition of what it means to truly love one's neighbor is very helpful for understanding agape:

> The man who truly loves his neighbor, therefore loves also his enemy. This distinction, "friend or enemy," is a difference in the object of love, but love for one's neighbor truly has an object which is without discrimination; the neighbor is the absolutely indistinguishable difference between man and man, or it is the eternal resemblance before God [underlining is mine]-- and the enemy also has this resemblance. We think that it is impossible for a man to love his enemy, alas! for enemies can hardly bear to look at each other. Oh, well, then close your eyes -- then the enemy absolutely resembles your neighbor; close your eyes and remember the commandment thou shalt love, then you love -- your enemy? No, then you love your neighbor, for you do not see that he is your enemy. 14

Thus, the motive for agape towards the neighbor must be almost negligible. That is, it is unconcerned with any such reason as that love for one's neighbor helps us to win God's love. It does look, strangely enough, as if neighborly love were bereft of any actuating principle and therefore had the nature of unreality. The motivation must be supplied, since love, by definition, is a movement toward an object. One can say that Christian neighborly love is a love for God's sake. But this must be qualified, for God in this case is not the end or ultimate object as in eros but is the starting point. He is the starting point not as the prime, unmoved mover but in the sense that he is Himself involved in the motion. That is, it is not "as being loved" but as loving that God sets love in motion. Hence, the phrase "for God's sake" has no teleogical significance but only a causal significance.

In this last statement lies the profound distinction between eros and agape. For, substituting the phrase "for God's sake" for the phrase "for beauty's sake" or some such Platonic phrase, one could say that for Plato this phrase has a teleological significance. That is, one has eros for one's neighbor because he possesses some shadowy gleam of the perfect beauty which is the ultimate goal. The motivation that Kierkegaard would supply for agape is "the eternal resemblance before God." A similar statement would consist of a motivation which occurs as a result of the ultimate unity of being with being within the divine ground.

Agape, then, is spontaneous, unmotivated, indifferent to value, and unconditional. One may say that agape is an indifference to value in a sense diametrically opposed to privation, the basis for eros. Thus, the word desire when used in connection with agape does not have the sense of privation that it does in eros. The difference lies in the distinction between egocentricity and theocentricity. Agape may also be defined as creative love and this may best be seen in Paul's conversion. One must ask in this connection what meaning is to be found in the fact that the most zealous of the persecutors of the Church of God was called to be an apostle. The first meaning that can be inferred from the conversion is that it shows the unmotived and indifference-to-value characteristic of agape-love. For, how contrary to all human calculations God's love and calling are, that He should call a persecutor, the least

worthy person of all, to be an apostle! Paul considers himself to be a paradigm of the upholder of the law, for his previous way towards fellowship with God was man's way: the strict observance of the law and traditions of his fathers. He says,

> . . . and I advanced beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my elders. 15

And he says again, as if he were worried lest there be any doubts in people's minds about the meaning of his conversion,

> . . . if any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, blameless. 16

I think one can say that Paul's conversion as he interprets it may verify the concept that God's agape is creative in the sense that Paul becomes of worth by being the object of God's love. That is, one may say that while agape does not recognize value, it does create it. This is so if one can assert, as I think it is possible to do, that Paul's religious position is entirely theocentric. Nothing proceeds from man,

> . . . for there is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God. 17

The spontaneous and unmotivated character of God's agape can further be seen by this passage in Romans:

> While we were yet helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 18

(Previously Paul says Christ died for sinners, the unworthy or the unrighteous; here it is stronger: the ungodly.) Continuing, he says:

> Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man--though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. 18

Agape is then identified with Christ crucified, and this in turn points to God's love, and they are considered to be one and the same. In Corinthians I xiii Paul states in quite a long passage about agape that it is the greatest of the whole faith-hope-and charity trinity because it

> . . . bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 19

The chief difficulty that arises in interpretation of this passage is that in the beginning of the passage Paul seems to be talking of neighborly love but at the end speaks about love, faith and hope abiding, indicating that he has switched to love towards God. Perhaps the error lies in looking at this passage as if Paul were concerned with the objects of love. For perhaps for him it is not a question of the object of love but of its nature; that is, he might be saying that where love is truly agape it is grounded in God and for that reason is one of the things that abide. Paul does seem to be making

a distinction between Hellenistic gnosis (knowledge) and Christian agape. Gnosis (the seeking to know) is distinguished from agape in that the former is egocentric and the latter theocentric. For Paul says,". . . 'knowledge' puffs up but love builds up." 19 Perhaps it is not incorrect to understand gnosis as the vision of God. If this is so, gnosis probably contains the notion of eros inasmuch as the seeking to know implies the ultimate goal which is the vision. I think it is true that gnosis signifies something purely human whereas agape is simply an outflow of God's love and hence not human. Gnosis is, for Paul, one of the things that "will pass away" in contradistinction to agape, which will "abide."

The question that really must be asked is, if God's love for man is spontaneous and unmotivated, then if man is to have agape for God mustn't it also be spontaneous and unmotivated? This question hinges on a similar one, namely, isn't man's love for God motivated in the highest degree by God's love? It is perhaps this question, if it is answered, that will make clear Paul's reticence about speaking of man's love for God. In at least two passages Paul says that the whole law is fulfilled in one word -- namely, ". . . you shall love your neighbor as yourself." 20

In Romans he says,

> . . . owe no one anything except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not kill, you shall not covet," and any other commandment are summed up in this sentence, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

When Paul thus identifies neighborly love with the whole requirement of the law and ignores its traditional connection with love to God, one must certainly remark at this strange omission. It is easy to understand how the agape of God towards man and the agape between men correspond, since the agape between men is simply God's infused love and hence is the same love; but the agape of man towards God falls outside this correlation. For man cannot love God "in spite of" or in forgiveness as he can love man. Thus one must say either that this act must consist in eros or that perhaps this love is simply a sort of response.

Man's love for God in the New Testament is a whole-hearted surrender to God -- in which man becomes God's willing slave. Unlike eros, it is a response of gratitude for something freely given, namely, God's agape. It may be that Paul's reticence is due to his extreme concern to make it clear that Christianity is a theocentric religion and he wants to refer everything to God. If he were to call man's love to god agape, he might see that this agape arises from man's inner resources. Further, it is obvious that if agape were a reversible relationship between God and man, then God's agape would be reduced to man's agape (denoting some kind of equality which would be utterly foreign to Christianity or man's agape would be elevated to God's, necessitating an egocentric religion, which again would be utterly foreign to Pauline doctrine). Hence, Paul conveniently does not use the word at all with reference to man's relationship with God. The fact that Paul shows this reticence does not, however, justify our understanding him to mean that love to God is eros. In spite of Paul's hesitation about calling it agape, the Pauline notion of man's loving surrender to God as a response to God's

agape differs from eros. For God is not the highest good as in eros in the sense that He is more desirable than all other objects of desire: He cannot be classed with objects of desire. The difference lies mainly in the distinction between a theocentric love and an egocentric love. Man loves God, not because on comparing him with other things he finds Him more satisfying than anything else, but because God's unmotivated love has overwhelmed him so that he cannot do otherwise than love God. That is, even when God seems to be the object of man's love as in the commandment, God is really the subject.

