



A Study of the Development and Significance of the Idea of
the 'Image of God' from its Origins in *Genesis* through its
Historical-Philosophical Interpretations to Contemporary
Concerns in Science and Phenomenology

by

John Haydn Gurmin, M.A.

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Head of Department of Philosophy: Dr Michael Dunne

Supervisor: Dr Mette Lebech

Co-Supervisor: Dr Cyril McDonnell

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created humankind in his image, in the *image of God* he created them, male and female he created them.

(Genesis: 1:26-27, NRSV).

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vi
Abbreviations	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE MEANING OF THE IMAGE OF GOD (BESELEM ELOHIM)	9
1.1 The Image of God as Encountered in the Old Testament	11
1.2 ‘Male and Female He Created them’	22
1.3 God’s Rule and its Royal Connotations	33
1.4 The Biblical Context and the ‘Image of God’	39
CHAPTER II JEWISH-HELLENISTIC UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE IDEA OF BESELEM ELOHIM	43
2.1 Historical Developments which lead to the Targum Translations	44
2.1.1 <i>Targum HaShivim</i> - The Greek <i>Septuagint</i>	46
2.1.2 Syriac Targum — The <i>Peshitta</i>	47
2.2 Targum Interpretations of Beselem Elohim	48
2.3 Ancient Greek Philosophical Developments	52
2.3.1 <i>Phantasia</i> and <i>Phantasmata</i> (Imagination and Images)	61
2.4 Philo’s Interpretation of the <i>Septuagint</i>	66
2.4.1 Philo’s influence on Jewish Theology and Law	71
2.5 Plotinus and Neo-Platonism	75
2.5.1 Image and the One	78
2.6 Summation: Jewish-Hellenistic Context and the ‘Image of God’	79
CHAPTER III FROM BESELEM ELOHIM TO IMAGO DEI: THE CHRISTIAN SYNTHESIS	82
3.1 A Consideration of Christian Anthropology with Regard to the ‘Image of God’ and the ‘Fall’	84
3.2 New Testament Interpretation of Beselem Elohim as Referring to Christ	86
3.2.1 Christ’s as the Image of God	88
3.2.2 Christ’s Lived Historical Existence and the <i>Imago Dei</i>	90
3.2.3 Christ as <i>Emmanuel</i>	93
3.3 The Augustinian Synthesis	95
3.3.1 Augustine’s <i>De Trinitate</i> and the <i>Imago Dei</i>	100
3.4 Alcuin: <i>De Dignitate Conditionis Humanae</i>	111
3.5 Bonaventure: ‘Mirroring’ and the <i>Imago Dei</i>	114
3.6 Medieval Jewish and Arabic Reflections on the <i>Imago Dei</i>	118
3.7 Aquinas and the Medieval Synthesis	120
CHAPTER IV RENAISSANCE AND MODERN APPROACHES TO THE ‘IMAGE OF GOD’ IDEA	133
4.1 Context: The Renaissance Period	135
4.2 The idea of the Image of God in Renaissance Writing	138
4.2.1 Petrarch and Ficino — Man as a ‘Microcosm’	140
4.2.2 Pico’s Critique of Man as a ‘Microcosm’	144

4.2.3	Pomponazzi, Morality and the ‘Image of God’	148
4.3	Reformation and Reformed Approaches to the Idea of the <i>Imago Dei</i>	150
4.3.1	John Calvin’s Reformed Theology and the <i>Imago Dei</i>	154
4.3.2	Paul Tillich — Modern Protestant Theological Reflections on <i>Imago Dei</i>	158
4.4	Modern Philosophical Approaches to the <i>Imago Dei</i>	159
4.4.1	Modern Philosophy and Mechanistic Views	163
4.4.2	Hume’s Reflections on Human Reason	165
4.5	Kant on the Image of God and on the Question of the Existence of God	168
4.6	Summation of Historical Approach to the ‘Image of God’ Idea	172
CHAPTER V <i>ON THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES</i> (1859), NEO-DARWINISM AND THE NON-EXISTENCE OF GOD		175
5.1	Charles Darwin and the Theory of Evolution	179
5.2	Evolution: One Theory or Many Theories?	184
5.3	The Neo-Darwinian Account of Evolution	187
5.4	Neo-Darwinism and the Non-Existence of the Proper Object of the Image (God)	191
5.5	The Neo-Darwinian Natural Scientific Method and the Question of ‘What it means to be a Human?’ A Change of Methodology Required?	201
5.6	Conclusion	209
CHAPTER VI A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF NATURALISM AND ITS UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN		211
6.1	Edmund Husserl’s Philosophical Critique of Naturalism (Scientism)	214
6.1.1	The Phenomenological Critique of Both Scientism and the Natural Scientific Method	221
6.1.2	<i>Ideas</i> : an Expansion of ‘Philosophy as Rigorous Science’	224
6.2	Husserl’s Early and Later Phenomenological Developments	226
6.3	Edith Stein’s Position in Relation to Husserlian Methodology	232
6.3.1	Stein’s Phenomenological Approach to the Question of What it Means to be Human	233
6.3.2	The Structure of the Human Individual in <i>On Empathy</i>	236
6.3.3	Constitution (<i>Konstitution</i>) in the Early Works	245
6.3.4	The Constitution of the Psycho-Physical Individual	253
6.3.4.1	The Pure ‘I’	254
6.3.4.2	The Physical Body (<i>Körper</i>) and the Lived Body (<i>Leib</i>)	256
6.3.4.3	The Contribution of Feelings to the Constitution of the Human Individual	259
6.3.4.4	The Foreign Living Body	260
6.3.4.5	The Constitution of the Person	261
6.3.4.5	Person and Value-Hierarchy	265
6.4	The Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities: An Investigation of Causality and Motivation	266
6.5	The Human Type and the Importance of Education in the Unfolding of the Human Individual	270
6.6	Some Preliminary Conclusions	275
CHAPTER VII STEIN’S PHENOMENOLOGICAL ASCENT TO THE EXISTENCE OF GOD (THE ORIGIN OF THE IMAGE)		277
7.1	Stein’s Phenomenological Starting Point	278
7.1.1	What is the Being of which I am Conscious?	282
7.1.2	The Experience of Finite Being as Analogical to Eternal Being	285
7.1.3	The Emptiness of the Pure I	286
7.2	The Contingency of the I, Its Content and the Felt Experience of Security	288
7.2.1	The Contingency of the I	288

7.2.2	The Contingency of the I in relation to its Content	289
7.2.3	The Proof of the Existence of God from the Being of the I	293
7.2.4	Security as a Revelatory Mood	296
7.3	The Image of God Idea and the Necessity of an Assent to Belief in the Existence in God	300
	Conclusion	305
	Bibliography	315

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ABBREVIATIONS

CWES	<i>The Collected Works of Edith Stein</i> , Washington D.C., ICS Press.
<i>Der Aufbau</i>	Edith Stein: <i>Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person</i> , ESW XVI, 1993, ESGA 14.
ESGA	<i>Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe</i> , Herder.
ESW	<i>Edith Steins Werke</i> , Herder.
FEB	Edith Stein: <i>Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent to the Meaning of Being</i> , trans. by Kurt F. Reinhart (Washington, D.C.: ICS, 2002). <i>Endliches und ewiges Sein: Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins</i> (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1986; 1949). ESGA 11/12.
ICS	Institute of Carmelite Studies (Washington D.C.).
<i>Ideas</i>	Edmund Husserl: <i>Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy</i> , trans by F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983). <i>Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie</i> , 1911, Husserliana III/1 and V, reprinted by Meiner, Hamburg, 1992.
<i>Ideas II</i>	Edmund Husserl: <i>Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book</i> , trans. by R. Rojcewicz & A. Schuwer (Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer, 1989). <i>Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, II</i> , Husserliana IV.
KJV	King James Version (Bible).
<i>Logical Investigations</i>	Edmund Husserl: <i>Logical Investigations</i> , trans. by J. N. Findlay from the second ed., ed. D. Moran, (London & New York: Routledge, 2001). <i>Logische Untersuchungen</i> , (Halle: Niemeyer, 1900-1).
LXX	Septuagint (Greek Version of Hebrew Bible).
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (Bible).
<i>On Empathy</i>	Edith Stein: <i>On the Problem of Empathy</i> , trans. by W. Stein, CWES, vol. 3, 1989. <i>Zum Problem der Einfühlung</i> (Halle: Buchdruckerei des Waisenhauses, 1916) forthcoming in ESGA 5.
<i>Phil. of Psy. and the Hum.</i>	Edith Stein: <i>Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities</i> , trans. by Mary Catherine Baseheart and Marianne Sawicki, CWES, vol. 7, 2000. <i>Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften</i> (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1970). ESGA 6, (2010).
PL	Migne: <i>Patrologia Latina</i> , Garnier, Paris.
PG	Migne: <i>Patrologia Graeca</i> , Garnier, Paris.
ST	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> .

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the various historical epochs of western civilization, the view and understanding of the human being as a being that has been made in the ‘image of God’ has exercised a profound influence on our conception of what it means to be human. Indeed, it is generally acknowledged that this idea underpins some of our most cherished ideals, such as, for instance, the dignity and equality of each individual human being, and the mutual responsibility that we share for each other and the environment. Yet, despite this prominence, not all agree with this depiction of the human being, or with the best way of understanding how the human being can be said to be ‘in the image of God’. Arguments for and against the existence of God, as well as different views of what it is to be a human being, in particular natural-scientific based views that emerged after the evolutionary theory of Darwin (1859), has seriously challenged the idea and has led to a renewed interest in this controversial issue in contemporary philosophy of religion and philosophical anthropology.

This study analyses the development and significance of the idea of the image of God from its origins in the story of creation in Genesis to contemporary concerns. It comprises seven chapters.

The first chapter begins with an investigation of the biblical use of the term image of God — the biblical text is the text *par excellence* to which writers in the

Western tradition refer, when they reflect upon the idea in their writings.¹ Though the idea is also seen in Near Eastern writings, it is in the context of the biblical text that the idea becomes universal in nature and extended to all human beings, male and female. This is in contrast to the Near Eastern texts where the king alone, and not each and every human being, is viewed to be in the image of God.

The second chapter investigates later Judaic writings, found in the *Targum* commentaries.² In these commentaries, there is, in general, a move away from the use of the word ‘image’, and a move towards the term of ‘likeness’ instead. Many of the writers/ translators of the *Targums* try to distance the relationship between God and the human by interpreting the text as designating a ‘likeness’ to God, rather than as an ‘image’ of God. We also consider Philo of Alexandria because he was an important commentator on Judaic literature who brought a new interpretative reading of the idea.³ Given his familiarity with Hellenistic philosophy — especially with Plato’s epistemological writings on the ‘image’, which placed the idea three-steps away from what truly ‘is’ — Philo was able to realign an interpretation of man made in the image of God without fear of either the anthropomorphism of God or the deification of the human being.

¹ See, Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (London: SPCK, 1984) p. 148. First published in 1974 by Neukirchener Verlag, Neukirchen-Vluyn, in *Biblischer Kommentar Series*.

² See, *The Aramaic Bible – Targum Onqelos to Genesis*, trans. by Bernard Grossfeld (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1988); *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, trans. by Michael Maher (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992); *The Aramaic Bible – Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis* vol. 1b, trans. by Michael Maher (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992); and the commentary of Alexander Altmann, “‘Homo Imago Dei’”, in *Jewish and Christian Theology*,’ in *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 48, No. 3 (July, 1968), 235–259 (pp. 235–236).

³ This influence can be seen in the many works of Philo. See, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. by C. D. Yonge (USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), e.g., Philo *On the Creation*, 23.69. Also, see, Norman Bentwich, ‘From Philo to Plotinus’, in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 4, No. 1 (Jul. 1913), 1–21 and Harry A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948), vol. I, pp. 238 ff., 390 ff.

Philo's writings on the *Logos* and on the image of God strongly influenced Christian thinking and its reflection on the image of God idea. Relying on Platonic influences and Judaic thinking, Chapter three details the way the early church fathers aligned Christ with the *Logos* and considered Christ to be the image of God, *par excellence*. The early Christian thinkers, therefore, focused on both the Hellenistic and Judaic texts with regard to their understanding of who exactly Christ was. Christianity developed into a world religion and thus the idea of the human being made in the image and likeness of God was extended across the Roman Empire after Constantine's conversion in 312 AD.⁴ The central alignment of the image of God with the *Logos* and 'reasoning' (power of the specifically human soul) transformed the conception of the image of God idea in Augustine's writings.⁵ Here the image of God was seen in relation to the three-fold aspect of memory, understanding and will. Aquinas commenting on the image of God idea followed Augustine's lead by also outlining trinities, but, Aquinas, brought out the dynamic aspect of the image in that it was when we 'remembered' God, when we 'thought' about God and when we 'willed' God, that was when we were truly *in* the image of God.⁶

Chapter four examines some major developments of the image of God idea in the Renaissance period.⁷ The image of God takes on an ambivalent value during this

⁴ *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, vol. 13, ed. Noel Emmanuel Lenski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) p. 9

⁵ See, Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans. by Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) and *On the Trinity*, trans. by Stephen McKenna, ed. Gareth B. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), (e.g., *De Trinitate*, X, 11, 7) and John Edward Sullivan's intense study of Augustine and the 'image of God', *The Image of God: The Doctrines of St. Augustine and Its Influence* (Iowa: The Priory Press, 1963).

⁶ See, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Vol. 13 (1a. 90-102): *Man made to God's Image*, ed. & trans. by Edmund Hill (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press); Latin text from the 1941 Ottawa edition of the *Summa Theologica* with Leonine edition readings incorporated in footnotes, e.g. (S.T., 1a. 93, 7).

⁷ Drawing on the work of Ernest Cassier & Paul O. Kristeller, eds., *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man: Petrarca, Valla, Ficino, Pico, Pomponazzi, Vives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948).

period. Emphases on the misery of the human condition by Lotario dei Segni (c.1160–1216), who later became Pope Innocent III, concentrated on the ‘Fall’ of mankind and on the misery of this condition and the way our image was marred by sin.⁸ Augustine’s *City of God* had portrayed this wretchedness of the ‘Fall’, but Augustine continued to hold that the image of God remained even after the ‘Fall’ (*Lapsus*).⁹ Other writers in the Renaissance period responded to dei Segni’s negativity and wrote on the positive aspects of the human being made in the image of God. These writers returned to the classical sources to aid them in their writings. Ficino, for example, pointed to the ability of the human mind as that which sets man apart from all other creatures.¹⁰ He thus built on earlier *Logos* accounts of Augustine and Aquinas. The Renaissance period also see developments occur with an emphasis on human dignity and human freedom, spanning out from the image of God idea.¹¹

Such positive approaches to the image of God idea, however, had another set back with the writings of Martin Luther who was also influenced and inspired by the writings of Augustine.¹² Luther, nevertheless, rejected many of the ideas of the Renaissance, especially regarding human freedom. Human beings are ultimately wretched and dependent on God. Yet, René Descartes, trained in Scholastic thinking, returns to a positive aspect of the image of God idea in the 1600s. Descartes draws on the ‘idea’ of the ‘image of God’ in his works to prove the existence of a

⁸ See, Paul O. Kristeller, ‘The Philosophy of Man in the Italian Renaissance,’ in *Italica*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Jun., 1947), 93–122 (p. 97).

⁹ Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. by Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin, 2003), written c. 413–427 AD (Ibid. pp. vii–viii).

¹⁰ Marsilio Ficino, ‘Platonic Theology’ trans. Josephine L. Burroughs in *Journal of History of Ideas*, (5, 1944), 227–239 (p. 227).

¹¹ See, Pico della Mirandola, ‘On the Dignity of Man,’ trans. by Charles G. Wallis, Paul J. W. Miller & Douglas Carmichael (Cambridge & Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998).

¹² Luther was an Augustinian monk. He entered the Augustinian house at Erfurt in 1505, and as such followed the writings and the rule of St Augustine. See, *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. xvii.

benevolent deity to ensure his epistemological evaluations of clarity and distinctness were guaranteed.¹³ Many of the followers of Descartes, such as Hume and Kant, however, start to demolish the traditional arguments for the existence of God. By bringing into question the existence of the proper object (origin) of the image, that is to say, God, the question of man as made in the image of God now becomes problematical.

The idea of man being made in the image of God, then, has a rich history, but it retains a fixed core of belief in the view that man is made in the image of God. The aim of the first four chapters of the study, therefore, is to outline the main features and developments of this idea, through examining the writings of principle philosophers and thinkers who are representative of the various historical periods (Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Modern) that offer perspectives on the idea.

This idea of the image of God, however, has also been brought into question. Thus in the second half of the study we will begin with an examination of Daniel Dennett's and Richard Dawkins' attempt to bring Darwin's evolutionary theory to bear as an argument for the non-existence of 'God'.¹⁴ In chapter five, however, we will argue that the non-existence of God is not proved by Darwin or neo-Darwinian writers. Furthermore, we shall argue that part of the problem of the neo-Darwinian line of argumentation, that rejects the existence of God, is the sole use of the natural scientific method of investigation in addressing and evaluating the question of what

¹³ René, Descartes, *Œuvres philosophiques*, ed. F. Buzon, 3 vols (Paris: Garnier, 1963–1973), CSM, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, eds. J. G. Cottingham, R. Stoothoof, and D. Murdoch, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), see, e.g., (AT VII 51-52, CSM II 35).

¹⁴ Cf. Daniel Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meaning of Life* (London: Penguin, 1996) and, also, Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

it means to be human. It will be outlined that the natural-scientific approach is not only seriously limited but inadequate to the task of determining the meaning of ‘being’ characteristic of human being and therefore an alternative approach is required. In the latter part of chapter five, therefore, we will examine the critiques of naturalism elaborated in the early decades of the twentieth century, inspired by phenomenology, in particular by Edmund Husserl and Edith Stein’s philosophies.¹⁵

Central to their (Husserl and Stein’s) critique of natural-scientific approaches to understanding the human being is their development of a more appropriate phenomenological method of analysis in investigating the question of what it is to be a human being. Husserl’s later argument for a pure disembodied consciousness, of course, is not supported by Stein, but his earlier attempt to focus, without naturalistic distortions and theories, on the essential features of human experiences is developed by Stein.¹⁶ Thus no independent treatment of Husserl’s thought will be given in this study. Stein’s phenomenological method of investigation allows for a holistic approach to be undertaken towards the question of what it means to be a human individual from our common experience of being psycho-physical individuals (that is, as persons who are sentient, rational (spiritual)

¹⁵ See, Edmund Husserl, ‘Philosophy as a Rigorous Science’, in E. Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, trans. by Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), pp. 71–147; ‘Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft’, *Logos*, 1 (1910–1911) 289–341. Also, see, Edith Stein’s works referenced in following note (n. 16) below.

¹⁶ Cf., Edith Stein, *On Empathy*, trans. by Waltraut Stein (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1989) originally published as *Zum Problem der Einfühlung* (Halle: Buchdruckerei des Waisenhauses, 1917) and Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, trans. by Mary Catherine Baseheart & Marianne Sawicki, CWES Vol. 7 (Washington, D.C., ICS Publications, 2000). The English publications contains the two treatises (‘Sentient Causality’ and ‘Individual and Community’), the first was originally published as, ‘Psychische Kausalität’ in *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften*, Erste Abhandlung. *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 5 (1922), 1–116, reprinted (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1970), and ‘Individuum und Gemeinschaft’ in *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften*, Zweite Abhandlung. *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 5 (1922), 116–283 reprinted (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1970). Forthcoming as ESGA 6.

and affected by causality) and it is thus this method which will be advocated to examine the question of what it means to be a human individual in chapter six.

The characterization of the human being as made in the image of God cannot avoid the question of the existence of God. In fact, since God is the *origin* or proper object of the image of God idea, his existence is central to arriving at a more comprehensive meaning of the image of God. Thus in the final chapter of our study, Stein's phenomenological argument for the existence of God, which she undertook to 'shrink the distance between belief and unbelief' will be examined.¹⁷ We shall see that, even though such proof may be debated and rejected by contemporary thinkers, it offers a philosophical way *to assent* to belief in God's existence. The phenomenological method to arrive at God's existence is one that is undertaken from experience, it does not operate at the level of premisses that deduce a conclusion and, as such, the way avoids Kant's critique of the traditional arguments for the existence of God.

The aim of our study, then, is to bring the various philosophical reflections on the image of God idea that have unfolded down through the ages together, taking on board the rejection of the *imago Dei* account that followed upon Darwin's publication of the *Origin of the Species* (1859).¹⁸ We will argue that the validity of the idea is dependent on assenting to the existence of God, but that even if such existence is not assented to, it is still possible that atheists would acknowledge the

¹⁷ See, Karl Schudt, 'Edith Stein's Proof for the Existence of God From Consciousness' in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, (82 No. 1, 2008) 105-125.

¹⁸ Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection or, The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, published as *The Origin of the Species* (London: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1998; 1859).

ideals that the 'image of God' idea espouses, such as equality between the sexes, the special status of the human being, given that being's ability to reason and so forth.

CHAPTER I

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE MEANING OF THE *IMAGE OF GOD (BESELEM ELOHIM)*¹

In his extensive and detailed study of the commentary on Genesis 1:26-28, extending from the early Church fathers up until 1974, Claus Westermann makes the point that the dominant presupposition common to all such exegetical literature is that Genesis is saying something about the nature of what it is to be a human being, or, perhaps, more accurately stated, that the human being, precisely because that being has been created in accordance with the *image of God*, bears God's image.² This chapter begins with an examination of these biblical reflections on the meaning of the image of God, addressing such questions as what this construction of the human being in

¹ The Hebrew language was originally written without vowels, the reader as such, supplied the vowel sounds. Through time, certain vowels were introduced to assist the reader in pronunciation and to prevent errors in reading and understanding. 'In the period from AD 500-800, scholars within the Jewish community who were designated to preserve and standardise the Old Testament text, produced the definitive edition of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament books. These scholars, called the "Masoretes" (or Massorettes), expended a lot of energy on the text, regularising the spelling of words, the division of materials into lessons for public reading, and the sequence of the later books (Writings). They devised a scheme for vocalising the entire text, preserved variant readings in the manuscripts, and thereby sought to safeguard the transmission of a text of the Hebrew Bible free from error'. See, Walter Harrelson, *Interpreting the Old Testament* (New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto & London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964) p. 19. The Hebrew and Greek references are taken from *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew, Greek, English*, Second edition, ed. & trans. by Jay P. Green (USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006). The English translations of the Bible are taken from *The Harper Collins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version*, ed. by Wayne Meeks (London: Harper Collins, 1993) henceforth NRSV, unless otherwise indicated.

² 'Since biblical interpretation came into contact with Greek thought and the modern understanding of humanity, scarcely any passage in the whole of the Old Testament has retained such an interest as the verse which says that God created the person according to his image. The literature is limitless. The main interest has been on what is being said [...] about humankind: what is a human being?' Westermann, p. 148. Westermann's commentary on Genesis represents a reflection on the literature published on the opening chapters of Genesis until 1974. As he notes, '(N)o large scholarly commentary on Genesis has appeared in German since those of Hermann Gunkel (1922) and Otto Procksch (1924). There has, however, been a flood of literature on Genesis 1-11 and a number of important, though short, and popular expositions [...]. The present situation, however, demands a thorough survey and account of all the literature on Genesis -- of the works of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish scholars, as well as the contributions of the pertinent secular disciplines. The bibliographies, general and particular, present this.' Ibid., p. ix. Also See, Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. by Mark Biddle (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997) originally, *Genesis*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922) and Otto Procksch, *Die Genesis*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1924)

God's image 'consists in' and 'what is intended' by God in making the human being in the image of God. The chapter, therefore, addresses the issue, ultimately, of 'what does it mean' to be made 'in the image of God'.³ As Westermann notes, however, all of these questions and issues point in the direction of a more fundamental and main question of '(W)hat is the purpose of the creator God when he decides to create a person in his image?'⁴ This way of phrasing the question links the act of God, who is identified in the phrase 'Let us make', directly with the creation of the human being in the image of God. In this regard, therefore, Westermann concludes that 'both the decision and the specification indicate that the creator God decides to create something that is his own personal concern.'⁵

In his researches into this topic, nonetheless, Westermann remarks that he had not encountered any attempt to derive the principles for the understanding of Genesis 1:26ff. from the passage as a whole. This chapter, therefore, begins with an exposition of the 'image' in relation to exegetical and inter-textual reading, with specific focus on what the Ancients may have meant when they used the terms 'image' (צֶלֶם, *tselem*) and 'likeness' (דְּמוּת, *demût*). These terms will also be considered with regard to the immediate *pericopes* in which they are found, that is to say, in the context of chapter one of Genesis, because this general context will throw more light on the way the terms were understood at the time of their usage. The main aim of this chapter, then, shall be to expose the representational-relational nature of the *beselem Elohim* (image of God) phrase, with specific regard to the context of its usage in Genesis and wider Old Testament literature.

³ Westermann, p. 155.

⁴ Ibid., p. 156.

⁵ Ibid.

SECTION ONE

THE IMAGE OF GOD AS ENCOUNTERED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The first time the image of God (*beselem Elohim*)⁶ is mentioned in the Biblical tradition is in the Book of Genesis 1:26-28.⁷ In fact, the phrase image of God (i.e., *beselem Elohim*) appears only three times in the Old Testament tradition (Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1 and 9:6).⁸ The word *tselem* (צלם, *image*) occurs seventeen times in the

⁶ The Bible has been redacted throughout its history and, as such, did not exist as one structured book but evolved over time. The Pentateuch (or first five books of the Bible) represents some of the earliest texts of the Bible. Harrelson outlines that the oldest literary works that have been preserved in the approximate form of their creation are probably the Song of Deborah (Judges 5) and the Song of Miriam (Exodus 15:25) (1200-1100 BC). It seems that these early works along with others, such as the commandments, were preserved in oral tradition for many generations prior to being recorded in written form. 'By the time of the kingship of David, (The Book of Kings, *Sefer Melachim*, מלכים, ספר, 1000-900 BC), however, Israelite literature was almost certainly in "written format" and produced in quantity. The twelve tribes were united under this period, and certainly under Solomon, the first great epic of Israel's beginnings as a people was almost certainly produced. This epic begins with Genesis (*Breishit*, בראשית) chapter 2 and continues through to Deuteronomy 34 and may even have incorporated the stories up to the life and time of David himself. The work is produced by the "J" source, although the author is unknown, "J" symbolises the source comes from the tribe of Judah and this author uses the term Yahweh (*Jahwe*, *Jehovah*) to refer to the personal God of Israel'. See, Harrelson, *Interpreting the Old Testament*, pp. 9-13. But, according to Harrelson, the 'J' or Yahwist source had traditions to work from in producing this historical-theological account of the beginnings of mankind and of Israel. 'By 538-165 BC the completion of the Old Testament exists in its present form. However, the Writings (Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1-2 Chronicles) were the last group to be collected in final form. It seems probable that this collection did not become entirely fixed until the period 90-100 AD. At this stage, the leaders of the Jewish community found it necessary to settle the question of canonicity'. See, Harrelson, *Interpreting the Old Testament*, pp. 9-13. For discussion of the emergence of the canon, see pp. 13-19. While this writing is considered to be composed by J, there are of course earlier forms of writing that are generally characterised as relating to the Priestly source, 'P'. Genesis chapter 1 is assigned by nearly all critics to 'P', there is a marked difference between 'P' and the account of creation that follows in Genesis chapter 2 ('J'). The 'P' source displays an impersonal style, formulaic, and measured to the point of austerity. It is starkly simplistic, and according to Speiser, 'this simplicity comes from detailed, refined and endless probing whereby every word was subjected to minutest scrutiny. By this very fact, the "P" source is seen less of an individual's work but rather of a school that had a continuous tradition behind it. The ultimate aim of this school was to set forth a *credo* – a *credo* which was untinged by the least hint of speculation'. See, *The Anchor Yale Bible: Genesis*, introd., trans., & notes by Ephraim Avigdor Speiser (London & New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008; 1964) p. 8.

⁷ It is, according to one commentator, 'the most immediate literary subunit in which the *image of God* is first mentioned.' See, J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (USA: Brazos Press, 2005) p. 43.

⁸ Ibid. p. 16, some biblical scholars also connect Psalm 8 with Genesis 1, since the texts share similar ideas. Although the psalm does not actually use the terms *image* or *likeness*, Psalm 8:5 (MT 8:6) explicitly compares humans to God, and 8:3-8 (MT 8:4-9) understands the role of humanity *vis-à-vis* the nonhuman creation in royal terminology reminiscent of Genesis 1, cf. Middleton, p. 16, n. 2.

Hebrew bible, while *demût* (דְמוּת, *likeness*) occurs twenty-five times. Middleton outlines that,

[*t*]selem describes humans created as the image of God (Genesis 1:26, 27 [twice]; 9:6) and (in possibly a derivative sense) Seth's relationship to (or affinity with) his father Adam (5:3).⁹

In his study of the etymological structure of the word *tselem*, Westermann highlights the point that,

in most cases the word means 'sculpture, plastic image, statue' (I Sam. 6:5, 11; 2 Kings 11:18; 2 Chron 23:17). It is used too to signify images of the gods (Ezek 7:20; Amos 5:26; Num 33:52 molten images).¹⁰

The meaning of the use of the word 'image' in Ezekiel 16:17 seems to designate an image of the gods made in human likeness. Westermann, therefore, believes that it is dangerous to render 'צלם' simply as being restricted to material form because it means a 'representation'.¹¹ Moreover, he points out that,

Most interpreters derive the word [*tselem*] from a verb צלם, 'cut, cut off': but it does not occur in Hebrew. The earlier derivation [for *tselem*] which had been rejected for the most part [came] from צל [sel] 'shade,' (with ׀ added to the stem).¹²

⁹ Middleton, p. 45. The passages are as follows: 'God said, "Let us make humankind in our *image*",' (Genesis 1:26); 'So God created humankind in his *image* (*Besalmo*)' (Genesis 1:27); 'Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person's blood be shed: for in his own *image* God made humankind.' (Genesis 9:6); 'When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his *image*, and named him Seth. (Genesis, 5:3), emphasis added. It is interesting to note that *Besalmo* refers here to the singular 'in his image', this contrasts with the phrase 'Let us' when God considers making humankind in his image. We shall discuss this point further with considerations of the importance of the phrase 'Let us', below.

¹⁰ Westermann, p. 146.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid. Westermann, however, outlines that this position of ׀ being added to the stem of צל has been proposed again by A. S. Marmardji, *La lexicographie arabe à la lumière du bilittéralisme et de la philologie sémitique*, 1937, 193ff. (Arabic, Review F. Rosenthal, Or NS 8 [1939] 148-150). Westermann, p. 146.

The root of the word, in Westermann's view, however, is uncertain.¹³ Middleton, in his analysis, holds that the word *tselem* is predominantly used to 'designate three-dimensional cult statues of various false gods, which are all roundly condemned in the Old Testament'.¹⁴ *Tselem* is also used in reference to,

three-dimensional *representations* that are not cult statues of deities (raised relief) wall carvings of Babylonian soldiers (Ezekiel 23:14) and the golden mice and tumours that afflicted the Philistines that were offered as a guilt offering to YHWH to avoid judgment (1 Samuel 6:5 [twice], 11).¹⁵

Furthermore, Middleton notes that though 'image' is seen as a 'hewn statue or copy,' the word *tselem* is also used in a different sense when it comes to Psalms 36 and 73.¹⁶ Here the word is used to 'describe human life as fleeting and insubstantial,

¹³ Westermann notes that 'Wildberger's starting-point is to [outline] that *tselem* is not the usual word for an image of a deity in the Old Testament. Thus use of *šalmu* in the Babylonian civilisation is the closest non-Israelite source. [Wildberger] quotes a long series of texts in which the king is described as the image of God and concludes, (p. 255): '...the places where the king is spoken of as the *šalmu* or *mussulu* of his god...suggest that Gen 1:26-30 are rooted ultimately in the royal ideology of the Ancient Near East.' See, H. Wildberger, TZ (1965) 245-259, 481-501, and W. H. Schmidt, WMANT (Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen) 17, 1964, pp. 127-148). The vocabulary too of 'Genesis 1:26 reflects the royal tradition, especially the very רָדָה [*rada*]. [...] Egypt is even richer in texts that describe the king as the image of God.' See Westermann, p. 152. Harrelson outlines that, in the Babylonian tradition, we are told that 'kingship was lowered from heaven,' as the various city-states were established (see the Babylonian creation story, *Enum elish*). See, Harrelson, *Interpreting the Old Testament*, p. 45. Speiser, also highlights that our present version of the P writings has connections with the old Mesopotamian material. Mesopotamia's canonical version of cosmic origins is found in that so-called Babylonian Creation Epic, or *Enuma elish* 'When on High'. The numerous points of contact between the *Enuma elish* and the opening section of Genesis, in accordance with Speiser, have long been noted, 'there is not only a striking correspondence in various details, but – what is even more significant – the order of events is the *same*, which is enough to preclude any likelihood of coincidence' (emphasis added). See. *The Anchor Yale Bible*, p. 9.

¹⁴ Middleton, p. 45. Middleton cites the following passages to defend his position: Numbers 33:52 'you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their figured stones, destroy all their cast *images*, and demolish all their high places'; 2 Kings 11:18 'Then all the people of the land went to the house of Baal, and tore it down; his altars and his *images* they broke in pieces, and they killed Mattan, the priest of Baal, before the altars.' [...] Amos 5:26 'you shall take up Sakkuth you king, and Kaiwan your star-god, your *images*, which you have made yourselves.' (Sakkuth and Kaiwan were Mesopotamian deities, see NRSV p. 1364 n. 5:26). Middleton also outlines in n. 3 that 'The Aramaic cognate *selem/salma* is also used eleven times in the narrative of Daniel 3:1-18 for the cult statue that Nebuchadnezzar erected'. Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 45-46, my emphasis. Middleton believes that this range of usage of the term *tselem* certainly supports Walter Kaiser's conclusion that [*tselem*] means 'carved or hewn statue or copy.' See Walter Kaiser Jr., *Towards an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978) p. 76.

¹⁶ Psalm 39:6 [MT 39:7]; 73:20, 'Surely everyone goes about like a *shadow*. Surely for nothing they are in turmoil; they heap up, and do not know who will gather'; 'They are like a dream when one awakes, on awaking you despise their *phantoms*.' Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, p. 46.

resulting in translations like “shadow”, “phantom”, “fantasies”, “dream” and “image”.¹⁷ These usages of the word *tselem* are somewhat different from the previous in that here they move away from a tangible and concrete understanding of a ‘hewn statue or copy’, and to an ‘unreal appearance or mere semblance’.¹⁸ Middleton believes that if we were to try to find a mid-way understanding between these two particular positions, it would probably be conveyed in the sentiment of (visible) ‘form’ (whether solid or insubstantial). Here, then, the use of the term ‘image’ is caught in the middle between material reality and ‘form’. Thus Middleton’s analysis concurs with Kearney’s view that ‘image’, when used in Genesis, is done so in varying degrees to represent various spectrums from ‘dream’ to ‘material reality’.¹⁹

Turning our attention to the word likeness, we note that *demût* (דמויה) is the Hebrew word for ‘likeness’ and is used in Genesis 1:26 and 5:1 and again (like *tselem*) is found in the chapter which discusses Seth’s relationship to Adam, his father in 5:3.²⁰ Westermann holds that the derivation of this word is clear, for,

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Middleton highlights that this move is also apparent in some uses of the Greek term *eikon* and Latin *imago*. See also, D. J. A. Clines, ‘The Etymology of Hebrew *Selem*,’ in *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*, 3 (1974), p. 23.

¹⁹ Middleton, p. 46 Kearney states: ‘Of the seventeen occurrences of *tselem* in the Old Testament, five are from the Genesis passages [...] on creation; ten carry a more concrete and material sense of “statue”, “model”, “picture”, while the remaining two refer to a more oblique or mental sense of image as “shadow” or “dream”. It appears to be the more abstract/spiritual connotations of this term which determine certain later renditions of this notion as “personality”, “consciousness”, “freedom of will” and “immortality” (e.g. *Wisdom of Sol.*, 2:23-4). The five Genesis allusions to *tselem*, which primarily concern us here, are generally located somewhere in the middle of the scale extending from the concrete to the abstract.’ Interestingly Kearney refers to this relationship as it is found in Kabbalistic mysticism – ‘*tselem* gave rise to a double interpretation based on an antithetical play of associated words: *halom* (dream image) and *golem* (material image) – the implication being that man bears a resemblance to both the spiritual and physical order of creation.’ Richard Kearney, *The Wake of the Imagination* (London: Routledge, 2001; 1988) pp. 62-63.

²⁰ ‘Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image according to our likeness”’ (Genesis 1:26); ‘This is the list of the descendents of Adam. When God created human-kind, he made them in the likeness of God.’ (Genesis 5:1), ‘When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became father of a son in his likeness according to his image.’ (Genesis 5:3), emphasis added.

it is an abstract formation from the verb דָּמָה ‘to be like’ (the verb and the noun occur side-by-side in Isaiah 40:18) and means ‘that which is like something, likeness, representation’ (in 2 Kings 16:10 it means the replica of an altar). It is often said that דְּמוּה is a weakening of the word צֶמֶל; but this cannot be demonstrated from the way in which the words are used. When the word is translated by ‘likeness,’ as is possible in some passages, it should not be understood as if the meaning were: not the same, but only like. The Hebrew word does not carry this attenuating sense. The word is used in Hebrew only when something is compared with something else.²¹

Middleton also points out that in the vast majority of references the phrase *demût* is used to convey a general comparison between two things, ‘and is rendered by a statement that one thing had the “appearance” or “form” of another, or else by phrases such as “like, as, something like, similar to,” and so on.’²²

Yet the relationship and meaning of *tselem* and *demût* is quite complex.

There is no particular static use of the terms in the course of the Hebrew bible. As Kearney outlines,

In both biblical accounts of God’s creation of man – *Gen.* 1:26-7 and 2:8 – two terms are used to express a relation of resemblance: ‘image’ (*tselem*) and ‘likeness’ [*demût*]. The former is sometimes interpreted as a concrete resemblance and the latter as a more abstract notion of relation between the human personality and God. But the matter is by no means clear cut. *The Interpreter’s Dictionary to the Bible* informs us that each of the terms – *tselem* and [*demût*] – are used in the Old Testament to refer to both a concrete and abstract meaning.²³

²¹Westermann, p. 146. Westermann further outlines that דְּמוּה can have the same meaning as צֶמֶל: as is the case in 2 Chron 4:3, (representations of wild cucumbers), corresponds exactly to 1 Sam 6:5, 11; Ezek 23:14 describes the representations of the Babylonians by צֶמֶל, and v. 15 by דְּמוּה. The word can be used for a comparison as in Ps. 58:5, ‘like the venom of a serpent.’ Ezekiel finds the word particularly apt to explain his vision. Of the nineteen passages where it occurs, twelve are found in Ezekiel, seven elsewhere. Ezekiel uses the word with many shades of meaning which fluctuate between ‘representation’ and ‘something which is like.’ Ibid. pp. 146-147.

²²Middleton lists the following passages where *demût* is used: Psalm 58:4 [MT 58:5]; Isaiah 13:4; 40:18; Ezekiel 1:5 [twice], 10, 13, 16, 22, 26 [three times], 28; 8:2; 10:1, 10, 21, 22; Daniel 10:16). Middleton, p. 46.

²³Kearney, p. 62.

It is held by Middleton that biblical scholars all too often outline that the use of *demût* in relation to *tselem* is deliberate on the part of the redactor of the text in Genesis in order to prevent too close an identification of the human image with divinity. This, in turn, therefore,

leads biblical scholars to the common-place tactic of distinguishing *tselem* from *demût* by claiming that the physical, concrete connotation of *tselem* (whereby humans are visible or bodily images of God, an analogy with a cult statue of a deity) is intentionally modified in Genesis 1:26 by the more abstract *demût*, which functions to prevent either an overly physicalistic understanding of the image or too close an identification of the human image with its divine archetype.²⁴

It appears, however, that this reading of the relationship between ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ is somewhat simplistic as ‘likeness’ is used on occasion in Scripture for a *concrete* representation or copy of something (2 Kings 16:10, 2 Chronicles 4:3, Ezekiel 23:15)²⁵ and what makes the situation even more complex is that the relationship between ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ is reversed with regard to the story of Seth (Genesis 5:3). In this instance Middleton asks does ‘image’ qualify ‘likeness’? Also, each term *tselem* and *demût* appears to stand alone in relation to humanity’s special status with regard to God (*tselem* in Genesis 1:27 and 9:5, *demût* in Genesis 5:1). Middleton believes that this variation seems to point to the fact that the terms may qualify themselves in some form of mutual way, or that the terms may not in

²⁴ This distinction goes back ultimately to Paul Humbert’s influential word studies of *tselem* and *demût* in his ‘Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse,’ *Mémoires de l’université de Neuchâtel* 14 (1940) pp. 153-157, especially, p. 165, cited by J. Maxwell Miller, ‘In the “Image” and “Likeness” of God,’ *Journal of Bible Literature* 91 (1972), p. 292, quoted by Middleton, p. 46.

²⁵ Middleton, p. 47. Interestingly, this concrete usage of *demût* is ‘paralleled by a 1979 excavation at Tell Fekheriyeh in Syria that unearthed a ninth-century BC statue with an inscription containing Aramaic cognate equivalents of both *tselem* and *demût* (and the Akkadian cognate of *tselem*) as synonymous terms designating the statue’. Middleton, p. 47. See A. R. Millard and P. Bordreuil, ‘A Statue from Syria with Assyrian and Aramaic Inscriptions,’ *Biblical Archaeologist*, 45 (1982), 135–141, quoted by Middleton, p. 47, n. 8.

fact be used in the early chapters of Genesis with ‘clear and distinguishable meanings at all’.²⁶

The use, however, of the term image of God is thus far equated as being a *resemblance* of God found in *relation* to a concrete instantiation and also with regard to ‘semblance’ (the Latin origins of which *similis* means to be *like*, and that has a close relation to re-semblance, which would relate likeness to some *object*, in this case, God).²⁷ Here we get the impression that the writers of Genesis aim to outline something concretely apparent in the human being that sets the human apart from all of ‘incarnate’ creation. With regard to this ‘image - of God’, it is seen in the ‘J’ account of Creation, that there is a physical dimension to the ‘image’, in that the image of God is linked to the physicality of ‘breath’ (*ruah*). In Genesis 2:4 we find Yahweh scooping up the earth (*adamah*) and moulding the figure of the first human (*Adam*), and then blowing breath into *the* Adam:

Yahweh *breaths* breath into the inert form and it becomes a living self, a ‘soul’. Selfhood in the Bible is the result of a union of body (flesh) and divine breath. The man [*adam*] does not *have* a soul, he *is* a soul, a self, when and only when the union of body and spirit has taken place.²⁸

From this perspective, the image of God in this reading is equated with having both a soul and a self that is dependent on the union of body and spirit. As such, the image of God refers to the particular composition of the human individual that sets the

²⁶ Middleton, p. 47.

²⁷ Richard Messer outlines Richard Swinburne’s understanding of God as an object as follows: ‘if [we say that God is an object then] God is something of which properties are true, which causally interacts with other recognisable objects, which can be distinguished from others as the subject of certain predicates which he has and they don’t: well, that is the case with God, and therefore on any natural understanding of “object”, God is an object’. From this definition if we discuss God’s omnipotence, immutability as uniquely his properties then God by this definition may be understood as an object. See, Richard Messer, *Does God’s Existence Need Proof?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) p. 21.

²⁸ Johannes Pedersen, *Israel, Its Life and Culture*, 2 vols (New York: Oxford University Press, 1926; 1940), vol. I, p. 99.

human apart from all other forms of creation. There is, in fact, no mention of the divine breath being given, or received in such an intimate manner by any other form of creation. The question might be raised at this juncture about the philosophical dimensions to the Biblical text. It appears that the early communities of Genesis were searching out their cosmological story, trying to understand and reason their position in the world. In this way, they aimed to find a rational meta-narrative which would provide meaning to their inquiring minds. In the Hellenistic world Homer's *Illiad* and *Odyssey* and Hesiod's poetry in the classical period served to account for the workings of the universe in a similar manner. In modern times these stories are considered 'myth', not in the sense of 'myth' and 'legend' but as a *muthous* (*μύθος*), here one sees myth as an intuitive way to comprehend the workings of the world and the role of human beings in that cosmos but not totally devoid of rational reflection, for, as Aristotle pointed out, all of myth begins with wonder.²⁹

²⁹ As Jan N. Bremmer notes, however, Greek cosmogonies are rather late in their formulation as compared to Near Eastern cosmogonic myths. According to Bremmer, 'local Greek histories show that traditionally the beginning of the world was presupposed. The Greek cosmogonies seem to have grown out of contact with the Near East so that by the eighth century BC Hellenistic poets started to borrow from the Near East to fill the gap of origins. The first attempts are seen in the *Illiad* where Hera announces that she wishes to reconcile "Okeanos, begetter of the gods, and mother Tethys (XIV. 201)." Studies suggest that Okeanos is the Greek version of Apsu – the god mentioned in the Babylonian creation myth *Enuma elish* ("when on high"). Plato in the *Timeaus* (40c) refers to Okeanos and Tethys as the children of Ouranos and Gaia, but the parents of Kronos and Rhea. Other borrowing from Near Eastern literature is evidenced in the *Illiad* (XV. 187-193) where Zeus, Poseidon and Hades cast lots, this is similar to the Near Eastern poem, the Akkadian *Atrahasis*.' See Jan N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, (Boston & Leiden: Brill, 2008) pp. 1-3. Water played a key role in these original cosmogonies, the Babylonians with Tiamat and Apsu and the Egyptians with Nun (the primordial waters), Okeanos to the Greeks was a fresh water that encircled the world. As such the Greeks imaged the beginning of the world as water, this idea prefigures Thales' (A 12) idea of water as the first principle. For a comprehensive analysis of the place of 'water' in early mythology, see Jean Rudhardt, *Le thème de l'eau primordiale dans la mythologie grecque* (Berne: A. Francke, 1971). The Near East, as such, may have influenced both Greek philosophical thinking and Judaic reflection on the origin of the world. These early stories of origin can be seen as demonstrating the beginnings of philosophical reflection on the causes and ordering of the world. As such the story of Genesis is an attempt to explain the primordial history of the world and humankind. Aristotle came to realise later in his writings that the early Greek mythic stories that he was acquainted with were in themselves attempts to philosophise and understand origins and Genesis might also be seen in this philosophical light. Aristotle states in his *Metaphysics*, that 'it [was] owing to their wonder that men [...] first began to philosophise; they wondered originally at the obvious difficulties, then advanced little by little and stated difficulties about the greater matters, e.g., about the phenomena of the moon and those of the sun and the stars, and about the genesis of the universe. And a man who is puzzled and wonders thinks himself ignorant (whence

As we have noted, the phrase image of God as *beselem Elohim* occurs quite rarely in the Hebrew Bible. The concept of the image of God, however, may rest on antecedent ideas which are refashioned in the Genesis text. The phrase is probably not without its historical foundations. It seems, therefore, that the phrase may have been influenced and indeed incepted from previous cultures and mythology, in particular from Sumero-Akkadian mythology where the ‘representative of Anu on earth was the king, whose command was therefore divine’.³⁰ The King had, what might be understood in more modern terms as, the ‘Divine Right to Rule’. It obviously was advantageous to the ruling aristocracy to be linked with the Divine. The biblical tradition, nonetheless, while perhaps inspired by these older myths, differs greatly in that the image of God idea is not reserved to one (ruling) individual but is extended to both male and female, to one and all. Instead of segregating the king from the people, the phrase in essence made everyone ‘royal’, ‘kings’, and thereby everyone participated in Divine rule, and not just the king.

For the Hebrews of Genesis every individual as such was a responsible participant in his/ her covenant with God in whose ‘image’ he/ she was created. Undoubtedly, this was a radical conceptual change where each individual is equal in

even the lover of myth is in a sense a lover of wisdom, for myth is composed of wonders); therefore since they philosophised in order to escape from ignorance, evidently they were producing science in order to know, and not for any utilitarian end.’ *Metaphysics*, 982b11-25 in, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. by Jonathan Barnes, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995; 1984) p. 1554.

³⁰ Fred Gladstone Bratton, *Myths and Legends of the Ancient Near East* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1970) p. 21-22. In the Sumerian Pantheon Anu was the sky god, according to Bratton it was the ‘all-encompassing sky with its *mysterium tremendum* and its awesome fascination, that awakened in the Mesopotamian the consciousness of the insignificance of human life and, at the same time, the feeling of reverence for the majestic power of Lord Anu. Mere contemplation of the omnipotence of the sky god compelled one’s humble submission’. Ibid. p. 21. Anu represented one god of the Mesopotamian trinity which included Enlil the earth or storm god and Enki the water god, but Anu as the god of heaven was considered the king of all gods. ‘As such the king as a representative of Anu extols authority over all whom he commands. There were also an array of other gods in the Sumerian Pantheon which governed the moon (Nan-Sin), the netherworld, pestilence and death (Nergel), the sun-god (Utu) who was the god of justice, law and order, Ninurta a fertility and solar deity etc. But Anu stood at the apex’. See Bratton, pp. 21-23.

the eyes of God — in that each individual shares God’s image. This of course was certainly true of Adam and Eve before they were banished from the Garden of Eden for disobeying God’s commands (Genesis 3). The content of the phrase image of God, nevertheless, extends ‘equality’ to each individual in the sight of God and in the sight of each other in this book of origins. Certainly, the phrase in that regard has influenced Western civilisation’s history in that it prefigures a rise in understanding of the ‘dignity of man’ which flourished in particular in the Renaissance and has subsequently been borne out in various literature right up to the U. N. Charter of Human Rights in most recent times.³¹ This radical conceptual change displayed in Genesis chapter one might be viewed as an embryonic pre-cursor of our modern secular understanding of human dignity (see Chapter IV). Given that our modern world-views are shaped by the mergence of Judeo-Hellenistic-Christian thinking in the centuries after the death of Christ, it is, as such, unsurprising that the term *beselem Elohim* continues to be conceptually unfolded over 2,500 years.³²

Returning to our etymological analysis of the words *tselem* and *demût*, there seems in effect to be no particular *univocal* relationship between the two words. The words, in fact, have a range of meanings and in that sense they can be viewed as *polysemous*. Even if *tselem* tends towards material reality and *demût* tends towards the abstract, it does not give information as to how the redactor of Genesis *intended*

³¹According to Gerard Verbeke, though the concept of ‘human dignity’ is not a novel idea of the Renaissance as such, the idea of human dignity goes back beyond Thomas Aquinas to the Church Fathers and ultimately to Plato. Verbeke traces the idea of man as a frontier between spirit and matter back beyond Aquinas through the Church Fathers and finally to Plato. See, Gerard Verbeke, “‘Man as a frontier’”, according to Aquinas’, in *Aquinas and Problems of his Time*, ed. by G. Verbeke & D. Verhelst (Medievalia Lovaniensia, Series I, Studia V), Leuven – The Hague, 1976, pp. 195-223. See, Mette Lebech, *On the Problem of Human Dignity: A Hermeneutical and Phenomenological Investigation* (Würzburg: Verlag Königshausen & Neuman, 2009), p. 74, n. 69.

³² It is testament to the enduring legacy of the teaching of both the Old and New Testaments that the vast majority of people still hold the Bible and its ideals as an important book of teaching and learning two millennia and more on.

to use the terms *per se*. In the wake of the ‘death of the author’ critique, such intentions tend towards obscurity, yet, to apprehend meaning from the text one has to try and inter-subjectively ‘see’ what was intended, notwithstanding the limitation of the text in this regard. Focusing on the words themselves and etymologically tracing their origins can only provide so much insight. Thus Westermann suggests the necessity of looking at the phrase in context of the first chapter of Genesis and in the wider context of Old Testament literature at that time. Middleton proposes a similar method, when he argues that,

we need to move from philology to syntax, from analysis of isolated words to larger verbal units, for it is at the level of phrases and sentences that significant meaning resides. Reading Genesis 1:26-28 at this level yields three specific observations that are commonly made about the image, all of which warrant further examination.³³

The use of the phrase image of God in the first chapter of Genesis is associated with a number of key areas of interest. Firstly, the phrase is attributed to ‘male and female’, to the two sexes of humanity (Genesis 1:27). Male and Female human beings are subsequently given the command to rule (רָדוּהוּ, *radar*), and to have dominion (כָּבַשׁ, *kabas*) and stewardship over the non-human world (Genesis 1:26). Finally, God speaks in the plural form when commanding ‘Let us make’; here the image of God is associated with a plurality (*El-ohim*). Interestingly, this plural form is used only in Genesis chapter one in the Old and New Testaments.

³³ Middleton, p. 48.

SECTION TWO

‘MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM’

According to Westermann the phrase ‘male (זָכָר, *zakar*) and female (אִשָּׁה, *neqeba*)’ is typical of the language of the Priestly (P) redactor of the book of Genesis, i.e., the earliest writer (community of writers) of the Genesis text. The phrase also occurs in what is considered Priestly redaction in the book of Leviticus 12:2-7; 15:33; 27:2-7 and the book of Numbers 5:3. Although the use of the phrase is also found in the Yahwist (J) tradition in Genesis 7:3, 9, here it is assumed that the use of the terms ‘male and female’ by J may have ultimately have been inspired by P.³⁴ Given that P is considered to have included the terms ‘male and female’, it highlights the importance placed on both the sexes at the earliest time-frame of Genesis composition, rather than a later addition as an necessary after-thought.

Many observe that the use of the phrase ‘male and female’ is significant in the opening sections because it indicates that humankind consists in two sexes, male and female and Westermann maintains that ‘there can be no question of an “essence of man” apart from existence as two sexes.’³⁵ This leads Westermann to the understanding that ‘what it is to be human’ is intimately linked to the community, the destiny of the human being is thereby seen in *relation* to life in community because people have been created to live with each other.³⁶ Harrelson also notes the importance of the two sexes, remarking that scripture points to the fact that woman is not made like other animals. She is taken from the rib of man and called woman

³⁴ According to Westermann, Gunkel considers these uses of male and female by J as resulting from the influence of P. (Gunkel commenting on Genesis 1:27b). See, Westermann, p. 160.

³⁵ Westermann, p. 160. Yet, this is not to say that mankind can be defined purely by sex. Sex is not the only feature of what it is to be a human and so Westermann develops his idea of sex with regard to community.

³⁶ Ibid.

(*ishshah*) because ‘this one *at last* is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; [...] this one was taken from man (*ish*).’ (Genesis, 2:4). There is a *relational* status here between man and woman, as Harrelson notes:

The mystery of the *relation* between man and woman is marvellously well portrayed in this simple story. We also see that the narrative maintains the view that man is not fully man except in *relation* to woman.³⁷

It is also interesting to note that the Scripture passage outlines that man recognises something special in woman that helps him in some way to identify himself. She is ‘at last’ bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, the other animals which were brought to Adam to be named obviously did not ‘image’ Adam in a way that ‘woman’ did. Woman is made, as it were, in the image of God, and thereby there is something of foundational commonality between man and woman that does not exist between man and other animals. Evidently, the writers of this section of the Biblical text recognised the importance of woman, that woman, like man, was able to communicate on levels and in ways just not possible with the rest of the animal kingdom.

Harrelson outlined above that man was not fully man without woman, this is an interesting aspect of Genesis chapter one which Maryanne Cline Horowitz elaborates further. She notes that in some of the rabbinical traditions the Hebrews considered Adam as composed of both male and female in one entity, rather than two separate sexes. As she states,

The dominance of the hermaphrodite view of the being created in God’s image is indicated by reports that, in the LXX commissioned by King Ptolemy (285-247 BC), the seventy-two elders wrote in Greek, ‘Male and

³⁷ Harrelson, p. 47, my emphasis.

female he created him.’ They wrote ‘him’ instead of ‘them’ to prevent anyone from thinking they were created separate at the beginning’.³⁸

This hermaphroditic notion of the unity of man and woman as the image of God led the Rabbis to consider men and women fully human. They also held that man and woman fully became the image of God when they were united in God’s blessing as husband and wife. Thus, any man without a wife, or any wife without a husband, in this view, denigrated the image. This is why, as Horowitz comments, ‘the idea that a human being needs a spouse to fulfil the image of God was a theme running through Jewish tradition, which frowned on celibacy.’³⁹

In this way, nonetheless, the phrase image of God became a means by which marriage and thus procreation were affirmed as positive and necessary aspects of Biblical life, bringing stability to social relationships and child rearing.⁴⁰ In fact, many Jewish Rabbis through the ages held that the act of procreation was a means by which the image of God was promulgated and thus marriage was an essential part of ‘multiplying’ the image of God from one generation to the next in the human species. Other Rabbis, however, did not limit the image of God to the act of procreation, but looked at the ‘ontology’ of man as a means to certify that he/ she was in the image of God.

³⁸ Maryanne Cline Horowitz, ‘The Image of God in Man: Is Woman Included?’ in *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 72, No. 3/4 (Jul. – Oct., 1979) 175-206, [p. 186]. LXX here refers to the Septuagint or Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 187. Horowitz quotes Rabbi Eleazar ben Pedat (d. 279) as reportedly stating ‘Any man who has no wife is no proper man; for it is said, “Male and female he created he them and called their name Adam”. (*Yebam.* 62b-63a), “The sages observed: a man without a wife lives without blessing, without life, without joy, without a helpmate, in want of all that is good, and without peace, without a blessing, for it says, ‘God blessed them’ – only when they were a pair”’ (*Midr. Psalm 59*, also see *Yebam.* 62b). See, Horowitz, p. 187.

⁴⁰ Interestingly, while the Jewish tradition advocated the necessity of marriage the later Christian tradition did not link the image of God idea to the necessity of marriage as such, for in the tradition of St. Paul celibacy was widely advocated and accepted as a means of devoting ones life to God and thereby becoming ‘in his image’. This will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

Several rabbis [...] said that man was in the image of God in that he stands upright, speaks, and understands, and sees, as do the ministering angels, and that he is like the lower animals in that he eats and drinks, procreates, excretes and dies. (*Gen. Rab.* 8.3-11). Celestial beings thus are also in the image of God.⁴¹

For those rabbis that held that *Adam* was a hermaphrodite, i.e., both male and female in the original act of creation, they also held that the role of women was equal to the role of men.⁴² Thereby dominion to subdue the earth was not just given to man but also to woman.⁴³ In the ‘unity of man and woman’ there is the ‘image of God’.⁴⁴

The view that *Adam* was an hermaphrodite in the first act of creation was contested by Augustine in the fifth century. He pointed to the second part of Genesis 1:27 to prove his position, i.e., ‘male and female created he *them*’ (*De Trinitate* 12.6.8). By comparison, the Rabbis who argued for the hermaphroditic view of Adam (as noted above) changed the third person plural to the third person singular form, i.e., ‘And God created the man in His own image; in the image of God He created *him* (emphasis added, Genesis 1:27).’ It would appear, nonetheless, from the grammar of the sentence and from what the writers of Genesis are implying and in accordance with Augustine’s interpretation, that there were indeed two sexes, male and female that were created independently and not hermaphroditically unified.

⁴¹ Horowitz, p. 189.

⁴² *Adam* was perceived to have two faces, the male and the female, and as such there were two sides to *Adam*. These two sides faced in opposite directions but co-existed in one ‘body’. Horowitz, p. 186.

⁴³ Some Rabbis disputed that woman was given the command to rule and subdue the land, that this command was only given to man. The Medieval Rabbi Rashi (1040-1105) interpreted the text to refer to man and that man was given the right to subdue woman, ‘Rashi [points] out that the Hebrew word which has been read “and subdue it,” may be read “and he shall subdue her.” He drew the moral that the man masters the female that she may not be a loose woman, and thus implying that both the command to be fruitful and to subdue were given to man alone, Rashi justified subordination in marriage as part of the God-created state before mankind’s fall.’ Horowitz, p. 188 n. 34; also See, Ramban Nachmanides, *Commentary on the Torah*, trans. by Rabbi Charles Chavel (New York: Shilo, 1971) Genesis 1-2.

⁴⁴ See, Horowitz, pp. 188-189.

Notwithstanding the issues with regard to sex, Karl Barth holds that there are *communitarian* significances to the phrase ‘male and female’. He outlines that ‘male and female’ is what *defines* the image. This is to say human beings are God’s image in relation to their inter-personal and inter-subjective character.⁴⁵ While ‘male and female’ does seem to point to a communal nature that links human life to that of God (certainly in the Christian understanding of the communal Trinity), ‘male and female’ with regard to pure terminology, does not identify what separates the human community from the non-human community because a great deal of the animal kingdom is categorised as male and female also. Middleton does not altogether agree with Barth’s analysis and his understanding of ‘sexual differences’ in its portrayal of the social dimension of being human.

Middleton proposes that these views are misguided because in his opinion, male (זָכָר, *zakar*) and female (נְקֵבָה, *neqeba*) are *biological*, not social terms and thus cannot support either the notion of human *relationality* or culturally male/female characteristics. What Middleton sees as the social dimension is not the biological terms male and female but the terms אִישׁ (*is/ man*) and אִשָּׁה (*issa/ woman*). These are the terms used in Genesis chapter two, whereas the terms *zakar* and *neqeba* from Genesis 1:27 are used with regard to the animals that Noah brought into the ark in the flood account in Genesis 6:19, 7:9. It seems that Middleton is pointing out that these words ‘male and female’ are in some fashion reserved in their use to specifically designate that they were pairs of various animals capable of reproduction. Therefore, Middleton concludes that,

⁴⁵ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *The Doctrine of Creation*, part 1, *The Word of Creation*, trans. J. W. Edwards, O. Bussey, and Harold Knight (Edinburgh: Clark, 1958) pp. 194-197.

Not only [...] does the phrase *male* and *female* in [Genesis 1:27] not define the content of the image in social-relational terms at all, but its role is anticipatory, looking ahead and preparing us for [Genesis 1:28], where human beings (having been made biologically male and female in [Genesis 1:27]) are blessed with fertility and commissioned by God to reproduce, in order that they might fill the earth and subdue it.⁴⁶

Westermann and Barth's reading of the communal nature of male and female, nevertheless, is not without foundation. Here there are two individuals male and female who are created together in the image of God, wherein, without doubt, the natural inclination of the two individuals is to communicate. This is brought out by the redactor of Genesis chapter two, the 'J' source when in verse twenty-three Adam is seen to exclaim: 'This *at last* is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh'. It is as if Adam is speaking directly to the woman, exclaiming Eve's equality in her ability to communicate with him and to understand his assertion (that she too was morphologically (bone of my bones) and spiritually (flesh of my flesh) of his kind).

After Adam's exclamation that Eve was of his kind, God then commands the two sexes to *rule*. This is the second characteristic of the image of God mentioned in Genesis chapter one. The command to rule (רָדָה, *rada*) over the animals appears in Genesis 1:26 and again in Genesis 1:28. In Genesis 1:26, we are told that,

God said, 'Let us make humankind, in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

While in Genesis 1:28 it is stated that,

⁴⁶ Middleton, p. 50.

God blessed⁴⁷ them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’

The verb *rada* means to ‘tread the wine press’ in Joel 4:13: it means ‘to subdue’ in Numbers 24:19 and Leviticus 26:17. It is used in reference to the dominion of the king in 1 Kings 5:4; Psalms 110:2; 72:8; Isaiah 14:6; Ezekiel 34:4. ‘Psalm 8:6 is saying exactly the same but in different words: “Thou has given him dominion (משל, *masal*) over the works of thy hands; thou has put all things under his feet,” and in the following verses 7 and 8 the animals over whom he exercises dominion are listed’.⁴⁸

The word *rada* is held to have its origin from the court language of the great civilisations. It is viewed to have royal underpinnings. But the idea of *rada* moves away from the rule of a person at the creation of Sumerian and Babylonian narratives. According to Westermann, the creation of humans in Sumerian-Babylonian literature is directed towards the cult of ministering to the gods. However, in Genesis 1:26 the goal of human beings is within this world – with the call to dominion over the animals and the earth. The rule refers to all of humankind – in a universal sense.⁴⁹ The command to rule over the animals agrees with Genesis

⁴⁷ The blessing in Genesis 1:28 is of importance especially when linked with begetting and conception, birth and succession of generations.

⁴⁸ Westermann, p. 158. Similar expressions are found in the description of the king in Egypt. ‘The king, beloved (son of Re)...the good god, image of Re, son of Amun, the one who *tramples under foot* the foreigners (W. Helck, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, 17-22, 1961) emphasis added. In the birth story of Amenophis III from Luxor, the promise is made: ‘You will be king of Egypt and ruler of the desert. All lands are under your surveillance, the boundaries lie united under your sandals’, See Westermann, pp. 158-159.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 159, Westermann outlines that P’s account of *dominion* (rule) cannot mean killing animals for food, he compares rule to the rule of the sun over the day, and the rule of the moon over the night. It is human rule over animals without condition. Furthermore Westermann states that dominion over animals certainly does not mean their exploitation by humans. In fact, people would forfeit their kingly role among the living (that is what *rada* refers to) were the animals to be made the object of their whim. The establishment of a hierarchical order between humans and animals means that the animals are not there just ‘to vegetate’; the relationship set up between them is to be understood in a positive sense. Ibid.

verse 26, except that in the command given *directly* to humans an additional verb *kabas* is added to the verb *rada*. This second verb, like *rada*, belongs to the context of subordination or domination. This command is used in terms of slaves in Jeremiah 34:11, 16; Nehemiah 5:5; 2 Chronicles 28:10 and in relation to land which is subjugated in Numbers 32:22, 29; Joshua 18:1; 1 Chronicles 22:18. It is also possible that the verb derives from the *rule of the king*, although it is not used in such a fashion in the Old Testament. According to Westermann, in practice *kabas* has the same meaning as *rada*. The difference might be in the stress placed on subjugation (*kabas*) of the earth, the earth being the object of *kabas*.⁵⁰

Middleton is of the opinion that ‘rule’ (*rada*) is not included into the text by chance. It would appear that the fact that the word is used twice in the two verses of Genesis 1:26 and 1:28 makes it appear that the redactor used it with particular intention. Middleton attaches particular significance to the use of the word rule (*rada*) in Genesis in relation to its usage with kingship in the Old Testament (it is used along with *malak* [to reign] and *masal* [to govern] to describe royal activity).⁵¹ As with Westermann, Middleton both recognises and brings to the fore the royal implications of *rada*, - a call to royal rule. The question thus arises as to what exactly the royal rule entails.

⁵⁰ Westermann, p. 161.

⁵¹ Middleton states that – Although it does not always have a royal sense – ‘it [*rada*] is used of authority over slaves in Leviticus 25:43, 46, 53 and over labourers in 1 Kings 5:15 [MT 5:30]; 9:23, and 2 Chronicles 8:10; and possibly for the treading of a wine press in Joel 3:13 [MT 4:13] – though this may well be a different verb, *yarad* [to go down], *rada* is used of the rule of the king or other political leaders in 1 Kings 4:24 [MT 5:4]; Psalm 72: 8, 110:2; Isaiah 14:6; and Ezekiel 34:4’. See Middleton, p. 50

Interestingly, the use of *rada* in Ezekiel 34:4,⁵² draws on the metaphor of shepherding, this idea of shepherding was a standard image for a king in the ancient Near East:

This intersection of royal and pastoral metaphors is particularly relevant for Genesis 1:26, 28, where *rada* occurs with various categories of animal life as its object, including *behema*, which is usually translated as ‘cattle’ or ‘livestock’ and typically refers to domesticated animals. Significantly, however, humanity is called to exercise power also over the ‘birds of the air’, ‘fish of the sea’, and indeed over ‘everything that moves upon the earth’ – a rather comprehensive assignment. Whatever the details of applicability, however, James Limburg is undoubtedly correct when he suggests that the use of *rada* here extends an originally political ideal to the relationship of humans with nonhuman creation.⁵³

It seems that *kabas* from Middleton’s view is not equivalent to *rada* as Westermann’s analysis is wont to indicate. Like Westermann, Middleton highlights the lack of a relationship between *kabas* and royal connotations. In fact *kabas* is used in many contexts which seem to have a harsh or violent meaning.⁵⁴ In relation to the first chapter of Genesis and the use of *kabas* there does not appear to be the implication of a violent or adversarial relationship to the earth *per se*. Indeed, Deuteronomy 3:20 and 31:2 among other texts refer to Israel’s possession of the Promised Land – do not utilise *kabas* but *yarasi* which means simply ‘to take possession of’ in a neutral sense without any particularly violent connotations.

⁵² ‘The Word of the Lord came to me: mortal, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel: prophesy, and say to them – to the shepherds: thus says the Lord God: Ah, you shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings: but you do not feed the sheep. You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have *ruled* them.’ (Ezekiel, 34:1-4, emphasis added).

⁵³ Middleton, p. 51 – also see James Limburg, ‘The Responsibility of Royalty: Genesis 1-11 and the Care of the Earth’, *World and World II* (1991) pp. 14-30.

⁵⁴ Even its use in ‘Micah 7:19 for the forgiveness of sins probably has the sense of crushing them underfoot (which calls to mind the cognate noun *kebes*, which means “footstool” in 2 Chronicles 9:18). More typically, *kabas* is used of the defeat or conquest of enemies (2 Samuel 8:11), a man’s (illegitimate) sexual relationship with a woman (Esther 7:8), the enslavement of human beings (Jeremiah 34:11, 16, Nehemiah 5:5; 2, Chronicles 28:10) and the control of land after military conquest (Joshua 18:1; Numbers 32:22, 29; 1 Chronicles 22:18)’, Middleton, pp. 51-52.

From Middleton's perspective *kabas* as used in Genesis is best understood in a similar vein to *yarasi*. As he states:

In Genesis 1:28 *kabas* refers, minimally, to the right of human beings to spread over the earth and make it their home. Since the earth has already sprouted with vegetation in [Genesis 1:12] and plants for human consumption are mentioned in [Genesis 1:29], *kabas* may even anticipate human cultivation of the earth by agriculture. Indeed, both the domestication of animals (represented by *rada*) and cultivation of the earth (represented by *kabas*) are fundamental human functions that become quite explicit later in the primeval history. (In the MT both *rada* and *kabas* occur with the earth as their objects in [Genesis 1:26] and [Genesis 1:28] respectively, thus suggesting that here at least the terms are interchangeable.⁵⁵

The use of the terms *rada* and *kabas* seem to point to a communal relationship between humans to bring about rule over the animals of the earth and also dominion over the land. This seems to point to a distinctly *royal authority* given to the human race — a calling to rule the earthly dominion with care and responsibility (to shepherd) — both Westermann and Middleton agree on this aspect.

Robert Davidson also asserts that 'image and likeness are defined by what follows, (in the Genesis text, that is, the command) to rule.'⁵⁶ But does this mean that the 'image' of human beings is to be understood with regard to *rule* solely? Other interpreters, who are not of this opinion, would continue to hold that rule is an important subsidiary component of the image, that is to say, it is related to the image as its result or consequence. Middleton too is of this opinion:

Rule defines the image as its 'permanent implication'. [Therefore Middleton is] inclined to [hold] that while rule may well be grammatically only the purpose and not the definition of the image in [Genesis 1:26], an initial look at the overall rhetorical world of the text suggests that it [rule] is necessary

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 52.

⁵⁶ Robert Davidson, *Genesis 1-11 Cambridge Bible Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) p. 25.

and inseparable [to the image's] purpose and hence virtually constitutive of the image.⁵⁷

This leaves the possibility of the image of God being defined in more ways than rule and dominion. One can hold that rule is necessary and inseparable to the image's purpose and hence *virtually* constitutive of the image but that the idea of image of God is not conceptually defined or circumscribed by rule and dominion. Indeed the texts of Genesis do not appear to indelibly wed image to rule and dominion. God said 'let them have dominion over the fish...' (Genesis 1:26) and God said [...] 'be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish...' (Genesis 1:28). There is a sense from the text that dominion and rule is freely given to human beings in a more passive sense, as a right given to humans because they have been created in the image of God. In agreement with Middleton's careful analysis of the text it is evident that the image of God as an idea is not totally defined by *rule* and *dominion*. But certainly rule is an important aspect in human being's ability to be in the image of God, proper rule and governance paralleling God's ability to reign/ shepherd over the earth ruling with justice and fairness seems to be called for – this ability of human rule to participate in royal rule is brought out further in scripture references to God's *royal rule* in the Old Testament. We have already noted in passing the royal connotations of rule that *rada* evokes.

⁵⁷ Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, pp. 54-55. This point is similarly made by W. H. Schmidt, *The Faith of the Old Testament: A History* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) p. 198.

SECTION THREE
GOD'S RULE AND ITS ROYAL CONNOTATIONS

'Let us make (*na 'aseh*)' – these plurals have been understood as announcing a decision of God to bring about an action. They have been interpreted and explained in many different ways. Some exegetes hold that the 'Let us make':

- (i) represents a remnant of the old polytheistic mythology (the gods of the Cannanite or Mesopotamian pantheon)
- (ii) refers to the deliberation of the Trinity (Augustine)
- (iii) is a plurality within the Godhead
- (iv) is God speaking to the heavenly court
- (v) is the royal plural
- (vi) is a request to the earth to aid in creating humanity
- (vii) is a plural which differentiates between God and humanity.⁵⁸

Middleton holds that the best way to understand the 'Let us make' is in relation to a careful inter-textual reading which sees the plurals as referring to the heavenly court and divine angels. This reading was suggested in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*.⁵⁹ This *Targum* rests on a tradition going back to pre-Christian times although its final form maybe from the 6th century AD.

In many biblical texts, God's throne room is occupied with a heavenly court of angelic beings, who are royal messengers of the cosmic king and this heavenly court is focused with helping God in the administration of his kingdom. Importantly, the Old Testament texts that refer to the heavenly court are 'both late and early, poetic, prophetic, and historical'.⁶⁰ In Isaiah 6, the attendants of 'the king, YHWH of hosts' are the 'winged seraphim', while in Ezekiel's vision of God's chariot throne

⁵⁸ See, Middleton, p. 55.

⁵⁹ See, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* trans. with intro. by Michael Maher, MSC, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992).

⁶⁰ These include, Job 1:6; 2:1; 5:1; 15:8; 38:7; Psalm 29:1; 82:1; 89:5-7 (MT 89:6-8); 95:3; 96:4, I Chronicles 16:25; Psalm 97:7; Exodus 15:11; 2 Samuel 5:22-25; 1 Kings 22:19; Isaiah 6:2, 8; Jeremiah 23:18, 21-22; Ezekiel 1; 3:12-13; 10; Daniel 4:17 (MT 4:14), Middleton, p. 56.

(Ezekiel 1, 3, 10) the winged creatures are described but not named – ‘which is also true of the vision of John in Revelation 4-5, when the heavens are opened and the seer is granted a glimpse of the events in God’s throne room’.⁶¹ However,

In Genesis 1, [...] the main action does not happen in the heavens. Rather, the dramatic movement of the text is from the heavens (days one and four) to the waters (days two and five) to the earth (days three and six), which is the focus for four of God’s eight creative acts. This may explain why on day six, which foregrounds the *earth*, there is no explicit vision (or mention) of *heavenly* beings. Yet their presence is alluded to by the shift from third-person jussives in God’s first seven creative acts to the otherwise cryptic cohortative (‘let us make’) in the eight act.⁶²

Interestingly there is a similar first-person plural in Isaiah’s vision. In Isaiah YHWH poses the question, on behalf of both himself and the seraphim, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for *us*? (Isaiah 6:8). In Genesis chapter one there is a movement in 1:26 from ‘in *our* image’, to 1:27 ‘in *his* image’ (*Besalmo*). In Ezra 4:18 there is a similar shift between plural and singular in relation to a human king and his royal court: “The letter that you sent to us has been read...before me”.⁶³

Middleton believes that ‘angelic beings are not foreign to the author of Genesis 1’ this is indicated by the use of ‘similar first-person plurals in Genesis 3:22 and Genesis 11:7’ (both seem to be referring to the heavenly court) and by ‘explicit mention of cherubim in 3:24’. It, therefore, seems plausible on Middleton’s account that in Genesis 1 (like Isaiah 6) ‘God shares with angelic courtiers the decision to commission the human agent for a significant earthly task’.⁶⁴ Moreover, it points to the fact that the writers of the text would see the image of God in relation to rule as akin to God’s ruling ability as found in the oral tradition.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid. n. 35.

⁶⁴ See Middleton, p. 57.

Psalm 8 is seen to take up this commissioning⁶⁵ and uses the language of royal coronation to portray the elevated status of humanity as ruler (*masal*) over creation. The psalm goes so far to boldly compare humanity to God,

What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?

You have made them a little
Lower than God
and crowned them with glory
and honour
You have given them dominion
over the works of your
hands;
you have put all things under
their feet (Psalm 8, v. 4-6, NRSV).

The psalm does this both implicitly and explicitly. The name of the creator who is King is

‘majestic [*addir*] in all the earth’ and God’s splendour [*hōd*] is ‘above the heavens’ (8:1 (MT 8:2)), humanity is said to be crowned/adorned with an analogous ‘glory’ (*kābōd*) and ‘honour’ (*hādār*) for terrestrial rule (8:5 (MT 8:6)). This implicit comparison which uses terms with royal connotations to describe both God and the human creatures is made explicit when the psalmist asserts that humans are godlike or almost divine, which is the import of having being made ‘little lower than [*Elohim*]’.⁶⁶

Westermann examines this possibility also and holds that the use of plurals has Babylonian parallels, and he highlights that the description of the heavenly court in the Old Testament is given in the following passages: 1 Kings 22:19; Job 1:6f.;

⁶⁵ ‘You made them [humans] little lower than *elohim*, And crowned them with glory and honour. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: All flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim that paths of the seas. (Psalm 8:5-8 [MT 8:6-9]). See, Middleton, p. 57.

⁶⁶ Middleton, p. 58. *Elohim* may refer to the angels rather than to YHWH explicitly in this way the understanding of *tselem elohim* may be that ‘it is [...] possible that not only Psalm 8 but also Genesis 1:27 and 9:6 may be comparing humans not just to the creator but to the divine/heavenly realm in general, thus suggesting a broad analogy between the cosmic king, his royal angelic courtiers, and his earthly human vice-regent’. See, Middleton, pp. 58-59.

2:1f.; 38:7. Finally, he states that Isaiah 6:8 is alleged as a parallel to Genesis 1:26: ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Westermann, however, is not convinced of the link between the plural and the heavenly court. He argues that,

[it is] impossible that P should have understood the plural in this way, not only because he was not familiar with the idea of a heavenly court, but also because of his insistence on the uniqueness of Yahweh, besides whom there could be no other heavenly being. Angels or any sort of intermediary beings are found nowhere in P.⁶⁷

in opposition to Westermann’s view, however, Middleton points out in his analysis that there are not just late biblical texts that refer to the heavenly court but indeed ‘early’ texts such as Genesis 3:22, 24 that indicate the existence of the court:

God said, ‘see, the man has become like one of *us*, knowing good and evil, and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’ – therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the *cherubim*, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis, 3:22-24).

The mention of the cherubim seems to point to the understanding of a royal throne. As Lawrence Boadt points out, ‘many times kings pictured themselves seated on special thrones built on cherubim, the winged-bull-man-eagle [...] a cherubim throne was a sign of royal glory as the representative of the gods, and marked the king’s share in their divine power.’⁶⁸ These early texts might have been redacted by P in a holistic fashion thus the ‘us’ of 1:27, 3:22 and 11:7 may have been weaved through an intricate writing undertaking by P in exile. As Lawrence Boadt notes:

The P source was the last great narrative source to be put together. It clearly intended to supplement what J and E said about the historical traditions of Israel with special materials on worship, observance of the covenant in day to

⁶⁷ Westermann, pp. 144-145.

⁶⁸ Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1984) p. 268

day life, and social structures of the covenant in the day to day life, and social structures of Israelite community. J and E traced the promise of God up to the covenant on Sinai and the taking of the land of Canaan as a gift [...] But P shows many signs that it was written in the time of the exile when the land and the king had both been taken away. One piece of evidence is found in the comparison of the prophet Ezekiel's message during the exile with the thought of P in Leviticus 17-26. To help people maintain their faith in Yahweh even when everything seemed to have been lost, P set out all the aspects of Israel's faith that were still valid. It includes in its story the reasons for keeping the Sabbath (Gen 1), the origins of circumcision (Gen 17), the divine command to obey all cultic and religious laws (Lev 1-27, Num 1-10, 25-36), and the important role of the high priest next to Moses himself (Ex 4:28; Num 1, etc.).⁶⁹

In this way, perhaps Middleton's analysis of 'Let us make' as referring to the heavenly court is the most logical, especially given its support found in the *Targum Commentaries*. The other suggestions that God is referring to the three-persons of the God-head as outlined by Augustine is as Westermann indicates a 'dogmatic judgment'.⁷⁰ However, it is held that the plural could be used to signify deliberation. In the foregoing analysis of 'Let us make' one might ask what insight does it give to the image of God idea. It would seem that the 'Let us' from Middleton's account highlights again the use of royal metaphor in the opening chapter of the book of Genesis thus imbuing each individual human being both male and female with an authority to 'rule' and 'subdue' with analogical reference to the divine authority of *El-ohim*. It conveys that the human being both male and female have after deliberation been created (*bara*) or called into existence in a particular fashion from a divine authority to rule royal and shepherd creation *par excellence*.

⁶⁹ Ibid. pp. 103-104.

⁷⁰ Westermann, p. 144.

God has created a cosmic temple whereby all creatures are called to worship him as king.⁷¹ The language of Psalm 148 captures this central function of creation to praise God.

Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
Praise him in the heights!
Praise him, all his angels;
Praise him, all his host!

Praise him, sun and moon;
Praise him, all you shining
Stars!
Praise him, you highest heavens,
And you waters above the
heavens!

Let them praise the name of
The Lord,
For he commanded and they
Were created. (Psalm 148, v. 1-5)

All the earth is called in these psalms to praise God. Creation in this regard is seen as a ‘temple’ in which it is appropriate for humanity as God’s ‘image’ to offer praise;

For just as no pagan temple in the ancient Near East could be complete without the installation of the cult image of the deity to whom the temple was dedicated, so creation in Genesis 1 is not complete [...] until God creates humanity on the sixth day as *imago Dei*, in order to represent and mediate the divine presence on earth.⁷²

⁷¹Middleton, p. 71. Middleton also notes that there are some references to God as King in later Pentateuch literature in Numbers 23:21, Deuteronomy 33:5 (both poetic texts) and in the former prophets in 1 Samuel 12:12. ‘God is said to “reign” (*mālak*, the cognate verb) in Exodus 15:18 (a poetic text) and 1 Samuel 8:7 and to “govern” (*māšal*) in Judges 8:23’. Ibid., p. 71, n. 76. Some texts explicitly contrast God’s rule with that of human kingship (1 Samuel 8:7, 12:12). However, the Psalms freely name God as king.

⁷² Middleton, p. 87. Also see Rikki E. Watts, ‘On the Edge of the Millennium: Making Sense of Genesis 1,’ in *Living in the Lamblight Christianity and Contemporary Challenges to the Gospel*, ed. Hans Boersma (Vancouver, B.C.,: Regent College Publishing, 2001), p. 148.

SECTION FOUR

SUMMATION: THE BIBLICAL CONTEXT AND THE 'IMAGE OF GOD'

From Middleton's and Westermann's exegetical and inter-textual analysis an understanding of the idea of the image of God seems to be linked with the notion of *rule*. Human beings are called to exercise rule on God's behalf in creation, but not only to rule, they are to rule analogically to God's rule, to rule in accordance with the covenant to 'shepherd'. In this way, human beings are viewed to be *like* (or *represent*) God in exercising royal power on earth – they have received the gift of sharing in (*relating to*) and *participating* in God's royal right to rule. If we are 'like' God in our ability to rule then the *image* is seen as *representational*, indicating similarity by means of analogy between God and humans. Human beings in exercising this rule are *representative* of God's authority and therefore humans become responsible in the *office and task* entrusted to them in *relation* to God. In the Near East the King ruled because he was in the 'image' of the god, the writers of Genesis extended this status to 'all', male and female alike.

Humans are also commissioned to 'fill the earth' and therefore participate in God's creative power, to bring forth new life and to multiply. God started the process of creation, which human beings are now called to continue. The human image of God is also a *participation* in this creative work of building and development of the earth – to labour and work, to form culture, develop civilisation. Human beings are called also to praise and extol God and God's works.

From the perspective of modern exegesis working with source, form, historical and inter-textual criticism it is evident that the image of God is

contextualised in many ways by the surrounding verses and literature of Genesis chapter one. The principle dynamic understanding is in terms of *representation, relation* and signified in *rule* or, more precisely, *participation* in the *royal rule* of God to have dominion over the earth and to subdue/ shepherd it. This opens up a myriad of possibilities with regard to the question of what is meant by *rule* and its relationship to *responsibility* towards that which we have dominion over. In the modern period this has become a question of exceeding importance especially concerning the ecological care of the planet – given the fears of rising carbon dioxide levels. This ecological situation has resulted from what many hold as improper care and rule/ shepherding of the environment. Humans have, in other words, lost respect for the wonder of creation. An understanding of what analogous Divine rule means requires a comprehensive reflection on the responsibility that accompanies that rule, this is not immediately explicated in Genesis chapter one, but in later Old Testament literature God lays down commandments/ laws in order to define right relations.

Returning, however, to the philosophical elucidations that can be gleaned by means of careful exegesis of the scriptural text of Genesis chapter one, it is apparent that the human being was reasoned to be beyond all other forms of creation in our ability to rule and to take care of creation. Thus the human being occupies a position of responsibility that is not given to other forms of creation. Animals to the Old Testament writers were undoubtedly viewed as not capable of reasoned responsibility. Humans are thereby called to rule and to participate in a calling that seems beyond all other ‘incarnate creation’, this separation from all other forms of creation obviously pointed to human endowment with a higher level of ability to

think – an ability that was given to them by *Elohim* in whose ‘image’ they participated.

In the second chapter of Genesis, it is noted that God commanded human beings not to eat of the ‘tree of knowledge of good and evil’ (Genesis 2:16-18), so responsibility in the early chapter of Genesis seems not to be bound up with knowledge of good and evil. Yet, God’s command not to eat of the tree of ‘good and evil’ seems to imply that a primitive knowledge of ‘right’ from ‘wrong’ is known to man before the temptation by the Serpent in Genesis 3 and the subsequent ‘Fall’ (*Lapsus*) in Genesis 3:6-14.⁷³

What we found in our reflection on Genesis in this chapter was, firstly, that the image of God as an idea pre-existed the Old Testament story of Genesis. It was used in the Near East by Kings to empower their Royal authority – their ‘divine right to rule’ given they represented a particular god. The Pharaohs of Egypt also believed themselves to be divine or in the ‘image’ of the various gods, this demonstrates practical usage and understanding of the idea prior to its use in Genesis.⁷⁴ Secondly, the Old Testament usage of the term image of God outlined that everyone was in the image of God – male and female not just the kings as in the case of the Ancient Near East. This was a radical point of departure. Thirdly, in this culture the importance of marriage and rule may have been bound with the image of God. Some Rabbis, however, linked the image of God not just with rule and procreation but with human ontology and the way humans differed from the rest of creation to resemble the Divine. Fourthly, human beings were found thus to represent, to be in relation to, to

⁷³ The eating of the tree of knowledge in Genesis results in the human race being banished from the Garden of Eden. This is often referred to as the ‘Fall’ or *Lapsus*.