The final consideration concerns the nature of the Thomistic caritas. The question that arises from such a consideration is whether Thomistic caritas is a synthesis of eros and agape or simply the Latin word for agape. From what has been said about Thomas in the preceding pages, two things may be observed: first, that for Thomas there is no merit without grace, and second, that love is the root of the virtues and the root of all love is self-love. From the former notion arises the idea of a two-fold movement: that of grace coming down to man and the instillation of certain supernatural principles wherein he may begin an upward movement towards God. Thus this downward movement called grace is really none other than God's agape, and hence we may say that Thomas is in accord with Paul thus far. But his notion of caritas as an upward tendency, based as it is upon the foundation of self-love, seems to accord badly with the Christian love which "seeketh not its own." Thomas seemed to realize this difficulty, however, and tried to overcome it with the introduction of the Aristotelian doctrine of friendship. In doing so, Thomas tried to make a distinction between two types of self-love, acquisitive love and the love of friendship. He asserted that the latter was caritas; that is, one loves God, himself and his neighbor with the love of friendship. This notion of friendship which Thomas introduced for the sake of being able to correct his view that all love is egocentric (eros), he was pleased to find did not contradict his first premise that all love is self-love. For, even if I love my friend for his own sake, I still only love what is for myself a "bonum." Thus the unity of the Thomistic doctrine of love was preserved, inasmuch as with the addition of the notion of friendship, the proposition still holds that all love goes back to self-love and man can only love that which is a "bonum" for himself. Thus, it seems that Thomas' notion of love is basically eros and hence diverges radically from the Pauline agape towards one's neighbor. The real difference between Pauline agape and the Thomistic caritas may be emphasized by saying that the former is an almost completely downward movement and the latter is considerably more upward. Thus the medieval theologians, more specifically Thomas and Dante, are fundamentally concerned with the ascent to God. Certainly this is true of Dante's Divine Comedy. That is, the Thomistic phrase "no merit without grace" is non-Pauline. The Pauline understanding is always that of grace and love in the form of Christ coming down to us. We never ascend but achieve fellowship on this leval; whereas in Thomas, though grace is a terribly necessary prerequisite to merit, without our own ascent we cannot achieve fellowship.

In summarizing what has been said about agape, one may conclude that with such a definition of agape as has been given, it is impossible for man to have agape towards God in any Christian's understanding. Hence, the chief difficulty that arises is that if one is to speak of a theological virtue of love, its meaning must be radically different

from that of agape. Thomas saw this difficulty, and hence he made caritas more like eros and less like agape. On account of this it is extremely difficult for Thomas to speak of agape towards one's neighbor, since his caritas has such egocentric principles.

Further, it has been shown that the real difference between grace and God's love, for Aquinas and for Paul, is that the former considers grace as essentially a means for man's ascent to God whereas the latter knows no ascent. That is, Paul conceives of grace as bringing about fellowship on our level whereas Aquinas considers grace as necessary for bringing about fellowship on God's level. For Aquinas, grace is the divine assistance man needs in order to be able to ascend to God and the power whereby his upward-directed love (eros) is set in motion. For Paul, grace is the same as God's agape, and is God's gracious will whereby he enters into fellowship with sinners. Thus, for Paul, love is always agape, but for Aquinas it is a synthesis of eros and agape; for God's love is agape but man's love for God is fundamentally eros.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Dante, De Monarchia, Book II, Chapter 16, tr. H. W. Schneider.
2. Summa Theologica, II, Dist. 44, Q. 2, a. 3, ad. 4. The Summa Theologica (Random House edition) is the source of all quotations from St. Thomas in this paper.
3. II-II, Q. 147, a. 3.
4. I, Q. 1, a. 1.
5. I-II, Q. 62, a. 3.
6. I-II, Q. 65, a. 4; II-II, Q. 4, a. 5.
7. Dante, Divine Comedy, II, xxvii, 130, tr. D. L. Sayers.
8. Ibid., 139.
9. I-II, Q. 26, a. 13.
10. I-II, Q. 62, a. 4.
11. Loc. cit.
12. Plato, The Symposium 200, tr. Jowett.
13. Matthew 5. 44-45, Revised Standard Version.
14. Soren Kierkegaard, Journals (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), tr. Alexander Dru.
15. Galatians 1. 14.
16. Philippians 3. 4.