⁷⁴ Bratton, p. 55.

participate in, God's rule and God's divine majesty. In this way, there is a compulsion to hold that the human being participates in the *essence* of God. Whatever that essence may be, however, such positive talk about God would have been discouraged by Jewish theologians for fear of anthropomorphism. In the next chapter we encounter this fear in the *Targum Commentaries* which interpret the Hebrew scriptures for the Aramaic, Greek and Syriac Jewish diaspora from 500 BC to the Medieval Period.

CHAPTER II

JEWISH-HELLENISTIC UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE IDEA OF BESELEM ELOHIM

In the previous chapter we noted that the writers of Genesis most likely conceived of the image of God as a phrase denoting the way in which the human being (both male and female) was capable of representing God, particularly in ‘our’ ability to participate in divine ‘rule’ and subjugation. In this chapter, we will trace how the term image of God was understood by a number of Jewish and Hellenistic writers in the period from c. 515 BC to 300 AD. This brings us into contact with several texts in a range of languages. The first sets of texts are the *Targums* and they exist in three languages: Aramaic, Greek and Syriac. We will outline the historical reasons that resulted in the development of these *Targum* texts before considering their interpretation of Genesis 1:26-27.

After considering the Aramaic *Targum* commentaries we will move to consider the influence of Hellenistic thinking on Jewish thought. This will necessitate an outline of Plato and Aristotle’s approach to ‘image’ (*eikon*, *phantasmata*) and ‘imagination’ (*phantasia*) before moving to Philo of Alexandria’s interpretation of Genesis (the *Targum HaShivim* or *Septuagint*) in light of Greek philosophy. Finally, we will outline Plotinus’ understanding of ‘image’ in his philosophy of the *One* as expounded in his *Enneads*. Philo influenced two strands of thinking after the death of Christ. The first strand was Christian, exemplified by the work of Origen, and the second influence was Neo-Platonic influencing the work of

Plotinus.¹ Plotinus had a profound influence on the thinking of St Augustine who became the great synthesiser of Christian-Hellenistic thinking on the image of God idea in the 400s AD.

SECTION ONE
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS WHICH LEAD TO
THE TARGUM TRANSLATIONS

From 515 BC the Jewish nation started to use Aramaic commentaries which were read alongside the Hebrew scriptures. These ‘translations’ were eventually written down as commentaries and were known as the *Targum Commentaries*.² Yonatan Kolatch remarks that,

Among the oldest extant interpretations of the Torah are the ancient *Targumin*, or translations. The most influential [*Targumin*] are *Targum Onkelos* and *Targum Yonatan ben Uziel*, each of which is an Aramaic translation. Written originally for non-Hebrew speakers, they have also played a significant role throughout Jewish history as commentaries. *Targum Onkelos* is accepted by Jewish authorities to be *the* authoritative translation; it is largely literal [...] both *Targum* are important sources of Jewish law and lore.³

The Hebrew language’s existence became endangered from 700 BC. From the 700s the Assyrian empire began to rise in the East. Jewish efforts to fight the Assyrians off

¹ Norman Bentwich remarks ‘two streams of philosophy [...] are sourced in Philo: the stream of pagan [Neoplatonism], and the stream of Christian Gnosis. They culminate at the same time, the one in Origen, the other in Plotinus.’ See, Bentwich, p. 4.

² *Targum* is the Aramaic word for interpretation/ translation. See, Yonatan Kolatch, *Masters of the Word: Traditional Jewish Bible Commentary From the First Through Tenth Centuries*, vol. 1 (Jersey City, USA: Ktav Publishing House, 2006). These commentaries/ translations were composed from the time of the Second Temple (515 BC) until the early Middle Ages.

³ Yonatan Kolatch, *Masters of the Word: Traditional Jewish Bible Commentary From the First Through Tenth Centuries*, vol. 2 (Jersey City, USA: Ktav Publishing House, 2007), p. 157. The Talmud refers specifically to four translations: (i) *Targum Onkelos* (Aramaic), (ii) *Targum Yonatan ben Uziel on Nevi'im* (Aramaic), (iii) *Targum of Aquila on the Torah* (Greek), *Targum HaShivim* (also known as the *Septuagint*) (Greek). In addition to these translations cited by the Talmud there are (at least) four Torah translations that date from the Talmudic period, *Targum Yonatan ben Uziel on the Torah* (Aramaic), the fragmentary *Targum Yerushalmi* (Aramaic), *Targum Neofiti* (Aramaic) and the *Peshitta* (Syriac). Kolatch, vol. 2, p. 160.

led to total defeat of the northern Israeli tribes resulting in exile in 722/721 BC (1 Kings 13, 2 Kings 17). Aramaic became the spoken language of diplomacy and trade in the Middle East. Judah (the southern kingdom), however, survived as the only independent part of Israel. This period was a time of submission to Assyria's power. Some of the kings resisted (Hezekiah and Josiah), but other kings gave in totally (for instance, Manasseh) to Assyria's power.⁴ In fact, when 'Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, conquered the northern kingdom of Israel (in 722 BC), he exiled the Ten Tribes living in the Shomron area, and repopulated the area with a people that spoke Aramaic'.⁵

Aramaic was the language of the Babylonian Empire, but Hebrew, despite this action by Shalmaneser, continued to be retained as the language of the Jewish people; this was true in the southern kingdom of Judah. Yet a further blow to the Hebrew language came in 586 BC when the Babylonian empire of Nebuchadnezzar conquered the kingdom of Judah in two invasions in 589 and 587 BC (2 Kings 18-25). The Babylonians destroyed the First Temple and captured the Jews. The Jewish people, now in exile, began to speak in the various local languages to which that they were exposed. It was not until 539 BC that the Persian emperor Cyrus the Great conquered Babylonia and soon, thereafter, allowed the Jews to return to Israel, but they were no longer conversant in Hebrew.⁶ The Hebrew language underwent a further attack with the conquest of the Middle East by Alexander the Great in 331 BC. In this period, Greek became an ever more important language for the Jewish people as they were governed firstly by the Greeks in Egypt (Ptolemies) and then by

⁴ Boadt, pp. 22-23.

⁵ Kolatch, vol 2., p. 161.

⁶ Ibid. p. 162. In Nehemiah 13.24 it is stated that 'half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke the language of various peoples.'

the Greeks in Syria (Seleucids),⁷ this helped to eradicate further any pockets of Hebrew that remained since the Babylonian invasion. Hebrew, nevertheless, was still considered the *holy tongue* and the Rabbis read the Scriptures in Hebrew. Increasingly, however, the ‘lay’ populace was not able to understand the original language, thus the *Targum Commentaries* (in the dialect of Western Aramaic), the *Septuagint* (Greek Old Testament) and the *Peshitta* (Syriac which is an Eastern Aramaic dialect) were required to bridge the gap in understanding from the sixth century BC to the Middle Ages.⁸

1.1 *Targum HaShivim* – The Greek *Septuagint*

As noted above, the *Targums* exist not only in the Aramaic language. One of the most famous *Targums* is the *Targum HaShivim*, this *Targum* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. *Targum HaShivim* is more commonly known as the *Septuagint* (LXX). It was necessary to translate the Old Testament into Greek in the years after 333 BC due to the fact that Alexander the Great conquered Israel in 332 BC.⁹ By 331 BC the city of Alexandria was founded, this city became the most advanced place of scholarship in the Mediterranean.¹⁰ Thus Hellenistic rule brought with it a necessity for Jewish people to become familiar with Greek. The Jewish people also started to travel out of the Middle East and throughout the Mediterranean in this period.

⁷ Boadt, p. 23.

⁸ The influence of Aramaic is also exemplified by the fact that the *Dead Sea Scrolls* were written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek (parchments from these scrolls date from c. 150 BC - 70 AD). The *Mishnah* (Jewish oral traditions) and *Tosefta* (Jewish Oral Law), written as a ‘supplement’ (*tosefta*) to the *Mishnah*, were composed in Aramaic around 200 AD and continue to show the influence of Aramaic in the period after the birth of Christ to the Middle Ages.

⁹ Alexander conquered Darius (the Emperor of Persia) in 333 BC. See, Diarmaid MacDulloch, *A History of Christianity* (London: Allen Lane, 2009) pp.38-40.

¹⁰ In 323 Alexander’s body was taken to Alexandria, elevating the city even further. The city was endowed with a major library. Ibid. p. 38.

The *Septuagint* (LXX) is a translation of the entire Hebrew Scriptures, including the deuterocanonical books, and was undertaken from the 'third century BC onwards and often revised later by Greek translators. It was widely used by the Jews outside of Palestine, and especially by the New Testament writers and early Christians.'¹¹ The process of the Greek translation of the Hebrew bible is laced with deep philosophical influences, ranging from the use of philosophically-laden terms such as *Logos* and *arche* in the Gospel of John and the concept of *eikon* or 'image' in the book of Genesis. The Greeks not only brought with them a new language but also a wealth of philosophical knowledge. The impact of Hellenistic thinkers such as Plato (428/427 BC - 348/347 BC) and Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC) on Jewish thought, therefore, was immense. This is exemplified through the work of Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BC – c. 40 AD) and his understanding of the *Septuagint*. We will consider how Philo was one of the chief figures of Jewish-Hellenistic philosophy presently.¹²

1.2 Syriac Targum — The *Peshitta*.

The Syriac or *Peshitta* 'translation' of the Old Testament was made by the Christians in Syria. This work may date back to the second century AD, but it was completed around the fourth or fifth centuries. The word *Peshitta* means 'simple' or 'common' and this represents the daily-use Bible of the people.¹³ This work has readings that support both the Hebrew Old Testament text and the *Septuagint*. One reason why the

¹¹ Boadt, p. 75.

¹² He had particular political influence also, given that he died in the year in which he was at Rome as ambassador of the Alexandrian Jews to the Emperor Gaius. Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Greece and Rome*, vol. 1 (London & New York: Continuum, 2003; 1946) p. 458.

¹³ Boadt, p. 75.

Jews moved to Syria was, according to Josephus, ‘due to its proximity’.¹⁴ Another reason for the Jewish movement to Syria, however, may be linked to the wars that followed the dismemberment of Alexander’s kingdom. The Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties were in continual disputes in the coastal district that formed the eastern edge of the Mediterranean.¹⁵ Notwithstanding these issues, the *Peshitta* was a later translation of the Old Testament, and occurring around 200 AD. The Jews at this time were in quite a fluidic form of movement and dispersed widely.¹⁶

As a translation, the *Peshitta* remains faithful to the Pentateuch — it is a very literal translation of these first five books of the Old Testament. Other books, such as the Book of Psalms, are influenced by the LXX and are, therefore, more a free translation.¹⁷ Thus we will not undertake an investigation of the *Peshitta*, given its literal adherence to the Hebrew Pentateuch which we have discussed in chapter one.

SECTION TWO

TARGUM INTERPRETATIONS OF BESELEM ELOHIM

Alexander Altmann, who undertook a significant scholarly analysis of the Aramaic *Targums* and their findings concerning the phrase image of God in his article ‘“Homo Imago Dei” in Jewish and Christian Theology’, highlights the point that many of the *Targums* had a reluctance to define the meaning of the phrase image of

¹⁴ John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE – 117 CE)* (Berkeley & London: University of California Press, 1999; 1996) p. 242.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Pompey brought the region under Roman control in 63 BC and the Jews in general lost political control. They were given the right, however, to exercise semi-independent rule in the Kingdoms of Herod (37-34 BC), Archelus (4 BC-6 AD) and Agrippa (41-44 AD). According to Barclay the concept of the Jewish ‘homeland’ and ‘diaspora’ in this period becomes quite difficult to distinguish. Barclay, p. 243.

¹⁷ Joshua Bloch, ‘The Authorship of the Peshitta’ in *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, Vol. 35. No. 4 (Jul., 1919), 215-222 (p. 215).

God.¹⁸ This reluctance was due, on the one hand, to a fear of anthropomorphising God and, on the other hand, to divinising the human being. As Altmann notes,

Turning [...] to rabbinic sources, we note a certain reluctance to define the meaning of the phrase ‘image of God’. This is particularly evident in the Aramaic versions of the Pentateuch. The oldest of these, the Targum Yerushalmi discovered by A. Diez Macho and dated by him as pre-Christian, fights shy of rendering the term [*tselem*], ‘image’ by [*zalma*] or similar Aramaic equivalents and uses instead the more innocuous term *demūt* or *demū*, ‘similitude’, which carries with it the association of *imitatio Dei*, rather than any anthropomorphic concept of God. Since Genesis 1:26 speaks of both *zelem* and *demūt* (‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness’), this Targum translates the second term by the synonymous phrase *kad nafaq ken*, meaning ‘in similar fashion’. In verse 27, where the term *zelem* [*tselem*] occurs twice, *demūt* and *demū* are used in the Aramaic version, and in order to avert any suggestion of anthropomorphism, *be-zelem Elohim* (‘in the image of God’) is rendered *bi-demū min qadam YY* (‘in a similitude from before the Lord’).¹⁹

The position of *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan be Uziel*²⁰ is similar to *Targum Yerushalmi* in that it, too, avoids as far as possible the term ‘image’ (*zalma*) and replaces it with the word *deyoqna*, which corresponds to the Hebrew *demūt* (‘similitude’). This, according to Altmann, is evident from the way Genesis 1:26 is paraphrased, where *ki-demūtenū* (‘after our likeness’) is rendered *bi-deyoqnāna*. In that particular verse Altmann outlines that *Pseudo-Jonathan* has no hesitation translating *be-zalmenu* by *be-zalmāna* because God’s words are presented as an address to the ministering angels, the implication being that man was to be created in the *image of the angels*. However, in Genesis 1:27 the term *be-zalmō* is translated by *be-deyoqneh*, ‘in his similitude’, and this term is used again in Genesis 5:1 (Hebrew – *bi-demūt*) and also in Genesis 9:6 (*be-selem Elohim*). *Pseudo-Jonathan*’s term

¹⁸ Alexander Altmann, ‘“Homo Imago Dei” in Jewish and Christian Theology,’ *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 48, No. 3 (July, 1968), pp. 235–259.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 235–236.

²⁰ *The Aramaic Bible – Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis* Vol. 1b, See, n. 2.

deyoqna’ seems to correspond to the old *Targum Yerushalmi*’s *demū* or *demūt*. Altmann concludes by holding that in both Aramaic versions (*Targum Yerushalmi* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*) there is evidence of the tendency to avoid speaking of the ‘image of God’, while both have apparently no objection to using the phrase ‘similitude of God’.

Turning to *Targum Onqelos*²¹, Altmann notices in this work that the phrase *be-zēlem* (*bi-demūt*) *Elohim* in Genesis 1:27, 5:1, and 9:6 are left in the original Hebrew (hence no translation is attempted). Here Altmann suggests that the,

translator did not wish to tamper with the text. [...] The reason for Onqelos’ procedure may be simply due to a desire to refrain from meddling with a phrase so much charged with theological ambiguity. It is also possible that by *Elohim* he understood here the angels, although, unlike Pseudo-Jonathan, he does not indicate by his rendering of verse 26 that the plural ‘Let us make man’ refers to the angels. He could not have done so expressly, since his version is a literal one, but the midrashic exegesis may have been presupposed. There is a third possibility [...] like Pseudo-Jonathan and Symmachus, Onqelos may have separated *be-zēlem* (*bi-demūt*) from *Elohim* and understood the clause to signify: ‘In a specific image God created him’.²²

From Altmann’s analysis of the *Targums* it appears that the phrase ‘image of God’ was a contentious and difficult issue for the *Targum* translators. In many cases the greatest fear the translators had was that of anthropomorphism. They tended to temper the possibility of anthropomorphism by translating the term ‘image of God’ as ‘likeness of God’, the ‘image’ obviously denoted a higher degree of *relationship* than a likeness. It was a conscious effort by the interpreters to juxtapose the two terms in the *Targums* other than *Onqelos*. As Altmann outlined *Onqelos* decided to leave the word image (*tselem*) intact alongside *Elohim* for fear of ‘tampering with the

²¹ *The Aramaic Bible – Targum Onqelos to Genesis*, See, n. 2.

²² Altmann, pp. 237-238.

text'.²³ It is, therefore, not surprising that *Onqelos* was considered the most authoritative translation of the Hebrew text given its literal adherence to the text. The commentaries point to the fear of conceiving of the divine in a corporeal sense.

Investigating the *Targums* reveals a shift in thinking from the time of the composition of Genesis. In Genesis it is evident that there was not the same fear of linking the divine with the human. God is seen 'walking' in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8) and as such He exhibited human attributes. By the time of the *Targums* this association of the divine with human characteristics was feared. This fear is seen by the way the Aramaic *Targums* separate God from the 'image' in their interpretations. They do keep the concept of likeness, but for the *Targum* writers their God has moved 'beyond' anthropomorphism and thus God cannot be conceived to be in human form, 'walking around the Garden of Genesis'. Certainly this fear of linking oneself to divinity for the Jewish people can perhaps be exemplified in the case of Christ who claimed to be the 'son of the Father' in the early decades AD. At that time, the Jewish people considered this claim to be blasphemous and required that the blasphemer be put to death as recorded by the Gospel writers (Luke 23:21-24, John 18:12-19:22). Undoubtedly, the *Targums* as commentaries on the Pentateuch had a profound and wide-ranging influence on the Jewish people. They also formed a lot of the Jewish writers at the time including Philo of Alexandria. Philo too falls into line with distancing the image of God idea from too strong of a relationship with God; he does this by utilising Hellenistic philosophy, particularly the philosophy of Plato.

²³ Ibid., p. 237.

SECTION THREE
ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Almost all commentators would agree that Ancient Greek culture has provided Western philosophy with most of its formative concepts. Along with the biblical tradition of Judeo-Christian thought, the Greek way (*ὁδός*) of speculation has maintained a formidable influence throughout the cultural, academic, literary and artistic development of Western civilisation. This influence was also to include and extend to the Jewish world of ‘revelation’. In particular Philo of Alexandria became a major synthesiser of Greek speculative thinking and Jewish thinking in the years around the birth of Christ. Greek mythology and philosophy had at that stage speculated on ‘images’ (*phantasmata/ eidola*) and the role of ‘images’ as a means of representation for a number of centuries. It was not until the time of Plato,²⁴ however, that the concept of ‘image’ received its first major philosophical examination. As Kearney explains,

With Plato, one of the founding fathers of Western metaphysics, the notion of image receives its first properly *philosophical* formulation. Removed from the cosmic drama of gods and heroes, the theme of image is assessed as a distinctly *human* mode of existence. This transition from a mythological to a metaphysical perspective was already anticipated by several pre-Socratic thinkers – e.g. Democritus, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, and Anaxagoras – who occasionally adverted to the problematic rapport between images (*phantasmata/ eidōla*) and reality.²⁵

Plato believed that the maker of an image, an *eidolou demiourgos*, is, as such, a copier or imitator (*mimetes*). Every human activity that relates to the making of images – painting, sculpture, poetry, music, or other creative arts of human culture – is understood as an *imitation* of the original creative act of the divine demiurge. This

²⁴ All references to Plato’s works are sourced from *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett, 1997), unless otherwise indicated.

²⁵ Kearney, p. 87.

demiurge is seen in action in the *Timaeus* (29-31),²⁶ all actions that are produced are understood with regard to the potentiality of the soul, the soul as such is capable of reasoning and has an ability to imitate the original act of the divine demiurge. In this way, the god's action is the original one true action and all following actions are copies. Human beings insofar as we deploy the power of imaging given our ability to reason we become beings that are capable of thinking in a *similar* way as the divine demiurge. Plato's philosophy, however, tends not to concentrate on the positive ability of human beings and on our power of creatively imaging the divine. Plato criticises man-made images as inferior copies of the 'real'.

Plato's ideas find full expression in Book VI of the *Republic*.²⁷ In this dialogue, Plato discusses the *Divided Line*, which divides off the 'correct vision of knowledge (*epistēmē*) from the false vision of mere opinion (*doxa*).'²⁸ Reason is located in the highest section of the *Divided Line* and imagination is placed in the lowest section. Reason (*nous*) is held to have the capacity to contemplate truth, imagination is relegated to the most inferior form of human opinion²⁹ – what Plato calls *eikasia* or fuddle.³⁰ As Kearney points out,

Reason alone has access to the transcendental *Ideas*. Imagination does no more than [*reflect* the objects of our temporal sensory world which

²⁶ *Timeaus* (29-31): The god wanted everything to be good and nothing to be bad so far as that was possible, and so [the god] took over all that was visible – not at rest but in discordant and disorderly motion – and brought it from a state of disorder to one of order, because he believed that order was in every way better than disorder [...] accordingly the god reasoned [nothing] could [...] be better than intelligence and [the god] concluded that it is impossible for anything to come to possess intelligence apart from the soul. Guided by this reasoning he put intelligence in the soul, and soul in body, and so he constructed the universe. He wanted to produce a piece of work that would be as excellent and supreme as its nature would allow. This, then [...] is how we must say divine providence brought our world into being as a truly living being, endowed with soul and intelligence., *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle*, ed. S. Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd, and C.D.C. Reeve, (Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 1995) pp. 443-444.

²⁷ Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Robin Waterfield (USA: Oxford University Press, 1994).

²⁸ Kearney, p. 90.

²⁹ *Ibid*,

³⁰ David Melling, *Understanding Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 108. For an overview of Plato's epistemology in the *Divided Line* (*Republic* Book VI), see, *ibid.*, p. 107.

are themselves no more than a copy of the transcendental *Ideas* themselves].³¹

Thus in Plato's epistemological framework mankind resides at a third removed from truth.

Plato uses the idea of 'images' both in his wax-tablet model of memory in his *Theaetetus*, (191c, d) and in his notion of an 'inner artist painting pictures in the soul' *Philebus* 39c. In these cases, he evokes the idea of images as copies of perceptions and thoughts. Here we see Plato placing the representations on a medium (the wax-tablet) which is capable of being impressed/ shaped and is capable of retaining this impression/ shape through time.

Yet, Kearney holds that the picture of image or imagination is not totally negative in Platonic understanding. In the *Republic* Plato is seen to have a 'counter-current' to his denouncement of image-makers where he allows the occasional use of image in the pursuit of truth. In Book VI, Plato is seen to concede 'that knowledge (*epistēmē*) at times [may] have recourse to what he terms 'thought-images' in order to enable our human understanding (*dianoia*) to give figurative expression to its abstract ideas'.³² Images are to be construed as a mid-way or a path between the sensible experience and rational intelligence. In Plato's psychology, the image plays a mediational function:

[The image] leads the mind from the lower to the higher – that is, from the material to the transcendental world. [Teachers] of truth re-deploy images to

³¹ Kearney, pp. 90-91.

³² Kearney, pp. 99. 'Plato gives an example of a mathematician who employs material drawings of a square to help his pupils comprehend the essentially invisible idea of the square, but such positive use of images are exceptions to the general rule'. p. 99.

point *beyond themselves* to essences that ultimately transcend figurative embodiment. The image here cancels itself out.³³

Furthermore, in the *Timaeus*, Plato sees the whole natural *kosmos* as the ‘perfect *image* of an eternal *paradigm*, and no longer as a deficient, but as a wonderful manifestation of the divine’ (*Timaeus*, 29b). And again Plato says that cosmic time (*chronos*, which is the measure of all change and decay) is a moving image of eternity (*Timaeus*, 37c). Plato calls for a connection between the image and that which is being *represented*. The image is to be judged in relation to truth (*Laws* 667e). In the *Laws* Plato states that one must try to use the image to portray the object being represented faithfully. In order to judge a work of art, one needs to know what the work of art is representing (i.e. the object), how true the representation is that is derived from this, and how good the work of art is in executing the representation (*Laws*, 669a-b). The artists who are best at portraying that which they wish to represent are those that follow exactly the existent symmetries of the original, whereas those artists that fail to do this are artists that change the proportions and thus they give a mere *illusion* of reality and beauty (*Sophist*, 235d, 236a). In this way,

through participation in, or imitation of, intellectual and intelligible principles like symmetry, number, and equality, even the images of art can according to Plato be somehow connected with the realm of ideas. For like the rest of the world, true images must be images of something truly real. And yet the intellectual and intelligible, the ideal spheres, remain for Plato far above all imagery – man can hope to reach the *noeton* only by leaving all images behind.³⁴

³³ Ibid., p. 100.

³⁴ Gerhart B. Ladner, ‘The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy’, in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 7 (1953), 1–34 (pp. 6–7).

It might be held on this reading that Plato gives the Western world a suspicion of image overall. What was negative, in this interpretation of image is that Plato is seen to view the temporal world as a copy of the *Ideas* and we receive in this world ‘shadows’ or a third-hand rendition of the truth. Here Plato’s use of ‘image’ is seen as a negative because it tends towards *opinion* rather than leading one to un-conceal truth (*aletheia*). However, one could also see the ‘images’ in the story of the cave bring one to a closer determination of the ‘Idea’ in that these ‘images’ participate in the *Forms* and in this regard could be seen in a positive light – as leading or aiding one towards knowledge.³⁵

Though Aristotle³⁶ differed from Plato with regard to the metaphysical aspect of the image he still retained a primary interest in the epistemological understanding of the image (that is, the role the image played in the promotion of truth or falsehood). In nature with Aristotle’s philosophical outlook his treatment of *phantasia* (imagination) and *phantasma* (image) rests on a realist epistemology. Given Aristotle’s empirical approach, an understanding of image is developed in connection with its role as a mental intermediary between sensation and reason,

³⁵ Reale highlights that the use of ‘image’ in Plato’s philosophy is complex. However, he notes that Plato’s use of ‘image’ has a positive aspect, in that images participate in ‘metasensible reality’. As Reale states, ‘*the sensible cosmos is an image of a metasensible reality carried out by the Demiurge*’, Giovanni Reale, *A History of Ancient Philosophy: Aristotle and Plato*, ed. & trans. John R. Catan (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990) p. 101. Reale explains further that ‘the whole of reality [for Plato] in every area - is a “mixture” which implies a synthetic bipolar connection to the two opposed principles’ and ‘the material Principle participates (through the demiurgic Mind) in a very complex way in the intelligible, because this participation, which consists in the reception of the imprint of the images derived from the Ideas, happens in an ineffable and marvelous way.’ Ibid. p. 102. Thus, Plato’s understanding of *image* is quite complex and different commentators hold different positions on the role of *images* in Plato’s philosophy. We can note that the *image* is an epistemological concept in Plato’s philosophy and that the image participates in the realm of Ideas. Reale points out that the ‘image, is the object of opinion, [an opinion which] can be well founded, but not achieve epistemological certitude’ (p. 101). This is a more positive view of ‘image’, compared to saying *images* are totally negative and therefore to be abandoned as Ladner seems to suggest.

³⁶ All references to Aristotle’s works are taken from *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, vols. I & II (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995) unless otherwise indicated.

rather than as an imitation of a divine demiurge as explicated by Plato in the *Timeaus*.

Aristotle tends to concentrate on the properly psychological status of the image as a *mental* representation (*phantasma*). The Platonic idea of the image as a form of an object, in turn being an external copy of nature (which is an external copy of the transcendental *Ideas*), is replaced by an Aristotelian conception of the image as an *activity* of the mind which mediates between the inner and the outer world (reality). As such,

Phantasia stands midway between *aesthesis* and *noesis*. The image serves as a bridge between the inner and outer. It is both a window on the world and a mirror in the mind.³⁷

Aristotle, in fact, goes so far as to assert that the soul never thinks without a mental image (*On the Soul*, 431a, 15-20, *On Memory*, 450a1). Spoken words are seen as symbols of the inner images (*On Interpretation*, 16a, *On the Soul*, 420b).

To the thinking soul images serve as if they were contents of perception (and when it asserts or denies them to be good or bad it avoids or pursues them). That is why the soul never thinks without an image. The process is like that in which the air modifies the pupil in this or that way the pupil transmits the modification to some third thing (and similarly in hearing), while the ultimate point of arrival is one, a single mean, with different manners of being. (*De Anima*, 431a, 15-20)

Yet, while Aristotle distanced himself from Plato's more esoteric views he was, nevertheless, influenced by Plato's more practical account of images found in his reflections on memory. In the *De Anima* (i.e., *On the Soul*) Aristotle makes reference to the idea of an image being impressed on a wax-tablet,

³⁷ Kearney, pp. 106–107. See, also, Aristotle, *On the Soul*, (427b, 428a).

Generally, about all perception, we can say that a sense is what has the power of receiving into itself the sensible forms of things without the matter, in the way in which a piece of wax takes on the impress of a signet-ring without the iron or gold; what produces the impression is a signet of bronze or gold, but not *qua* bronze or gold, in a similar way the sense is affected by what is coloured or flavoured or sounding not insofar as each is what it is, but insofar as it is of such and such a sort according to its form. A primary sense-organ is that in which such a power is seated. The sense and its organ are the same in fact, but their essence is not the same. (*On the Soul*, 424a, 15-25).

While there are some commonalities between the theories of Aristotle and Plato, there are, nonetheless, considerable differences in their philosophical outlooks, and which take them in two different directions with regard to the origin and function of images.

Aristotle, in his empirically oriented hylomorphic approach, held that the mind was *tabula rasa* and, as such, his starting point required him to explain how we perceive objects from the outer world (reality). The intellect, for Aristotle, was akin to a blank slate or a piece of wax (as Plato suggested), yet it had to be passively receptive to receive sense-impressions without itself interfering or distorting these impressions when taken from reality. As such, Aristotle's philosophy aimed at descriptively analysing the process by which objects from the outer world were understood via the 'soul' without recourse to pre-existing *a priori* ideas. If the soul were to have innate ideas, it could not structure reality without interfering with the object itself. This was later to become problematic for Kant writing in the 1700s. The problem of actually grasping the object independent of innate structures, or of what might be termed the 'furniture of the mind' resulted in Kant holding that the *noumena* could not be experienced independent of the way the mind structured that

experience. So, our knowledge of the thing in itself (*das Ding-an-sich*) is coloured by the our way of perceiving or ordering reality.³⁸

Aristotle, as a realist, however, preferred to view the soul as a potentiality that could receive the impression from the organ of perception and this impression could be ‘stamped’ onto the passive soul and thus the soul can retain an ‘image’ of this object that was once perceived in actual time, as a memory. Memory as such relates to what has passed (*On Memory*, 450a, 12-15) and Aristotle defines it as ‘neither a perception nor conception, but a state or affection of one of these, conditioned by a lapse of time’ (*On Memory*, 450a, 24-25). The ‘image’ experienced in memory is different from an ‘image’ derived from the soul as a thought. The ‘image’ of memory relates in likeness to the object once experienced. As Aristotle states,

Just in the same way we have to conceive that the image within us is both something in itself and relative to something else. In so far as it is regarded in itself, it is only an object of contemplation, or an image; but when considered as relative to something else, e.g., as its likeness, it is also a reminder [...] just as when [we] contemplate the painting in the picture as being a likeness [to the actual object painted], [...] in that case the experience involved in this contemplation [...] is different from what one has when one contemplates it simply as a painted figure, [...] the one presents itself simply as a thought, but the other, just because, as in the painting, it is a likeness, presents itself as a reminder. (*On Memory*, 450b1, 15-30).

Memory is a function, a function of the primary-act of sense perception, i.e., of the faculty whereby we perceive *time* (*On Memory*, 451a1, 15-19). Recollection and memory are not identical for Aristotle. Aristotle holds that those with a good memory are not identical with those who are quick at recollecting. Recollecting

³⁸ See, Sebastian Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason* (London: Routledge, 2006).

differs with respect to memory not only in relation to time but also, more importantly, because recollection is a mode of inference, ‘for he who endeavours to recollect infers that he formerly saw or heard, or had some such experience, and the process is, as it were, a sort of investigation.’ (*On Memory*, 453a1, 5-15). Here Aristotle naturalises the act of recollection (*anamnesis*) which separates his theory from the metaphysical account of recollection which is espoused by Plato. The soul’s life in the body for Plato was engaged in a process of recollecting (*anamnesis*) through incarnate experience what it had forgotten through the process of birthing (*hysteria*). The soul thus retains, as it were, innate *a priori* ideas that were re-collected through the aid of sense perception. For Aristotle visions or ‘images’ had to be explained from the rational standpoint of empiricism. It is not surprising that Aristotle’s ‘realist’ philosophy breaks with Plato’s idealist starting point. As Kearney outlines,

All the images of our dreams or reveries are, [Aristotle] asserts, ultimately derived from our sensible experience. With regard to their being (*einai*), [Aristotle] goes on to explain ‘that imagination is a species of sensation, even if each expresses itself in a different way.’ And so it follows that since a ‘dream is a species of imagination, it is therefore a particular mode of perception, that is, an imagined mode of perception’ (*De Insomniis*, 459a). [...] This ‘realist’ character of Aristotle’s epistemology is also evident in his definition of the image in the *Rhetoric* as a secondary or modified sensation (*phantasia estin aesthesis tis aisthenēs*) (1370a). The so-called divine visions of which Plato speaks in the *Timeaus* are, impressions which rise up when reason is asleep or in a fever (*De Insomniis*, 462a). Those who claim to be inspired visionaries are simply ‘confusing the representation of a perception with perception itself’ (*De Memoria*, 451a). To avoid such confusion, it is necessary to recognise that the main source of our images is *memory* understood as a reservoir of images which record our sensory impressions of reality (*De Mem.* 451). ‘Memory’, says Aristotle, ‘refers to that part of the soul to which imagination refers’. (*De Memoria*, 450a).³⁹

³⁹ Kearney, p. 107.

This raises the question as to what exactly imagination *is* and what is the relationship between the image and imagination. Aristotle discusses the faculty of imagination in relation to the capacity of the human being who imagines at the level of deliberation (calculative imagination) in comparison to animals who imagine at the level of perception or sensitive imagination. By doing this he draws distinctions between the images used by the faculty of perception in the modes of deliberation by the human being and by the sensitive imagination which also animals have. Images here play a role in both deliberative/rational and sensitive epistemology.⁴⁰

2.3.1 *Phantasia* and *Phantasmata* (Imagination and Images)

For Aristotle all *phantasia* (imagination) is connected with either reasoning or perception (*φαντασία δέ πάσα ἢ λογιστικὴ ἢ αἰσθητικὴ*). While reasoning (calculative imagination) is confined to man, the animals (besides man) share in the *phantasia* that is connected with perception (sensitive imagination) (*On the Soul*, 433b1, 27-30). In the *De Anima*, Aristotle points out that what is initially given is the ‘object’ of desire, this produces movement by being pictured (imaged) or thought of to oneself (*On the Soul*, 433b 11-12). Here there are three particular component parts of the movement – the desire, reason (*nous*) and *phantasia*. Gerard Watson notes that ‘the causes can be reduced to two (rather than the three aforementioned), desire and *nous*, if one takes *phantasia* to be a form of vision’ i.e. ‘Φαίνεται δέ γε δύο ταῦτα

⁴⁰ This is why Aristotle maintains that, though the human being and animals have memory, only the human being can recollect. Recollection is a form of logical inference that is crucial in planning any human action for Aristotle.

κινούντα, ἢ ὄρεξις ἢ νοῦς, εἴ τις τὴν φαντασίαν τιθείη ὡς νόησίν τινα.’ (*On the Soul*, 433a, 9f.).⁴¹

Aristotle believes that animals do not possess the *phantasia* which is connected with deliberation (*On the Soul*, 434a5-7, *On Memory*, 453a1, 5-15).⁴² The fact that animals are not able to reflect renders them more prone to being deceived than the human being (who has a normally functioning mind). Also the human mind has a sense of time (*chronos*) and having this sense of time, the human being can deliberate between a good action to do ‘presently’ comparing the future consequences of doing such an action in/ at this moment. As such human reason can resist immediate desires. For Aristotle, animals are not capable of comparing immediate actions with longer-term consequences. The animal acts solely in accordance with the desire for the apparent good which is provoked by a perception which recalls automatically the appearance of a somewhat similar good on a previous occasion (*On the Soul*, 433b, 5-10).

Sensitive imagination [...] is found in all animals, deliberative imagination only in those that are calculative: for whether this or that shall be enacted is already a task requiring calculation; and there must be a single standard to measure by, for that is pursued which is greater. It follows that what acts in this way must be able to [do, is to] make a unity out of several images. (*On the Soul*, 433b, 5-10)

As noted, *phantasia* in Aristotle plays the role of a ‘movement’ in response to what is perceived. Watson outlines that,

⁴¹ Gerard Watson, ‘Fantasia in Aristotle *De Anima* 3.3’ in *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, vol. 32, No. 1 (1982), 100-113 (p. 102).

⁴² ‘The *phantasia* which is capable of deliberation is called *bouleutikē* (*On the Soul*, 434a7) and *logistikē* (*On the Soul*, 433b29), and is distinguished from the *phantasia* which non-rational animals have (the *aisthētikē*) because whether one will do this particular action or that particular action is a matter of reflection’. See, Watson, p. 102.

sensible objects produce sensation in us, and the [‘effect’] remains in sense-organs that have ceased to perceive, just as a movement might continue in air or water even when what caused it has ceased to function. The effect is to be found in both the internal organs and those on the surface of the body.⁴³

In *De Insomniis*, Aristotle continues to reflect on the ‘effect’ that remains in sense-organs when we, as it were, cease to ‘perceive’. Here the senses succumb to sleep. Yet, Aristotle points out that we can perceive sense-images even whilst asleep. We come to know this because sometimes sense-images persist in us in our waking state even after the moment of perception (dreaming) has passed (*De Insomniis*, 459a24ff.). What is apparent to Aristotle is that sense-images are present not just whilst we are awake but also while we sleep (*De Insomniis*, 460b28ff.). So, the sense-images have to persist, even when our senses are, as it were, drawn in when we sleep.

Aristotle considers that the sense-images are *physical* and although they are physical they tend to be weakened and reduced by the passage of time (*De Insomniis*, 461b11-19). Each of the sense-images is a remainder, something which is left over from the actual sensation. (*De Insomniis*, 461b21-2). In dreaming, therefore, the sense-images are not immediately given as when one is awake. Moreover, *phantasia*, according to Watson ‘should not be confused with reasoning by being taken for a form of judgement.’⁴⁴ Thus, *phantasia* is not perception, reasoning or judgement. Yet, *phantasia* must belong to consciousness as such. Aristotle also held that there must be some reality corresponding to it as we say commonly that some *thing* appears, using the verb form (cf. *On the Soul*, 428a12-15) or the noun, ‘there is a *phantasia*’. Aristotle says that *phantasia* is distinct from perception because not all animals have the ability to bring about *phantasia*, for example, ‘the ant and the bee

⁴³ Watson, p. 103.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

have it, but not the grub'.⁴⁵ Moreover, images appear even when one's eyes are closed. Aristotle disagrees with Plato's position stating that:

phantasia cannot be *doxa* with *aisthēsis*, nor *doxa* through *aisthēsis*, nor a combination of *doxa* and *aisthēsis* (*On the Soul*, 428a24ff.)

This is so because Aristotle has shown *phantasia* to be neither *doxa* on its own nor *aisthēsis* on its own.⁴⁶ *Phantasia*'s name is taken from 'light' because without light we cannot see, and sight is perception *par excellence*. Aristotle, therefore, sees that *phantasia* has some role in perception as such. So, *phantasia* is a movement following on *aisthēsis*, but it is not a type of thought, and therefore it is proper to treat it between the two. *Phantasia* is something *like* perception; it is involved in the mutation of sense-perceptions into *phantasmata*, which are then available for the activity of the intellectual soul.⁴⁷ The *phantasia* is necessary, though not of itself sufficient, for the conversion of perceptions into thoughts, this is confirmed by the end of chapter eight of *On the Soul*.

Aristotle notes that (*On the Soul*, 432a4-14) the objects of thought are to be found among the forms which are the objects of perception, and that for this reason someone who did not perceive anything would not learn or understand anything, and when one contemplates, one must do so contemplating a *phantasma*. *Phantasmata* are like sense-perceptions except that they are 'without matter'. The *nous* in the case of human beings, transforms *phantasmata* into *noēmata*. Watson outlines that this is not explicitly explicated by Aristotle. Also Aristotle leaves unexplained the details of the conversion of *phantasia*, the movement which remains in the soul similar to the

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 106.

⁴⁶ Plato is not mentioned directly but commentators hold that Aristotle is referring to Plato in this passage concerning the right conception of *phantasia*. Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 109.

perception which has caused it, into a *phantasma*, the image which results from *phantasia*. In the case of animals, the process ends with *phantasmata*. In the case of men, the *nous* can act on the *phantasmata* and bring about *noēmata*.⁴⁸ Here, then, Aristotle gives a more positive account of images and their role in understanding than Plato's philosophy afforded them and he distances the ability of animals from the human ability to translate images into an understanding.

In *On Memory* Aristotle notes further differences between the human being and the animal in the philosophy of perception. Here he outlines that memory and recollection differ. He states (453a7ff.) that while other animals share in memory, one may say that none of the known animals can recollect except man. This is because recollection is a kind of (logical) inference, for when a man is recollecting he infers that he has seen or heard something of the sort previously, and the process is a kind of search. This power can only belong by nature to such animals as have the faculty of deliberation – for deliberation too is a kind of inference. Reason, therefore, is bound to *our ability* to perceive, to remember and to deliberate/ make inferences.

Aristotle and Plato's reflections on the role of images in epistemology were to have a profound effect on the writings of subsequent philosophers, especially Augustine and Aquinas. Plato's works had a more immediate effect on the writing of Philo of Alexandria, who wrote as a 'Jew for Gentile ears'.⁴⁹ Philo was a Hellenistic Jew and heavily influenced by Greek thinking. As a Jew he was steeped in Hebrew theology – yet it is not known whether Philo understood Hebrew or relied on Greek

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 110.

⁴⁹ Richard P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event* (London: SCM, 1959) p. 41.

translations. Greek philosophy gave Philo a new vocabulary to explain his faith. In fact Philo went as far as to maintain that ‘Plato had been anticipated by Moses’.⁵⁰

SECTION FOUR

PHILO’S INTERPRETATION OF THE SEPTUAGINT

Philo (20 BC – 50 AD)⁵¹ was an Alexandrian Jew who interpreted the Old Testament (*Targum HaShivim/Septuagint*) in the light of Pythagorean, Platonic, Peripatetic, and Stoic thought.⁵² Philo had already encountered Hellenised Judaism, given that the Old Testament which he referred to was the *Targum HaShivim*, otherwise known as the Greek *Septuagint*.⁵³

The *Septuagint* rendered Genesis 1:26 literally as follows: καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός Ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ’ εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν (i.e. *kai eipen ho Theos poiēsōmen anthrōpon kat’ eikona hēmeteran, kai kath’ homoiōsin*).⁵⁴ Plato’s distrust of ‘image’ (*eikon, eidolon, phantasma*) had a formidable impact on the Jews who spoke Greek. Like some of the Aramaic *Targums* the Greek Targum translated ‘image’ in a way that distanced God from the human. Gone is the anthropomorphic, corporeal imagery found in the Hebrew Bible, replaced here by

⁵⁰ William H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), p. 36.

⁵¹ All references to Philo’s works are taken from *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. by C. D. Yonge (USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), unless otherwise indicated.

⁵² Horowitz, p. 190.

⁵³ Karen Jobes, Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Michigan, USA: Baker Academic, 2000). As Jobes and Silva outline, ‘The Pentateuch was originally translated in Alexandria around the year 250 BCE., and the rest of the Hebrew Bible was translated within the following two centuries. The precise reason for the translation of the Pentateuch at that time is debated by scholars’, p. 29. Jobes and Silva also outline that although it has become customary to use the term *Septuagint* to refer to the complete Greek canon of the Hebrew Bible, the canon has grown from older Greek translations. Some scholars prefer the combined abbreviation ‘LXX/OG’ as a continual reminder of the diversity that characterises the corpus. But the situation is made even more complicated as Jobes and Silva point out because it is not possible to know that the oldest surviving form was in fact the first Greek translation made of the book. See, Jobes, Silva, pp. 31-32.

⁵⁴ *The Septuagint version of the Old Testament and Apocrypha, with an English Translation*, ed. by L.C.L. Brenton (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1972) Genesis 1:26. ‘And God said, Let us make man in Our Image, according to Our likeness’ (trans. cf. *The Interlinear Bible*).

abstract (metaphysical) philosophical imagery. In Philo's *On The Creation (De Opificio mundi)*, an account of the world's creation, Philo clearly demonstrates his Platonic influence when he outlines that the image of God in man was a purely *spiritual* resemblance between incarnate human nature and God:

Let no one think that he is able to judge of this likeness from the characters of the body: for neither is God a being with the form of a man, nor is the human body like the form of God; but the resemblance is spoken of with reference to the most important part of the soul, namely, the mind: for the mind which exists in each individual has been created after the likeness of that one mind which is in the universe as its primitive model, being in some sort the God of that body which carries it about and bears its image within it.⁵⁵

When Philo read the LXX version of Genesis 1:26, he was undoubtedly reminded of Plato's use of the terms *eikon*, *eidolon*, *phantasma*. Philo undertook an exegesis of Genesis chapter one which incorporated Plato's philosophical reflections on the positive approach to the soul and its ability to understand versus the negative view of the body and its constant mode of distraction.⁵⁶ As Horowitz states, 'Philo interpreted the image of God in man to be a purely spiritual resemblance between human nature and God.'⁵⁷ Wolfson points out this influence on Philo with regard to his reflections on Genesis 1:26:

Animals have only an irrational soul. But man, in addition to his irrational soul, has also a rational soul or mind. 'I', says Philo, 'am many things, soul and body, and of soul there is a rational part and an irrational part.' [cf. *Allegorical Interpretation* III, 1, 2]. Unlike Plato in the *Phaedrus* [246 A] but like Plato in the *Timaeus*, [Philo] holds that this rational soul was created by God himself [*Timeaus*, 69c], so also in Philo that which is *rational* in us was formed by God himself [*On the Confessions of Tongues* XXXV, 179; *On Flight and Finding* XIII, 69]. But then he departs from Plato. According to Plato, there was no idea of mind nor any idea of soul; but instead there was a universal mind existing probably from eternity, and a universal soul which was created by God prior to the creation of the world out of three ingredients

⁵⁵ Philo, *On the Creation*, XXIII (69).

⁵⁶ See Harry A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948), vol. I, pp. 238 ff., 390 ff.

⁵⁷ Horowitz, p. 190.

– the same stuff as the ideas, the stuff of matter, and a mixture of the stuff of ideas and the stuff of matter. [*Timaeus* 34 B ff.] According to Philo, there are ideas of mind and soul, both of them created by God when he formed the intelligible world on what the Pentateuch calls the first day of creation [*On the Creation*, VII, 29]. He therefore speaks of the human mind as ‘the mind created after the *image* and *idea*,’ or as being ‘a closer *likeness* and copy than anything else on earth of the eternal and blessed idea,’ [*The Decalogue* XXV, 134.], or as a ‘divine image’ and as ‘being shaped after the archetypal idea, the most sublime Logos.’ In the same sense, in another passage, after having described the idea of soul as the ‘*image of God*’ and a ‘pattern’, he speaks of the ‘human mind’ as a ‘fragment of that divine and blessed soul from which it cannot be separated,’ that is, an *image* of the idea of rational soul, which is as immaterial as its pattern’ [emphasis added].⁵⁸

Plato in the *Timaeus* outlines that human souls were placed in the stars prior to their descent into bodies. For Philo the soul is not corporeal, there is no mixture of matter. Philo places the rational soul in the head although it may also be placed in the heart (*kardias*). The rational soul is graced by God with the power of free will by which it can control the desires and emotions of the irrational soul.⁵⁹ Here, free will and reason are seen as evidence of the image of God being impressed on the human ‘soul’.

Plato evaluated the original forms of being against the background of a transcendental realm of Ideas. Temporal reality or the sensible world is seen as an image (*eikon*) of the *Forms* (*eidos*, *Ideas*).⁶⁰ These *Ideas* of pure beings are immutable and timeless. They form a hierarchy which is crowned by the highest *Idea* of all – the Good (*pros hen*). This world is beyond (*epekenia*) the lower order of ‘becoming’. Philo too held that temporal reality was an image of the *Forms*, but the *Ideas*, or the *Logos* (which represents the totality of Ideas), are themselves but an

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 389–390.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 390–393.

⁶⁰ These are espoused most fully in the *Republic* Book VII, where the myth of the cave is used to outline how the Forms exist in the world beyond (*epekenia*) temporal reality. But again one must remember that the images participated in the Forms – so there is not as such a dualism in Plato’s philosophy seen in this light.

image of God who is their pattern (*paradeigma*) and archetype (*arche-typos*). As Wolfson comments,

Just as Philo has used the term Logos as the equivalent of the term mind in the case of the mind which is the place of the intelligible world, so he now also uses the term Logos as the equivalent of the mind which is in man. He thus uses the term Logos as a description of that part of the soul which is the opposite of both the irascible and the concupiscent parts of the soul [...] But just as the immanent Logos in the world so also this Logos in man has its source in the pre-existent Logos which is the totality of all the ideas constituting the intelligible world [...] ‘one the archetypal Logos above us, the other the *copy* of it which we possess,’ [*Who is the Heir of Divine Things*, XXXXVIII, 230] [Philo] refers to them afterwards as ‘the mind with us and the mind above us.’ [*Who is the Heir of Divine Things*, 236].⁶¹

The world that is apprehended by sense perception is in this regard only ‘an image of an image’. Thus, the creation of human kind in the image of God represents for Philo the fact that man is not an *immediate* image of God, but he is made after the immediate image, which is the *Logos*. He distinguishes between the man whose creation is in the image of the *Logos*, described in Genesis chapter 1, and the man whose formation is narrated in Genesis, chapter 2:

The races of men are twofold; for one is the *heavenly man*, and the other the *earthly man*. Now the heavenly man, as being born in the *image of God*, has no participation in any corruptible or earth-like essence. But the earthly man is made of loose material, which he [Moses] calls a lump of clay. On which account he says, not that the heavenly man was made, but that he was fashioned according to the image of God; but the earthly man he calls a thing made, and not begotten by the maker (emphasis added).⁶²

Philo, also, takes into consideration the importance of ‘air’ (*αἴρ*) and its role in the differentiation of humankind from animality in Genesis. For ‘God breathed into his face [Adam’s] a breath of life.’ Philo highlights that this breath was not ‘air

⁶¹ Wolfson, p. 393.

⁶² *Allegorical Interpretation I*, chap. XII.

in motion’, but a ‘certain *impression* and character of divine power, which divine power Moses calls by an appropriate name *image*, that is to say, it is an image of the *idea* of mind which is itself called *image*’ (*That the Worse is Wont to Attack the Better*, XXIII, 83, – emphasis added).⁶³

Philo goes on to discuss the image by using expressions such as ‘fragment’ and ‘ray’. He sees ‘the rational faculty (*λογισμός*) as a fragment of the universal soul, or a fragment, impression or ray of that blessed nature (that is, the nature of the Divine mind).’⁶⁴ In this way, the divine spirit that is breathed into Adam is seen as giving Adam the essence of the mind which is an incorporeal image of the idea of mind. Here Philo discusses the essence (*eidos*) of the mind as *related* to the Divine mind of which the term image of God is a *representational* phrase which aims to outline this *reality*.

Returning to Philo’s commentary on Genesis chapter 2, Philo notes that the *heavenly man* was different from man generated now,

The first man [...] was made according to the image of God. For man as formed now is perceptible to the external senses, partaking of qualities, consisting of body and soul, man or woman, by nature mortal. But man, according to the image of God, was an idea, or a genus (*genos*), or a seal (*sphragis*), perceptible only by the intellect, incorporeal, neither male nor female, imperishable by nature.⁶⁵

According to Altmann, in several places Philo considers the term *seal* (*sphragis*) as an equivalent of image (*eikon*) in the active sense of the seal’s force as

⁶³ Wolfson, p. 394. This brings to mind the effect that objects have on perception as outlined by Aristotle in *De Anima*.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

⁶⁵ *On the Creation of the World*, XLVI, 134.

a pattern. In the first place the *Logos* is called the ‘archetypal seal,’⁶⁶ ‘the seal of the universe,’⁶⁷ ‘the original seal’ of which intelligible and incorporeal man is a ‘copy’.⁶⁸ Yet the heavenly man too is called ‘an idea or type or seal’ because the earthly man is modeled after him. Moreover, Philo speaks of a ‘form which God has stamped on the soul as on the tested coin.’⁶⁹ Again Philo is clearly building on Plato’s use of the concept of seal (*sphragis*) as outlined in his *Theaetetus*. It is clear that the idea did not originate from an exegesis of this biblical verse but stems from elsewhere. According to Ladner, ‘it is very probable that St. Paul, [who was] about a generation younger than Philo, knew his writings, and especially his Image-Logos doctrine, to which he, perhaps makes a polemical reference in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (15:45 ff.).’⁷⁰ Paul, however, would here have considered Christ as the *Logos* which we will examine further in chapter III.

4.1 Philo’s Influence on Jewish Theology and Law

It appears that the Rabbis of the early Tannaitic period (70-200 AD – the Tanna refers to a period of learning of the *Misnah* which is a collection of books that complements the bible especially in relation to the law) also drew on Philo’s philosophy and, by doing so, they indirectly allowed the Platonic ‘image’ to enter and shape their thinking. One of the writings of this period – the *Mishnah Sanhedrin* (4:5) is one such work influenced by Philo’s use of the ‘seal’. The work contains a peroration to be addressed to witnesses in a court trial — which may result in the sentence of death for the accused. The peroration highlights the worth and dignity of

⁶⁶ Ibid., VI, 25, See., Altmann, p. 241.

⁶⁷ *On the Change of Names*, XXIII, 135.

⁶⁸ *Questions and Answers on Genesis* 1, 4.

⁶⁹ *Allegorical Interpretations*, III, chap. XXXI, 95.

⁷⁰ Ladner, p. 7.

the individual human being and the peroration cautions the witnesses against testifying against the accused without absolute certainty of the facts. They are reminded that:

Man was created as a single being in order to teach [us] that one who destroys one person is considered as having, as it were, destroyed a whole world, and [that] one who preserves one person has, as it were, preserved a whole world [...]; in order [also] to tell of the greatness of the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, for a man stamps many coins with one seal, and all of them are alike, and the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, stamped all men with the seal of the first Adam, and no one is like the other. Hence every one is obliged to say: For my sake the world was created.⁷¹

Altmann notes that the term the ‘seal of the first Adam’ (*hotamo shel Adam ha-ri’ shon*), as well as the simile of the coin, is used, in the above passage, in the same sense in which Philo speaks of the *heavenly man* or reason (*nous*) which is created after God’s image as a seal impressed on the earthly man and stamped on the soul (of every individual man) as on a coin. However, there is no mention in the

Mishnah of Philo’s elaborate distinctions between God as the *arche-typal* pattern, the *Logos* as God’s image, heavenly man as the image of the image, and earthly man as stamped with the latter. [But], the *Logos* concept [is absent] from the Rabbinic mind as expressed in the *Mishnaic* formulation.⁷²

But Altmann, explains that ‘what is entirely new and highly characteristic of the Rabbinic mind is the emphasis on the diversity of men and on the value of each individual as a unique exemplar of humanity.’⁷³ Thus Philo’s contribution was put to beneficial use in the *Mishnah*. It was made to serve as a reminder of the dignity and value of each human individual (*Halakah*).⁷⁴

⁷¹ Altman, p. 242.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 243.

⁷⁴ Legal material of the Talmud.

The Rabbis also use the concept of the image of God to argue against celibacy. A person who does not beget children or who refuses to do so fails to multiply the human species and thereby

diminishes [...] the ‘similitude’ or Divine image on earth [...] for the words (Genesis 9:6) speaking of man as the image of God are immediately followed by the commandment (verse 7) to be ‘fruitful’ and ‘multiply’.⁷⁵

A further use of *halakic*⁷⁶ is used with the idea of the image of God (in accordance with Deuteronomy 21:23) where respect for the corpse of the dead is called for. The dead here include dead criminals, since every man bears a ‘similitude’ or ‘resemblance’ to God.⁷⁷ According to Altmann, it is obvious that what mattered to the Rabbis was the possibility of translating the image of God concept into *halakic* categories, to put it in pragmatic-legal rather than theological terms.⁷⁸

Philo’s interpretation of *tselem* in the context of *eikon* draws out a number of important and substantial reflections on the image. Firstly, the dangers of too close a relationship between God and the human being is safeguarded by distinguishing between the heavenly man and the earthly man as an ‘image of an image’, rather than the *image per se*. This conception of the heavenly man or *Logos* bearing what we might call an *immediate image* becomes useful for later Christian writers reflecting on the relationship of Christ to God.⁷⁹ Furthermore, there is an emergence of an understanding of image in relation to *nous* or *reason* which is stamped, imprinted, sealed, breathed on the soul of every person, this explains how we can apprehend the

⁷⁵ Altmann, p. 243.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Rashi’s *Commentary* on this verse combines all the source material (*Tosefta*, Sanhedrin 9:7; *Talmud*, Sanhedrin 46b; Pseudo-Jonathan ben ‘Uziel to Deut. 21:23) quoted by Altmann, p. 243, n. 35.

⁷⁸ Altmann, p. 243.

⁷⁹ The Gospel of John adopts the concept of *Logos* in this regard - *Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος* (John 1.1)

Forms, the world of *Ideas*. Interestingly, as Horowitz points out, Philo *allegorically* holds that man is *nous*, ‘reason’ and woman is *aesthesis*, ‘sense-perception’, (*Allegorical Interpretation II*, XI, 38). Women are thus associated with the lower part of the soul, with the irrational and the sensual. As such the female, after her creation, brought with her desire for bodily pleasure in the first man, this for Philo was the beginning of evil (*On the Creation of the World*, LVIII, 151-152).⁸⁰ Because of the linking of women with ‘sense-perception’ Philo believed it was more difficult for women to be in the image of God as such. Certainly Philo’s negative account of the female (although it must be noted that this is allegorical) is not in keeping with the original Hebrew understanding that ‘male and female’ were both created in the image of God.

Notwithstanding these issues, Philo, however, develops the Hebrew scripture by defining that reason was the imprint of the divine breath, a divine breath that imposed a ‘power’ of the divine on the human. Thus, while we can know that God exists for Philo, we cannot know *what* God is. Philo holds that although we have been given ‘reason’, ‘our reason, acute and penetrating as it may be, can never take us to the point of discovering what God is.’⁸¹ Greek philosophy, therefore, had an

⁸⁰ Philo diverged from rabbinical tradition, which had viewed man and woman together as completing the image of God. Philo believed that the union of man with woman was a move away from man’s first clinging to God, thus celibacy and virginity were highly valued qualities in Philo’s philosophy. As Horowitz states ‘growing in God’s image as “becoming a virgin” or “becoming a man”, [...] “Becoming a man” is to let the masculine element, reason, dominate over the feminine element, sense-perception and desire. Thus, to the extent one departs from bodily sexual existence, one enters in relationship with the Divinity and one grows in the image of God’. Horowitz, p. 192.

⁸¹ See, Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) p. 91. Sandmel goes on to outline that Philo’s ‘usual term for God as the transcendent, unknowable deity, is the Platonic term *To On*, “that which exists”; at times he uses another Platonic phrase, *To ontōs On*, “that which *existingly* (that is, ‘truly’) exists.” See, Sandmel p. 91. There is a sense here that the discussion becomes ontological in Philo – God is that which existingly exists, undoubtedly this is founded on the scriptural reference where God reveals his name as, ‘I Am who Am’ in Exodus (3:13-15). But given the fear of anthropomorphism God remains distant and beyond all comprehension. But the *relational* aspect of the image to God is ill-defined due to the lack of clarity in virtue of the fact that the question *what* is God is left as ‘transcendent’.

impact on the understanding of the image for Jewish theology and Jewish law in the first centuries AD.⁸² Greek philosophy, however, became ever more prevalent in the context of early Christianity.⁸³ Philo's works were to influence Plotinus a pagan philosopher who embodied neo-Platonic thinking.

SECTION FIVE

PLOTINUS AND NEO-PLATONISM

Plotinus was born in 204/5 AD and died in 270 AD. His works are seen by many as extending the work of Plato. The originality of Plotinus' work thus resides in commentary and defence of Platonic philosophy as he viewed it. His student Porphyry (234–305 A.D) collected his works together after his death and published them. Plotinus, Porphyry, Amelius (c. 246–290/300 AD), Iamblichus (c.240–325 AD), Hypatia (370–415 AD), Plutarch of Athens (c.350–431/2 AD), Syrianus (fifth century), Proclus (c. 410/12–485 AD) and John Philoponus (490–570 AD) represent some of the key thinkers who were influenced by Plato's thinking and are constituted by historians as Neoplatonic thinkers. Neoplatonism was influential up until the time of John Philoponus.⁸⁴

⁸² David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) gives an extensive account of the influence of Philo's thinking and its impact on the early church, including the writings of St. Paul. This impact will be considered further in chapter III.

⁸³ The Christian Alexandrian Origen (c. 185 AD – c. 254 AD) played an important role in the transmission of Philo's thinking to the Christian world. 'Origen's homilies on Genesis were translated by Rufinus of Aquileia (345-410) and Origen's works had an impact on the fourth-century Cappadocian Fathers: Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa; by the fourth century Latin Fathers such as Jerome and Ambrose; by twelfth-century theologians such as Bernard of Clairvaux and William of St. Thierry; and by the Renaissance authors Pico della Mirandola and Erasmus', Horowitz, p. 193. Cf., Henri de Lubac, *On First principles – Origen* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973) introd.

⁸⁴ Many hold that John Philoponus was not in fact a Neoplatonist but rather plays a role in the last phase of the Alexandrian school. What separates Philoponus from other Neoplatonists is the fact that unlike the other Neoplatonists he was a committed Christian, and furthermore, Philoponus' writings contain criticism of Aristotelian Neoplatonism (e.g. Philoponus wrote against the eternity of the world). Thus Neoplatonism began to wane, or rather was assimilated into Christian philosophy. See, Paulina Remes, *Neoplatonism* (California: University of California Press, 2007) pp.19-33.

Plotinus' major work was the *Enneads* (the books were divided into six groups of nine, the word 'enneed' comes from the Greek word for nine).⁸⁵ In this work Plotinus outlines that every being proceeds from a principle source which he calls the *One*. The One, Intellect and Soul are three key players in the metaphysics of Plotinus (*Enneads*, VI, V9). The *One* as such is self-caused, it is the absolute simple first principle (*arche*). Everything relates to the *One*, as all colour relates to white light. As Paul Henry outlines,

The One is the One and nothing else, and even to assert that it 'is' or that it is 'One' is false, [*Enneads*, V.4,I, 8; VI.7,38,I; cf. *Parmenides* 141e 12], since it is beyond being or essence [V.I, 8, 8 = *Republic* vi. 509b 9.]. No 'name' can apply to it; it eludes all definition, all knowledge, [V. 4, I, 9-10 = *Parmenides* 142a 3-4] it can neither be perceived or thought [V. 5, 6, 12, V. 3, 14, 2].⁸⁶

Plotinus as Henry has shown has drawn great inspiration from the philosophy of Plato. The 'One' of Plotinus maybe viewed as akin to the 'Good' of Plato's *Republic*, 'the One, [...] would be the God of Plato, the Good of the *Republic* identified with the absolute One of the *Parmenides*.'⁸⁷ John Dillion, points out that the One, in the heirarchical world-view of Plotinus might be conceived concentrically. In this view,

The One is actually at the core of reality, like the centre of a circle (an image of which Plotinus is very fond, e.g. IV. 3. 17, 12; VI. 5,5, 8-18).⁸⁸

The primary emanation/procession or irradiation of the *One* appears to be the 'intellect' (*Nous*).⁸⁹ As Dillion notes,

⁸⁵ Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans. Stephen MacKenna (London: Penguin Books, 1991) all references to the *Enneads* are taken from this edition unless otherwise indicated.

⁸⁶ Paul Henry, 'The Place of Plotinus in the History of Thought', in Plotinus, *The Enneads*, pp. liii-liv.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. lv.

⁸⁸ John Dillion, 'Plotinus: An Introduction', in *Enneads*, p. xci.

with [the] ‘inner life’ of the One is connected its relation to Intellect (*Nous*). The first stage or ‘moment’ of Intellect on proceeding from the One is a sort of indefiniteness (cf. V. 4, 2; V. 1, 7).⁹⁰

As Dillion highlighted an emanation is not a temporal emanation but an eternal dependence, i.e., the intellect has an atemporal dependence (of its being) on the *One* from which it ‘emanates/ irradiates’ . For Plotinus when the ‘intellect’ is thinking it is thinking of itself.⁹¹ The Forms are expressed with the Intellect but the Forms relate back to the *One*, which is the stable and underlying ‘truth’ – so the Form of $3+2=5$ relates back to the *One* and is thus a necessary truth. Remes highlights the way Plotinus came to the belief of an ordering principle of ‘Forms’ in dialogue with Aristotelian thinking:

The existence of [an] organizing principle in lifeless things seems, from the Neoplatonic point of view, to be an unexplained starting-point in Aristotelianism. Besides exploiting fairly difficult and abstract Aristotelian notions of first mover and active intellect, Plotinus follows the demiurgic story of the *Timaeus* and likens the generation of organisation in, for example, stones to its appearance in living beings. Both are organised because the Soul has formed them according to the principles in the Intellect.⁹²

The intellect has the ability to distinguish between the Forms which are united in the *One*. The eternal intellect thinks about the Forms. Through this thinking the intellect is lead to the *One*. The *One* is the principle of being, while the intellect is the

⁸⁹ See Dillion p. xcii. Dillion notes that modern authorities on Plotinus would rather not use the term ‘emanation’ because of its Stoical connotations, but favours *illumination*, or irradiation. As he outlines, ‘For Plotinus, the creative process, without loss of its essence, causing, in each case, first an indefinite and unformed projection of itself, and then a reversion upon it as source, which causes the hypostasis in question, Intellect, Soul, or (the quasi-hypostasis) Nature to define itself, and be productive in its turn – all this taking place, of course , not in any temporal sequence, but eternally.’ See, pp. xci-xcii. In a more precise sense there is a double activity of each level of being, according to Dillion, that of an activity internal to it and one that goes out from it (See *Enneads*, V. 4 [7], 2). See, n. 1 p. xcii. Finally, only at the lowest level, that is of Nature projecting itself, is there a failure as such in the ‘return’, this results in ‘evil’, this is at the level of matter. See, p. xcii.

⁹⁰ Dillion, p. xciv.

⁹¹ Sullivan, p. 6.

⁹² Remes, p. 57.

principle of intelligibility, and so, the intellect is an external ability of the *One*'s causality (see, VI. 42, 21-23). As Plotinus states,

Anything existing after The First must necessarily arise from that First, whether immediately or as tracing back to it through intervenients; there must be an order of secondaries and tertiaries, in which any second is to be referred to The First, any third to the second [V.4.1, 1-4].

5.1. Image and the One

This process, or referral back to the Source involves a double aspect of movement, that of *prodos* and that of *epistrophe* and the Divine Mind (the *nous*) proceeds immediately from the One as an *image* of the One. The *nous* is a good copy but it is inferior to the One. Thus,

The Divine Mind turns again to its begetter, the One, and contemplates it, and in so doing attains to full resemblance or *likeness* [emphasis added], and is thereby constituted as the Divine Mind. As a result of this 'vision' and concomitant likeness, the Divine Mind in turn emanates the Universal Soul (the *psyche*) from itself, thus imitating the One. Soul, the third hypostasis is an image of the Divine Mind, though inferior to it. Soul in its turn takes its fullness, is constituted in being, by looking back to its source, the Divine Mind. In this contemplation it attains full likeness, and then generates its image by adopting a downward movement. The same process as this is found by Plotinus to exist in a gradually diminishing way at all levels of being.⁹³

The last of the emanations is Matter (the *hyle*) as Dillion has previously highlighted, and while it is something of an 'image of its engendering principle, [it is according to Sullivan] but pale and faint to an extreme' [VI.3.7].⁹⁴ 'Matter returns only to its

⁹³ Sullivan, p. 5. Sullivan also points out that, 'this process has been described as the four moments of the psychic life. The first moment is always the genesis of the image, the first element of likeness. The second moment is that of conversion to the principle, a conversion in the "ontological" order, the second element of *similitude*. *Contemplation* which is a pure tendency toward the One, more or less immediate, is the the third element in this process. The last factor is the unconscious generation of the inferior *image*, and this is always described as an illumination'. Sullivan, p. 5.

⁹⁴ *Enneads*, VI, 3, 7, trans cit., 116, 497-498 .

proximate principle, the individual soul [II.4.15; VI, 3,7]'.⁹⁵ What we have seen from Plotinus' theory is that an image depends upon, and accompanies,

some emanation or generation from a higher principle. Every image is like its model and principle, but always inferior to it; an image is always a degraded copy. An image has impressed in it, together with likeness to its principle, a tendency to return to the principle and model; an image is always turned toward its model [V.3.8]. In fact, by this return upon its principle the image attains full likeness, the fullest possible to it, and then imitates its model by engendering a copy of itself. The latter process is always conceived of as being some sort of illuminative operation. At the farthest provinces of being, that is, at the level of matter, the dynamic return is almost totally lacking, and, granted that images are always degradations, it is better described as only a trace, rather than as an image, of the Supreme [*Enneads*, I, 6, 8].⁹⁶

SECTION SIX

SUMMATION: JEWISHHELLENISTIC CONTEXT

AND THE 'IMAGE OF GOD'

In this chapter we began our analysis of the way *Beselem Elohim* was understood through Jewish and Hellenistic developments from c. 500 BC to 270 AD. We began from the time of the *Targum* commentaries and finished with a reflection on Plotinus' *Enneads*. It was noted that the early *Targum* commentaries moved away from an anthropomorphic view of the image of God. God was seen to be beyond the immanent world of incarnation. As such, the image of God was conceived as 'spirit', 'reason', 'intellectuality'. Likeness, rather than image was the preferred method of denoting mankind's status in the *Targums*. Yet, the phrase *Beselem Elohim*, was retained for its practical usage, that is, in the legal tracts of the Jewish people which point to the sacredness and uniqueness of each individual human life, precisely because each individual was created in the image of God.

⁹⁵ Sullivan, p. 6; (*Enneads*, II, 4, 15; VI, 3, 7).

⁹⁶ See, Sullivan, p. 7.

We also noted that Plato and Aristotle's philosophy are important Hellenistic influences on the topic of the image. Plato holds that the 'world of the shadows' participate in world of the Forms. Here images are viewed as 'fuddle'; they do not as such lead to knowledge, thus reason relying on images at best raises itself to mere opinion but as Reale points out 'images' may be viewed as leading to the realm of 'Ideas' and therefore they cannot totally be seen in a negative light. To be made in the image of God from this point of view, therefore, is perhaps not altogether a 'positive' idea, in the sense that images are not the total reality. But here the idea of 'image' is seen to be useful – as human beings cannot be said to 'God', they are not the Divine reality. Philo of Alexandria embraced this Platonic account of image. Philo could dilute the idea of the image of God without recourse to likeness by discussing image in light of Plato's philosophy. Plato's philosophy allowed Philo to see the image of God as an image of a *Logos* who was in the image of God. As Bentwich notes, the neo-Platonists of the early centuries AD 'all professed a belief in one supreme transcendental God, who [was] so far exalted above the world and mankind as to be incomprehensible.'⁹⁷ This supreme being they associated with Plato's *ἀγαθόν*, or the Idea of the Good, which they interpret literally as 'beyond being' *ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας* and thereby this period of reflection on the image of God points to a conception of God which is abstract and transcendent.

Aristotle's psychological approach to the image had, as we noted, a more positive view of the image than Plato did: for Aristotle images play a central role in what we might term his theory of cognition. Aristotle held that images stood as a mid-way between deductive calculations and sensitive imagination. The ability to

⁹⁷ Bentwich, p. 9.

convert images into understanding, in Aristotle's view, is only given to rational animals, i.e., to humanity. Aquinas, as we shall presently see, is influenced heavily by Aristotle's philosophical approach and it is not until the Medieval period that full fruition of Aristotle's thinking is once again embraced.

The last philosopher we discussed in this period was Plotinus. His philosophy points to the necessary aspect of the image referring back to the point of emanation, the *One* in order for it to retain its likeness. Plotinus' concept of the return to the *One* was more at the level of the spiritual than at the level of matter – pointing again to the influence of Plato and the suspicion of the incarnate world. The body as such is denigrated, whilst the world of spirit is brought to the fore. This emphasis on the 'mind' or 'rational' aspect of the human (*contra* the body) and its connection to the image of God takes on further significance and emphasis in the works of Augustine and Aquinas.

CHAPTER III

FROM *BESELEM ELOHIM* TO *IMAGO DEI*: THE CHRISTIAN SYNTHESIS

In the previous two chapters, we discussed *Beselem Elohim* in the context of both Genesis chapter one and wider Old Testament considerations, and with reference to some important Jewish-Hellenistic developments up to the time of Christ. Continuing our historical exploration of the variation of the idea of *Beselem Elohim*, this chapter outlines a number of very influential Christian interpretations of Genesis chapter one. Our focus lies on the Christian-intellectual circuit from the time of the New Testament (particularly St Paul) to the synthesis of Augustine and Aquinas, taking into account a number of disparate opinions *en route*, most notably that of Alcuin who, as a seemingly lone voice, considered the body (and not just the soul) worthy of reflection. Moses Maimonides will also be considered as a Jewish philosopher reflecting on the idea in the Middle Ages.

In its purest form the Christian philosopher-theologians tended to argue that the image of God was either reflected by or situated in the human capability to rationalise and to refer back or return to its exemplar (*exitus* and *reditus*), that is, to God.¹ It thus followed from this that, generally speaking, humankind imaged God

¹ Here, the thought of Plotinus and Neo-platonic thinking of returning to the ‘One’, comes to the fore in its influence, in particular, on Augustine’s reflections on the ‘image of God’ idea. Millard Erickson outlines the rational conception of the idea of the image of God when he notes that, ‘on the basis of the Genesis 1:26–27 a tendency gradually developed to understand “image” and “likeness” as two aspects or dimensions of the image of God. At times there were naturalistic overtones: the human was created in God’s image only, but gradually evolved into God’s likeness as well. [...] Origen, for example, saw the image as something given immediately at the creation, with the likeness to be conferred by God at a later time. It was Irenaeus, however, who gave the distinction between image and likeness a direction that theologians followed for some time. While his statements vary greatly and are not completely consistent, we do occasionally find in them a clear distinction between image

because of the capacity to reason and was held to be in God's likeness insofar as one followed the commands of God. Aquinas, in particular, develops this idea within the context of his analogy of being, that human beings are in some proportion an image of God. Overall, the philosophical narratives point to a central preoccupation among Christian thinkers to locate an area, or a part of the human being where the image of God can be demonstrated to have been made manifest/ present. This area or part is predominately taken to be the human mind, whether in its activity (Aquinas) and/ or static nature (FitzRalph).

Before turning to the philosophical issues relating to these reflections, it will be useful to give a short sketch of Christian anthropology in order to situate the writings of Paul, Augustine, Alcuin, Bonaventure, Aquinas, Grossesse and FitzRalph.²

and likeness. By the former he meant that Adam had reason and free will; by the latter Irenaeus pointed to some sort of supernatural endowment that Adam possessed through the action of the Spirit. [...] When, however, Adam fell into sin, he lost the likeness, although the image persisted at least to some degree. [Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5.6.1].² See, Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd edn (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998), p. 522. The 'likeness' according to Erickson, consisted of the 'moral qualities of God, whereas the image involved the natural attributes of God' which was worked out more fully in the Middle Ages. Ibid.

² We chose Augustine and Aquinas in particular, as they are seen as the great synthesisers of their particular eras. Augustine writing in the 400s is seen to have brought together the learning of Athens and Jerusalem. As Frederick Copleston notes, 'the name of Augustine stands out as that of the greatest of the Fathers [...] a name that dominated Western thought until the thirteenth century and which can never lose its lustre, notwithstanding the Aristotelianism of St. Thomas Aquinas and his School, especially as this Aristotelianism was very far from disregarding and still further from belittling [Augustine]. Indeed, in order to understand the currents of thought in the Middle Ages, a knowledge of Augustinianism is essential', *A History of Philosophy: Medieval Philosophy*, Vol. 2, (London: Continuum, 2003; 1950) p. 40. While Aquinas writing in the 1200s brings together various philosophical traditions from the time of Augustine. See., Jan. A. Aertsen, 'Aquinas's Philosophy in its Historical Setting' in *Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. by N. Kertmann & E. Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) pp. 12–37. Aertsen, highlights that 'An indication of [the complexity of Aquinas's work] can be found in a document of his contemporaries. On May 2, 1274, the rector of the University of Paris, and "all the masters teaching in the Faculty of Arts" sent a letter to the general chapter of the Dominicans meeting in Lyons. In that letter they expressed their grief at the death of Friar Thomas and made known their wish that his final resting place should be Paris, "the noblest of university cities". Their letter had another purpose as well. The masters requested the Dominicans to send them "some writings of a philosophical nature, begun by [Thomas] at Paris, but left unfinished at his departure". In addition, they requested the sending of translations that "he himself promised would be sent to us," namely, Latin versions of the commentary of Simplicius of Aristotle's *De caelo* and of Proclus's exposition of Plato's *Timeaus*.' [*Chartularium*

SECTION ONE
A CONSIDERATION OF CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY WITH REGARD
TO THE IMAGE OF GOD AND THE 'FALL'³

The Christian synthesis brings with it the learning of two great traditions: the traditions of Jerusalem and of Athens. The synthesis of these traditions began in the early years of the Church Fathers and, for all intents-and-purposes, this process of synthesis in Greek and Judaic thinking continues to inform our post-modern existence.⁴ Augustine represents one of the first principle Christian synthesisers of the reflections of Athens and Jerusalem in the 400s AD. In his early years he was influenced by Plato's writings (presented to him via Plotinus) and by the cult of Mani. Both Plato and Mani's philosophical systems were suspicious of the world of matter and viewed the body in a negative light.⁵

For Augustine, the utmost appraisal for the soul and the life of the soul was seen as the ideal form of existence. Augustine's interpretation of how we image God, however, cannot solely be seen as referring to humankind's ability to use reason alone. His view of the image also had an ethical dimension whereby one is an image

Universitatis Parisiensis, eds Denifle, H., and Chatelien, E., (Paris: De la Lain, 1889) vol. 1, n. 447.] Aersten, p. 14. Here it becomes evident that Aquinas possessed translations of philosophical importance that the Masters in Paris did not have demonstrating some of the advantages Aquinas had at synthesising philosophical and theological thinking in the Middle Ages. Copelston, notes the great powers of Aquinas's mind in its ability to synthesis learning, '[Thomas] possessed greater powers of systematisation [than Albert the Great, his teacher], and it was only to be expected that the meeting of the erudition and open-mindedness of the older man [Albert] with the speculative power and synthesising ability of the younger [Thomas] would result in splendid fruit.' Copleston (ibid.), p. 303. These two thinkers are the hinges of our investigation in this chapter, the other thinkers are brought in to offer additional perspectives, Alcuin, Bonaventure, FitzRalph who draw on Augustine's thinking and Moses Maimonides who represents Jewish reflection on the Image in the Middle Ages. Therefore, Augustine and Aquinas's philosophical approaches shall dominate this chapter, with references to other major Christian philosophers to draw out their reflections on the image of God idea.

³ For a general overview of Christian anthropology, see, John R. Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991).

⁴ See, Paul Helm, *Faith and Reason: Oxford Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁵ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Vol. 2, Medieval Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2003), see, esp., pp. 40-51 for a general overview of the life of St Augustine.

of God insofar as one follows the path of righteousness, in other words, one becomes another 'Christ'. This view is heavily influenced by the writings of the Evangelists and St Paul in particular.

Questions pertaining to the Fall (*Lapsus*) of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden are relevant background issues that influence Augustine's reading of the Genesis text. The 'Fall', for Augustine, opens up a certain ontological chasm between Adam and Eve in their original form and their subsequent existence after they were banished from the Garden of Eden due to disobediently eating the fatal fruit (Genesis 3:1-23).⁶ No longer is the image and likeness of God given to human beings in a passive act of grace or gift from *Elohim* but due to the 'Fall' one has to 'earn', to strive, to become like God. This, indeed, even gives rise to the issue concerning whether there is any image of God at all left intact after the Fall. Yet, Augustine considers that some form of the Trinity remains; otherwise, we could not come to know God.

With regard to the body, even though the cult of Mani places suspicion on the material world, Christian anthropology views the body as important, the body is considered as the 'temple of the holy spirit' (1 Corinthians 6: 19-20). The body, therefore, is to be preserved from various forms of sin that would defile it.

⁶ There is a remarkable change in the ontology of the human person after the Fall. The 'Fall' results in a fissure opening between the originally created Adam and Eve and the subsequent dejected human species which is removed from the Garden of Eden. It also opens up a 'fault' in creation itself. This 'original sin' of disobedience and the fissures it causes is seen in the subsequent passages of Genesis where man is told that he would have to work and toil because the land was cursed due to him eating of the tree of knowledge, moreover man would be condemned to eat the plants of the field and to sweat, to eat bread and to return to the soil upon whence man came (Genesis, 3:17-19). While this was the punishment for man, woman was condemned to labour pangs and to being ruled over by her husband (Genesis, 3:16). This identified a new relationship between God, mankind and the earth, where man and woman's original relationship was fractured, the ideal existence to which they were called was dispelled and a new form of existence brought into being.

Alcuin, who lived from 735–804 AD gives particular attention to the image of God idea and reflects on its meaning both for the human body and human reason. Alcuin, like Augustine, points to the necessity of ethical and right relationship with God and the community in order to become *like* God. It thus seems that living to the ‘highest ethical standard’ possible is what is considered in common by Augustine, Alcuin and later Aquinas, as imaging God. To lead in reality what Christians call the life of a Saint is in effect to image God. The example of right living is demonstrated to Christians via Jesus’ life as portrayed in the Gospels. Each Christian is called to be another Christ (*alter Christus*) in order to be in the image of God. Having the ability to choose right from wrong, therefore, is central to this world-view.⁷

SECTION TWO

NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION OF BESELEM ELOHIM AS REFERRING TO CHRIST.

The New Testament understanding of Genesis passage 1:26-27 undergoes a transformation when it is interpreted in light of Christian Christology. Christ (who is held by Christians to be the second person of the Trinity) is seen to be a perfect *representation* of the Father (who according to the Gospel of St John ‘sent him’ (John 17:18, 20:21)). In this regard, the Son (Christ) proceeds from the Father and is in the image of the Father. St John notes that Christ claimed, ‘Whoever has seen me has seen the Father’ (John 14:9). But to understand Genesis 1:26-27 in a Trinitarian sense requires one to have faith in Christ as the incarnate ‘son of God’. This reading of Christ as the image of God *par excellence* is specifically Christian. While the question of the existence or indeed non-existence of God and the qualities or

⁷ As such, free will is an essential element in our ability to image God (we will consider the issue of free will further in Chapter VI).

attributes of God are discussed in philosophical parlance, the question of the immanence of God, becoming incarnate in human form is seen by many as a ‘scandal to reason’. We will address the issue of the existence or non-existence of God in the final chapter of this study, but it is of importance to note, at present, that, the Christian religion has in fact proposed a radical solution to the problem of the way humankind are made in the image of God. If Christ truly is the ‘Son of God’, then God himself has taken on human form and, therefore, we can see what it truly is to be in the image of God in his life and teachings.

From the Old Testament account of the image of God, as discussed in chapter one, we can in fact see the image of God everyday in one another. In the Christian view, Christ called human beings who ‘did the will of [his] Father in heaven [his] brother and sister’ (Matthew 12:49-50). So, here again, for Christians those who follow the ‘will’ of the Father are brothers and sisters of Christ who is the image of God.

There are two ways of considering the *way* in which Christ is the image of God. The first way, we might term, is the *ontological* way, whilst the second, we might call the *existential* way. In the ontological (that is Christ and God being of the same substance (ὁμοούσιος)) mode of representing the image of God, here we need to consider Christ’s nature as being both human and divine. In the existential imaging, we consider Christ’s *way* of life, his teachings and preaching.

2.1 Christ as the Image of God

The issue of the hypostatic union comes into effect here. Christ's *humanity* could be seen by his disciples and followers but his *divinity* appeared to be hidden from their view (Hebrews 10:20). There are, however, in the Gospel accounts, particular times when the disciples catch a glimpse of Christ's divinity. This occurs when various miracles are performed that defy natural explanation and, indeed, most especially at the Transfiguration event, where Christ undergoes a trans-figuration. In this instance his divinity is revealed to the apostolic witnesses who climbed the mountain with him and refuse to leave the mountain once they have viewed his Divine nature (see, Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9: 28-36).⁸ Thus the human form of Christ is visible, but the divine is invisible. Because of the hypostatic union, even in Christ's human form, his divinity is given although not 'seen'. The problem of seeing the Divine has certainly been an issue since the time of the burning bush. Moses is told 'no one can see the face of God and live' (Exodus 33:20). This is also emphasised in the New Testament where John outlines that no one has seen the *form* of God at any time (John 5:37).⁹

There are at least two passages in the New Testament where the Old Testament understandings of *image and likeness* reappear without substantial

⁸ In St. Paul's letter to Philippi, Paul says that Jesus was in the 'form of God but took on the likeness of men, and being in the form of man he became obedient unto death, even death on a cross'. (Philippians, 2: 5-11).

⁹ Other passages that highlight that God has never been seen include John 1:18, where John states that the 'only begotten Son has explained God', while John 6:46 notes that no one has seen God, except the one who is from God, and 1 Tim. 6:15-16 says that Christ dwells in 'unapproachable light'. There are other passages which paradoxically inform that certain Old Testament Patriarchs saw God, such as Genesis 17:1 where the Lord appeared to Abram, Exodus 6:2-3, where God says he appeared to 'Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as Almighty God', etc.

alteration, that is, in 1 Corinthians 11:7 and James. 3:9.¹⁰ In Corinthians the term *eikon* is used as the *Septuagint* (LXX) rendering of *tselem*, while in James the term *likeness* (*demût*) is translated by the term *homoiousis*.¹¹ In most New Testament references to the image of God, *eikon* is employed to suggest a ‘perfect reflection of the prototype’. As the following entry from the *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* explains,

Nothing could make clearer the tremendous impact of the revelation of God in Christ than the fact that it has almost completely obliterated the thought of man as being in the image of God and replaced it with the thought of Christ as being the image of God, that being understood in the sense of perfect correspondence to the divine prototype.¹²

The implication of the New Testament passages is that Christ is the image of God – this likeness is an incarnate reality for the followers of Christ.¹³ The revelation of God in Christ moves the focus away from man being created in the image of God, and to Christ being an ‘image’ of the Father. In becoming flesh, the image of God is *now visible* for Christian believers. Paul outlines that Christ is the ‘image (*eikon*) of the invisible God’ (1 Col. 1:15).¹⁴ From the perspective of Paul it is only in relation

¹⁰ For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man. (1 Corinthians 11:7), *ἀνὴρ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν, εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων· ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστίν* (emphasis added, ΠΡΟΣ ΚΟΡΙΝΘΙΟΥΣ Α, 11:7). With it [the tongue] we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the *likeness* of God. (James 3:9). *ἐν αὐτῇ εὐλογοῦμεν τὸν κύριον καὶ πατέρα, καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ καταρώμεθα τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τοὺς καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν θεοῦ γεγονότας*, (emphasis added, *The Greek New Testament*, ΙΑΚΩΒΟΥ, 3:9)

¹¹ Literally ‘the same substance’.