PIETY AND EROS

Harrison J. Sheppard

"All men by nature desire to know"; and with this begins their pain. In the beginning, man's sole concern was to stay alive. But there are animals stronger than man, and something besides physical strength was necessary for him to survive. This necessity, in conjunction with the gregarious instinct, caused man to become a social animal; and his reason enabled him to make his society effective. Thus, practical motives initially impelled men to band together and seek permanent habitations. With the abandonment of the nomadic and bestial life and the establishment of societies, laws were established to regulate the societies. From laws arose the sense of right and wrong, and painful conscience. But this is a question which has been asked since the laws began: did right and wrong begin when men made laws, or did men formulate the laws because there was right and there was wrong?

At least by the first time a man felt himself wronged by the laws, speculation had begun, investigation into the very basic questions which accompany the institution of laws: what is just? what is virtuous? what are right and wrong?

In order to explain the mysterious phonomena of the physical world, cosmologies were invented. A cosmology is essential to the laws and to speculations about the nature of virtue, for with a mythical account of the origin of the universe, comes a further vindication of the laws. The gods furnish an ultimate reason for civil obedience. And at the same time, some cosmological system must be supposed prior to the development of any ethical scheme. For with a purely materialistic cosmology presupposed (such as that of Lucretius), the ethical system will be directed primarily toward ends attainable in this world. On the other hand, if the ethical scheme has as a basis a cosmology which posits the existence of spiritual beings (such as that of Hesiod) and non-material essences in general, it will be directed toward ends beyond this world. Thus the importance of the cosmology on which the ethical system is based is manifest.

An ethical system based upon a cosmology positing the existence of spiritual beings who affect men (for there are cosmologies which accept the possibility of the existence of divinities, but deny that they would be concerned with men, e.g., that of Lucretius) would say that obedience to the will of these beings, which we call piety, constitutes virtue. Thus in some ethical systems we find the laws divinely sanctioned, for they are divinely decreed. But here again is the question of the origin of law: since cosmologies were at least framed by men, did God create the laws, or did the laws create God? Or more exactly stated; did men formulate the laws because of divine injunctions, or did men create their gods to give additional strength to their laws?

If obedience to the will of the gods constitutes virtue, the nature of the gods must be ascertained, and it is necessary to determine exactly what their will is. The "Timaeus" is a statement of the Platonic cosmology, and Timaeus tells of gods who are concerned with the affairs of men. This then is the question: who are the Platonic gods, and what constitutes piety for Plato?

In trying to answer these questions, we shall examine the nature of those beings whom Plato calls gods and attempt to ascertain which of them he really regards as divinities. Then we shall determine the nature of the beings toward whom Plato believes pious action should be directed. In judging whether or not a specific being referred to by Plato as a god is one toward whom Plato believes true piety is to be directed, we shall use the criteria that he be in some way knowable, and that he have some effect upon mortals. For if nothing about the divinity is knowable, and if he cannot affect men in any way, then there is no basis, object, nor reason for piety, and the word becomes meaningless.

The Euthyphro ("On Piety") concerns itself solely with the Homeric gods as the objects of pious action. When Euthyphro, who is prosecuting his father for murder, invokes the myth of Zeus' punishment of his father, Cronos, as justification for his act, Socrates replies: "Is not this, Euthyphro, the reason why I am being prosecuted, because when people tell such stories about the gods I find it hard to accept them?"[1] The myths of the Olympian gods are unacceptable to Plato. By rejecting the myths in the manner and to the extent which he does, he denies the existence of the gods themselves. Plato's censorship of the poetic accounts of the actions of the gods includes the elimination of their following attributes and activities:

Warring and plotting against one another:

> Neither must we admit at all that gods war with gods and plot against one another and contend, for it is not true.[2]

Punishing men without benefiting them:

> God is the cause of good things only, but the cause of evil we must look for in other things and not in God [and when the gods punish mortals the poets] must declare that what God did was righteous and good, and they were benefited by his chastisement.[3]

Desiring to appear before mortals:

> If God is altered, it must necessarily be for the worse. For we surely will not say that God is deficient in either beauty or excellence....It is impossible then even for a god to wish to alter himself, but as it appears, each of them being the fairest and best possible abides forever simply in his own form. No poet then....must be allowed to tell us that "The gods in the likeness of strangers many disguises assume as they visit the cities of mortals." We must not suppose that while the gods themselves are incapable of change they cause us to fancy that they appear in many shapes deceiving and practising magic upon us....For would a god wish to deceive, or lie, by presenting in either word or action what is only appearance?[4]

Experiencing grief or any other passion:

> We beg [of the poets] at least not to describe the gods as lamenting or crying.[5]
> To hear how Zeus forgot all the designs which he devised because of the excitement of his passions will not be permitted .[6]

Committing any acts of intemperance (Republic 389C-390D).