¹² N. W. Porteous, ‘Image of God’, in *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962) p. 684.

¹³ As Hebrews 1:3 states, ‘He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word.’ – *ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, καθαρῶσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς* (emphasis added, ΠΡΟΣ ΕΒΡΑΙΟΥΣ, 1:3).

¹⁴ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all things have been created through him and for him. (I Col. 1:15-1:17), *ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, ...* (emphasis added, ΠΡΟΣ ΚΑΛΟΣΣΑΕΙΣ, 1:15).

to Christ that it is possible for human beings to attain the *likeness* to God. As Kearney comments,

In Phil. 2:6-8 [Paul] speaks of Christ's exchanging the form (*morphe*) of God, which was his by right to assume the form of a servant and the likeness of men, *morphe* – in both cases, meaning 'mode of existence'. As Christians are in Christ, the relationship will work itself out in the relationships existing in the Christian community. In Col. 3:15 the exchanging of the old man (nature) for the new, 'which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator,' will bring about a community in which racial, religious and social distinctions will no longer have any meaning, 'but Christ is all in all' (Eph. 4:22-24).¹⁵

In the New Testament, the understanding of a Christian is as of a person who dies with Christ (which is symbolically seen to occur at baptism) and who puts on a new nature. In other words, Christians are asked to conform themselves (*summorphous*) to Christ (the image of God). As 2 Corinthians 3:18 states:

And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same *image* from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit (emphasis added).¹⁶

The ontological aspect of Christ's ability to be the image of God comes from the fact that he is of the 'one substance'. Human beings are not of the same substance as the Father. Christ alone shares in the 'same substance', thereby Christ is the image of God and in fact, in the Christian worldview, he *is* God.

2.2 Christ's Lived Historical Existence and the *imago Dei*

It is important, then, to reflect on the *lived* nature of Christ's historical existence in order to understand why the writers of his time and later considered him to be

¹⁵Kearney, p. 72.

¹⁶ ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες ἀνακαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν Κυρίου κατοπριζόμενοι τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν, καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος (emphasis added, ΠΡΟΣ ΚΟΡΙΝΘΙΟΥΣ Β 3:18).

perfect. The two main issues that we will address are: (i) how did Christ image God in his life as lived in a particular historical period in time and (ii) how was Christ understood to express the qualities of the divine in his preaching and teaching according to Christians and those who were so impressed by him. We will also need to examine what made his disciples think that Christ was the image of God, that he was like God, and that he represented the divine, was the son of God. The life of Christ is ‘seen’ and ‘recorded’ and ‘explicated’ in the New Testament first and foremost.¹⁷

The existential aspect of Christ imaging God, as seen by his followers, is best expressed in the lived ‘life’ of Christ, that is to say, it is the image of God as understood via Christ’s life and works. Those, who have seen Christ and his works have seen the work of the Father, or the *person* of Christ have seen something of the *person* of the Father as the three-persons are held by Christians to share the one substance (*ὁμοιούσιος, homoiouisis*). The personality of Christ is seen in the Scriptural texts and these texts point to the moral quality and integrity of Christ’s life, and the highpoint of his moral theory is often seen to be conveyed in the Beatitudes which are outlined in Matthew chapter 5.¹⁸ Matthew 5:21 also

¹⁷ We are aware that there are other ‘gospels’ and ‘writings’ which exist outside of the New Testament canon. We will, however, confine our discussion to the New Testament as it has had the most impact on our understanding of Christ through the centuries.

¹⁸ Here Christ is seen to teach the moral codes of the kingdom, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...’ (Matthew 5: 3-10). Pope John Paul II, placed Matthew chapter 5 at the heart of the moral theory of the Catholic Church in *Veritatis Splendor*. John Paul II held that the Beatitudes represent *promises* ‘from which there also indirectly flow *normative indications* for the moral life. In their originality and profundity they are a sort of *self-portrait of Christ*, and for this very reason are *invitations to discipleship and to communion of life with Christ* (*Veritatis Splendor*, § 16).

Full text available at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor_en.html (accessed 10 January, 2008).

characterises the qualities of the life espoused by Christ which seemed to other human beings to ‘transcend’ human ethics. In Matthew 5:21, Jesus states,

‘You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, “you shall not murder”; and “whoever murders shall be liable to judgment”. But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; [...] be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift [at the altar].’

‘You have heard that it was said, “you shall not commit adultery” but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. [...]’

‘You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”. But I say to you: Do not resist an evil-doer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.’

‘You have heard that it was said, “you shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy”. But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you [...] for if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?’ (Matthew 5:21-46)

The Gospels, then, give Christians a standard of a *way* to live for the purposes of becoming another Christ, in other words to image God. These calls to the moral life represent, in many ways, the life lived by Christ as his story unfolded in the Gospels until his eventual death on the cross in the face of a false trial. This teaching and way of life obviously influenced the people around him because it seemed to transcend an ordinary human existence. The existential historical lived life of Christ, as narrated in and through the Gospels, gives us an insight into what made St Paul and other Church Fathers consider Christ to be the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15).

2.3 Christ as *Emmanuel*

The New Testament understanding of the image of God, then, provides perhaps the most *tangible* understanding of the image of God to date in our chronological analysis;¹⁹ that is to say, the Christians of that period no longer had an abstract notion of God but a God brought close *Emmanuel* (God-with-us). Christ, for the early ‘Christians’, represented an embodiment of the image and likeness of God in an incarnate form and *hypostatic union*. The message-of-the-Gospels (*kerygma*) foretell the possibility of beholding God ‘face-to-face’ (1 Corinthians 13:12).²⁰

St Paul was not in favour of the abstract god of the Hellenistic philosophers, and was suspicious of combining Greek philosophy with Revelation.²¹ He preached that the truths of the biblical faith as revealed in the Old and New Testament could not be adequately understood by reason, or indeed metaphysics.²² Tertullian was of the same mind raising the (rhetorical) question ‘what has Athens got to do with Jerusalem?’²³ It was clear to some believers like Clement of Alexandria, nonetheless,

¹⁹ It was ‘tangible’ in that sense that Christ was a human being like everyone else.

²⁰ For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. (1 Cor. 13:12) *βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον...* (emphasis added, *The ΠΡΟΣ ΚΟΡΙΝΘΙΟΥΣ Α*, 13:12). Interestingly the term face-to-face is rendered *prosopon pros prosopon* in Greek, what was considered later as ‘person-to-person’. *Prosopon* being the term associated with the three persons of the Trinity which was proclaimed in the Council of Nicea in 325 AD and the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD. At these Councils the Son was proclaimed to have the same essence as the Father (*homoiousia*). See Diogenes Allen, Eric O. Springsted, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007) p. 71 for a discussion of the *homoiousia* concept and the Council of Nicea.

²¹ ‘See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe and not according to Christ’ (Colossians 2:8-10).

²² ‘For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles [...] for God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.’ (1 Corinthians 1:22-23, 25).

²³ Tertullian asks ‘After Jesus Christ we have no need of speculation, after the Gospel no need of research. When we come to believe, we have no desire to believe anything else; for we begin by believing that there is nothing else which we have to believe’, Tertullian, ‘The Prescriptions against the Heretics’, in *Faith and Reason*, ed. by Paul Helm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 62.

that the truths of metaphysics had perhaps anticipated the truths of revelation. Thus, the unknown god (*agnostos theos*) of the Greeks might be understood as the Creator God of monotheistic religion.²⁴ From the point of view of Christian apologists, the search for the creator, together with the search for man's final end (*telos*), and the way to attain it, had reached their ultimate height in the Christian religion.

Yet the Christian conception of the image of God as referring to Christ alone in a perfect way, tends to undermine the pluralist understanding of Genesis 1:26-27 whereby all are made in the image and likeness of God. The implications of the Christian view seems to diminish this universal claim, because Christ for Christians, on the one hand, is the perfect image of the Father. On the other hand, all are brothers and sisters in Christ and, as such, participate 'most fully' in the image and likeness of God, in becoming an *alter Christus* – another Christ. Thus the Christian interpretation of the *Beselem Elohim* passage, while making the term more tangible in the fact that God is brought immanently into their presence, tends to require that the image of God be 'earned' in some way through baptism, virtuous conduct and following the path of righteousness as walked by Christ: this is the 'way' to salvation.²⁵

²⁴ Plato's *Timaeus* was seen to have some parallels with the biblical account of Yahweh's creation of the universe in Genesis. The Greek concept of *Logos* seems to have been co-opted into the Gospel of John for an extensive account of the concept of *Logos* in the Gospel of John, see, Michael Mullins, *The Gospel of John, A Commentary* (Dublin: Columba, 2003), pp. 48-54. Here Mullins considers the Hebrew use of word *dabar* (word/deed) in the Old Testament, and *memra* in the *Targums* alongside the Greek influence. Mullins points to the fact that, 'Philo of Alexandria endeavoured to knit together Greek philosophy and the biblical understanding of God's creative plan by his use of *logos*. This would have been the understanding of persons who lived in the cultural milieu of the diaspora Jews, like Philo, who used Greek language and ideas to express the riches of biblical tradition. He saw God's *logos* giving meaning and plan to the universe. Many of the first Jewish and Gentile readers of the gospel would have shared this cultural milieu. p. 53, n.73.

²⁵ Hence the designation of the 'Methodist Church' for one of the later Protestant-Christian religious denominations.

In Genesis, the text seems to be more passive, whereby God created humans, both male and female in his image and likeness. The active part in earning such an image comes after the ‘Fall’, the moment of disobedience by Adam and Eve, when both ate of the tree of knowledge and were cast out of the garden. This interpretation undoubtedly has affected the Christian interpretation of the image, especially in relation to Augustine and later writers such as Luther and Tillich in particular.

SECTION THREE THE AUGUSTINIAN SYNTHESIS

We have noted that some of the Church Fathers were hesitant to attempt a synthesis between Greek philosophy and Hebrew thinking, Augustine, however, undertook this project adeptly. Yahweh as the God (*Deus*) of creation is seen as the ultimate origin of Being. In sum, Augustine opened up the possibility of putting philosophy at the service (*ancilla*) of theology in the pursuit of truth (*veritas*). An opening that found its full expression in the medieval motto of *fides quaerens intellectum*, ‘faith seeks understanding’.²⁶ Augustine stands as a monumental figure in the Latin tradition and his philosophical and theological musings determined in some fashion the later generations of philosophic developments.²⁷

²⁶ As Copleston notes, ‘The general attitude of the Fathers set the tone, so to speak, in what we call “Augustinianism”. St. Anselm, for instance, was a theologian, but he saw that the existence of God who revealed the mysteries of the Christian religion needs in some way to be proved, and so he developed a natural theology, [...] *Fides quaerens intellectum* may, to speak rather crudely, work forwards or backwards. Working forwards from the data of revelation and applying reasoning to theological dogmas, in order to understand them as far as possible, it produces Scholastic theology; working backwards, in the sense of considering the presuppositions of revelation, it develops the proofs of God’s existence. But the mind at work in either case is really the mind of the theologian, even though in the second case it works within the province and with the methods of philosophy’. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. II, pp. 553-554.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

In 1963, Sullivan undertook an extensive examination of Augustine's understanding of the image. In that year, Sullivan noted that there was no recent monograph which treated exclusively and systematically of the doctrine of the image as it appears in the writings of St Augustine.²⁸ This work of Sullivan's continues to represent one of the most systematic studies of the *imago Dei* concept in Augustinian thinking.²⁹ Augustine's writings on the image of God idea are spread throughout his letters, his sermons, the *Confessions (Confessiones)*, the *City of God (De Civitate Dei)* and *On the Trinity (De Trinitate)*. The principle source of Augustine's teaching is found in his publication *On the Trinity*. Sullivan outlines that Augustine's work is difficult to interpret because of his use of 'rhetorical expression, the richness and complexity of teaching – not to mention the lack of precision in distinctions that are used'.³⁰ The overall trajectory of our account of Augustine's understanding of the *imago Dei*, however, will not focus on every aspect of his teaching but aim to capture the fundamental reflections of Augustine on the idea of the image of God, principally in his work *On The Trinity* – where three ideas of the image of God which are outlined in trinities; a permanent trinity, a trinity that sub-ordinates self-as-object to God-as-object and an image of God that is reserved for the beatific vision.³¹

²⁸ Sullivan, p. viii. Sullivan notes that J. Heijke published an anthology of Augustinian texts concerning the divine image in man with regard to the *De Trinitate*. See, J. Heijke, *St. Augustine's Comments on 'Imago Dei'* (exclusive of the *De Trinitate*), *Classical Folia*, Suppl. III, 1960). However, the *De Trinitate* is of particular importance as it represents a principle source for Augustine's doctrine of the trinitarian image which is not included in Heijke's anthology. We will follow Sullivan's chronological treatment of the 'image of God' in *On the Trinity* closely in this section.

²⁹ Middleton remarks that Sullivan's publication represents 'a comprehensive analysis of Augustine on the *imago Dei*,' (p. 18, n. 15). Other commentaries of interest are David Cairn's, *The Image of God in Man* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953).

³⁰ Sullivan, p. ix.

³¹ Among the many writings of St. Augustine one cannot find any lengthy or developed treatment of the concept of image. Characteristically, Augustine treats of the *image (imago)* in a number of passages to be found in different works – *Lib. 83 QQ., Q. 74 (PL 40:85-86)*; *De Gen. Lib. Impf., XVI, 57 (PL 34:242, CSEL 28, 1:497)*; *QQ. In Hept., V, 4 (PL 34:749-750, CSEL 23, 2:731)*; *De Gen. Lib. Impf., XVI, 61-62 (PL 34:244-245, CSEL 28, 1:501)*. Sullivan, p. 3.

The phrase ‘in the image and likeness of God’³² was somewhat pivotal in Augustine’s conversion from Manichean materialism to the Christian faith. He heard Ambrose preaching the Gospel to the people every Sunday. Augustine notes that he became more and more certain that the criticisms of Manichaeism of the Catholic faith were erroneous. As he recalls,

Every Lord’s day [*Dominica*] I heard [Ambrose] ‘rightly preaching the word of truth’ (2 Tim. 2:15) among the people. More and more my conviction grew that all the knotty problems and clever calumnies which those deceivers of ours had devised against the divine books could be dissolved. I also learnt that your sons, whom you have regenerated by grace through their mother the Catholic Church, understood the text concerning man being made by you in your image (Gen. 1:26) not to mean that they believed and thought you to be bounded by the form of a human body. Although I had not the least notion or even an obscure suspicion how there could be spiritual substance, yet I was glad, if also ashamed, to discover that I had been barking for years not against the Catholic faith but against mental figments of physical images. You who are most high [...] have no bodily members, some larger, others smaller, but are everywhere a whole and never limited in space.³³ You are certainly not our physical shape. Yet you made humanity in your image, and man from head to foot is contained in space (*Confessions Book VI, 4: PL 32:721*).³⁴

The Manichean sect followed the teaching of a Babylonian prophet named Mani who lived in the 200s AD. According to Manichean beliefs there are two opposing forces at work in the universe, a kingdom of light (good) and a kingdom of darkness (evil). The soul, which belonged to the kingdom of light, was trapped inside the body (evil). The body was to be restrained as much as possible from lust, over-eating etc. Mani

³² In 382 AD, Pope Damasus I asked Jerome (who was contemporaneous with Augustien) to make a revision of the old Latin translations of the Bible. The Book of Genesis and other protocanonical books were translated by 405. Augustine, would have been familiar thus with the Latin verse of Genesis 1:26-27, the Vulgate renders as follows, ‘*et creavit Deus hominem ad imaginem suam ad imaginem Dei creavit illum masculum et feminam creavit eos*’, See, *Biblia Sacra Vulgata: Holy Bible in Latin*, eds. by Roger Gryson, et al (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007) 4th revised edition. The *Douay-Rheims* which is an English translation of the Vulgate bible renders the Latin as follows, ‘And God created man to his own image: to the image of God he created him: male and female he created them’. See, *The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version: Translated from the Latin Vulgate*, trans. Challoner, Richard (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 2000). Here we notice that the Latin translation has ‘to his image’ rather than ‘in his image,’ which seems again to prevent too close an anthropomorphic reading of the idea of the image of God as had been the case in the Targums.

³³ cf. Plotinus 3.9.4: 5.5. 8-9, see *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans. Henry Chadwick, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 94 n. 7. All further quotations from the *Confessions* taken from this translation unless otherwise stated.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94

was seen as a prophet, Jesus was also viewed by the followers of Mani as a prophet. Both Mani and Jesus as prophets brought with them messages of salvation and redemption.

There is a similarity between the Mani cult and the Gnostics who also emphasised the light and dark aspect of existence, matter being 'evil' and the soul being 'good'. We have previously seen in Greek thinking that there is a similar division where the body is considered negatively while the soul is seen as central. Plato's philosophical system saw the body (*soma*) as a tomb (*sema*) for the soul.³⁵ As Copleston notes,

characteristic of Gnosticism in general was a dualism between God and matter, which, though not absolute, approached that of the later Manichaean system. The resulting gulf between God and matter was filled up [...] by a series of emanations of intermediary beings in which Christ found a place. The complement of the process of emanation was the return to God by way of salvation.³⁶

One can hear the influence of Plotinus in the 'return' towards God, this process of emanation and return (*exitus et reditus*) received particular attention by John Scotus Eriugena in his *De Divisione Naturae*.³⁷ Augustine was acquainted with the philosophy of Plotinus, and also of Porphyry, these were introduced to him through Ambrose (Bishop of Milan, 333-397)³⁸ and made accessible through the

³⁵ 'The reality of the soul and its pre-eminence over the body finds emphatic expression in Plato's psychological dualism, which corresponds to his metaphysical dualism. In the *Laws* Plato defines the soul as 'self-initating motion' [...] or the 'source of motion'. This being so, the soul is prior to the body in the sense that it is superior to the body (the latter being moved without being the source of motion) and must rule the body. [...] the no one is willingly bad; the bad man becomes bad because of some faulty habit of body [...] Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Vol. II - Medieval Philosophy: Augustine to Scotus* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1959) pp. 207-208

³⁶ Copleston, *Medieval Philosophy: Augustine to Scotus*, (2003) p. 21

³⁷ See, *Ibid.* pp. 112, 116-135.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

translations of Victorinus, who was an African rhetorician and convert to Christianity like Augustine.³⁹

Augustine was baptised by Ambrose in 387, (*Confessions IX, 6* (PL 32:769)). Before his baptism ‘Augustine wrote a group of writings including the *De Immortalitate Animae*, composed in Milan. In this body of writings there is only one explicit reference to the image text from Genesis, and it is not utilised to any particular purpose (cf. *Soliloquia, I, I, 4* (PL 32:871)).⁴⁰ It was only gradually that Augustine came to realise that some things in neo-Platonism could not be reconciled with Christianity.⁴¹

It is in the *Confessions* that Augustine’s first reflection on the Trinitarian image in man appears. In answer to the question ‘Who can understand the omnipotent Trinity?’ Augustine writes the following:

I wish that human disputants would reflect upon the triad within their own selves. These three aspects of the self are very different from the Trinity, but I may make the observation that on this triad they could well exercise their minds and examine the problem, thereby becoming aware how far distant they are from it. The three aspects I mean are being [existing], knowing, willing. For I am and I know and I will. Knowing and willing I am. I know that I am and I will. I will to be and to know. In these three, therefore, let him who is capable of so doing contemplate how inseparable in life they are: one life, one mind, and one essence, yet ultimately there is distinction, for they are inseparable, yet distinct. The fact is certain to anyone by introspection.

³⁹ ‘To [Simplicianus] I related the mazes of my wanderings. But when I mentioned that I had read certain books of the Platonists, which Victorinus, sometime Rhetoric Professor of Rome, (who had died a Christian, as I had heard) had translated into Latin, he testified his joy that I had not fallen upon the writings of other philosophers, full of fallacies and deceits, after the rudiments of this world, whereas the Platonists many ways led to the belief in God, and His Word’ (*Confessions*, Book VIII, II, p. 190). There is much debate whether Augustine’s conversion to Platonism preceded and influenced his conversion to Christianity or vice versa. From Augustine’s own testimony, however, it seems like he was converted *both* to Platonism and Christianity around *the same time* (c. 386 A.D).

⁴⁰ Sullivan, p. 7.

⁴¹ *Retract.*, I, 1, 4: *Laus quoque, qua Platonem vel Platonicos seu Academicos philosophos tantum extuli quantum impios homines non oportuit, non immerito mihi displicet: praesertim quorum contra errores magnos defendenda est Christiana doctrina*’ (PL 32:587).

Let him consider himself and reflect and tell me what is there (*Confessions*, XIII, xi).⁴²

Here Augustine announces the theme of his large work *On the Trinity*. This work was begun a year or two after the completion of the *Confessions*. Augustine highlights that we, as conscious human ‘selves’, experience our being, knowing and willing as closely related, but yet distinct. Furthermore, Augustine believes that, though distinct they are related, therefore, being, knowing and willing cannot be pried apart. Augustine appears to outline that there is a mental-three-in-oneness and so our own experience of a trinity can illuminate in some way the reality of the Trinity.⁴³ Gareth Matthews states:

The idea that the human self, and especially that part of the human self that sets human beings apart from the lower animals, namely, the mind, is an image of God, *imago Dei*, gives Augustine both the incentive and the license to find in the human mind significant similarities to God, the more the better. He can do this without having to suggest in any way that human beings might come to rival God in perfection. The idea of the human mind as the *imago Dei* also gives him the idea of admonishing his readers to burnish the Divine image within them, again, without needing to fear the sin of perfectionism. After all, an image, no matter how well it images what it is the image of, will necessarily remain derivative from its original.⁴⁴

3.3.1. Augustine’s *De Trinitate* and the *Imago Dei*

Augustine refers to the opening chapter of Genesis to highlight the Trinitarian nature of God, interpreting the words ‘Let us make’ as a sign of three-persons in communion with each other over the act of creation:

⁴² Some of the terminology has affinities with Plotinus (e.g. 6.4.14).

⁴³ In Book X of the *Confessions* Augustine discussed memory whilst in Book XI he discussed time as a *distantio animi* these final books of the *Confessions* point a more specified look at the question of mind (*mens*).

⁴⁴ See, Gareth B. Matthews, ‘Introduction’ in Augustine, *On the Trinity*, trans. Stephen McKenna, ed. by Gareth B. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. xi.

For God said ‘Let us make man to our image and likeness’; but a little later it is said, ‘And God made man to the image of God’ [Gen. 1:26-27]. It would certainly be incorrect to say ‘our’, because it is a plural number, if man were made according to the image of one person, whether of the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit; but because he was made in the image of the Trinity it was, therefore said: ‘in our image’. But again, in order that we might not think we are to believe in three gods in the Trinity, since the same Trinity is the one God, it was said: ‘And God made man in the image of God,’ which is just the same as saying ‘in His image’ (*De Trinitate*, XII, 6, 7).

This usage of the Trinitarian image in man already supposes the knowledge of what in fact that image means and Augustine realises there are issues with defining the way this image manifests itself.⁴⁵ In order to explore this problem Augustine considers the ideas of love and charity and their relationship to the human mind.

For Augustine there is no mind (*mens*) without knowledge and love of self. There can be no knowledge of self without mind and self-love, and there can be no self-love without self-knowledge and mind. This trinity is inseparable because of the mutual relation, they (knowledge, love, mind) are distinct via the mutual relation, co-substantial because of inseparability and relation, and one because the same substance and inseparable. The mind, thus knows itself through itself, and not through the senses (*On the Trinity*, IX, 3, 3).⁴⁶

When the human mind, however, knows itself and loves itself, it does not know and love something immutable; each individual man, attentive to what is going on within him, speaking in one way when he expresses his own mind, but defines the human mind in a different way by a special and general knowledge. Therefore, when one speaks to me about his own mind, as to whether he understands or does not understand this or that, and whether he wishes or does not wish this or that, I believe what he says; but when he

⁴⁵ Sullivan notes that the treatment of the Trinitarian image in the *De Trinitate* is immensely intricate and difficult to explicate, Augustine works through several conceptions of the Trinity and creates an analogy between his understanding of the Trinity and the image of the Trinity in man in a systematic fashion. Sullivan, p. 116.

⁴⁶ *Mens ego ipsa sicut corporearum rerum notitias per sensus corporis colligit, sic incorporearum per semetipsam. Ergo et semetipsam per se ipsam novit, quoniam est incorporea.* (*De Trinitate*, IX, 3, 3), Sullivan, p. 121.

speaks the truth about the human mind, either specifically or generally, I recognise the truth and approve. [...] For it is not by seeing many minds with our bodily eyes that we gather, by their similarity, a general or special knowledge of the human mind; but we contemplate the inviolable truth, whence we can as perfectly as possible define, not what each man's mind is, but what it ought to be in the light of the eternal types (*De Trinitate*, IX, 6, 9).

This perfect knowledge results in the generation of a *mental word* (*Verbum*) the likeness of the eternal Word of God. In the production of the mental word Augustine sees several elements of similarity to the eternal procession of the Word of God.⁴⁷

All knowledge according to the form [*secundum speciem*] is similar to that which it knows [...]. The mind, therefore, has a certain likeness to the form known to it, whether we are pleased with the form [known] or displeased with the privation of it. Wherefore, we are *like* God inasmuch as we *know* Him, but we are not like Him to the extent of being His equal, because we do not know Him as He knows Himself. And as, when we learn of bodies through our bodily sense, some likeness of them arises in our mind, and is a *phantasm* of the memory (for the bodies themselves are by no means in our mind when we think of them, but only their likeness. Were we, therefore, to approve of the object for the *image*, we would be in error, for the approval of one thing for another is an error. Yet the *image* of the body in the mind is better than that bodily form, insofar as it is in a better nature, that is, in a living substance, such as the mind is.) So, when we know God, although we become better than we were before we knew Him, and especially when this knowledge being liked and loved worthily, is a word, and thereby produces some similarity to God. Yet that knowledge is less than He is, because it is in a lower nature; for the mind is creature, but God is creator. (*De Trinitate*, IX, 11, 16, emphasis added).

Augustine here outlines that our capacity to reason can aim to *know* God. We are *like* God insofar as we *know* him, but, in fact, we can never be God, as it would require us to be able to know God as God knows himself and it is not possible for the human being to know God as God knows himself. Augustine holds that we come to *know* objects through images, the *image* is better than the object itself because it inheres in a better living substance, that is, in the human mind. The human mind has a privileged bond with itself because it is the 'knower of the thing known'. Thus,

⁴⁷Ibid.

Augustine moves towards a conviction of existence itself, for even if one doubts that one exists, one cannot doubt, for to doubt the mind has to already be existent, for as Augustine states in his later work *The City of God* (Book XI, 26) if I am mistaken, I am (*si fallor, sum*).

To begin with, it is, therefore, clear that something can be knowable, that is, it can be the object of knowledge, and yet it may not be known; but it is impossible for something to be known that is not knowable. Therefore, we must obviously hold fast to this principle that everything which we know begets the knowledge of itself within us at the same time. For knowledge is born from both, from the one who knows and the object that is known. [...] Hence, when [the mind] knows itself, it begets a knowledge of itself that is equal to itself. For it does not know itself as less than it is, nor is its knowledge that of another essence, not only because it is itself that which knows, but also because it knows itself, as we have said above. (*De Trinitate*, IX, 12, 18).

According to Augustine, the mind in its ability to reason is preceded by a desire to *know*. In Book IX, chapter twelve, Augustine discusses self-love, he realises that the mind was lovable to itself even before it loved itself, because the mind could love itself, just in the same way as it was knowable to itself, before the mind knew itself, because it could know itself. For, if the mind were not knowable to itself, it would never have been able to know itself. By the end of Book IX, chapter twelve, Augustine identifies the mind, knowledge and love as means by which we image God.

And so there is a certain image of the Trinity: the mind itself, its knowledge, which is its offspring, and love as a third; these three are one and one substance. The offspring is not less, while the mind knows itself as much as it is; nor is the love less, while the mind loves itself as much as it knows and as much as it is (*De Trinitate*, IX, 12).

Sullivan outlines that this is the first trinity which Augustine will call an image of God or, more precisely, of the divine Trinity in man.

There is a certain image of the Trinity in the mind itself, and the knowledge of itself which is its offspring and word, and love as the third, and these three are one and one substance. (*De Trinitate*, XV, 3, 5).⁴⁸

In this way Augustine completes his discussion of the first trinity in which he sees a ‘kind of image of the Trinity’ in us. ‘He does not advert to this trinity again in detail, but will find a new and better image of the Trinity in man.’⁴⁹

Augustine moves to a second understanding of the ‘trinity in the mind of man’: ‘behold then the mind *remembering* itself, *understanding* itself, *loving* itself; if we perceive this, we perceive a trinity, not yet God, indeed, but already an image of God.’ (*De Trinitate*, XIV, 8, 11). This trinity, in the opinion of Augustine, is a better image than the previous one, because, as he says it is ‘a more evident’ one (*De Trinitate*, XV, 3, 5). The second image seems to be a further development of the first trinity. The tenth book of the *De Trinitate* is the place where discussion of the second image occurs. Augustine states the question he wishes to respond to as follows, ‘What does the mind love when it seeks so ardently to know itself, as yet still unknown to itself?’ For the mind seeks to know itself, and is inflamed with this desire. It loves therefore, but what does it love? Is it itself? (*De Trinitate*, X, 3, 5).

⁴⁸ *Et est quaedam imago Trinitatis, ipsa mens, et notitia ejus, quod est proles ejus ac de se ipsa verbum ejus, et amor tertius, et haec tria unum atque una substantia.* (*De Trinitate*, XV, 3, 5). Sullivan, p. 123.

⁴⁹ Sullivan in summation states that ‘In the trinity of the mind, self-knowledge, and self-love Augustine has found many resemblances to the major characteristics of the divine Trinity, but they have not all been found on the same level of self-knowledge. The discussion begins with self-knowledge understood in a general and indistinct way, when he comes to the production of a word he demands perfect knowledge of self. With respect to love he had laid down the principle that love follows knowledge, but in trying to knot the difference between generation and procession in the Trinity by means of the created analogy he runs into difficulty. At the root of this problem is his consistent view of love as the unitive force in man’s knowledge. This latter position leaves the impression that knowledge follows upon love, and his sudden change of terms (from *amor* to *appetitus*) does nothing really to alleviate the problem. Finally, with respect to mind, the other member of the trinity, he consistently notes that it is something absolute, existing in itself, and not relative to some object like knowledge and love. Accordingly, mind would seem to be out of place as part of a trinity composed of parts distinguished, apparently only by relation. We have already seen that the mind is the site of the divine image for Augustine, and reflective of the unity of the Godhead. It then really has no place in the trinitarian image as one of the triad.’ Ibid. pp. 123-124.

His answer will be that the mind does know itself in some way before the desire to know itself arises:

The very fact that [the mind] seeks itself clearly shows that it is more known than unknown to itself. For it knows itself as seeking and not knowing, while it seeks to know itself. (*De Trinitate*, X, 3, 5).

Augustine holds that:

Since we are investigating the nature of the mind, let us not take into consideration any knowledge that is obtained from without through the senses of the body, and consider more attentively the principle which we have laid down: that every mind knows and is certain concerning itself. (*De Trinitate*, X, 10, 14).

This certain knowledge (which we all have) is knowledge of the mind itself, in other words our self. But while we can be sure of self, other objects may be doubted:

For men have doubted whether the power to live, to remember, to understand, to will, to think, to know, and to judge is due to air, to fire, or to the brain, or to the blood, or to atoms, to a fifth body. ... [But] who would doubt that he lives, remembers, understands, wills, thinks, knows and judges? For even if he doubts, he lives; if he doubts, he remembers why he doubts; if he doubts, he understands that he doubts; if he doubts, he wishes to be certain; if he doubts, he thinks; if he doubts, he knows that he does not know; if he doubts, he judges that he ought not to consent rashly. Whoever then doubts about anything else ought never to doubt about all of these; for if they were not, he would be unable to doubt about anything at all (*De Trinitate*, X, 10, 14).⁵⁰

While we can doubt where the source of the power to live, to remember, to understand etc, originates. Augustine holds that we cannot doubt that we *remember* (*memory*), *understand* and *will* (*De Trinitate*, X, 11, 7). We can have knowledge of self, according to Augustine, and this knowledge is natural to the mind. But this knowledge is only attained by and through reflection,

⁵⁰ ...*utrum enim aeris sit vis vivendi, reminiscendi, intelligendi, volendi, cogitandi, sciendi, iudicandi; an ignis, an cerebri, an sanguinis, an atomorum, an praeter usitate quatuor elementa quinti nescio cuius corporis...dubitaverunt homines...Vivere se tamen et meminisse, et intelligere, et velle, et cogitare, et scire, et iudicare quis dubitet? Quandoquidem etiam si dubitat, vivit; si dubitat unde dubitat, meminit; si dubitat, dubitare se intelligit; si dubitat, certus esse vult; si dubitat, cogitat; si dubitat, scit se nescire; si dubitat, iudicat non se temere consentire oportere.* (*De Trinitate*, X, 10, 14).

We must now ask in what way understanding belongs to thought. [...] The knowledge of anything which is in the mind, even when one does not think of it, is said to belong to the memory alone. For if this is so, then the mind did not have these three things, so that it remembered itself, understood itself, and loved itself; but it only remembered itself, and afterwards when it began to think of itself, then it understood itself and loved itself (*De Trinitate*, XIV, 7, 9).⁵¹

In this text we can see what Augustine means by *self-memory*, the permanent trinity in the mind, the ‘inner memory’. Sullivan points out that it should be noted here that this is not equivalent to Platonic ‘reminiscence’, for Augustine expressly rejects this aspect of platonic thought in an earlier section (*De Trinitate*, XII, 15, 24). However, ‘memory of self’ is not the trinity that Augustine proposes as the optimum understanding of the Trinity, but goes on to consider the understanding and the will to clarify his point.

For if we take ourselves to the inner memory of the mind by which it remembers itself, and to the inner understanding by which it understands itself, and to the inner will by which it loves itself, where these three things are always together at the same time, and always have been together at the same time, from the moment when they began to be, whether one thought of them or whether one did not think of them, then the image of that trinity, too, will indeed be seen to belong to the memory alone; but because the word cannot be there without the thought (for we think everything that we say, even if we speak by that interior word belonging to no nation’s tongue). This image is rather to be recognised in these three things, namely, memory, understanding, and will. (*De Trinitate*, XIV, 7, 10).

With regard to the way the image of God was understood by the early Augustine, we noted that it consisted in ‘mind (*mens*), knowledge (*notitia*), and love (*amor*) of self as its parts, and these culminated in the production of a mental word (*verbum*). The

⁵¹ The *memoria principalis* is intellectual memory, as Augustine distinguishes between sense memory and intellectual memory. Cf., *De Trinitate*, XV, 23, 43.

mental word itself consisted in perfect knowledge of self - which was seen “in truth itself”.⁵²

The second trinity as outlined by Augustine does not end with the construction of a mental word (*verbum*). In this trinity, there is self-memory, self-knowledge (*intelligentia*) and self-love (*voluntas*). The mind (*mens*) here is seen as a unity and as such a *resemblance* of the unity of God who is ‘one’. The mind is not something dynamic as knowledge and love, but exists in itself. In this trinity, that is the second trinity, the mind is given the position of reflecting the unity of the Trinity. Human beings having a unified ‘mind’, therefore, image God who is ‘one’.

But Augustine had some hesitation about concluding that *self-memory, self-knowledge and self-love (voluntas)* were means whereby we imaged God:

[Now] this trinity of the mind is not on that account the image of God because the mind remembers itself, understands itself, and loves itself, but because it can also remember, understand, and love Him by whom it was made. And when it does so, it becomes wise; but if it does not, even through it remembers itself, knows itself, and loves itself, it is foolish. Let it, then, remember its God, to whose image it has been made, and understand Him and love Him (*De Trinitate*, XIV, 12, 15).

According to Sullivan, Augustine does not deny absolutely that the ‘self’ is some sort of object.⁵³ What Augustine does deny, however, is that the ‘self’ can be *properly* conceived and understood independently of God. This is why Augustine sets about to subordinate the ‘self’ to God, for,

But if it [the mind] does not [refer to the activity of the trinity in man to God], even though it remembers itself, knows itself, and loves itself, it is foolish.

⁵²According to Sullivan, Augustine did not explicate the relations between these different types of knowledge and the production of the mental word. See, Sullivan, p. 134.

⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 137.

Let it [the mind], then, remember its God, to whose image it has been made, and understand Him and love Him. Or to express this more briefly, let [the mind] worship God who was not made, but by whom it was made so that it is capable of Him and can be a partaker of Him; wherefore it is written ‘Behold, the worship of God is wisdom [cf. *Job* 28:28]; and not by its own light, but by a participation in the highest light, will it be wise, and where the eternal light is, there it will reign in blessedness’ (*De Trinitate*, XIV, 12, 15).

In this way, if the ‘activity’ is not related to God, but remains at the horizontal level of mind, we have a problem of alignment. In other words, if man does not know him or herself as dependent on God, and does not act in such regard, then he or she has ‘forgotten his/her self’. Explaining the famous Greek Delphic oracle and injunction from Apollo ‘know thyself’, therefore, Augustine argues,

Why, then, was [the mind] commanded to know itself?⁵⁴ I believe it was so commanded that it might consider itself and live according to its nature, that is, that it might desire to be ruled according to its nature, namely, under Him to whom it ought to be subject, and above those things to which it is to be preferred; under Him by whom it ought to be governed and above those things which it ought to govern. For it does many things through evil desires, as though it had forgotten itself. For it sees certain intrinsically beautiful things in that more excellent nature which is God. Whereas it ought to remain steadfast in order to enjoy them wanting to appropriate these things to itself and to be like Him, but not by Him, but by its own self to be what He is, it is turned away from Him, it is moved and sinks into being less and less, which it considers to be more and more. For it is not sufficient to itself, nor is anything at all sufficient to him who departs from Him who is alone sufficient (*De Trinitate*, X, 5, 7).⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Augustine does not explain why he takes the ancient Greek admonition, ‘Know thyself’ to be aimed at the mind in particular. Stephen McKenna believes that Augustine would probably have Cicero’s first *Tusculan Disputation* in his mind when writing Book X of *De Trinitate*. Cicero outlines in this *Disputation* that the call to ‘Know thyself’ given by Apollo was an instruction not to know the members of our body, or our stature, or our shape, but when Apollo spoke ‘Know thyself’, Cicero held he meant to ‘Know your own Mind’ (*animus*) (*Tusculan Disputation*, 1.22.52). See, Augustine, *On the Trinity*, trans. Stephen McKenna, p. 49, n. 12.

⁵⁵ It is precisely because a human being knows that a stone exists and that animals live and knows itself as a being that loves to be, that *that* being that has all three — existence, understanding and loving to be — is superior, in a metaphysical sense, to stones that (merely exist) and animals that live (but do not understand that they are living beings). There is, however, for Augustine, a being superior, metaphysically speaking, to human being, and that is God, ‘in whom we live, move and have our being’ (as St Paul puts it: Acts 17:27-28). Hence Augustine’s argument follows that if a human being does not maintain itself as superior to animals and as inferior to God, that human being will not come know himself or her self.

Sullivan points out here that Augustine completes the subordination of the mind/‘self’ to God; ‘If self is an object of the image independently of God, then we have a trinity of stupidity, whose members are self-forgetfulness, self-ignorance, and self-hate.’⁵⁶ Knowledge of God (*Intelligentia Dei*), presupposes the gift of faith:

And indeed ‘He is not far from any of us,’ as the Apostle says, and then adds: ‘In him we live and move and have our being’ [Acts 17:27-28]. If this were said with regard to the body, it could also be understood of this corporeal world, for we also live and move and have our being in Him according to the body. Therefore, it must be understood in a more excellent and, at the same time, invisible and intelligible way, namely, with respect to the mind that has been made to His image. (*De Trinitate*, XIV, 12, 16).

Mankind can ‘remember’ God, for he is present to all, and in some sort of ‘intelligible’ way this includes the sinner:

Yet such a man [the sinner] walks in an image (cf. Ps. 38:7) because his mind has a memory, understanding, and love of himself [...] by reason of this image in himself he is able to cleave to him whose image it is. For it has been so placed in the rank of natures, not of place, that above it there is only God (*De Trinitate*, XIV, 19-20).

For Augustine, even a sinner can remember God, or have the ‘idea’ of God. Mankind as such is *capax Trinitatis* (capacity for the Trinity) because he bears within himself always and indestructably an image of the Trinity.⁵⁷ Augustine sums up his discussion of the image, the final one as follows.⁵⁸

In the fourteenth [Book], we discussed the true wisdom of man, namely the wisdom given by a gift of God in the partaking of that very God Himself, which is distinct from knowledge. Our argument has now progressed so far that the Trinity appears in the image of God, which is man according to the mind [*homo secundum mentem*]; this is being renewed in the knowledge of God, according to image of Him who created man [cf. *Colossians* 3:10] according to His own image [cf. *Genesis* 1:27], and so perceives wisdom which consists in the contemplation of eternal things (*De Trinitate*, XV, 3, 5).

⁵⁶Sullivan, p. 138.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 141.

⁵⁸This is, the second trinity modified from self-as-object to God-as-object.

Yet, the full perfection of the trinitarian image is reserved for the full sight of God who is the Trinity (as seen in the next life, with God, and in the beatific vision).

But with respect to that image of which it was said: ‘Let us make man our image and likeness’ [*Genesis* 1:26]. We believe that man has been made image of the Trinity, because it was not said ‘to my’ or ‘to your’ image, and we comprehend this insofar as we have been able by our investigation. And, therefore, it is rather in this sense that we are also to understand what John the Apostle says: ‘We shall be like to him, for we shall see him just as he is’. (*De Trinitate*, XIV, 19, 25).

There are as such, for Augustine, three levels of the trinitarian image in mankind (i) a permanent trinity, (ii) trinitarian image with not the self but God as object and (iii) full perfection of the trinitarian image with the beatific vision. The permanent trinitarian image left to man after sin is the trinity consisting in self-memory, self-knowledge and self-love. In the view of Augustine no one loses this natural reflection of the Trinity because it is bound up with the very essence of the mind or soul. As Sullivan explains,

The presence of God, common to all men, together with the perpetual trinity in the mind, even in sinners, is considered by Augustine as the potential basis for the actual remembering, knowing, and loving of God, which is the act of the renewed image. In other words the ‘relics’ of the trinitarian image in man are as a complex unit related by Augustine to the re-formed and supernatural image of the Trinity as its basis.⁵⁹

The second trinitarian image presupposes the renewal of the image in the mind by grace and the accompanying gifts. It consists in the ‘memory,’ knowledge, and love of God. The third image is given with the beatific vision. It is only in knowing and loving God that the trinity in man becomes more and more *like* God, and here is the

⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 143.

‘return’ of the image upon its exemplar, that is the *activation* of the essential tendency of the image.

SECTION FOUR

ALCUIN: *DE DIGNITATE CONDITIONIS HUMANAЕ*⁶⁰

This treatise on the dignity of creation of the human being was attributed to the work of Saint Ambrose (339–397) or Saint Augustine, but Alcuin (735–804) is probably its true author.⁶¹ The text shows insight of Augustinian thinking, which makes it unlikely to be the work of Ambrose while the style of the writer seems not to fit that of Augustine *per se*. Lebech notes, however, that,

if it was written as late as the eight century it is surprising that it contains no trace of the definition of person given by Boethius, since the treatise touches on this very subject in some detail.⁶²

Alcuin comments on Genesis 1:26 ‘Let us make man to our image and likeness’, as follows:

It is recognised that the dignity of the human condition [or ‘the way man is made’] is so great that it originates, not simply in the word commanding as the other six-day works, but at the counsel of the Holy Trinity, and by the operation of the divine majesty. This was done thus so that, from the honour of being thus made, man might comprehend how much he owes his Maker, since in the making, the Maker granted him the privilege of dignity, so that he would more ardently love his Maker, the more he understood how

⁶⁰ This text can be found in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, Garnier, Paris, 1879, vol. 17, col. 1106-1108. It is taken to be a text of Ambrose. Lebech states, ‘As a pseudo-Augustinian text it is reproduced *inter opera Augustini* in PL 40, 1213-1214 under the title *De creatione primi hominis*, and once again as a text of Albinus (=Alcuin) in PL 100, 565-568 with the title *Dicta Albini de imagine Dei*.’ Mette Lebech, *The Identification of Human Dignity: Hermeneutic, Eidetic and Constitutional Analyses in the Light of Edith Stein’s Phenomenology*, Ph.D. Thesis, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005) Appendix, p. 27. Also see, Mette Lebech, James McEvoy with John Flood, ‘*De dignitate conditionis humanae*: Translation, Commentary, and Reception History of the *Dicta Albini* (Ps.-Alcuin) and the *Dicta Candidi*’ in *Viator* 40, No. 2 (2009).

⁶¹ See John Marenbon, *From the Circle of Alcuin to the School of Auxerre. Logic, Theology and Philosophy in the Early Middle Ages*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 30-43, 144-163.

⁶² Lebech, *The Identification of Human Dignity*, p. 47.

astonishingly he was made. This understanding was to derive not only from being made so excellently at the counsel of the Holy Trinity, but also from the fact that the Maker of all created man to His own image and likeness, something which was granted to no other creature.⁶³

Alcuin holds that the image is to be considered as the nobility of the inner man and relates this nobility to the linking to the image of the Trinity. Just as God *is*, has life, and knows, so, too, the soul is, has life, and knows.⁶⁴ This bears remarkable similarity to the text of Augustine in his first understanding of the trinity in man.

Alcuin goes further to point out that,

there is another trinity in it [the soul], whereby it was made in the likeness of its Maker, the perfect and highest Trinity of Father and Son and Holy Spirit; though one in nature, it nevertheless has in it three dignities, i.e. intellect, will and memory.⁶⁵

Alcuin notes the image should be considered in relation to the nobility of the inner man — the interior. He goes on to say, however, that,

God is always and fully everywhere giving life, movement and direction to all, as the Apostle confirms that ‘In him we live, and move, and are’, (Acts 17:28); so the soul is alive everywhere in the body, giving life, movement and direction to it. There is no more soul in the important members than there is in the less important; the soul is whole and complete in the least as well as the greatest part. This is the image the soul has in itself of the unity of the omnipotent God.⁶⁶

Alcuin, in other words, believes that the Trinity is not confined only to the interior man but extends also to the body. This moves away from Augustine’s understanding

⁶³ Ibid., Appendix, pp. 27-28. Translation from Latin rendered by James McEvoy & Mette Lebech.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 28. Chapter II of the text reads *quae quoque quamdam sanctae Trinitatis habet imaginem. Primo in eo quia sicut Deus est, vivit et sapit; ita anima secundum suum modum est, vivit et sapit.*

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid. *Primo quidem quod sicuti Deus unus semper ubique totus est, omnia vivificans, movens et gubernans, sicut Apostolus confirmat quod: ‘In eo vivimus, movimur et sumus’ (Act. XVII, 28); sic anima in suo corpore ubique tota viget, vivificans illud, movens et gubernans. Nec enim in majoribus corporis sui membris major, et in minoribus minor: sed in minimis tota, et in maximis tota. Et haec est imago unitatis omnipotentis Dei, quam anima habet in se.* Translation of Scripture comes from Douai Verson (by Challoner), since that translation was made directly from the *Vulgate*, see Lebech, *The Identification of Human Dignity, Appendix*, p. 27.

of the Trinity extending to the interior, and gives particular emphasis on the body. Alcuin seems to realise the importance of the body in the overall act of Trinitarian creation. In chapter two of his treatise, for example, Alcuin goes on to highlight that,

our interior man bears astonishingly within his nature these three [the soul is intellect, will and memory ... one soul having three dignities], as the image of Him, and is more excellently still in the dignities of the soul commanded to love the Maker, so that He may be loved as He is known, and remembered as He is loved. It does not suffice to know Him, unless His will be done in love; still more, these two are not sufficient unless we add the memory in virtue of which God may dwell always in the mind of the one who understands and loves him. Just as there cannot be a single moment in which man is not using or enjoying God's goodness and mercy so there ought to be no moment in which the memory does not keep him present. Thus, dearest child, the statement seems true to me that the inner man is the image of God. For by 'soul' is meant the entire inner man; which enlivens, rules *and holds together this mass of sap-moistened mud*, lest it wither and be dissolved.⁶⁷

Chapter three of Alcuin's treatise discusses likeness. The understanding of likeness is understood via reflection on the charity, goodness and justness of God, along with the other holy virtues. In this way, man was also created to have charity, to be good and just, patient, mild, pure and merciful. Insofar as some one has all these holy virtues, then in his self this person is closer to God and thus the greater the likeness that person bears to the Creator. If, however, vice were to be the path upon which a person walked, then that person, in Alcuin's eyes, would stray from the nobility of His condition of likeness. The likeness of man to God for Alcuin, then, is acquired through the *habit* of right virtue. The alternative route of vice is seen by Alcuin to render man in the likeness of the beast, to irrationality and animality. As he concludes,

What greater disgrace could befall [man], what more unhappy misery, than that of losing the glory of likeness to his Creator, slipping downwards into crude and irrational likeness with the beasts of burden? Therefore, dearly beloved, let each one pay attention to the excellence of his condition and

⁶⁷ Ibid. pp. 28-29, my emphasis.

acknowledge as something to be venerated in himself the image of the Holy Trinity. Let him struggle by nobility of conduct, exercise of virtues and dignity of merits to possess the honour of the divine likeness to which he was created. Then, when he appears, he may appear like Him (cf. John 3:2) who in the first Adam made him astonishingly like Him, and in the Second even more astonishingly reshaped him.⁶⁸

SECTION FIVE

BONAVENTURE: 'MIRRORING' AND THE IMAGO DEI

Bonaventure developed his distinct Trinitarian doctrine in relation to Augustinian elements of thinking.⁶⁹ Bonaventure accepts Augustine's understanding of the Trinity and the faculties of *memoria*, *voluntas*, and *intellectus* as the locus of the image-character, but he highlights that only in *knowing* and *loving* God do we truly actualise this image. The three faculties *mirror* the three Persons, which is a static dimension to the image, whilst the *act* of knowing and loving God is a more dynamic understanding of the way we image the Trinity – a dynamic aspect, in knowing and loving God we mirror the trinitarian processions. Thus, there is a certain tension between this dynamic and static *mirroring* of the Trinity. According to Kearney the most telling metaphor for the image of God in Bonaventure is that of 'mirroring'. Bonaventure explicitly adverts to the derivation of the term *imago* from *imitando*, meaning to imitate or reflect.⁷⁰ As Bonaventure outlines in *The Journey of the Mind to God*,

The first two steps, by leading us to God through the vestiges through which He shines forth in all creatures, have thereby led us to reenter into ourselves, that is, into our mind, where the divine image shines forth. Now [...] that entering into ourselves, and, as it were, forsaking the outer court, we ought to

⁶⁸ Ibid. pp. 30-31

⁶⁹ Rik van Nieuwenhove, 'In the Image of God: The Trinitarian Anthropology of St Bonaventura, St Thomas Aquinas, and the Blessed Jan van Ruusbroec (1)' in *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 2001: 66: 109, 109-123 (p. 111).

⁷⁰ Richard Kearney, p. 124. Kearney draws his quotations from *St Bonaventura Opera Omnia*, Op. Collegii S. Bonaventura, Florence, 10 vols.

strive to see God through a *mirror* in the Sanctuary [...]. Enter into yourself, therefore, and observe that your soul loves itself most fervently. It could not live itself unless it knew itself, now could it know itself unless it summoned itself to memory, for we do not grasp any thing with our understanding unless it is present to our memory. From these considerations notice, not with your bodily eyes, but with the eye of your mind, that your soul has three powers. Consider therefore, the activities of these powers and their relationships, and you will be able to see God through yourself as through an image and this indeed is to *see through a mirror in an obscure manner*.⁷¹

One can readily see the influence of Augustine in the above passage. Bonaventure outlines that the intellect cannot function unless it grasps the most universal concept (being *per se*) and its transcendental properties (one, true, good).⁷² The intellect must be able to grasp the universal in order to understand why objects are defective. As such, Bonaventure notes that,

if one considers the order, the origin, and the relationship of these faculties to one another, [one] is led up to the [...] Trinity itself. For, from memory comes forth intelligence as its offspring, because we understand only when the likeness which is in the memory emerges at the high point of our understanding and this likeness is the mental word. From the memory and the intelligence is breathed forth love, as the bond of both. These three — the generating mind, the word, and love — exist in the soul as memory, intelligence, and will, which are consubstantial, coequal, everlasting and mutually inclusive. If God, therefore, is a perfect spirit, then He has memory, intelligence, and will. He also has a Word begotten and a Love breathed forth, which are necessarily distinct, since one is produced by the other — a production, not of another essence, nor merely or an accidental difference, but a production of a distinct Person. The mind, then, when it considers itself by looking into itself as through a mirror, rises to the speculation of the [...] Trinity, the Father, the Word, and Love, Three Persons coeternal, coequal and consubstantial, so that whatever is in any one is in the other, but one is not the other, but all three are one God.⁷³

⁷¹ Bonaventure, *The Journey of the Mind to God*, trans. Philotheus Boehner, OFM, ed. and introd. Stephen F. Brown (Indianapolis: Hackett., 1993) III, 1. Bonaventure deals with the question of the contemplation of God in the *vestiges* in the sense world in chapter II of this work. As such, Bonaventure in chapter III, deals with the contemplation of God through his image stamped upon our natural faculties and outlines how this is so for each of them. God is seen to be the necessary principle and object of their operation. Our memory (mind) is illuminated by eternal truths in the light of which reason can judge the correctness of propositions, III, 2.

⁷² Bonaventure, *The Journey of the Mind to God*, III, 2.

⁷³ *Ibid.* III, 5.

For Bonaventure, then, the true source or model of the image remains that of God the Father, Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit. From this perspective also, therefore, finite copies of the image are ‘merely *copies* of the Divine Image of Christ (who is the perfect reflection of the *Exemplar Aeternum*)’.⁷⁴ It can be noted that ‘God’s image is ‘*mirrored* at three ascending levels, i) the external world, ii) the natural self, iii) the supernatural.’⁷⁵ But how does one ‘mirror God’ at the highest, ‘supernatural’ level? In response to this issue, Nieuwenhove remarks that,

Bonaventure distinguished between *vestigium*, *imago* and *similitudo*. The *Trinitas fabricatrix* expresses itself in the Book of Creation in all created beings as a *vestige*; human beings are the *image* of the Trinity, whereas *likeness* refers to deified people — those just and holy people who possess the infused gifts of the Holy Spirit. All created things mirror the divine triad of Unity, Truth, and Goodness; the human person mirrors the divine triad by focusing her memory, intelligence, and will on God; but one can only possess God as an infused gift if one is transformed (*configuretur*) by faith, hope, and love. There is therefore a triple *conformitas ad Deum*, the first two of which are natural. The human person only truly becomes the image of God when she takes God as the object of her faculties [1 *Sent.* D. 3 p. 2 a.1 q. 2, concl; II, 83b]. If the soul takes itself as object of its knowledge and love, it is only a potential image of God. Only when it takes God as the object of its knowledge and love, does it become a true image.⁷⁶

Bonaventure notes, following Augustine, that the ‘best’ trinity relates to God as object. Furthermore, Bonaventure holds that we *participate* in the Trinity through knowledge and love, whilst it is our three faculties that mirror the three Persons.⁷⁷ As Bonaventure summates,

To achieve this reflection which the soul has of its unique principle that is triune through the trinity of its powers, by which it is the image of God, it is aided by the lights of the sciences which perfect and inform it, and represent the most blessed Trinity in a threefold manner. For all philosophy is either

⁷⁴ Kearney, p. 124.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Rik Van Nieuwenhove, ‘In the Image of God: The Trinitarian Anthropology of St Bonaventure, St Thomas Aquinas, and the Blessed Jan Van Ruusbroec (2)’ in *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 2001: 66: 227, pp. 227-237, [p. 22].

⁷⁷ Bonaventure, *The Journey of the Mind to God*, III, 6.

natural, or rational, or moral. The first is concerned with the cause of being, and thus leads to the Power of the Father, the second is concerned with the basis of understanding and thus leads to the Wisdom of the Word; the third deals with the ordering of our life and thus leads to the Goodness of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁸

Akin to Alcuin and Augustine, Bonaventure has the conception of the interior man, or the internal 'self'. In the interior, human beings realise that they can in fact make 'images', this power to 'make' images is a power akin to God's power. The world is 'seen' within or through 'images' in the internal 'mirroring', and this is converted to 'memory' and 'imagination'.⁷⁹ Bonaventure sees '*imagination* as halfway between the sensible world and the understanding. [Images have a two-fold path they can lead into error or can lead towards supernatural truth]. Taking the option of ascent, imagination can create images which imitate God'.⁸⁰

In summary, for Bonaventure the soul is created as an image of God, understood as a Trinitarian God, but it is only when the soul exercises its three faculties in a sufficient way that it can become fully aware of its image. In our fallen state, distracted by sense-images, concupiscence, worried by cares of the world, the soul cannot re-enter into itself as into the image of God.⁸¹ The soul needs to be reformed in Christ by the three theological virtues (faith, hope and love).⁸² Chapter four of Bonaventure's *Journey to the Mind of God* discusses renewal through grace precisely because of the necessity of the re-creation of the human person, through the infusion of grace, to make us *like* God.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Kearney, p. 125.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Bonaventure, *The Journey of the Mind to God*, IV, I.

⁸² Ibid. IV, 2-3.

SECTION SIX

MEDIEVAL JEWISH AND ARABIC REFLECTIONS ON THE IMAGO DEI

Medieval Jewish theology can be seen to follow the Platonising interpretation of the *homo imago Dei* motif which was undertaken by Philo. As Altmann outlines,

Whereas the rabbis of the tannaitic period had discarded the Philonic *Logos*, the medieval Jewish philosophers substituted it for either Plotinus' second hypostasis, the Intellect (*Nous*), or Aristotle's active intellect [...] Man's pre-eminence over the lower ranges of creation lay in his rational soul or potential intellect, and his ultimate destiny was the felicity achieved through the contemplative life of reason and consummated in the union of his intellect either with God (as in Neoplatonism) or with the Active Intellect (as in medieval Aristotelianism). Since God is (in Neoplatonism) the ultimate Ground from which the Intellect emanates, and since he is (in Aristotelianism) the supreme Intellect, the essence of man, namely, his *intellect*, has been stated by Scripture to be in the image of God and in his likeness. This is how Moses Maimonides explains the biblical phrase, and this interpretation became commonplace in Jewish philosophy and exegesis.⁸³

Maimonides writing in a *Guide for the Perplexed* remarks how the early readers of *Genesis* had mistakenly understood God to be corporeal:

Some have been of the opinion that by the Hebrew [*tselem*], the shape of a thing is to be understood, and this explanation led men to believe in the corporeality [of the Divine Being]: for they thought that the words 'Let us make man in our [*tselem*]' (Gen. 1:26) implied that God had the form of a human being, i.e., that He had the figure and shape, and that, consequently, He was corporeal. They adhered faithfully to this view, and thought that if they were to relinquish it they would *eo ipso* reject the truth of the Bible: and further, if they did not conceive God as having a body possessed of face and limbs, similar to their own in appearance, they would have to deny even the existence of God. The sole difference which they admitted, was that He excelled in greatness and splendour, and that His substance was not flesh and blood. Thus far went their conception of the greatness and glory of God.⁸⁴

But Maimonides highlights that God is not in fact corporeal and that the way humankind images God is via the *intellect*:

⁸³ Altmann, p. 254.

⁸⁴ Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedländer (New York: Dover, 1956), Chapter 1, p. 13.

As man's distinction consists in a property which no other creature on earth possesses, viz., intellectual perception, in the exercise of which he does not employ his senses, nor move his hand or his foot, this perception has been compared – though only apparently, not in truth – to the Divine perception, which requires no corporeal organ. On this account, i.e., on account of the Divine intellect with which man has been endowed, he is said to have been made in the form and likeness of the Almighty, but far from it be the notion that the Supreme Being is corporeal, having a material form.⁸⁵

This conception of the intellect 'imaging' the Divine, however, broke down in Lurianic Kabbalah which was to exert dominance in Jewish mystical thinking from the sixteenth century.

In Lurianic Kabbalah, [...] there was no longer a clear-cut correspondence between man and the upper world of Divinity.⁸⁶

Here Adam was created in order to complete the process of restoration, and the drama of the union and reintegration of light was about to be completed when Adam's sin threw everything back into confusion. Thus, in 'Lurianic Kabbalah, it is the task of man to re-enact the process of restoration through long and protracted effort until the end of time'.⁸⁷

The work of Moses Maimonides was an influential text in the Middle Ages and would, among the many other texts that we have discussed, including St Paul, Augustine and Bonaventure, also have influenced one of the most influential writers of the Middle Ages, St Thomas Aquinas.

⁸⁵ Ibid., Chapter 1, p. 14.

⁸⁶ Altmann, pp. 257-258.

⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 258.

SECTION SEVEN
AQUINAS AND THE MEDIEVAL SYNTHESIS

The relationship between Judaic and Hellenistic thinking was somewhat turbulent in the first few hundred years after the death of Christ until Augustine's primary attempt at synthesis. The medieval period continued this process of systematisation of thinking and synthesising two particular 'world-views' under the auspices of such thinkers as Maimonides, Averroes, Peter Lombard and especially Thomas of Aquinas. Thomas represents what many consider the crowning achievement of the medieval synthesis of Greek and biblical learning outlining the principle ideas in his *Summa*.⁸⁸

Aquinas, following Augustine's lead, makes reference to Augustine's teaching that are outlined in the summary of St Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences*.⁸⁹ Thomas changes the terminology of Augustine slightly when he refers to *memoria sui*, *intelligentia sui* and *voluntas sui* as a *trinity of powers*. As Nieuwenhove points out, 'Aquinas realised that the image of the Trinity is principally found in the *acts* of memory, understanding, and will, rather than in the corresponding faculties.'⁹⁰ Aquinas describes memory as a power, as Augustine had done before him in his contemplation of these trinities, it is the mind's capacity for retaining intelligible species, allowing knowledge and love to exist at an habitual level in the mind.

⁸⁸ Latin and English quotations from the *Summa* are taken from, St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Vol. 13 (1a. 90-102): *Man made to God's Image*, ed. and trans. Edmund Hill O.P., (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁸⁹ Lombard only treats of two images with self as object, and only makes a few passing remarks about God as object of the divine image. Thomas follows this pattern also, discussing the two conceptions of the trinity outlined by Augustine in terms of self as object.

⁹⁰ Rik Van Nieuwenhove, *In the Image of God*: (2), p. 227.

The meaning of 'image' [...], demands some sort of portrayal in kind. If then we are to observe an image of the divine Trinity in the soul, it must be looked for principally at the point where the soul approaches most closely, in so far as this is possible at all, to a portrayal of the divine persons in kind. Now the divine processions are distinguished from each other in terms of a word from its utterer and of a love connecting them both. But as Augustine says, there can be no word in our souls *without actual thinking* [*De Trinitate* XIV, 7]. And so an image of the Trinity is to be looked for in the mind first and foremost in terms of activity, in so far as out of the awareness we have we form an internal word by thinking [...]. Because, however, the source of activities lies in attitudes and powers, and everything exists virtually in its source, we can go on in the second place, as a sort of consequence, to look for the image of the Trinity in the soul in terms of powers, and especially of attitudes, in so far, that is, as activities already exist virtually in them (S.T., I, 93, 7).

According to Aquinas, then, our being, belongs to the image of God in us in that it is peculiar to us apart from other animals; for it belongs to us precisely as *human* beings, in so far as we have minds (*ergo dicendum quod esse nostrum ad imaginem Dei pertinet, quod est nobis proprium supra alia animalia; quod quidem esse competit nobis inquantum mentem habemus*). And, therefore, this trinity is the same as the one Augustine mentioned in *De Trinitate* IX, which comprises mind, awareness and love.

Aquinas commenting on Augustine notes that Augustine observes in the soul three properties of mind, namely; memory, understanding and will. Aquinas wondered why Augustine moved from mind, awareness and love, to understanding the image to relate to 'memory, understanding and will'. Commenting on *De Trinitate* X, 4, Aquinas outlines that we can talk about understanding things, and willing or loving them, both when we are thinking about them and when we are not. When they are not being thought about, however, they belong to memory alone; which, according to Augustine, is nothing else than habitual retention of awareness and love.

Yet a problem arises here also because no word can be associated with memory without thinking, for, as Aristotle stated and Augustine also outlines, ‘we think every word we utter, even that internal word of the mind which belongs to no particular language of men’. And so it follows that this ‘image is rather to be recognised in [...] memory, understanding and will: I mean the understanding by which we understand when we are thinking [...] and the will or love or charity which connects that offspring and its parent together’⁹¹ Aquinas thus concludes,

From this it is clear that [Augustine] places the image of the divine Trinity rather in the *activity* of understanding and willing than in their habitual retention by the memory; although even in this respect there is to some extent an image of the Trinity in the soul, as [Augustine] says in the same passage. And thus it is clear that memory, understanding and will (as Augustine uses the words in this context) are not three *faculties*, as they are said to be in the *Sentences* (S.T., 1a. 93, 7).⁹²

In his commentary on the *Sentences*, Thomas held that the image of the Trinity in man is to be seen in the trinity of spiritual *powers* – memory, intellect, and will (1 *Sent.*, d.3, q.4, a. 4, ad 1). This is the first conclusion of Aquinas:

The subject or site of the image is the *mens*, the noblest part of man which comprises those powers independent of matter, the spiritual powers of man. These powers are three and three only: intellectual memory, intellect, and will. (Ibid., a. 1)

God, however, is considered by Aquinas, as we already noted was the case for Augustine, the most true object of imitation (S.T., 1a. 93, 8). ‘Actual imitation of the

⁹¹ The ‘offspring’ is the word, and the parent is the memory it emerges from; this is his manner of speaking in order to bring out the analogy with the divine Word which is the Son of the Father. See, Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. Edmund Hill, pp. 74-75, n. d.

⁹² *Ex quo patet quod imaginem divinae Trinitatis potius sunt in intelligentia et voluntate actuali quam secundum quod sunt in habituali retentione memoriae; licet etiam quantum ad hoc aliquo modo sit imago Trinitatis in anima, ut ibidem dicitur. Et sic patet quod memoria, intelligentia et voluntas non sunt tres vires, ut in **Sententiis** dicitur.*

Trinity is clearly present when God is the object of the activity of the image'.⁹³ Aquinas foresees, however, an issue with the activities of remembering, understanding and loving in relation to God. For if the Trinity is imaged through *activity* then what about those people who do not think about 'God'? Aquinas, here, is concerned about the universal status of the 'image' as Augustine had been before him:

That we should understand and love God is proper to us as recipients of divine grace. So if you look for the Trinity's image in the soul in terms of remembering, understanding, and loving God, God's image in man will be a matter of grace, not of nature. And so it will not be common to all men [...] On the other hand, there is what Augustine says, *it is not because the mind remembers and loves and understands itself that God's image is in it, but because it is also able to remember and understand and love God, by whom it was made* [*De Trinitate*, XIV, 12]. Much less therefore is his image to be looked for in the mind with reference to other objects (S.T., 1a, 93, 8).

The question arises as to what exactly Thomas thinks an image and likeness 'is'. In S.T. 1a 93, 1, Aquinas notes that once you have an image you have a likeness, however not every likeness necessitates the finding of an image (cf. Augustine *Eighty-three Questions*, 74, PL 40, 85). Aquinas notes that the *idea* of image involves likeness, and that 'image' adds something to 'likeness', namely the idea of being a sort of print taken from another; for the word 'image' suggests something done in imitation of another.⁹⁴ An egg, for instance, is not said to be the image of another egg, be it never so much its peer and its equal, because the egg is not taken from it like a print. Here Aquinas, holds that the image does not have the idea of equality, because '*where you have an image you do not necessarily have equality*'

⁹³Sullivan, pp. 247-248

⁹⁴*Ex quo patet quod similitudo est de ratione imaginis, et quod imago aliquid addit supra rationem similitudinis, scilicet quod sit ex alio expressum; 'imago' enim dicitur ex eo quod agitur ad imitationem alterius.* Edmund Hill notes that there is an etymological link which was 'received from Isidore of Seville, by which *imago* is read as a portmanteau word from *imitatio* and *ago*. [As such, according to Hill] there is a genuine etymological connection with *imitor*. See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. Edmund Hill, p. 50-51, n. d.

(S.T. 1a. 93, 1). Aquinas compares the image in the looking glass to the human being staring into the mirror – there is an image but certainly not an equality. In this way, Aquinas states:

man bears some likeness to God that is derived from God as its original, though this likeness does not amount to equality, since this particular infinity surpasses the thing modelled on it. So then we say that God's image is to be found in man, though not his perfect image. This is indicated by Scripture when it says that man was made *after* God's image; for the preposition 'after' signifies the sort of approximation which is attainable by an essentially distant object (S. T. 1a, 93, I).⁹⁵

Aquinas distinguishes between material images, made by human beings and the spiritual image that was made by God. God, for Christians, put a spiritual image of himself in mankind. As Augustine and Aquinas hold that the 'Firstborn of all creation' is God's perfect image, perfectly realising that of which he is the image, and so Christ is said to be 'the image' quite simply, and never *after the image*. Yet, Aquinas says that man is both 'the image', because of his likeness to the original, and 'after the image', because the likeness is imperfect. The perfect image of God would require one to have perfect identity of nature, and as such God's image is his Christ (S.T. 1a 93, I). Next Aquinas discusses how Christ and the Father are 'one'. One, is said to mean 'being undivided', one is also said to be used in numerical sense, but, Aquinas notes that,

something can be called one not only numerically or in kind or in class, but also by a certain analogy of proportion [*analogiam vel proportionem*]; and in this way a creature can be one with God [*et sic est unitas vel convenientia creaturae ad Deum*], or consort with him. As for what he says about one

⁹⁵ *Manifestum est autem quod in homine invenitur aliqua Dei similitudo quae deducitur a Deo sicut ab exemplari; non tamen est similitudo secundum aequalitatem, quia in infinitum excedit exemplar hoc tale exemplatum. Et ideo in homine dicitur esse imago Dei, non tamen perfecta sed imperfecta. Et hoc significat Scriptura, cum dicit hominem factum ad imaginem Dei; praepositio enim 'ad' accessum quondam significat, qui competit rei distantis. The word 'after' here signifies primarily the distance, whereas the Latin word *ad* primarily the approximation.*

thing being matched with another, it refers to the idea of perfect image [*pertinet ad rationem perfectae imaginis*](S.T. 1a. 93, I).

Here, Aquinas moves to discuss the proportional and analogical relationship that exists between the divine and the human via the *image* and *likeness* because we are not identical to God, we are *image* and *likeness* via a proportion.⁹⁶ For Aquinas what

⁹⁶Aquinas understood being to exist in a plurality contra the univocal understanding of being which was held by Parmenidean monism. But while Aquinas held that there was a plurality of being, he also believed that a unity characterises the notion of being. As Wippel outlines, ‘Aquinas [held] that being is predicated analogically rather than purely univocally or purely equivocally. He criticises Parmenides for having mistakenly thought that “being” or “that which is” is used in only one way. In fact, Aquinas counters, it is used in different ways. For instance, taken in one sense it means substance, and in another accident, with the latter sense allowing for different usages in accord with the various supreme genera or categories of accidents. Or again, being may be taken as applying both to substance and accident.’ John Wippel, ‘Metaphysics’ in *Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, p.89. Aquinas’s reflections on analogy is of particular importance because he moves from speaking of being at the ‘horizontal level’ (being experienced by sense perception) to predicting language at the vertical level, to the being of immaterial substances and ultimately God. As Wippel explains, ‘the problem of analogy arises for Aquinas at two very different levels. On the one hand, it may be addressed at the level of beings insofar as they are discovered through sense experience and fall under being as being or being in general, the subject of metaphysics. It is at this horizontal level that we may ask how “being” can be meaningfully applied to substance and to the other categories. But this issue may also be addressed at what we may call the vertical level or [...] transcendental level [see C. Fabro, *Participation et causalité selon Saint Thomas d’Aquin*, (Louvain & Paris: Publications Universitaires de Louvain/ Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1961), pp. 510-13, 535]. On this level one is concerned with how “being” and like names may be applied to different kinds of substances, including not only finite and created realities but God himself.’ Wippel, pp. 89-90. In Aquinas’s systematic approach he discusses the horizontal level of analogy and having set out his proofs for the existence of God moves to consider analogy at the vertical level. What Aquinas realised on the horizontal level, is that something can be predicated or said of different things that differ in definition but that are relatively related to the one same thing [cf. Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* 1003a33-36]. Aquinas, following Aristotle’s lead in *Metaphysics* IV, 2, gives the example that ‘health’ is said of an animal’s body, or urine, and of medicinal potion, but not in the same way. It is said of urine insofar as it is a sign of health, of the potion as a cause of health, and of the living body as the subject in which health is present. And each of the usages, are related back to what Kelly calls the ‘home context’, the animal’s health. See. Thomas A. F. Kelly, *Language, World and God: An Essay in Ontology* (Dublin: Columba, 1996) p. 62. Aquinas believed that accidents are named by ‘being’ because they are inherent (relational) in a subject, which we term substance. For Aquinas, like Aristotle, being is said primarily of substance (as substance enjoys being in itself), while accidents have being but in a different way. Wippel, p. 91. Once Aquinas considers the horizontal level, he once again considers the ‘problem of the One and the Many [that is] how can there be many beings, each of which shares in being, and yet each of which is different from every other? In *De hebdomadibus*, Aquinas [defines the term] to participate [as] “to take part of something” and explains that “When something receives particularly that which belongs to another universally (or totally), the former is said to participate in the latter” [BDH 2], If a particular quality or characteristic is possessed by a given subject only partially rather than totally, the subject is said to participate in the quality or characteristic. Because other subjects may also share in that perfection, each is said to participate in it. No one of them is identical with it’, Wippel p. 93. Aquinas ultimately sees that ‘something is brought into actuality to the maximum degree by reason of the fact that it participates by likeness in the first and pure act – subsisting existence, or God. Each and everything receives its perfection by participating in existence (*esse*). From this [Aquinas] concludes that *esse* (existence = act of being) is the perfection of every form, since a form is perfected by having existence, and it has existence when it actually exists [QQ 12.5.1]’, Wippel, p. 97. Aquinas does not mean that everything that participates in the divine *esse* makes a creature part of God - it is

is necessary to realise an image is a likeness in *kind*, as for example, the king's image in his son and normally a likeness of shape, as for instance a man's image in a bronze statue. To look for likeness in *kind* requires that one also look for ultimate divergence (*ultima differentia*). *Ultima differentia* is important as it highlights essential distinctions within a common class that differentiates its kinds from each other. Here Aquinas will differentiate the divergence or distinction of intelligence and non-intelligence. It is 'discernment and intelligence [...] as Augustine says, which are *so close in likeness to God that there is nothing closer in all creation* [Augustine, *Eighty-three Questions* 51. PL 40, 32]' (S.T. 1a. 93, 2). And so Aquinas concludes, 'thus it is clear that only intelligent creatures are properly speaking after God's image'.

Aquinas' understanding of proportion comes into focus, whatever is imperfectly something or other participates, to some extent, in what is perfectly so (*Ad primum ergo dicendum quod omne imperfectum est quaedam participatio perfecti*).⁹⁷ So, things that fall short of the full *idea* of image (*et ideo etiam quae deficiunt a ratione imaginis*) still share to some extent in that *idea*, in so far as they have even a distant *likeness* to God. Aquinas quotes Dionysius, who states that, 'things caused bear their causes' *approximate images*, that is in so far as they approximate them, and not without qualification' (S.T. 1a. 93, 2). Aquinas is pointing to the necessity of living the good life to perfect the image, as Augustine did previously. The universe is more perfect than intelligent creation in extent and

rather a participation in the act of existence. This background of analogy and participation is relevant to our discussion in Chapter VI, section III, where the human being's likeness to the Divine is considered in more detail. For a comprehensive account of analogy and proportion from a modern analytic perspective, see Kelly, chapter III, pp. 60–79.

⁹⁷ Thus, according to this definition of the idea of participation, the human participates in God's rule, that is to say for Aquinas, human rule (whatever is imperfectly something) participates to some extent in what is perfectly so, God's rule. See, our outline of this idea in Chapter I.

diffusion, but for Aquinas, in intensity and concentration a better likeness of the divine perfection is to be found in intelligent creation, which has a capacity for the highest good (*Sed intensive et collective similitudo divinae perfectionis magis invenitur in intellectuali creatura, quae est capax summi boni*) (S.T. 1a, 93, 2).

Human kind in Aquinas' cosmological understanding are not the only beings to be intelligent, besides humans and God the angels for Aquinas are intelligent. He thus asks whether the angels have the image of God in a more perfect way than human beings. Augustine in *Eighty-three Questions* 51, (PL 40, 33) outlines that man is thoroughly after God's image, formed by God directly, and therefore there is nothing more intimately connected with God than man. So the angels are not more after God's image than man. But Aquinas outlines that Gregory the Great held that the angels were the 'seal of resemblance' and thus seemed to indicate that the likeness of the divine image is stamped on the angel more distinctly (*Homilies on the Gospels* II, Hom. 34, PL 76, 1250). Aquinas believes that we can see the use of image in two ways, first in referring to that in which the idea of 'image' is primarily realised, that is, an intelligent nature. If this is looked at on its own, we find that angels would have the image more perfectly than humans, because their natures are more perfectly intelligent. In the second way, Aquinas compares God to man via proportion of their existence:

God's image can be considered in man with reference to points in which it is secondarily realised; for example, we find a certain imitation of God in man, in that man is from man as God is from God; also in that all men's soul is in all his body and again all of it in any part of the body, in the same sort of way as God is in the world. And in ways, like that, God's image is found more perfectly in man than in angels. But God's image is not directly and properly realised in man in such ways except on the basis of the first sort of imitation in virtue of man's intelligent nature; otherwise even the animals would be after God's image (S.T., 1a. 93, 3).

Aquinas seems to leave the question of whether the nature of man is more in the image of God than Angels open in S.T. 1a 93, 4.⁹⁸ His main purpose seems to be to outline that Augustine did not mean that angels did not have the image of God, rather he [Augustine] showed that the image was more perfect in man.

Aquinas now considers the image of God in women in S. T. 1a. 93, 4. Aquinas finds that God's image is found equally in both man and woman as regards that point in which the idea of 'image' is principally realised, that is, an intelligent nature. But in a secondary way, Aquinas notes that God's image is found in man in a way in which it is not found in woman because man is the beginning and end of woman, just as God is the beginning and end of all creation (S.T. 1a. 93, 4). This idea seems to be taken from St Paul who is quoted in the context of this text:

Thus after saying that *the man is the image and glory of God, while the woman is the glory of the man*, the Apostle goes on to show why he says it, and adds: *for the man is not from the woman, but the woman from the man*;

⁹⁸ Interestingly, Robert Grosseteste's (c. 1175-1253 AD) outlines that the human being is 'made equal of the angels through his soul, similarly to the animals through sensibility and to growing things through vegetation', here Grosseteste seems to highlight that the image of God is summed up in man, i.e., man is a microcosm of all creation. As such man is the ultimate or last created, in this way, man is somehow everything, the end (*telos*) of everything, the template of all. The whole universe as such shines through the 'effect'. God is the cause, human beings are the ultimate effect which God shines through. See, James McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) pp. 380-401. Also see, Siefried Wenzel, 'Robert Grosseteste's Treatise on Confessions, "Deus Est"' in *Franciscan Studies*, Vol. 30 (1970), pp. 218-293 [p. 241]. Grosseteste's seems to allow God's creation to be reflected in man, all the dimensions of the entire universe (spiritual and material). The human being can reflect this specifically through the mental faculties of intellect, will and memory through the act of 'knowing, willing and remembering'. Grosseteste places higher regard on the material aspect of mankind in his/ her ability to be in the *image of God*, which is similar to Alcuin's position in *De dignitate conditionis humanae*. See *Dictum* 54., Joseph Goering and Randall Rosenfeld: 'The Tongue is a Pen: Robert Grosseteste's *Dictum* 54 and Scribal Technology' in the *Journal of Medieval Latin*, Vol. 12 (2002) pp. 111-140. No. 15. Finally, Grosseteste highlights that man and woman share the same nature and they both have 'the one and same dignity', *Hexaëmeron*, part eight, chapter XVIII, 4, See, Robert Grosseteste, *On the Six Days of Creation*. A translation of the *Hexaëmeron*, by C. J. F. Martin, *Auctores britannici medii aevi VI* (2), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) p. 249. Although this position is affirmed by Aquinas in one aspect he also reads Genesis literally and thereby sees the creation of man first as of significance, woman is created from 'Adam'.

and the man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man (S. T. 1a. 93, 5)

This view of woman, as put forward by Aquinas, requires a literal understanding of Genesis where Adam is viewed as being created first whilst woman was formed from the ‘side’ of Adam. Aquinas, however, maintains the intellectual capacity of women as much as men and thereby holds that both male and female are made in the image and *after* the image. Regarding the body, Aquinas states that, ‘God’s likeness in the manner of an image is to be found in man as regards his mind; but as regards his other parts only in the manner of a trace’ (S.T. 1a. 93, 6). So, man is called an image of God, not by definition, but because God’s image is stamped on him (*sed quia in eo est Dei imago impressa secundum mentem*), just as a penny is called Ceasar’s image, in so far, as it has his image on it. It thus follows that we do not have to verify God’s image of any and every part of man. This is why Aquinas, in his interpretation of Genesis 1:26-27, highlights the point that the image is given not in parts of man but in the mind,

so it must be said that Scripture, having stated *After God’s image he created him, adds male and female he created them*, not to present the image of God in terms of sexual distinctions, but because the image of God is common to both sexes, being in the mind which has no distinction of sex. And so in *Colossians* [3:10], after the Apostle has said *According to the image of him who created him*, he adds, *where there is neither male nor female* [Galatians 3:28]⁹⁹, (S.T., 1a. 93, 6).

Likeness, is also discussed by Aquinas in the *Summa* (1a. 93, 9) he outlines that likeness is not distinguished from ‘image’ in its common meaning, since it is included in the meaning of ‘image’; but it is only distinguished in so far as a likeness falls short of the meaning of ‘image’, or on the other hand, gives perfection to

⁹⁹ Here Aquinas’ memory is mixing *Galatians* 3: 28 with *Colossians* 3:10.

‘image’. For Aquinas, the essence of the soul belongs to ‘image’ in so far as the soul portrays the divine essence by those points that are proper to its intellectual nature. The essence of the soul, however, cannot ‘image’ because it is *simple*. Ultimately, love of virtue belongs to ‘likeness’, just as virtue does (S. T., 1a. 93, 9). Here perfecting one’s life through virtue can account for a certain ‘likeness’ to the *image per se*.

Finally, Aquinas’s epistemological treatment of image can be seen in *Quaestiones Disputatae* the treatment of the ‘image’ of the Trinity is enveloped in the presentation of Aristotelian psychology, and especially its ‘theory of knowledge’ (*De Veritate*, q. 10, aa. 2-6).¹⁰⁰

At best Thomistic epistemology recognises the intermediary role of images, given the finite limits of human understanding. While the true forms of reality — whether it be spiritual *ideas* or the things themselves — lie beyond the grasp of imagination, man has need of images to serve as *analogies* between our rational and sensible experience. Aquinas thus cleverly combines the Platonic notion of a pure *noetic* realm devoid of images with the Aristotelian doctrine that forms cannot be mentally represented *without images*.¹⁰¹

Thomas’s position is an expression of orthodox Scholastic realism and;

This realism goes hand-in-hand with a certain kind of *rationalism*. All uses of imagination are subordinate to the superior claims of both reality and reason. Thomas is of course prepared to admit that certain mysteries of divine

¹⁰⁰ ‘Of all the Fathers other than Augustine, only two, Hilary of Poitiers and John Damascene, could be considered to have exercised any influence of significance on the Thomistic doctrine of the image, and even then it is modified by the insights of Augustine. The definition of an image by St. Hilary and the association of free will with the divine image by St. John Damascene are the two points in question. In the *Commentary* Thomas uses the definition of the image given by Hilary as the basis for his analysis of this notion, while in the *Summa* it is the analysis of Augustine which assumes singular prominence, though the definition of Hilary continues to exert some influence with regard to the requirement of specific likeness for an image’. Sullivan, p. 269

¹⁰¹ Kearney, p. 129. As Aquinas states, ‘Incorporeal things of which there are no phantasms are known by us by comparison with sensible bodies of which there are phantasms. Therefore when we understand something about these things, we need to turn to phantasms of bodies, although there are no phantasms of the things themselves.’ (S.T. 4. 179; 5. 112) quoted by Kearney, p. 129.

Revelation – such as, for instance, the Trinity or prophecy – may well surpass the limits of human understanding. He insists, nonetheless, that these mysteries are on no account to be confused with the irrational workings of imagination. The latter only lead to error, unless controlled by the rational intellect.¹⁰²

Aquinas influenced by Aristotelian epistemology followed him in accepting that the mediational role of the imagination could be positive or negative and that even in the case of revelation that such revelation should be subjected to rational intellect.¹⁰³

For Aquinas, the *imago Dei* is the basis for participation in the divine life. The image of God is realised principally in an act of contemplation in the intellect.¹⁰⁴ Notwithstanding the many differences and developments of the idea of the *Imago Dei*, all of these thinkers in the Christian period look to our ultimate end, understood as life, with God in the next life, wherein the human being will encounter God, in the beatific vision, face-to-face. At that stage, God will be inescapable, and all of our memory, knowing, loving and *acts* of thinking will be directed towards this end. The pre-dominant narrative throughout their reflections, therefore, is one of comparing

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 129-130

¹⁰³ See, Ibid. pp. 130-31

¹⁰⁴ Interestingly Richard FitzRalph writing in the 1300s and influenced by Augustine's writings on the '*imago*' asks whether the meaning of the image is 'to be found in the essence of the mind or in its acts'. According to Dunne, FitzRalph holds, 'that it is more to be found in the essence because the essence itself is the image and the acts are not the image. Yet it might be argued that the mind is an image when considered together with these acts since it can grasp God through its acts and so then it is more of an image when it has this act than when it does not. [But] this, [according to FitzRalph], does not follow because the mind is an image to the greatest extent because of its substance. Therefore, it is not more of an image at one time than at another'. See, Michael Dunne, 'Richard FitzRalph on the Mind as an Image of the Trinity' in *Universality of Reason – Plurality of Philosophies in the Middle Ages*, Proceedings of XII International Congress of Medieval Philosophy Palermo, 16-22 September 2007. Forthcoming. With regard to the three acts of 'remembering, thinking and willing', FitzRalph states that while 'it is argued that the mind is less like the Trinity than when it does not having anything beside itself because in the uncreated Trinity nothing is thus really distinct in the way that one act of the mind is different from another, I state, as I did in the reply to the first argument that when it has these three acts it is more similar to the Trinity inasmuch as it is a Trinity but it is less similar to the Trinity by reason of these acts, inasmuch as the Trinity is a being which is simple to the highest degree; and this proves the argument and nothing more, and this is true.' [*Lectura*, MS Paris BN lat. 15853, 36va-vb], quoted by Dunne, Ibid. The tradition of aiming to find commonalities between the human being and the Divine is seen to continue with FitzRalph in his comparison of God's simplicity and the human mind's simplicity. An overarching characteristic of these philosophical narratives is the way the 'image of God' is found in human beings.

the human being to the Divine. Thus in their efforts to understand the image of God, whether it is in the various Trinities of the mind, mirroring, or the static mind, all of the thinkers looked for something that could be identifiable in the human being that demonstrated the presence of the 'image of God'.