Being influenced by sacrificial offerings:

> It is certain we cannot allow the gods to be acceptors of bribes or greedy for gain [so the poets] cannot chant "Gifts move the gods and gifts persuade dread kings."[7]

Now if the gods never visit mortals, and cannot be moved by sacrifices, and feel neither grief nor happiness because of the actions of men, the connections between men and the gods have been severed, and the Homeric gods can have nothing to do with men. And furthermore, since the stories surrounding their births and early history are denied, the result is that, if there are any gods at all left, they are not the Olympians. It was for this sort of expurgation and denial of mythology that Socrates was convicted of impiety. Athena, as the founder and protectress of Athens, was an essential part of

every state activity. At the beginning of every state enterprise of importance, the gods were invoked and sacrifices were offered. To deny that this would help impel the gods to protect Athens would be a grave political offense, for this denial would lead to disastrous results. It would destroy the moral force of the actions of the state, that is, Athens' support by the gods. And this would result in political disorder, not to mention the loss of morale among the people, and in time of war, in the armies.

In the Timaeus Plato restates his disbelief in the existence of the mythical gods:

> To know or tell of the origin of the other [Olympian] gods is beyond us, and we must accept the traditions of the men of old time who affirm themselves to be the offspring of the gods--that is what they say. Although they give no probable or certain proofs, still, as they declare they are speaking of what took place in their own family, we must conform to custom and believe them.[8]

Thus Plato rejects the conventional Greek piety, for he rejects the conventional Greek deities.

However, in the Republic, and even more forcefully in the Laws, Plato himself speaks of the necessity that the people accept the existence of the gods. In the Laws the Athenian Stranger says:

> No one who in obedience to the laws believed that there were gods, ever intentionally did any unholy act, or uttered any unlawful word; but he who did must have supposed one of three things,--either that they did not exist...or if they did took no care of men...or that they were easily appeased and turned aside from their purpose by sacrifices and prayers.[9]

Even in Plato's own ideal states of the Republic and the Laws, he places great importance upon the institution of conventional piety for the general populace. To aid in the maintenance of order in the state, it is necessary to have the citizens believe in the existence of virtuous gods who are concerned with the actions of men, and who cannot be bribed, so to speak, by sacrificial offerings.

But to return to the major question: Plato also speaks about the gods of the heavenly spheres in the Timaeus. He classifies the heavenly bodies as "divine and eternal animals" because of his definition of soul: "the motion which can move itself"[10]; and in his discussion of the soul in the Phaedrus, he demonstrates that "that which is moved by itself is immortal."[11] Thus the heavenly spheres, being self-moved, possess immortal souls. Plato says of the spheres: they "are not altogether immortal and dissoluble, but they shall certainly not be dissolved, nor be liable to the fate of death."[12] They are "not altogether immortal" because they are composed of matter, the stuff of the world of becoming, but they are "not liable to the fate of death" because they have immortal souls.

But the divine spheres have no concern with mortals, for

> they ever continue to think consistently the same thoughts about the same things... divine and eternal animals, ever abiding and revolving after the same manner and in the same spot.[13]

They cannot be the objects of piety, for they are unconcerned with the actions of men, and do not themselves confer any benefit or punishment upon them as reward or reprimand.