CHAPTER IV

RENAISSANCE, MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING THE ‘IMAGE OF GOD’

In this chapter we continue with an examination of major thinkers in the history of thinking and their reflection on the idea of the ‘image of God’ in order to assess the permutations in the variation of the idea. What becomes noticeable in this period is that the reflection on the idea of the image of God brings us also into contact with the idea of human dignity. The relationship between these two ideas is significant in that the image of God seems to imply a dignity of the human being. This is brought to the fore through the writings of Renaissance thinkers. The Renaissance also saw a return to the Ancient sources (*ad fontes*), demonstrating that the Ancient texts continued to be important for thinkers in this period as they had been for the Scholastics. Yet, the cosmology of some of the Ancients is called into question with the writings of Copernicus and Galileo. Against this background, the Renaissance period sees a flourishing of new ideas about the place of human beings in the cosmos. Writers, such as, Petrarch (1304–1374), Ficino (1433–1499), Pico (1463–1494) and Pomponazzi (1462–1525) emerge as pivotal thinkers in this period and their positive emphasis on the capabilities of the human individual stand out as a representative account of one strand of thinking in the Renaissance age.

Both Martin Luther (1483–1546) and John Calvin (1509–1564), also writing in the Renaissance, are important figures in the historical mapping of the idea of the image of God as their views not only represent a great majority of thinkers in that period but have also exercised major influence on conceptions of the idea of the

image of God right down to the present day.¹ The Reformation period saw reflection on the human being living in a Postlapsarian world. The necessity of salvation and grace in Luther's views are seen to temper the positive ideas of the early Renaissance thinkers, when it came to human beings and their capability. The Reformation, then, can broadly be seen as a time of suspicion of man and man's abilities (without the necessary assistance and dependence on God's grace).

A complicating factor for the reception of the idea of the image of God in modern times is the problem of epistemological claims to have *knowledge* of the existence of God. Modern thinkers, such as Descartes (1596–1650), Hume (1711–1776) and Kant (1724–1804), create more suspicion (not so much in relation to the positive attributes of man and his ability to reason) but in the fact that their philosophical reflections bring up for discussion, and into the foreground, the question of God's existence. If it cannot be demonstrated that God exists (as Aquinas, for instance, says that it can), this will have significant bearing on epistemological claims pertaining to the subsequent reception of the idea of man as made in the image of God. This question, although not necessarily assumed by early thinkers became much more pronounced after the writings of Hume and Kant.

If it could be demonstrated that God does not exist, this would have major implications for the image of God idea. It would mean that the idea is ultimately a misconception. Yet, even if it could be demonstrated that God does not exist, the idea of mankind made in the image of God has, nonetheless, provided significant inspiration for other ideas (e.g. human dignity). Ideas which continue to inform our

¹ This is so because a great number of people are members of the Lutheran church or of other denominations that arose out of Martin Luther's split with the Roman Catholic Church in the 1500s.

current world-view and which we find of value. Because Kant and Hume force us to address the question of the existence or non-existence of God, these thinkers and their critiques cannot be overlooked. Thus, in this chapter, a particular investigation of the non-existence of God shall be undertaken with modern ‘proofs’ in mind, and this will prepare our study for our examination of critiques of God’s existence unfolded in light of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution (1859) and modern neo-Darwinism in the following chapter.²

SECTION ONE

CONTEXT: THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD

The period of the Renaissance has been considered a move from theocentricism to anthropocentricism, whereupon ‘man’, once again, becomes the ‘measure of all things’ (Prothagoras).³ According to Paul Oskar Kristeller, many historians praise this movement away from God-centred thinking to the awakening of belief in the human endeavour, ‘these historians see the ultimate realisation of this in the Enlightenment philosophy of *liberty, equality, fraternity* and onwards to modern secular thinking’.⁴ John Gribbin holds that ‘the Renaissance was the time when Western Europeans [...] realised that they had as much to contribute to civilisation

² Descartes’ necessity to prove the existence of God in order to assure his clear and distinct ideas already raises the problem of God’s existence in the 1600s, as does Thomas Hobbes mechanistic philosophy in the same period.

³ ‘Prothagoras says, “Man is the measure of all things which are, that they are, and of the things which are not, that they are not”’ (*Theaetetus*, 152a).

⁴ Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Concepts of Man, and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 1.

and society as the Greeks and Romans had contributed.’⁵ In this period Gribbin also maintains that mankind’s ‘inferiority complex’ is overcome.⁶

Renaissance thinking from 1350–1600, however, presents a complex picture of thinking. Different schools and thinkers expressed a great variety of views on problems related to the conception of man as on others. It would be difficult, therefore, to reduce this thinking to a single common denominator.⁷ Many of the texts themselves do not display a radical departure from Medieval thinking, in that, there is no radical denunciation of the existence of God and the affirmation of the self-sufficiency of man that seems to be the impression given by writers such as Gribbin. In fact, *Renaissance* humanism appears to be a time of rediscovery of the Ancient texts, rather than an abandoning of them in favour of a new way of thinking. The Middle Ages, however, was also a time of discovery and refocusing on Ancient texts, such as Aquinas’s reflections and commentaries on Aristotle.

The Renaissance period as such, then, is not characterised by a rejection of God in favour of, as it were, a ‘deification’ of man. Indeed, Luther is writing about scripture and how to understand God and our relationship with God in the early 1500s, whilst later reformers, such as Calvin, continued this discussion until his death in 1564. The question of God, therefore, continued to be of importance to Renaissance writers. On the other hand, it must be noted that the Renaissance witnessed developments in science with Copernicus (1473–1543) and Galileo (1564–

⁵ John Gribbin, *Science A History 1543–2001* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), p. 3.

⁶ Gribbin outlines that it is ‘unsurprising that the people of the Dark Ages (roughly from AD 400 to 900) and even those of the Middle Ages (roughly from AD 900 to 1400) felt inferior to the Ancients given that structures such as the Pantheon and the Coliseum in Rome continue to inspire awe today. In that period, knowledge of how to build such structures had also been lost, it therefore ‘must have seemed that they were the work almost of a different species – or of gods’, Gribbin, p. 3.

⁷ Kristeller, *Renaissance Concepts of Man*, p. 2.

1642) that made individuals question the cosmology of their time and their place in the universe. Given the movement towards heliocentrism as opposed to geocentrism, the hegemony of the Medieval world-view came under review and forced the intellectual thinkers of the time to become more individual in their hypotheses as opposed to conforming them to a pre-set theological world-view.⁸ This of course would have pointed to a new found confidence in human reason, as Gribbin points out.

In discussing the Renaissance and the idea of the image of God the texts of the time consider the idea of the image of God invariably with the idea of the dignity and place of humankind in the universe.⁹ We shall also consider Luther and Calvin's works focused on 'reformation thinking', though their writings are in fact composed in the timeframe of the Renaissance period (which is considered to have extended from about the 'middle of the fourteenth century to the end of the sixteenth').¹⁰ Unlike other Renaissance thinkers, however, Luther and Calvin did not hold the notion of the glorified state of man, as did the early Renaissance thinkers. In other words, 'the glorification of man was not approved by *all* Renaissance thinkers, but only by some of them.'¹¹ The glorification of man was not as such a new discovery

⁸ In Ecclesiastes 1:5 it is stated that 'the sun rises and the sun goes down, and hurries to the place where it rises.' Also in 1 Chronicles 16:30 it is said 'tremble before him, all the earth. The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved'.

⁹ It is also important to note that Renaissance thinkers reflected on man's rational ability and thus may have arrived at the idea of the dignity of man without reference as such to the 'image of God' idea. In other words, Renaissance writers reading the Classical texts would have had philosophical influences to underpin their anthropology quite independent of the 'image of God' idea. But as we outlined in earlier chapters the content of the 'image of God' idea, that is what specifically made mankind to be in the 'image of God', was aligned with 'reason' in the thought of Augustine and Aquinas. It is, thus, difficult to state that the 'image of God' idea was the only influence on Renaissance writers when it came to setting out their anthropology on man. In reality Renaissance writers would have had a myriad of influences to construct their anthropology.

¹⁰ *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man: Petrarca, Valla, Ficino, Pico, Pomponazzi, Vives*, ed. Ernest Cassier and Paul Oskar Kristeller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), See General Introduction by Kristeller and John Herman Randall, JR., p. 1.

¹¹ Kristeller, *Renaissance Concepts of Man*, p. 4, my emphasis.

by Renaissance thinkers. The praise of man as an inventor of the arts is common in Greek literature where the myth of Prometheus may be cited as a famous example.¹²

The notion of man as a microcosm is widespread in the thought of late antiquity and the phrase that man is a great miracle was quoted by Pico and other Renaissance thinkers, *magnum miraculum est homo*¹³ but the idea of man as a microcosm was also characteristic of Scholastic reflection. Ancient Greek thought might be viewed as cognisant of philosophical anthropology. Plato, as we noted, placed the human soul in the middle between the corporeal world and the transcendent world of pure forms¹⁴ and this notion was developed by the Neoplatonists and by Medieval thinkers, the Renaissance, therefore continued to be a development of Ancient and Medieval thinking.

SECTION TWO

THE IDEA OF THE IMAGE OF GOD IN RENAISSANCE WRITING

In the Renaissance period there was a new found optimism that reflected on the freedom and dignity of man. It would be too simplistic to say that the Medieval philosophers had a completely sceptical view of mankind because they did highlight that the *imago Dei* was retained after the fall and emphasised the relationship between mankind and God through our ability to reason, our ability to understand, to will and to remember. But our image was only truly God like when our understanding thought about God, when our will willed God and when our memory

¹² Ibid.

¹³ *Asclepius* 6, in *Corpus Hermeticum*, ed. A. D. Nock and A.J. Festugière, Vol. 2 (Paris, 1945), pp. 301–302, cf. *The Renaissance Concept of Man*, n. 6.

¹⁴ 'In its centre he set a soul, which he extended throughout the whole body, and with which he then covered the body outside' (*Timaeus*, 34b ff.).

remembered God and as such when we acted well morally. This positive relationship between dignity and the *imago Dei* in the Medieval period is characterised by Lebech as follows:

Each of the terms — *dignitas* and *persona* — finds its resolution in understanding the realities they refer to as relations. Conditionally (both in the old *and* the modern sense) can be said to be the kind of relation that obtains between a principle and what can be derived from it: the relation of foundation. The human being is related to its condition in such a way that this latter constitutes its dignity, because of the way it was created by God consulting Himself and ‘in His image and likeness’. It is thus His image that shines forth in the triple dignity of the human being — in intelligence, will and memory. What thus conditions the human being’s dignity is her special, conscious relationship with the condition of all conditions: with the God of whom she is the image. The *imago Dei* resides in the ontological relativity of human nature, i.e. in its capacity for a spontaneous and autonomous relationship with everything, including God, in intelligence, will and memory, reflecting God’s creative and conditioning relationship with all.’¹⁵

That said, the Medieval period also noted a negative view of mankind due to our Fall from Eden. The treatise *On the Misery of the Human Condition* by Lotario dei Segni (c.1160–1216) who became Pope Innocent III had a considerable impact on its readers. The impact of this document is probably best understood in virtue of the fact that many Renaissance writers wrote their treatises as a *response* to Pope Innocent III’s treatise. As such, the pope’s negative views of the human condition compelled Renaissance ‘humanists’ to respond. This reaction can be seen in the writings of Giannozzo Manetti¹⁶ who wrote his treatise on the dignity and the excellence of man as supplements or as criticisms of Innocent III.¹⁷ Manetti drew for his argument not only on classical sources such as Cicero, but also on the Church Fathers. Many of these Renaissance writers took to writing positive treatises about the excellence of

¹⁵ Lebech, *On the Problem of Human Dignity*, p. 67.

¹⁶ Giannozzo Manetti, *De dignitate et excellentia hominis*, 1451, printed in Basel 1532; republished by E. R. Leonard, Padua, 1975.

¹⁷ Paul Oskar Kristeller, ‘The Philosophy of Man in the Italian Renaissance’, in *Italica*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Jun. 1947) pp. 93-122, [p. 97].

man since Pope Innocent III had not carried out his promise about the subject.¹⁸ This reaction to Innocent III seems to have, in part, led to a systematic approach to the question of human dignity in the Renaissance period;

We cannot escape the impression that after the beginnings of Renaissance humanism, the emphasis on man and his dignity becomes more persistent, more exclusive, and ultimately more systematic than it had ever been during the preceding centuries and even during classical antiquity.¹⁹

2.1 Petrarch and Ficino — Man as a ‘Microcosm’

Francesco Petrarch (1304–1374) led the way with his treatise on ignorance (a reflection on his own ignorance and that of others). Petrarch stresses the point that our knowledge of nature and of animals (even if this knowledge is valid) is useless unless we can also know the nature of man. Petrarch describes how he went up to a mountain and having a copy of Augustine’s *Confessions* with him he opened it at the following,

And men go to admire the high mountains, the vast floods of the sea, the huge streams of the rivers, the circumference of the ocean, and the revolutions of the stars — and desert themselves [*Confessions*, X, Book VIII, 15].²⁰

By the fourteenth and fifteenth century, this awareness of the importance of ‘man’ spanned out in to the use of the term humanities (*studia humanitatis*) for the disciplines which were studied and taught in the Renaissance period. The term was, according to Kristeller, borrowed from Cicero and other ancient writers, and was

¹⁸ Lotario dei Segni had promised a companion work *On the Excellence of Man*, but this was never completed. See, Brian P. Copenhaver and Charles B. Schmitt, *A History of Western Philosophy:3 - Renaissance Philosophy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) p. 166

¹⁹ Kristeller, *Renaissance Concepts of Man*, p. 6.

²⁰ Francesco Petrarca, ‘The Ascent of Mont Ventoux’, in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, p. 44.

taken by the Renaissance writers Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406) and Leonardo Bruni (c. 1369–1444) to signify, the fields of grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history and moral philosophy.²¹ The humanists used the term humanities to express their basic and, as it were, ‘professional concern for man and his dignity’. By the mid-fifteenth century, the philosophical landscape in Italy came to be dominated more and more by a new Platonic movement which placed at its centre the so-called Florentine Academy which was founded by Marsilio Ficino and his friend Giovanni Pico.²²

Ficino and Pico (in spite of their wide knowledge and interest) were primarily philosophers of ancient and medieval philosophy, well abreast of the texts and doctrine, terminology and methodology of Ancient and Medieval philosophical writers. Ficino and Pico shared with earlier humanists a concern with man and his dignity. They, however, developed the idea of man and his dignity within a framework that was not witnessed in earlier humanistic writings. Ficino and Pico assigned to man ‘a distinctive position within a well-developed metaphysical system of the universe, and they define and justify man’s dignity in terms of his metaphysical position.’²³

Ficino did not dedicate a special treatise to the subject of man and his dignity *per se*. He, however, discussed the problem of man notably in his major philosophical work the *Theologia Platonica (Platonic Theology)*,²⁴ which includes a number of interesting sections on the topic. In aiming to outline the divinity of the

²¹ Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: the classic, scholastic, and humanistic strains* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961) pp. 110, 162.

²² Kristeller, *Renaissance Concepts of Man*, pp. 8-9.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 9.

²⁴ Josephine L. Burroughs provides a translation of Ficino’s *Platonic Theology* in terms of the relevant passages that concern his thoughts on the dignity of man. See, Josephine L. Burroughs, ‘Ficino and Pomponazzi on Man’ in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (April, 1994) pp. 227–242.

human soul Ficino describes man's abilities in the arts and in government.²⁵ He is also influenced by Platonic philosophy in that he stresses the intermediary position of the human soul between the 'incorporeal and corporeal worlds'.²⁶ Platonism as a source and framework for a philosophic system is justifiable to Ficino because of the harmony he believed existed between Platonism and Christian revelation. Ficino unsurprisingly refers to Augustine as his authority in this justification. Platonism, to Ficino was greater than all other philosophies.²⁷ Ficino reconstructed the Neoplatonic hierarchy of being in such a way that 'the rational soul which stands for man comes to occupy the place in the centre, below God and the angels and above qualities and bodies.'²⁸ Moreover, Ficino, like Plato, Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas insists on the universality of the human mind and sees in this its basic affinity with God. For Ficino, the soul aims to be cognisant of the truth and wishes to realise all goodness, it aims to encompass everything and it is able to live the life of all beings higher and lower:

This is the greatest wonder in nature. All other things under God are always in themselves of one certain kind of being; this essence is at once all of them. It possesses in itself images of the divine things upon which it depends. It

²⁵ Paul Oskar Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. 119.

²⁶ Kristeller, *Renaissance Concepts of Man*, p. 10

²⁷ Josephine L. Burroughs, 'Ficino: Introduction' in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, p. 186. Burroughs notes that Ficino wished to combine the Platonic doctrine as a whole with Christian doctrine, this of course was only possible after the recovery of the complete and original texts of the Platonic writers. Whilst Augustine had in his later writings rejected combining Platonic ideals with Christianity, Ficino did not heed this rebuke of Platonism but held that 'Platonic doctrine as an authority comparable to that of the divine law [...] the Platonic tradition [as such is] itself divinely inspired; its revival necessary in order that the Christian religion may be confirmed and rendered sufficiently rational to satisfy the sceptical and atheistical minds of the age.' See, 'Ficino Introduction', pp. 186–187.

²⁸ Paul Oskar Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, p. 119. As Ficino states: 'Soul is the intermediate degree of all things, and connects all superior and inferior degrees into one by both ascending to the superior and descending to the inferior [...] we collect all Being into five degrees, putting God and Angel in nature's highest place, Body and Quality in the lowest, and Soul right in the middle between these highest and lowest degrees. We rightly call it, in Platonic fashion, the third or intermediate essence, since it is both intermediate between the others and in every sense third. In descending from God, Soul is found in the third grade of the descent, and in ascending from the Body it is also found in the third grade of the ascent' [*Platonic Theology*, Book III, Chapter 2]. Marsilio Ficino, 'Platonic Theology' trans. Joseph L. Burroughs in *Journal of History of Ideas*, p. 227.

also possesses the reasons and models of the inferior things which it in a sense brings forth. Since it is the mean of all things, it possesses the powers of all; hence it transforms itself into all things. And because it is itself the true bond of the universe, in passing into some thing it does not forsake the others, but enters into individual things, and at the same time preserves all things. Therefore it can with justice be called the centre of nature, the middle point of all that is, the chain of the world, the face of all, and the knot and bond of the universe (*Platonic Theology*, Book III, ch. II).²⁹

For Ficino man is the ‘vicar of God’, since man indwells and cultivates every element. Man has the capacity to rule the four elements (fire, air, earth, water), and man rules over the animals, governs and teaches them. Ficino goes so far in Book XIII, chapter 3 to state that man is a *kind* of a god.

Hence man who provides generally for all things, is a *kind* of god. Certainly he is the god of the animals, for he makes use of them all, rules them all, and instructs many of them. It is also obvious that he is the god of the elements, for he inhabits and cultivates all of them. Finally, he is the god of all materials for he handles, changes and shapes all of them. He who governs the *body* in so many and so important ways, and is the vicar of the immortal God, he is no doubt immortal (*Platonic Theology*, Book XIII, chapter III).³⁰

The *Platonic Theology* is in essence a work that concerns arguments for the immortality of the soul,³¹ here Ficino augments Plato’s arguments for the immortality of the soul found in his works such as the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*. There are two other ideas of man’s position in the universe that are outlined in Ficino’s philosophy which are developed by subsequent thinkers– mankind is the ruler of all elements and all animals, and as such is born lord and ruler of nature. This position was already outlined in the book of *Genesis* in terms of the *imago Dei* idea where mankind is given power over all of creation. Also, Ficino holds that the mind of man observes the stars, is capable of understanding the motions of the

²⁹ Marsilio Ficino, ‘Platonic Theology’ trans. Joseph L. Burroughs in *Journal of History of Ideas*, p. 231.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 234.

³¹ Kristeller and Randall state that ‘the doctrine of immortality lies at the centre of Ficino’s Platonism’, see ‘Introduction’ in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, p. 15.

celestial spheres, and has the ability to construct a model of them on a smaller scale, and given this ability is thereby effectively given a mind slighter to that of God who constructed the spheres themselves.³²

Certainly no one could understand how Archimedes constructed his brazen spheres and gave them motions like the heavenly motions, unless he were endowed with a similar genius. He who can understand it because he has a like genius could doubtless, as soon as he has understood it, also construct another, provided he did not lack the proper material. Now, since man has observed the order of the heavens, when they move, whither they proceed and with what measures, and what they produce, who could deny that man possesses as it were almost the same genius as the Author of the heavens? And who could deny that man could somehow also make the heavens, could he only obtain the instruments and the heavenly material, since even now he makes them, though of a different material, but still with a very similar order? (*Platonic Theology*, Book XIII, chapter III).³³

This is a very positive account of man's ability to even be the creator of creation itself, if only man had the instruments to create this existence it would not be beyond the human being's capabilities to bring it about and echoes with the responsibility, and shepherding role given to man and woman because they were made in the image of God in Genesis 1:26-27.

2.2 Pico's Critique of Man as a 'Microcosm'

Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) modifies Ficino's doctrine in a number of significant ways. Pico's treatment of the question of man is best known from his *Oration on the Dignity of Man*.³⁴

³² Kristeller, *Renaissance Concepts of Man*, pp. 10-11.

³³ Marsilio Ficino, 'Platonic Theology' trans. Joseph L. Burroughs in *Journal of History of Ideas*, p. 235

³⁴ Although the term 'on the dignity of man' was not used by the author in the title but was added later by editors. The original title of the work was simply *Oration*, it was composed in 1486 to serve as an introductory speech for a public disputation on his nine hundred theses that Pico planned to hold in January, 1487 in Rome. This disputation never took place as Pope Innocent the VIII suspended it and

‘There is nothing to be seen more wonderful than man’, in agreement with this opinion is the saying of Hermes Trismegistus: ‘A great miracle, Asclepius, is man’ [*Asclepius* i. 6 (*Hermetica*, ed. W. Scott, I, 294)]. But when I weighed the reason for these maxims, the many grounds for the excellence of human nature reported by many men failed to satisfy me — that man is the intermediary between creatures, the intimate of the gods, the king of the lower beings, by the acuteness of his senses, by the discernment of his reason, and by the light of his intelligence the interpreter of nature, the interval between fixed eternity and fleeting time, and (as the Persians say) the bond, nay, rather the marriage song of the world, on David’s testimony but little lower than the angels [Psalm 8:5].³⁵

In the opening sections of the *Oration* Pico begins with two quotations, one of them is the passage outlining that ‘man is a miracle’ which is found in the Hermetic *Asclepius* and which already had been quoted by Ficino in his writings. Pico outlines his rejections to the traditional understanding as to what gives man dignity. He sees these arguments as insufficient. In other words, Pico rejects discernment of reason and man’s position as a microcosm. These arguments had been previously put forward to highlight how man was in the image of God. Grosseteste held that man was a microcosm, whilst Aquinas (following Plato, Aristotle and Augustine) held that man was in the image of God due to rational capabilities with the Trinitarian structures of memory and will (which were added by Augustine to moderate the purely rational position of Aristotle). Pico, however, does hold that these arguments

appointed a commission to examine the theses. See, Paul Oskar Kristeller, ‘Pico: Introduction’ in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, p. 217. The commission condemned some of the theses as heretical and when Pico tried to defend the theses (which were deemed heretical) in his *Apologia* he made things even worse and became involved in a conflict with the papal authorities that lasted for several years. At the start of the *Oration*, Pico attempts a general justification of the study of philosophy, he also takes ‘the dignity of man’ as his point of departure, but *contra* the traditional views of Medieval philosophy and Antiquity he rejects the idea that man owes his distinct place in the centre of the universe because he is a microcosm. Pico della Mirandola, *On the Dignity of Man*, trans. by Charles G. Wallis, Paul J.W. Miller & Douglas Carmichael, introd. By Paul J. W. Miller, (Cambridge & Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998: 1965), although this translation was also published in parts in the magazine *View* (Fall, 1944) pp. 88-90; 100-101 (December, 1944) pp. 134-135; 146-151). Also, Pico’s work is translated by Elizabeth L. Forbes, ‘Oration on the Dignity of Man’ in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*. These translations are probably from the text of the critical edition by Eugenio Garin (in Edizione Nazionale dei Classici del Pensiero Italiano, Vallecchi, Florence, 1942). The Latin text can be located on the Pico-project website: www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/pico (accessed Nov. 2008). We will use Forbes’ translation of the ‘Oration’ unless otherwise indicated.

³⁵ Pico della Mirandola, ‘Oration on the Dignity of Man’, trans. E. L. Forbes, p. 223.

are worthy to be considered but they are not the principle grounds upon which we should claim our privilege of the highest admiration of creation, of being in the image of God:

Admittedly great though these reasons be, they are not the principle grounds, that is, those which may rightfully claim for themselves the privilege of the highest admiration. For why should we not admire more the angels themselves and the blessed choirs of heaven? At last it seems to me I have come to understand why man is the most fortunate of creatures and consequently worthy of all admiration and what precisely is that rank which is his lot in the universal chain of Being — a rank to be envied not only by brutes but even by the stars and by minds beyond this world.³⁶

Pico's main doctrinal work, the *Heptaplus*,³⁷ is a commentary on the first section of Genesis. He wrote and published this work in 1489. In the fourth exposition of this

³⁶ Ibid., The critique of man as a microcosm also hints at a critique of Ficino. Pico's subsequent remarks show the reasons for his deviation from Ficino's position. The creator according to Pico had disseminated all gifts to creatures, so in this way, man was created with no particular gift but shared in all gifts that were disseminated by the creator, Kristeller, *Renaissance Conceptions of Man*, p. 12. Man, from Pico's perspective has 'no clearly determined essence or nature'. He is neither godly nor earthly. Man is neither mortal nor immortal. In fact, mankind may become all of this through his own will. For Pico, the Creator is viewed as having provided man with the seeds of every sort of life. It merely depends on whatever possibility that man wishes to place his focus. As such, man may become a plant, an animal, an angel, or he may even be unified with God himself. 'Man therefore possesses all potentialities within himself. It is mankind's task to overcome the lower forms of existence and to elevate him/herself towards God'. Kristeller, *Renaissance Conceptions of Man*, p. 12. '[God] therefore took man as a creature of indeterminate nature, and assigning him a place in the middle of the world, addressed him thus: Neither a fixed abode nor a form that is thine alone nor any function peculiar to thyself have we given thee, Adam, to the end that according to thy longing and according to thy judgment thou mayest have and possess what abode, what form, and what functions thou thyself shalt desire. The nature of all other beings is limited and constrained within the bounds of laws prescribed by Us. Thou, constrained by no limits, in accordance with thine own free will, in whose hand We have placed thee, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature. We have set thee at the world's centre [...]. We have made thee neither of heaven nor earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honour, as through the maker and molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine', Pico, 'Oration on the Dignity of Man', p. 225. Furthermore, Kristeller outlines that in Pico's philosophy man has no determined nature and no fixed place in the hierarchy of beings but he is somehow placed outside this hierarchy. This position is closely connected with the greater emphasis Pico gives to man's freedom of choice between the different natures or ways of life all of which are equally possible for him. This is according to Kristeller, a bold view, as it might be considered as one of the steps which dissolved the notion of the great chain of being that had dominated Western thought for so many centuries. For Pico man's dignity consists/ exists in the freedom of choice which is afforded to him because of the different possibilities open to him including the highest. The dignity of man is fully realised when the highest possibilities are chosen *Renaissance Conceptions of Man*, p. 14.

³⁷ Pico, 'Heptaplus', trans. Douglas Carmichael, in Pico, *On the Dignity of Man*, trans. Charles Glenn Wallis, pp. 63–170.

work, that is, 'Of the Human World: Of The Nature of Man', Pico outlines that man is the connection and juncture of the three worlds (the heavenly, the angelic, and the corruptible). In chapter six of the fourth exposition Pico discusses the dignity of man with regard to *Genesis* Chapter 1:26-27. Here he outlines that what he has discussed in his works points to the fact that man was made by God in his own image to have dominion over the fish, the birds, and the beasts, which first the waters and then the land had produced. As such Pico outlines:

We have already been discussing man above, but now for the first time we perceive him the *image of God*, through which he has power and command over the animals. Man was so constituted by nature that his reason might dominate his senses and that by its law all the madness and craving of anger and lust might be curbed. If the *image of God* has been blotted out by the stain of sin, we begin to serve the beasts in us, wretchedly and unhappily, and to live among them like the Chaldean king [Nebuchadnezzar. Cf. Daniel 4:30], sinking to the ground, eager for earthly things, forgetting our Fatherland, our Father, His kingdom, and the original divinity given to us as our prerogative. Truly, when man was in a state of honour he did not realise it, but ranked himself with the stupid beasts of burden and became like them [Psalms 48:13] -[emphasis added].³⁸

In the following chapter, Pico outlines that, through Adam who obeyed Satan rather than God, we, in fact, degenerated into beasts disgracing the form of man. Yet in Jesus Christ, the second Adam, who fulfilled the will of the Father, through Christ's blood, the sin of mankind was vanquished. We have all, therefore, according to Pico, become 'sons' of God according to the spirit and are thereby reformed by grace and as such regenerated, 'not as men but as adopted sons of God, so that in us as in Him the prince of darkness and of this world may find nothing.'³⁹ Here, then, the image of God is regenerated through the redemptive power of Christ. Pico in the fifth exposition again speaks of the relationship between the image of God and human

³⁸ Ibid. p. 125

³⁹ Ibid. pp. 125-126

dignity, here he outlines that God after the creation of the world placed man as His image in the centre of the world. The difference between God and man hinges on the fact that ‘God contains all things in Himself as their origin, [while] man contains all things in himself as their centre.’⁴⁰

4.2.3 Pomponazzi, Morality and the ‘Image of God’

Finally it is worth considering the philosophy of Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525) who was trained at Padua and taught philosophy at that university and later at Bologna.⁴¹ In 1516 Pomponazzi published a treatise on the *Immortality of the Soul*.⁴² Pomponazzi, like many of his predecessors believed that mankind was positioned between the pure intelligences of angels and the irrational souls of the animals. Yet, while those that followed the teaching of Plato held that the *telos* of human existence

⁴⁰ Ibid. p.135 As Kristeller outlines, ‘the question of what the dignity of man is based on and what his affinity [here we might read image and likeness] with God consists [...] is answered in terms which differ but slightly from those of the *Oration*. Emphasis is given to the fact that man combines and unites all things, not only through his thought, but also in reality (*re ipsa*). He shares this power with God alone, and the only difference is that God contains all things because He is the cause of all, and man combines all things because he is the centre of all.’ *Renaissance Conceptions of Man*, p. 16

⁴¹ Pomponazzi belongs to the tradition of scholastic Aristotelianism that had been identified with the European universities ever since their origin in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In this regard, Pomponazzi is important because he shows that the Aristotelian tradition remained strong and vigorous in spite of the humanist attacks directed against it. The philosophy of Pomponazzi, however, was somewhat affected by the new currents of humanism and Platonism especially in relation to the conception of man’s dignity and his place in the universe. Ibid. p. 17

⁴² This work immediately became the subject of a heated controversy among philosophers and theologians. It was controversial because Pomponazzi held a ‘naturalistic’ view of the human soul and he did not believe that the immortality of the soul could be proven on rational grounds. This idea is of interest because it points to the confidence of Pomponazzi as a Renaissance thinker to question the extent of reason in its capabilities to work out whether the soul was immortal or not. Pomponazzi states in chapter XV, ‘it seems to be that no natural reasons can be brought forth proving that the soul is immortal, and still less any proving that the soul is mortal, as very many scholars who hold it immortal to declare.’ Pietro Pomponazzi, ‘On the Immortality of the Soul’, in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, p. 377. In terms similar to Ficino and Pico, he endorses the Neoplatonic position that the human soul occupies a middle position in the universe: ‘Man is clearly not of a simple nature, since he includes three souls, so to speak – the vegetative, the sensitive, and the intellectual – and that he claims a twofold nature for himself, since he exists neither unqualifiedly (*simpliciter*) mortal nor unqualifiedly immortal but embraces both natures. Therefore the ancients spoke well when they established man between eternal and temporal things for the reason that he is neither purely eternal nor purely temporal, since he partakes of both natures. And to man, who thus exists as a mean between the two, power is given to assume whichever nature he wishes.’ *Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, p. 282

was contemplation and that this goal was only fully attainable in the world beyond, Pomponazzi formulated the *ideal* of moral virtue which was to be attained in the present life.⁴³ In Pomponazzi's view moral excellence could be attained by every person and in fact should be attained, but contemplation as such, seems to be attainable only by a few. The lack of hope in an eternal reward was an essential component in virtuous action.⁴⁴ Thus, for Pomponazzi virtue has value in and of itself and faithfulness to virtue is what ultimately gives the human 'dignity'. This is expressed by Pomponazzi in his shorter 'Question on Immortality' written in 1504.⁴⁵

Pomponazzi's writings point to the 'divine' in the human, the ability of the human being to live moral lives, and the call for human beings to live a moral life. Elliott M. Simon, grasps this relationship between Pomponazzi's moral philosophy and the 'image of God' idea as follows:

To rediscover the divinity within [Pomponazzi] presumes that human beings retain some measure of their divine perfection as creatures in the image of God.⁴⁶

The writings of the Renaissance philosophers point to a reflection on human creativity and capabilities, and these might be viewed as manifesting the image of

⁴³ 'There are three kinds of men to be found. Some are numbered with the gods, although such are but few. And these are the men who, having subjugated the vegetative and the sensitive, have become almost completely rational. Some [men] from total neglect of the intellect [being occupied] with the vegetative and sensitive alone, have changed [...] into beasts. [...] Some are called normal men; and these are the ones who have lived tolerably according to the moral virtues. They have not, however, devoted themselves entirely to the intellect or held entirely aloof from the bodily powers.' *Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, p. 282.

⁴⁴ 'virtue is essentially its own reward, and vice, its own punishment and that a good deed done without the hope of an external reward is superior to one done with such a hope.' Kristeller, *Renaissance Concepts of Man*, p. 19. This pre-figures some what the philosophical approach of Feuerbach who we will discuss below.

⁴⁵ As Pomponazzi states, 'To last for a long time does not imply perfection...an oak lasts for a thousandth part of that perfection which belongs to man. It is rather more perfect to be a man for one year, than to be an oak for ten thousand years'. Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'Two unpublished Questions on the Soul of Pietro Pomponazzi,' *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 8 (1955) pp. 76-101, [pp. 89-90].

⁴⁶ Elliott M. Simon, *The Myth of Sisyphus: Renaissance Theories of Human Perfectibility* (Cranbury, NJ: Rosemont Publishing & Printing Corp., 2007) p. 155.

God idea but of course could have come from philosophical reflection alone. Pico emphasises man's freedom and ability to be a host of potentialities, the freedom of the image of God idea might be seen already in Genesis, where man is essentially given responsibility for creation, this freedom was there to chose to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil before mankind were removed from the Garden of Eden for disobedience (for failing to give ear to (*oboedire*) the divine command). Ficino, influenced by the image of God idea was bold enough to consider mankind's ability to create all of creation if only the right provisions were made apparent. This alignment of human potential and human dignity gives a positive view of what it means to be made in the image of God, it means having a potential to be anything, even to be somewhat 'divine'. As Elliott outlined with regard to Pompanazzi these thinkers were reflecting on the 'divine' in man, in other words how mankind imaged God in their freedom, creativity, moral ability, capacity for reasoning. These writings form a system of thinking in this period to highlight the glory of man in response to Pope Innocent III's negative treatise on the misery of man. But all of the Renaissance writers did not hold such a positive view of mankind and in the next period mankind's *lapsus* was again to have an impact on the writings of the chief historical figures of the age.

SECTION THREE
REFORMATION AND REFORMED APPROACHES TO
THE IDEA OF THE *IMAGO DEI*

In the reformation period the image of God was once again considered in relation to ethical conformity or obedient response to God. This attempt begins with Martin

Luther (1483–1546)⁴⁷ who, as an Augustinian monk,⁴⁸ was well acquainted with the writings of the founder of his order, St Augustine.⁴⁹ The publication of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses led him into conflict with Rome and forced Pope Leo X to issue a Bull in 1520. Luther publicly burnt the Bull and published *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*.⁵⁰ Luther explicates that it is important for Christians

to know that God foreknows nothing contingently, but that [God] foresees, purposes and does all things according to His immutable, eternal and infallible will. This thunderbolt throws free will flat and utterly dashes it to pieces. Those who want to assert it must either deny this thunderbolt or pretend not to see it.⁵¹

⁴⁷Luther's complete works are published in German as, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Briefwechsel*. 18 vols. (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1930-1985), and Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Deutsche Bibel*. 12 vols. (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1906-1961). In English the complete works are published as *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 Vols. (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia and Fortress Press, 1958-1986).

⁴⁸ He entered the Augustinian house at Erfurt in 1505 after nearly being killed by lightning. He had also by 1505 received his Master's degree from the University of Erfurt., *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: CUP, 2003) p. xvii

⁴⁹ Luther took the chair of theology at Wittenberg after receiving his Doctor of Theology degree from the university of Wittenberg in 1512. Whilst preparing for his lectures Ernst Winter outlines that Luther 'turned completely from humanistic learning and Scholastic theology to a biblical exegesis of his own inspiration.' Ernst Winter, 'Introduction' in *Erasmus-Luther Discourse on Free Will*, ed. and trans. Ernst Winter, (New York: Continuum, 2002) p. viii By 1515. Luther found his biblical queries answered in the *Epistle to the Romans* (I, 17), in the context of 'justification by faith' and in 1517 Luther confronted John Tetzel, who was a 'travelling-salesman' of indulgences on behalf of the church, with his Ninety-Five Theses. It is reputed that Tetzel coined the phrase 'when the coin in the coffer rings, then a soul to heaven springs'. These Theses of Luther were concerned with theological issues and with the abuses in the church, abuses which included simony and nepotism.

⁵⁰ Martin Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, trans. Albert Steinhaeuser, (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1915). This work firstly attacks indulgences which Luther labels as 'a knavish trick of Roman sycophants' he then brings papal authority into question. Luther describes the papacy as the 'kingdom of Babylon' and later in the work he argues for the distribution of communion to the laity under both species. Ibid. In 1521 the Diet of Worms was convened and Luther was excommunicated from the Church. By 1525 Luther published *Bondage of the Will* that outlines his arguments against free will in response to Erasmus' defence of free will. Luther held that man was unable to do anything because he continues to sin, except for God's grace. For Luther, 'faith alone sets us free' (*sola fide*).

⁵¹ Martin Luther, 'The Bondage of the Will', in *Erasmus-Luther: Discourse on Free Will*, p. 106. In this document Luther also outlines his position that the faithful 'conscience is bound by the law of God alone [and as such] Papal tyranny, which falsely terrifies and murders the souls within, [...] is to be banished forthwith.' Ibid. p. 107. Luther moves away from the sacrament of confessing through the mediation of the church and allows one to confess directly in conscience to God. Free will had been the central tenet of early Renaissance writers when they considered the 'dignity of man'. Luther reigns in Free will by making it dependent completely on God's grace, Luther goes so far as to state that in 'relation to all things pertaining to salvation or damnation, man has no free will, but is captive, servant and bond slave, either to the will of God, or to the will of Satan.' Ibid. p. 113.

In 1535, a year after Luther published the complete *German Bible*, Luther began his *Lectures on Genesis* which span a ten-year period.⁵² In his *Lectures on Genesis*, Luther becomes occupied with *original sin*. Original sin is the sin of our first parents which resulted in Adam and Eve being banished from the Garden of Eden:

After the fall, however, death crept in, like a leprosy, over all the senses. So that now, we cannot reach the comprehension of this image of God by our intellect, not even in thought [...] But now, since the sin of the fall, all know how great is the excitement of the flesh; which is not only furious in concupiscence, but also in disgust, after it has satisfied its desire. In neither case, therefore, is either the reason, or the will, sound or whole. Both are fallen and corrupt. And the fury of the desire is more brutish than human. [...] But all of this Adam knew nothing, before the sin of his fall. His only peculiarity then was, that he had greater powers, and more acute and exquisite senses, than any other living creature. But now, how far does the wild boar exceed man, in the sense of hearing! The eagle, in sight! and lion, in strength! No one, therefore, can conceive, even in thought, how far the excellence of man, when first created, surpasses what he is now.⁵³

Having considered the fallen state of man and the dulling of our senses and abilities in comparison to the state of perfection we existed in prior to our Fall Luther then goes on to explain his understanding of the image of God as such:

I, for my part, understand the image of God to be this: — that Adam possessed it in its moral substance, or nature; — that he not only knew God, and believed Him to be good, but that he lived also a life truly divine; that is, free from the fear of death and of all dangers, and happy in the favour of God. This is apparent in Even, who [...] talks with the serpent, devoid of all fear.⁵⁴

God gives Adam and Eve security and does not allow them to die, thus they have no fear of death in their original state. This security according to Luther is the ‘image of

⁵² For a complete chronology of the life of Martin Luther, see *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, p. xvii.

⁵³ Martin Luther, *The Creation: A Commentary on the First Five Chapters of the Book of Genesis*, trans. Henry Cole, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1858) 1st published 1544, p. 90. The Commentary relating to Genesis 1:26-27, can be found in Luther, ‘Genesisvorlesung (cap. 1–17) 1535/38, Weimarer edition, (1911), vol. 42 of the *Martin Luther Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe* ed. by Kommission zur Herausgabe der Werke Martin Luthers (Hermann Böhlau, 2000–2007). This edition did not change the Weimarer edition’s contents.

⁵⁴ Luther, *The Creation*, p. 90

God' in which they live. But failing to follow God's commands when they eat of the tree of knowledge resulted in the 'loss of the image' and 'death'.⁵⁵ According to Luther, Adam before the Fall had an illumined reason, a true knowledge of God, and an upright will which loved both God and his neighbour. Adam also had a perfect knowledge of all nature; -- of animals, herbs, trees, fruits and all other creatures. If we were to see such a man, then Luther believes we would recognise the image of God. Again, because of the Fall, all of creation has undergone a corruption which results in a loss of its original excellence.

The intent of the Gospel for Luther is to restore the image of God in man. He notes that man's intellect and will have remained, but wholly corrupted. The Gospel aims to restore us to our original and indeed higher image, to an image in which we are born again unto eternal life, which requires faith, so that we can become 'one' with God like Christ is one with God (John 17). As Luther states, 'Now the very intent of the GOSPEL is to restore this image of God.'⁵⁶ Luther thinks that we are not only born unto *life*, but unto *righteousness*, because faith (through the merits of Christ) sets us free via Christ's death which gains the mercy of God. But this righteousness only *begins* in this life and can never, according to Luther, be perfected in the flesh of this life. Given the gift of the Holy Spirit, Luther sees that the image of God 'begins' to be restored in us, via the Gospel, by our faith in Christ and God's mercy but it is not perfected in this life but the next. As such we 'shall never be able fully to understand what the image of God was, which was lost by Adam in paradise.'⁵⁷ Luther concludes by outlining that the image of God, in which Adam was created, was something excellent above all things, in which was included

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 92

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 93

eternal life, eternal security, and all good. But that image is now so marred and obscured by sin, that we cannot reach the comprehension of it, even in thought.