We now have to deal with the creator of the heavenly spheres--the Demi-urge. It would seem that the creator of the universe is the one who instituted the laws determining pious action, and that he is therefore the one toward whom pious action is directed. However, the Demi-urge, after making the universe, fixing the motions of the Same and Other, endowing the gods with immortal souls, and making the material

proportion (fire:air::air:water::water:earth), departs, "remaining in his own accustomed nature"[14] apart from the gods and man. He has no connection with mortals, for if he did "they would be on equality with the gods."[15] So the other gods are left to create the mortal animals, including man. But in light of the fact that Plato really rejects the Olympian gods, how are we to understand the role they play in the creation of man?

The Timaeus is a "likely story," a metaphor. Both the Demi-urge and the Homeric gods are metaphorical beings who represent those things which are the creative forces of the universe: the Demi-urge the unknowable artisan who is the ultimate source of the creation of all things; and the gods, the children of the Demi-urge, those beings who are known to men as their direct creators, and the immediate source of the things which exist in the world of becoming.

The Timaeus is a cosmogony, an explanation of the creation of the physical universe; but Plato is not only a cosmogonist. Besides an explanation of the creation of the universe in metaphorical terms, there is a metaphysical scheme, a metaphysical cosmology. At the apex of the hierarchy of metaphysical essences is the Good:

> ...the author of knowledge to all things known, and of their being and essence, and yet not itself essence but far exceeds essence in dignity and power.[16]

The Good is the source of the forms: the intelligible world, the knowable divinities. In turn, from the forms, come the qualities which exist in the physical world. There are the five basic forms, Being, Same, Other, Motion and Rest (the first things utilized by the Demi-urge), and all the other forms which give qualities to the world of becoming: Beauty, Justice, Largeness, etc.

At the top of both systems we find something which is unknowable to ordinary men, and to which they can have no direct connection. At the next step in the hierarchies, we find that which gives existence to the creatures of the visible world, and is knowable to mortals. Thus:

Demi-urge:Good::Gods:Forms::Gods or Forms:Visible World[17]

In the Republic, the following qualities are ascribed to the gods by implications drawn from the qualities which are denied to the gods:[18] They are incorporeal, perfect, changeless beings who can only benefit men, even when they are punishing them; they have no history, for they are eternal. These are all qualities which the forms possess. Furthermore, the conventional mythology of the gods designates one essential characteristic to each of them; as each form is the form of some one thing.

But how can the forms "punish" men? In the Phaedo Socrates gives an account of the afterlife in highly sensible terms, and vividly describes the horrors of Tartarus, Cocytus, and so on. And yet in the Republic[19] he objects to the poetic accounts of these places, for he says they are untrue. Socrates' telling of the myths immediately before his death must needs be interpreted as a metaphor: Those who were impious are bound to the things of the body, and cannot see the beauties of the forms. Their bodies weigh them down because of their attachment to the things of the body on earth, and thus Socrates tells the myth of physical punishment. The punishment received by an impious mortal when he dies, is denial of the sight of the realities. To Plato this would certainly be the severest possible punishment, for it is his doctrine that all men desire the Good, the source of the realities. On the other hand, the account of paradise in the Phaedo is also given in terms which are vivid images of sensible things. Of the pious, Socrates says: "But those who are found to have excelled in

holy living are freed from these regions within the earth and are released as from prisons; they mount upward into their pure abode." In their "pure abode" they behold the realities, the forms themselves. This is metaphorically expressed in the Phaedo in such terms as "white that is whiter than chalk" and gems which are "by far purer than ours."[21]

Since the forms are the only knowable divinities, the gods would seem to be metaphorical representations of them in physical terms. This inference, in conjunction with the doctrine of recollection, makes understandable the term "divine inspiration" in the Platonic context. What Plato must mean by divine inspiration, since he does not accept the existence of the Homeric gods except as metaphors, is the knowledge of the forms which the soul receives prior to its encasement in the body. The poets cannot explain their art, just as the personages of dialogues frequently cannot explain their own statements although they may be true. However, the question then arises: If the poet's inspiration is received from having seen the forms before his birth, why then does Plato eject the poets from the state? The reason is that this knowledge is corrupted by attachment to the body:

> What shall we say of the actual acquirement of knowledge? Is not the body a hinderer? I mean to say, have sight and hearing any truth in them? Are they not, as the poets are always telling us, inaccurate witnesses?[22] It has been proved to us by experience that if we would have pure knowledge of anything we must be quit of the body.[23]

The body is an obstacle to knowledge; it corrupts and impairs the vision of the forms seen by the soul prior to its imprisonment in the body. And thus it is with the poets: their attachment to the body results in a corruption of the knowledge which they, like all other men, possess of the forms; and this corruption causes them to ascribe physical characteristics to the forms themselves.

Plato retains the mythical gods in the state, with many modifications, and for this reason: only the philosopher-kings of the Republic are to know the truth of the divinities:

> Every one will admit that a nature having in perfection all the qualities which we required in a philosopher [Temperance, courage, justice, love of truth, gentility, good memory, complete absorption in the pleasures of the soul, Republic 485-487], is a rare plant which is seldom seen among men.[24]
>
> The worthy disciples of philosophy will always be a small remnant.[25]
>
> Philosophy, the noblest pursuit of all, is not likely to be much esteemed [by the people].[26]

The general populace would find the mythical gods, as more personal, embodied deities, more understandable than the forms. Thus there would be a conventional piety in the state, which is necessary to its order, as was pointed out before. Although it would be but an image of the true piety, the true virtue, this is necessary; for if the truth about the divinities were told, lack of comprehension by the general populace would result in general disbelief, and hence disorder. So the truth, that the forms are the true divinities, is to be reserved for the philosophers alone. And the people will guide their actions according to the metaphorical gods, believing in the divine sanction of the state by personal deities. As for Plato himself, he certainly believes that the

laws are divine. There is the form of Justice, and although the justice dispensed upon earth is also but an image of that True Justice, still it had its origin in the divine model of Justice Itself.

In the Euthyphro, Euthyphro defines piety as "that part of the right which has to do with attention to the gods." To this Socrates replies: "I think you are correct, Euthyphro.... but I do not yet understand what you mean by attention."[27] The forms are the only true divinities for Plato, and attention to them means seeking knowledge of them, the desire for knowledge of the Good, the source of the forms: Eros. All true virtue comes only with knowledge, and knowledge comes through the pursuit of knowledge or wisdom: philosophy. The philosopher is the only truly pious man, tending his soul by seeking knowledge of the realities:

> The soul takes nothing with it to the other world but its education and nurture.[28]
>
> Only those who have duly purified themselves by philosophy will be freed and pass to more beautiful abodes than we can describe.[29]

As to the question of a divinity other than the forms, the fact that the highest beings in the Platonic dialogues, both metaphorical and metaphysical, are both unknowable to mortals, indicates that Plato feels that if there is such a supreme deity, he too would be unknowable to men. But this makes no difference so long as there are the forms: the essences of the intelligible world. These are ample guides to living a pious life and "holding fast ever to the heavenly way," the way of philosophy and true virtue.

FOOTNOTES

1. Euthyphro 6B
2. Republic 287C
3. Ibid. 379B-380B
4. Ibid. 381B-382A
5. Ibid. 388C
6. Ibid. 390C
7. Ibid. 390E
8. Timaeus 40E
9. Laws 885B
10. Ibid. 896A. In Timaeus 37 the soul is also called "the self-moved."
11. Phaedrus 245C-E
12. Timaeus 41A
13. Ibid.40A
14. Ibid. 42D
15. Ibid.41B
16. Republic 509
17. There is a certain ambiguity in the role the Demi-urge plays. On the one hand he represents the power which fashions the material of the universe, looking toward "the divine and eternal model," most likely the forms. On the other hand, he is representative of the source of the forms. In a way he is himself the model. As is said in the Timaeus (29E): "He desired that all should be, so far as possible, like unto himself."
18. Republic 378-391
19. Ibid. 387C
20. Phaedo 114C
21. Ibid. 110-114
22. Ibid. 65A
23. Ibid. 66D
24. Republic 491A
25. Ibid. 496B
26. Ibid. 389D. The section from 488 to 503 concerns itself with the qualifications of the philosopher, the incapabilities of most people to be philosophers, and the unpopularity of philosophy.
27. Euthyphro 12E
28. Phaedo 107D
29. Ibid. 114C

SOLUTION OF A MATHEMATICAL PROBLEM

David C. Jones

Part 1. Prove: If P_n is the number of parts into which a plane is divided by $\underline{n}$ lines, no two parallel, and no three meeting in a point: that $P_{n+1}=P_n+n+1$.

Let there be $\underline{n}$ such lines, and let one additional line be drawn under the given conditions, making $\underline{n}$ intersections: for it must intersect each one of the $\underline{n}$ lines, and each at a separate point. (Given)

Between each two consecutive intersected lines, the segment of the intersecting line crosses no further lines; for if so, the intersections would not be consecutive.

Therefore there is a single part of the plane immediately on either side of the segment; and let these parts be A and B.

But A and B are unique, i.e. are connected with no other such parts adjoining other segments; for the segments are determined by intersecting lines, and each such line divides all the plane into two unconnected parts, one segment in one, one in the other. Therefore A and B are unique, etc.

But if any segment were removed, the two unique parts A and B would be joined into one part, A+B.

So each segment of the line divides a single, unique part of the plane, A+B, into two parts, A and B.

But the line, from first to last of its $\underline{n}$ intersections, contains n-1 such dividing segments. For the first $\underline{\text{two}}$ intersections contain one such segment, and each additional intersection determines one more.

But before the first intersection, and after the last, the intersecting line divides the previously single part it crosses, in a similar manner, into two parts.

But this is the total line, and the sum of its divisions. So there are n-1+2 or n+1 single spaces divided into two spaces by the additional line; or n+1 additional parts created.

But if P_n is the number of spaces contained by the $\underline{n}$ lines, $P_{n+1}=P_n+n+1$.

Q.E.D.

Part 2. Prove: If S_n is the number of parts into which all space is divided by $\underline{n}$ planes, no two parallel, and no three meeting in a line, or any in parallel lines (or more than two lines meeting at a point): that $S_{n+1}=S_n+P_n$ parts.

Let there be $\underline{n}$ such planes, and let there be one additional plane passed under the given conditions; so that each of the $\underline{n}$ planes intersects it and there are $\underline{n}$ lines of intersection on it, no two parallel, and no three meeting in a point. (Given)

Therefore the lines divide the plane into P_n parts. (Part 1)

(continued)

But each part is cut by no further planes, for there is no further line of intersection; and so there is a single part of space immediately on either side of the planar part. Let those parts of space be A and B.

Now A and B are unique, i.e. are connected with no spaces touching other parts of the plane, other A's or B's. For there is a line of intersection between any two parts of the plane, and therefore an intersecting plane between the spaces touching any two planar parts. But the plane separates the two planar parts by a division of all space into two unconnected parts. Therefore A and B, etc.

But if any part of the plane is removed, the unique parts A and B on either side will join into one part, A+B.

So each part of the plane divides a single, unique part of space, A+B, into parts, A and B.

But there are P_n such dividing parts of the added plane. Therefore the added plane creates P_n new parts of space. But if S_n is the number of parts which already existed, $S_{n+1}=S_n+P_n$ parts.

Q.E.D.

Sonnet for a Warm Season

David Jones

Languorous serpent slipping through the dark,
Cool summer wind sloughs smoothly through my screen;
Whispers, and sighs, and searches to depart,
But leaves a distant scent of summer green --

Weeds crushed by children, grasses cut by men
Who shed their sweat this morning with the dew,
And stopped to rest a moment in my wind;
And one of them, to wonder what is true.

Counties away, he sleeps now through the night,
In quiet mounds of softly aching sheet.
Only the wind remembers morning's light;
And drops the morning's moment at my feet.

And he, and I, and all the winds that pass,
Can only tell of wonder, and of grass.