For even though we speak the phrase the image of God, Luther wonders who is there that can possibly understand what it is for a man to live a life of security, without fears, and without perils? And to be wise, righteous, good, and free from all calamities of distresses, either soul or body? To live a life without dependence on food and to have pleasure in cultivating the earth, not as labour but as enjoying an employment of the highest pleasure, performing a service to God, and yielding obedience to His will.⁵⁸

4.3.1 John Calvin's Reformed Theology and the *Imago Dei*

John Calvin's (1509–1564) commentary on Genesis outlines that God when he used the phrase 'Let us make', used a phrase of deliberation as to point to the next act of creation which would be undertaken as a special mode of creation. God is viewed as taking counsel concerning the creation of man, which signifies that God is about to undertake something which is great and wonderful.⁵⁹

Here Calvin aims to uphold the Trinitarian nature of the term 'Let us', this is akin to Augustine's view that the Trinity is being invoked by this phrase rather than

⁵⁸ Ibid. pp. 93-94

⁵⁹As Calvin states: 'Truly there are many things in this corrupted nature which may induce contempt; but if you rightly weigh all circumstances, man is, among other creatures a certain pre-eminent specimen of Divine wisdom, justice, and goodness, so that he is deservedly called by the ancient's "*mikrokosmos*", "a world in miniature". But since the Lord needs no other counsellor, there can be no doubt that he consulted with himself. The Jews make themselves altogether ridiculous, in pretending that God held communication with the earth or with angels.' John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. John King, M.D., (Guildford & London: Billing & Sons Limited, 1975; 1554 (Latin)), vol. 1, part 4, Genesis verse 26.

the hosts of heaven. With regard to the phrase image of God, Calvin notes that interpreters do not agree as to the meaning of this phrase. The image according to Calvin is viewed as ‘inhering in the substance and likeness in the accidents of anything’.⁶⁰ After noting this he turns to Augustine’s view of a trinity in man in light of intellect, memory and will. Calvin outlines that while Augustine’s distinctions are of interest he would rather base a definition of the image on a firmer footing than the subtleties of Augustine’s theory:

I would deny that [image] differs from [...] likeness [...] we know that it was customary with the Hebrews to repeat the same thing in different words. Besides, the phrase itself shows that the second term was added for the sake of explanation, ‘Let us make,’ he says, ‘man in our image, according to our likeness,’ that is, that he may be like God, or may represent the image of God. Although we have set aside all difference between the two words we have not yet ascertained what this image or likeness is. The Anthropomorphites were too gross in seeking this resemblance in the human body; let the reverie therefore remain entombed. Others proceed with a little more subtlety, who, though they do not imagine God to be corporeal, yet maintain that the image of God is in the body of man, because his admirable workmanship there shines brightly; but this opinion, [...] is by no means consonant with Scripture. The exposition of Chrysostom is not more correct, who refers to the dominion which was given to man in order that he might, in a certain sense, act as God’s vicegerent in the government of the world. This truly is some portion, though very small, of the image of God. Since the image of God had been destroyed in us by the fall, we may judge from its restoration what it originally had been. Paul says that we are transformed into the image of God by the gospel. According, to [Paul], spiritual regeneration is nothing else than the restoration of the same image (Col. 3:10, and Eph. 4:23).⁶¹

Like Luther, Calvin imagines the perfect nature of man before the ‘Fall’ and considers that these perfections are corrupted due to sin. Before the ‘Fall’ man was capable of placing all of his life subject to reason. Although Calvin holds that Christ is a true image of God, he sees the Old Testament phrase referring also to every one. He also wonders why St Paul should deny that woman is in the image of God, when

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Moses honours man and woman indiscriminately, with this title of image of God. For Calvin, Paul is referring only to the domestic relation between man and woman, and as such Calvin believes Paul restricts the image of God to government, in which man has superiority over the wife.⁶²

In the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Book I, chapter 15, III, Calvin outlines that the image of God is displayed in the external form of man, but that there is no doubt that the proper seat of the image is in the soul.⁶³ The external form is admitted because it distinguishes man from the brutes and also exalts the human being more nearly to God in a spiritual sense. For Calvin there is, therefore,

no part of man, not even the body, which was not adorned with some rays of [the *image's*] glory [for] it is certain that the lineaments of the Divine glory are conspicuous in every part of the world: whence it may be concluded, that where the image of God is said to be in man, there is implied a tacit antithesis, which exalts man above all the other creatures, and as it were separates him from the vulgar herd. It is not to be denied that angels were created in the similitude of God, since our highest perfection will consist according to the declaration of Christ, in being like them. But it is not in vain that Moses celebrates the favour of God towards [man] by this peculiar title [*image of God*]; especially as he compares man only to visible creatures.⁶⁴

In section four Calvin asks how is man to be considered in his ability to mirror the Divine glory and then notes that this can only be known from the 'reparation of [man's] corrupted nature'. For when Adam fell from his dignity he was alienated from God. But like Luther, Calvin believes that the 'image was not utterly annihilated and effaced in [man]', but what is left is so corrupted that it is a 'horrible deformity'. Our recovery and salvation is effected through Christ, who restores us to the true and perfect integrity. In this way, man is to 'put on the new man, which after

⁶² Ibid.,

⁶³ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. by John Allen (Philadelphia: James Russell Publishing, 1841; 1536 (Latin), 1541 (French)).

⁶⁴ Ibid. *Institutes*, I, 15, III.

God is created in righteousness and true holiness' (*Ephesians*, IV, 24). For Calvin, the image of God is still partly visible in the elect, inasmuch as the elect are regenerated by the Spirit, but this will obtain its full glory in heaven.

Shu-Ying Shih outlines that Calvin believed the human being to have an excellence above other animal life. This status is retained even in fallen human beings, who now bear the *imago Dei* in its deformity. Having this deformed image we are 'still capable of achieving great heights [which are] represented by the arts and the sciences'.⁶⁵

In sum, in the mid-Reformation-period the idea of the image was conceived with regard to sin and the fall from Eden. This shift was made in Luther's reflection on *sola fide* and *sola gratia* and his agonising reflection on sin and the abuses in the church. The reformists believed that only by faith and through God's grace can human beings be saved, there is no work that can be done in that sense to merit salvation as such. Our *image* is one of relation to God. The true 'image of God' is man before the Fall, that is Adam prior to the *lapsus*. We cannot even reflect on Adam's existence prior to the 'Fall' because of the effects of the fall on human reason. But Luther still seems to maintain that there is something of the image left even after the Fall, something that brings us to the Gospels in order to somehow redeem the image of God once again. Calvin, can be seen to hold that the image remains and its positive impact can be seen via the developments in science and the arts.

⁶⁵ See, Shu-Ying Shih, *The Development of Calvin's Understanding of the Imago Dei in the Institutes of Christian Religion from 1536 to 1559*, Ph.D. Thesis, (Heidelberg: Ruprecht Karls University, 2004) pp. 10-11

4.3.2 Paul Tillich — Modern Protestant Theological Reflections on *Imago Dei*

Paul Tillich may be taken as a representative of modern Protestant theology, and the following remarks appear in his *Systematic Theology* in relation to the *imago*:

Man as a creature has been called the ‘image of God.’ This biblical phrase is interpreted as differently as the Christian doctrine of man. The discussion is complicated by the fact that the biblical report uses two terms for this idea, which were translated as *imago* and *similitudo*. These were distinguished in their meaning by (Irenaeus). *Imago* was supposed to point to the natural equipment of man; *similitudo*, to the special divine gift, the *donum superadditum*, which gave Adam the power of adhering to God. Protestantism, denying the ontological dualism between nature and supernature, rejected the *donum superadditum* and with it the distinction between *imago* and *similitudo*. Man in his pure nature is not only the image of God; he also has the power of communion with God and therefore of righteousness towards other creatures and himself (*justitia originalis*). With the fall this power has been lost. Man is separated from God, and has no power of return. For the Roman Catholic doctrine the power of communion with God is only weakened, and some freedom of turning toward God remains.⁶⁶

Tillich rightly observes that the difference between Protestantism and Catholicism is a difference in the interpretation of grace. Continuing he exposes what is, in his view, the ‘exact meaning of the image of God.’

the first problem demands avoidance of a confusion between image of God and relation to God. Certainly man can have communion with God only because he is made in his image, but this does not mean that the image can be defined by communion with God. Man is the image of God in that in which he differs from all other creatures, namely, his rational structure. Of course, the term ‘rational’ is subject to many misinterpretations. Rational can be defined as technical reason in the sense of arguing and calculating. Then the Aristotelian definition of man as *animal rationale* is as wrong as the description of the image of God in terms of his rational nature. But reason is the structure of freedom, and it implies potential infinity. Man is the image of God because in him the ontological elements are complete and united on a creaturely basis, just as they are complete and united in God as the creative ground. Man is the image of God because his *logos* is analogous to the divine

⁶⁶ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1959), I, p. 258.

logos, so that the divine *logos* can appear as man without destroying the humanity of man.⁶⁷

The doctrine set forth by Tillich continues to hold the notion of man's 'corrupt' human nature as outlined by Luther. Luther seems to shy away from Augustine's conception of man after the fall as *capax Dei*, for Augustine human beings always retain their fundamental natural image of God in their rational soul: this is the view of Augustine and Thomas.

SECTION FOUR

MODERN PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACHES TO THE *IMAGO DEI*

In his extensive research on *The Mind of God and the Works of Man*, Edward Craig points out that the idea of the 'image of God' is a pervasive feature of the thought of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As he outlines,

[The idea is] something which can clearly be seen as a central concern of nearly all of the major philosophers of that period, even though they concern themselves with it for different purposes and reacted to it in widely varying ways. If anything can properly be called the 'dominant philosophy' of these hundred or so years, this is it'⁶⁸

René Descartes (1596–1650) is often seen as the father of modern philosophy, in the sense that Descartes is considered to have broken away from previous ways of philosophising by calling for a new *method* to start philosophy.⁶⁹ Undoubtedly

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 259.

⁶⁸ Edward Craig, *The Mind of God and the Works of Man*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) p. 13. Craig, notes however 'that commentators to whom this dominant philosophy, has for historical reasons, ceased to mean anything, frequently fail to recognise its role in the thought of those whose works they discuss.' Ibid.

⁶⁹ Descartes, however, recognised the importance of the philosophical education he received from the Jesuits in La Flèche, Anjou, even though he realised that there was no point of speculation which

Descartes' confidence to call for this new method is derived from the sense of freedom that existed in the Renaissance period. Foundations were important for Descartes; for him the very bedrock of philosophical speculation needed to be questioned, so questioned and confirmed that they could not possibly be doubted.

omnia semel in vita evertenda atque a primis fundamentis denuo inchoandum – 'Once in a lifetime we must demolish everything completely and start again right from the foundations'. (AT VII 17: CSM II 12)

As a mathematical thinker Descartes drew a link between the discipline of mathematics in its quest for knowledge and philosophical epistemology. For Descartes the link between,

those long chains of very simple and easy reasoning, which geometers customarily use to arrive at their most difficult demonstrations, gave me occasion to suppose that all the things which come within the scope of human knowledge are interconnected in the same manner (AT VI 19: CSM I 120).

This new unified way of seeing 'reality' gave Descartes the idea that it was possible to also unify or generate a system of reliable knowledge- the source of this secure knowledge was not to be found in nature itself but from the secure 'thinking' of the human mind. He outlined his thinking in his 1637 publication of his *Discourse* in French and more fully in his *Meditations on First Philosophy*, published in Latin in 1641, with the definitive second edition being published in 1642. The metaphysics of Descartes begins with a systematic exercise of doubt which leads him to one of the most famous dictums in philosophy *Je pense, donc Je suis* (*Discourse*, Part IV, AT VI 32: CSM I 127). This '*Cogito*', in Descartes' view could not be doubted, for even

could not be doubted or disputed (AT VI 8: CSM I 115). AT, *Œuvres philosophiques*, ed. F. Buzon, 3 vols. (Paris: Garnier, 1963), CSM, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, eds. J. G. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, and D. Murdoch, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

if one doubts, one knows that one doubts and therefore one exists.⁷⁰ This provided Descartes with a position of certainty upon which to build his philosophical enterprise. Here was the foundation of assurance that he had searched – it was self-evident, that one could not doubt one’s existence.⁷¹

The idea of the image of God is bound up with Descartes’ reflections on the proofs for the existence of God. The proofs for God’s existence proceed for Descartes from effect to cause. Descartes believes we have an idea of God which is an effect pointing to a greater cause, i.e., the reality itself. In the Third of his *Meditations*, Descartes aims to identify what he means by God. Here he states,

by the term “God” I understand (*intelligo*) a substance that is infinite, (eternal, immutable), independent, supremely intelligent, supremely powerful, and which created both myself and everything else (if anything else there be) which exists’ (AT VII 45: CSM II 31).

We, as creatures, are looking for the cause of the effect (the idea) which is ‘God’ and this cause exists *outside* of the mind. Descartes, therefore, has to consider the ‘idea’

⁷⁰ Augustine had already stated this in some sense when he said *si [...] fallor, sum* (cf. *De Civitate Dei*, Book XI, 26)

⁷¹ From the starting point of the *Cogito*, Descartes began to build-up his epistemology interiorly, i.e., through *a priori* means. The greatest problem for Descartes was the ‘evil genius’ which he introduced in the end of his *First Meditation*. This ‘evil genius’ could deceive Descartes about everything, thus the main concern for Descartes’ philosophical system was to prove the existence of a *benevolent* God. The argument for God’s existence had to be *a priori* in nature, built from the foundations of the *Cogito*. In his endeavour to prove God’s existence ‘ontologically’, Descartes reflected on the *idea* of God that was given to him innately (*a priori*). A problem arises in his attempt to prove God’s existence by virtue of the fact that Descartes believes God cannot be comprehended. Jean-Marie Beyssade outlines this paradoxical situation: ‘There is a paradox at the heart of the Cartesian metaphysics. On the one hand, Descartes’ whole system of scientific knowledge depends on our assured knowledge of God, but on the other hand, the idea of God is explicitly stated by Descartes to be beyond our comprehension.’ Jean-Marie Beyssade, ‘The idea of God and the proofs of his existence’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes*, ed. and trans. by J. Cottingham, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) p. 174. Beyssade quotes Descartes paradoxical situation as follows, in one instance Descartes states, ‘the certainty and truth of all knowledge depends uniquely on my awareness of the true God, to such an extent that I was incapable of perfect knowledge about anything else until I became aware of him’ (Fifth Meditation, AT VII 71: CSM II 49) and on the other hand, Descartes states, ‘We cannot comprehend [or ‘grasp’, *comprendre*] the greatness of God, even though we know it [*connaissons*]’ (Letter to Mersenne, 15 April 1630: AT I 145: CSMK: *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes: The Correspondence*, ed. and trans. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch and A. Kenny, vol 3, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)) 23.

of a perfect God in terms of an *effect* and the cause of the idea which is given to the mind via the effect. As such, Descartes claims the idea of God is innate because,

It only remains for me to examine how I received this idea from God. For I did not acquire it from the senses; it has never come to me unexpectedly, as usually happens with the idea of things that are perceivable by the senses, when these things present themselves to the external sense organs – or seem to do so. And it was not invented by me either; for I am plainly unable either to take away anything from it or to add anything to it. The only remaining alternative is that it is innate in me, just as the idea of myself is innate in me. (AT VII 51, CSM II 35)

Because the idea of God is held to be innate by Descartes, this allows him to argue that God, in creating him as a being, ‘placed’ the ‘idea of God’ in him, similar to the ‘mark of the craftsman stamped on his work’ and, therefore,

the mere fact that God created me is a very strong basis for believing that I am somehow made in his image and likeness, and that I perceive that likeness, which includes the idea of God, by the same faculty which enables me to perceive myself. That is, when I turn my mind’s eye upon myself, I understand that I am a thing which is incomplete and dependent on another and which aspires without limit to ever greater and better things; but I also understand at the same time that he on whom I depend has within him all those greater things, not just indefinitely and potentially but actually infinitely, and hence that he is God [...] it is clear enough from this that [God] cannot be a deceiver, since it is manifest by the natural light that all fraud and deception depend on some defect. (AT VII 51-52, CSM II 35)

Here Descartes reflects on Genesis 1:27 and the theological claim that human beings are made in the image of God, and it appears we should not be surprised that human beings who are made in the image of God, should display some similarity in his or her nature to God-as-cause and him/herself as an effect. Craig believes that Descartes’ assumption that God would not deceive him is made on Descartes’ understanding that he was made in the image and likeness of God.⁷² The extent to

⁷² Ibid. p. 23. As Craig states, ‘The premises that “God is no deceiver”, without which [Descartes’] salvage of knowledge fails, *in limine*, is plucked out of the air, a product of the unthinking assumption that God’s ways are our ways, that we resemble him in point of moral values [...]’. Ibid. p. 23

which Descartes reflects on the image of God seems to be limited to the fact that both God and Descartes are ‘thinking’ things, even though Descartes claimed that, as a finite substance that recognises its finitude, he is no more than a pale image of the infinite and perfect God.⁷³ For Descartes the *imago Dei* is an effect which is left by a cause – a substance which is supreme and infinite, immutable, omnipotent, and omniscient. Although in referring to the attributes of God in order to consider the image of God Descartes sets out a novel way to define the content of the image of God in relationship to the Divine attributes of omniscience, omnipotence etc. He does this in a negative fashion to derive from his finitude the infinite and the attributes of the infinite which surpass the qualities of the finite: but nevertheless that there is a sharing or ‘likeness’ in these qualities.

4.4.1. Modern Philosophy and Mechanistic Views

Descartes’ philosophy ushered in a mechanistic view of explanation with his scientific insights which were published in his *Principia Philosophiae* – this was a book about physics and Descartes made the correct definition of inertia which continues in a straight line rather than a circle as Galileo had thought. Descartes contributed to the discipline of Mathematics with his invention of the Cartesian plane, and given this development, he also provided the ability to consider geometry via using algebra. As John Gribbin outlines,

Descartes’ influence was profound, most importantly because of the way in which (although he believed in God and the soul) he swept away from his thinking any vestige of mystic forces and insisted that both the world we live in and the material creatures that inhabit the world (including ourselves) can

⁷³ Daniel E. Flage & Clarence A. Bonnen, *Descartes and Method: A Search for a Method in Meditations* (London: Routledge, 1999) p. 193

be understood in terms of basic physical entities obeying laws which we can determine by experiment and observation.⁷⁴

This ‘modern’ approach is also exemplified in the works of Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) who adopted Galileo’s principle of the conservation of motion in his understanding of matter. For Galileo when an object is in motion it will continue to remain in motion until it is impeded by another object. Hobbes realised that we assume that objects will come to rest because we after being in motion wish to rest. But the truth Hobbes claims is that ‘when a thing is in motion, it will eternally be in motion, unless something else stay it’ (*Leviathan*, 87).⁷⁵ So the principle of the conservation of motion was used by Hobbes in developing a materialist, mechanist view of human beings. The outlines of this view are undertaken in the introduction to the *Leviathan*, ‘What is the *Heart*, but a *Spring*; and the *Nerves* but so many *Strings*; and the *Joynts*, but so many *Wheeles*, giving motion to the whole Body...?’⁷⁶ In this way, human beings are animated (*anima*) through motion. Sensation is a pressing on an organ whilst imagination is a decaying relic of sensation. Hobbes sees the human being in a constant state of motion, never at rest:

There is no such thing as perpetuall Tranquillity of mind while we live here; because Life it selfe is but Motion, and can never be without Desire’ (*Leviathan*, 129-130).

This constant searching Hobbes termed *felicity* and brings about a situation where we end up going into war with each other in what he hypothetically imagines as the ‘state of nature’. In that ‘state of nature’ food and supplies are scarce and this constant need for food and supplies would result in an all-out-war of all-against-all. As human beings have a ‘restless desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in

⁷⁴ Gribbin, pp. 114–115.

⁷⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. C. B. MacPherson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

Death' (*Leviathan*, 161). Certainly Hobbes' account of the human spirit (*anima*) in terms of causal forces seems to dispel the existence of human free will and indeed soul. The material body of the individual being is controlled by physical forces. Hobbes' materialist philosophy undoubtedly changed the conception of the human being created in the 'image and likeness of God' to the human being more akin or likened onto the physical laws of nature and raised the question of God's existence, because if everything could be explained by means of material or physical forces then perhaps there was no need to posit the existence of God. This idea influenced the philosophy of David Hume in particular.

4.4.2 Hume's Reflections on Human Reason

David Hume (1711–1776) was influenced by the mechanistic philosophy of his time and the scientific advances that had been gained since the writings of Descartes. As Craig outlines,

The content of Hume's thought is in many ways strongly conservative in tone. He counsels resignation to the dictates of human nature, which he sees as a historical constant, and the greatest caution in any departure from traditional values and institutions. His work was a revolution within philosophy, so to speak: he sought to destroy man's favoured picture of man and replace it, though the picture he sought to replace it with was in a sense as conservative in its essence as the one it was to depose. The philosophy was far from revolutionary, as that is normally understood; but it was a revolution. It aimed no less than the destruction of the doctrine of the image of God, and substituted for it an anthropology which looked not to the divine but to the natural world for its comparisons, and to the sciences for its method. Man was a natural object; not, [...] a little god beside the great God, but a great animal amongst the lesser animals.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Craig, p. 70.

Craig points out that Hume talks about the image of God idea implicitly with regard to his writings on morality. Hume states in *A Treatise of Human Nature* that,

those who affirm that virtue is nothing but a conformity to reason; that there are eternal fitnesses and unfitnesses of things, which are the same to every rational being that considers them; that the immutable measures of right and wrong impose an obligation, not only on human creatures, but also on the Deity himself.⁷⁸

What Craig believes is that this points to a relationship between God and man in terms of their ability to reason, but that once having stated the above, Hume, moves to state that human reason will not by itself provide human morality.

All these systems concur in the opinion, that morality, like truth, is discern'd merely by ideas, and by their juxta-position and comparison. [...] In order, therefore, to judge of these systems, we need only consider, whether it be possible, from reason alone, to distinguish between moral good and evil, or whether there must concur some other principles to enable us to make the distinction.⁷⁹

And furthermore, Hume, moves to bring human reason under suspicion when he outlines our major assumption of the existence of scientific laws. He does this by questioning findings based on the experience of causation.

As all distinct ideas are separable from each other, and as the ideas of cause and effect are evidently distinct, 'twill be easy for us to conceive any object to be non-existent this moment, and existent the next, without conjoining to it the distinct idea of a cause from that of a beginning of existence is plainly possible for the imagination, and consequently the actual separation of these objects is so far possible that it implies no contradiction or absurdity.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. by Ernst G. Mossner (London: Penguin Press, 1985), Book III, Section I, p. 508.

⁷⁹ Ibid. See Craig., p. 72. Craig goes on to infer more indirect uses of the 'image of God' idea in Hume, see pp. 72-77.

⁸⁰ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965) pp. 79f.

Hume's criticisms here raise questions, for, assuming, as Descartes had done, that the *imago Dei* is an effect of a greater cause. It is difficult to use experience to draw such a conclusion. Furthermore, Hume outlined that one could not derive universal conclusions from particular premisses, this has become known since as the problem of induction. The fallacy, as Hume realised it, is to project *necessity* into the future, of 'particular' experiences of the past. The issue of causation was an issue not only for science but for metaphysics and theology too, especially in terms of demonstrating the work of God in the world. As Craig points out,

What [Hume did was] to take a historically existent conception of reason and show that it has practically no application to human thought. Secondly, the (then) existent conception of reason has nothing arbitrary about it either, it embodies a requirement of the dominant philosophy of the age, the Image of God doctrine taken in its cognitive version. Reason was the divine element in man, and so it had to be thought of in whatever terms might plausibly yield infallibility. Deduction might be held to do this, or at any rate to be theoretically capable of doing it, whereas probabilistic considerations certainly won't, not even in the mind of the perfect statistician.⁸¹

Descartes and Hume's philosophies challenged the epistemology of Medieval Scholasticism. Medieval philosophers held that to know reality was to secure an *adequate* representation of being and this was achieved by means of a rational judgement which ensured that the human understanding was in conformity with external reality. The famous Scholastic definition of truth as *adaequatio intellectus ad rem* (the correspondence of mind to things) captures the epistemology of the time. Being was the centre of the universe and the human mind responded to being in truth. Descartes and Hume placed emphasis on the individual subject in terms of their analysis of the objects of the world whilst Kant who was influenced by the science of Newton wished to address this problem of causation which Hume raised

⁸¹ Craig., pp. 77-78.

and by doing so he developed a new epistemological system of philosophy combining rationalist and empirical thinking. With the scepticism of human reason, came scepticism in ontological arguments for the existence of God, a critique of which was undertaken by Kant in light of his awakening to respond to Hume's 'scandal of science'.

SECTION FIVE

KANT ON THE IMAGE OF GOD

AND ON THE QUESTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Kant's (1724–1804) philosophy is significant in reversing the Medieval epistemological model. The human mind, for Kant, became central. Being, in Kant's philosophical writings, was not to be conceived as the transcendent origin of meaning, but as a representation of the human subject instead, or as a *production* of the human imagination. As Kant famously put it in his *Critique of Pure Reason*: 'being is not a *real* predicate [...] but only the *positing* of a thing' (A 598).⁸²

In Kant's philosophy, the existence of the object, therefore, cannot be known in and of itself (*das Ding-an-sich*) as it is hidden from our experience. We are thus left with an *image* of the real object. In this regard the essence of the object is not abstracted, as in the case of the Medievals, where the intellect grasps Being in truth (*adequatio rei et intellectus*). Thus, our understanding of an image is something that is representational when experienced, that is to say, it points to a *noumenal* reality

⁸² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer & Allen Wood (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of University of Cambridge: 2000), originally published as *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 1781 (available as e-book on Project Gutenberg at <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/6342/pg6342.html> [accessed October, 2010]).

that cannot be experienced (known) as such. Thus the Kantian concept of the ‘thing-in-itself’ is a limit concept of our human understanding.⁸³

Kant was awoken from his ‘dogmatic slumber’ because of David Hume’s ultimate conclusion that we live in a world of illusion with no prospect of overcoming these delusions.⁸⁴ Hume, unlike Plato, did not conceive of a world of the Forms or a metaphysical reality beyond our illusionary existence. The imagination, for Hume, drives him to scepticism.

Kant held that the transcendental imagination is that which grounds the objectivity of the object in the subjectivity of the subject, rather than in some transcendent order beyond man. It preconditions our very experience of the world.

⁸³ However, Kant offers an argument for the existence of God from his reflections on the moral law and happiness. Kant held that morality had to be known *a priori* and sets out the fundamental principle of morality, that is, the ‘categorical imperative’. The categorical imperative is defined in the following maxims: ‘act only in accordance with a maxim through which you can at the same time will that it be a universal law. (4:421)’, ‘act so that you always treat humanity, in your own person as well as in the person of every other, at the same time as an end, never merely as a means (4:429) and ‘all maxims from one’s own legislation should harmonize into a possible realm of ends, as with a realm of nature’. (4:436) Immanuel Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, ed. Bernd Kraft & Dieter Schoenecker (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1999) trans. by & quoted in Paul Guyer, *Kant’s Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (London: Continuum, 2007) p. 10. Kant’s argument points to the rational necessity to aim for the highest good, but our practical reason wavers in such regards and does not always achieve the ‘good’. Kant believes that the best explanation for moral normativity is grounded in God and Kant postulates the existence of God in this regard. As Davies states, Kant ‘argues that, since people ought to strive for moral perfection, and since they cannot succeed in this without divine assistance, God must exist to ensure that people can achieve that for which they should strive’, Brian Davies, *An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 266. Thus Kant does not think theism is irrational *per se*, even though his epistemology brought the ontological, cosmological and teleological arguments for God under suspicion.

⁸⁴ Hume’s problems are essentially both psychological and epistemological. According to Hume, *as a matter of fact*, we connect, in our minds, one idea derived from experience with another, e.g., we see smoke and we see fire, and unavoidably (mentally), but unjustifiably (epistemologically), conclude there is ‘no smoke without fire’, but, of course, as a matter of fact, we encounter cases where there is no smoke when anthracite burns, and we can have smoke from ice. Hume’s approach could be called a ‘psycho-analytic’ approach, then, as it breaks down the empirical contents in our minds upon which more complex judgements are founded. This had a profound impact on Kant when he found that Hume could find no ‘necessity’ (either in the object or in the knowing-subject of the experiences) to ‘connect’ such judgments. Hence Kant’s self-profession that he was awoken from his dogmatic slumber in relation to cause and effect and the claims of necessary connection between them in the thoughts of both the ancients (Aristotle/ Plato) and the moderns (Descartes).

This is what makes experience possible. Kant, however, thinks that it is impossible to experience God as God is transcendent. In this way, ideas of God cannot be corroborated because there never will be an experience of God via the senses. As Craig points out:

The image of God doctrine [in Kant], I would be a little surprised to find. [To assert that doctrine] involves making determinate assertions about the nature of the deity, and this Kant's epistemology must make him reluctant to do. It is true that he recommends certain beliefs according to which the human mind and divine minds resemble each other, as for instance when he says that we should think of the world as having been created by an intelligence like ours, though vastly more powerful, in order to encourage the aims of the natural sciences; but since he quite openly says that we should do this to help *satisfy the requirements for our own reason*, it would make a curious basis for the claim that man is like God, as Kant seems very much aware. [... By] assigning the bulk of the work to human agency, [Kant] looked forward to the nineteenth [century], whilst in throwing a cordon round the area of the thing-in-itself and neither permitting knowledge nor advocating scepticism there, but rather counselling something akin to faith, he made room in his philosophy for yet another major strand of European thought.⁸⁵

For Kant's epistemological system it was impossible to reach the conclusion that God exists by merely deriving this existence from premisses which operate from reason alone (*analytic a priori*). The mistake of Anselm and Descartes in following this method, according to Kant, is contained in the fact that ontological arguments are undone by their reliance on the assumption that 'existence' is a predicate.⁸⁶ Here,

⁸⁵ Craig, p. 243

⁸⁶ As Kant states in his concluding remark to the entire antinomy of pure reason, '(A)s long as we, with our concepts of reason, have as our object merely the totality of the conditions in the world of sense, and what service reason can perform in respect of them, our ideas are *transcendental* but still cosmological. But as soon as we posit the unconditioned (which is what is really at issue) in that which lies outside the sensible world, and hence in that which is outside of all possible experience, then the ideas come to be *transcendent*; they do not serve merely to complete the empirical use of reason (which always remains an idea, never to be completely carried out, but nevertheless to be followed), rather they separate themselves entirely from it and make themselves into objects whose matter is not drawn from experience, and whose objective reality rests *not* on the completion of the empirical series but on pure concepts *a priori*.' Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 549 (A565), my emphasis. The 'transcendent', then, is excluded from thought, but this is what gives sense to the 'limit' of the 'transcendental' in Kant's line of argument above. As Husserl acutely points out, following Kant, '(T)he idea of God is a necessary limiting concept in epistemological considerations, and an indispensable index to the construction of certain limiting concepts which not even the [post-Kantian] philosophizing atheist can do without.' Husserl, *Ideas I*, p. 187, n. 17.

Kant raises questions about the traditional arguments for the existence of God from Anselm's *Proslogion*, Descartes' 'ontological' and Aquinas' cosmological arguments. The question of the existence of God became more to the fore in this period. By the end of the 1700s 'reason' was embraced, and the traditional hierarchy/estates were overthrown in the French Revolution (1789–1799) in favour of the 'enlightenment'.

Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872), born after the French Revolution, reflected on Christianity, and promulgated that 'theology is anthropology', that is, that the idea of God is merely a projection of the idea of human beings. Thus, we might say that the image of God idea does not relate to the Divine beyond, but relates to man himself, who is called by Feuerbach to live this life in all earnestness rather than waiting for the joys of heaven. As he states,

Man negatives himself, but only to posit himself again, and that in a glorified form: he negates his life, but only, in the end, to posit it again in the future life. The future life is this life once lost, but found again, and radiant with all the more brightness for the joy of discovery. The religious man renounces the joys of the world, but only that he may win in return the joys of heaven; [...] to live in images or symbols is the essence of religion. Religion sacrifices the thing itself to the image. The future life is the present in the mirror of the imagination: the enrapturing image is in the sense of religion the true type of earthly life, -- real life only a glimmer of that ideal, imaginary life.⁸⁷

Feuerbach's work was quite populist and attempted to eradicate God, Feuerbach saw the objects of religious belief as illusory — a dream of the human soul. Ultimately, for Feuerbach, the idea of God is, as Elisabeth Hurt outlines,

a projection of the human consciousness, originating in the mind of man (*EC*, 203). God can no longer be regarded as the 'object of faith'; rather, he is

⁸⁷ Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans.. George Eliot (USA: BiblioLife, LLC, 2008), *Das Wesen des Christentums*, (Wiley-VCH, Verlag GmbH, 1984) 1st pub. 1841 p. 182.

‘man’s revealed inner nature, his pronounced self’ (*EC*, 31). Hence, ‘consciousness of the infinite’ is only ‘man’s consciousness of his own infinite being’ (*EC*, 13). [...] Man merely objectifies himself in religion. The ultimate reality of religion, Feuerbach concluded, is not some ‘independent’ transcendent being but man himself (*EC*, XXXVIII).⁸⁸

But it was not until 1859 that the question of God’s existence became even more to the fore with the publication of Charles Darwin’s epic work on origins.

SECTION SIX

SUMMATION OF HISTORICAL APPROACH TO THE ‘IMAGE OF GOD’ IDEA

Over the past four chapters of our historical investigation of the idea of the image of God, we came across a disparate array of ideas associated with what it might mean. In chapter one, we began with an investigation of the idea of the image of God in Genesis (1:26-27) and realised that the image is associated with God’s command to ‘rule’ and ‘subdue’ the earth, to shepherd creation, and to go forth and multiply. The image was extended in equality to both sexes (male and female). It was not located in a specific part but in the total union of body and soul in the Hebrew mindset. The readers of the Genesis text and its community must have seen the relevance of the image text to themselves, as setting them apart from other animals, as the divine breath ‘*ruah*’ was breathed into the nostrils of humans and not into other created forms. Thus, the human being was ‘set apart’ for a particular ‘duty’ given to them — to participate in divine rule.

⁸⁸ Elisabeth Hurth, *Between Faith and Unbelief: American Transcendentalists and the Challenge of Atheism* (Leiden, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2007) p. 96.

In chapter two, a relationship between the idea of the image of God and Jewish legal texts came to the fore, to kill a person was akin to destroying a microcosm. The Jewish commentators on the idea of the image of God feared too close a reading of the image idea with God who was viewed as transcending all being. The Greeks had understood ‘image’ (*eikon*) in relation to their epistemology and Plotinus was able to hybridise the Hellenistic idea of ‘image’ with his understanding of the Greek *LXX*, where mankind could be viewed as an image of an image through a Platonic cosmology.

In the third chapter, we found that there was a movement by the early and later Christian writers to identify and locate the image of God in a particular part of the human being. This resulted in the ‘mind’ and its capability for ‘reason’ being chosen to exemplify the way the human being is an exemplar of God *par excellence*. Through thinking, understanding and willing God, the image returned (*reditus*) back to its exemplar. We can hear the influence of Plotinus’ writings on the ‘One’ (*pros hen*) in the thinking of Augustine and Aquinas. As such, through the influence of Hellenistic texts that were made available to early Christian thinkers, Augustine’s (influenced by Plato and neo-Platonism) trinities developed the idea on a psychological, relational and ethical level, this expounded the biblical account in an intricate way. Aquinas (influenced by the introduction of Aristotle’s texts in the Middle Ages) noted the importance of the mind and the *activity* of understanding, willing etc. The body, he viewed at least as having a vestige, and this was of importance because, unlike the Greeks, the Christians believed in the resurrection of the body.

The writings of Pomponazzi, held that the human was the centre of all things (anthropocentrism), something which was later developed and considered by thinkers such as Feuerbach where the ‘image of God’ became a projection of man of his own attributes (theology is anthropology). Hume’s suspicion of philosophy, metaphysics, physics and theology brought the existence of God in whose image human kind was created under question. If one could not be sure of the necessary connexion between cause and effect then arguments such as Anselm’s and Descartes’ for God’s existence are rendered impotent. Kant further conceded a blow to ontological arguments by outlining that existence was not a predicate, furthermore, his epistemology did not allow for understanding if no experience was possible and God transcended all possible experience. Thus, his *Critique of Pure Reason* was in itself a critique of the ‘idea’ of God. His work also inverted the Medieval dictum *adaequatio rei et intellectus*, for Kant the human mind became centre stage which bolstered man’s abilities from within. But although Kant raised issues for traditional arguments for the existence of God, he was not an atheist as he postulated the existence of God via his argument from morality.

The question that confronts us at the end of our historic investigation of the variations in understanding of the idea of the image of God is ‘does God exist?’ In the next chapter we will consider the proofs put forward to prove the non-existence of God from the perspective of natural science and cosmology. These are the predominant critiques of the existence of God in our current time. This scientific critique, as we shall see, is built, to a major extent, upon Darwin’s writings of the late 1850s.

CHAPTER V

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES (1859), NEO-DARWINISM AND THE NON-EXISTENCE OF GOD

In the previous chapter, we noted that major concerns in the 18th century arose in relation to the question of the existence of God. This issue, while originating in Hume's empirical approach, came to fore, in particular, on account of Kant's transcendental philosophy which criticised the legitimacy of any form of traditional philosophical arguments for the existence of God, such as, for instance, as had been outlined and defended by Anselm, Aquinas and Descartes, among others. After Kant, all forms of 'ontological', 'cosmological' and 'teleological' arguments for the existence of God were brought under suspicion. In 1859, Charles Darwin published his now famous *On the Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection or, The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*.¹ This work called into question further any literal understanding of the cosmological account of creation as outlined in the book of Genesis and, in particular, the story that the human being was created in the image and likeness of God in Genesis 1:26-27.

In this chapter we aim to explore the central tenets of the thesis of the theory of evolution as outlined in 1859 (and, in its developed form, as modern day neo-Darwinism) and the main arguments based upon this theory that call into question the existence of God.² It will be demonstrated that neo-Darwinist writers do not disprove

¹ Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection or, The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, published as *The Origin of the Species* (London: Wordsworth, 1998).

² While there are other critiques in the history of philosophy with regard to the belief in the existence of God such as Kant, Feuerbach, Nietzsche etc., the theory of evolution raises the question of the

the existence of God. Furthermore, it will be outlined that many neo-Darwinists point to a number of unique abilities of the human being, namely; the ability to transcend ‘causal’ forces, linguistic ability and moral responsibility. Thus some of the early ideas of the ‘image of God’, such as indicating man’s responsibility are maintained within the neo-Darwinist framework by many of its prominent writers. That is, by writers who aim to disprove the existence of God. Finally, scientism and its implications for philosophical anthropology will be addressed. Such attempts of describing the human being from the perspective of its component parts (e.g. genes) will be seen to commit the ‘genetic-fallacy’. Thus such evolutionary theories and other such scientific theories will be critiqued for extending their findings beyond what they are reasonably capable of positing anthropologically.³

The theory of evolution as expounded by Darwin is a relatively straightforward theory and, as such, is not a complex doctrine. It operates with the hypothesis that, through time, human beings and all other creatures on the planet evolved from one common ancestor. The Darwinian model of explanation is seen by some current modern commentators (in particular neo-Darwinists) to point to the reality of material monism, that is, that human nature is completely composed of matter devoid of a soul and/ or an overarching mind. This theory has had major implications for philosophical anthropology insofar as scientific narratives were valued in the 1850s and, indeed, *are* valued in our current time. The theory of

existence of God from the perspective of the scientific method. As science has developed, it has been recognised as a method which produces objective results and findings which can be tested by others independently. Therefore, scientific proofs for the non-existence of God would be held by many as having substantial weight in the modern period. A dialogue with ‘science’ and its methodology concerning the existence of God cannot be avoided, therefore, in the modern context, and one would be remiss to overlook this, as philosophy itself began with reflections on *physis* (nature) and continues to engage with such reflections on reality.

³ This topic will be dealt with more thoroughly in chapter VI, when a phenomenological critique of scientism is undertaken and a more inclusive account of the human being is put forward via the phenomenological writings of Edith Stein.

evolution continues to inform our scientific understanding of the world in the present. In relation to the current importance of the theory of evolution for scientists and others, Daniel Dennett (a neo-Darwinist) remarks and admonishes that ‘almost no one is indifferent to Darwin, and no one should be’.⁴ Dennett, who is a major proponent of evolutionary theory, goes as far as to maintain that those who agree with this theory really do not fully grasp either the significance or the implications of what they are dealing with regarding other fundamental beliefs they may also hold. Thus, in Dennett’s estimation,

The Darwinian theory is a scientific theory, and a great one, but that is not all it is. [...] [Those] who oppose it so bitterly are right about one thing: Darwin’s dangerous idea cuts more [deeply] into the fabric of our most fundamental beliefs than many of its sophisticated apologists have yet admitted, even to themselves.⁵

Dennett’s arrival, therefore, at the conclusion that the idea of God and of the human being as being made in the image of God is a delusion and a myth follows upon, ultimately, anyone’s acceptance of the veracity of the scientific theory of evolution.⁶

⁴ Daniel Dennett, *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meaning of Life* (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 26.

⁵ Ibid. p. 18. Dennett is hinting at the way the idea affects fundamental religious beliefs in particular, see following footnote (n. 6).

⁶ Dennett states ‘how many of us are caught in [the] dilemma, loving the heritage [of belief in God/ or belief in the belief in God], firmly convinced of its value, yet unable to sustain any conviction at all in its truth? We are faced with a difficult choice. Because we value it, we are eager to preserve it in a rather precarious and “denatured” state – in churches and cathedrals and synagogues, built to house huge congregations of the devout, and now on the way to being cultural museums. There is really not that much difference between the roles of the Beefeaters who stand picturesque guard at the Tower of London, and the Cardinals who march in their magnificent costumes and meet to elect the next Pope. Both are keeping alive traditions, rituals, liturgies, symbols, that otherwise would fade. But hasn’t there been a tremendous rebirth of fundamentalist faith in all these creeds? Yes, unfortunately, there has been, [...] Is there a conflict between science and religion here? There most certainly is. Darwin’s dangerous idea helps to create a condition in the memosphere [that is, the sphere of the transmission of cultural ideas] that in the long run threatens to be just as toxic to these memes [cultural ideas] as civilisation in general has been toxic to the large wild mammals [one cannot tolerate] the deliberate misinforming of children about the natural world. According to a recent poll, 48 percent of people in the United States today believe that the book of Genesis is literally true’ pp. 515–516. Dennett believes that religious ideas would fade in light of ‘Darwin’s dangerous idea’, which he describes as ‘universal acid’ in chapter II.

Since 1859, however, there have been numerous developments in scientific research that have led to a wide variety of opinion regarding the theory of evolution. According to Radcliffe, the ‘theory’ of evolution has moved to become a (scientific) ‘world-view’ or meta-narrative of human origins.⁷

The first difficulty that we encounter when analysing the implications of the theory of evolution and its implications for human self-understanding is figuring out exactly what the theory of evolution states because there are many interpretations rather than a single theory of evolution. While some of these interpretations would not go as far as to claim to disprove the existence of God other interpretations of the theory do claim that belief in the theory of evolution and belief in the existence of God are incompatible. In the latter case, if the existence of God is discredited the idea of the ‘image of God’ is rendered void with regard to metaphysical underpinnings (God’s existence). This does not necessarily imply, however, that the idea did not make contributions to the history of thinking but if the existence of ‘God’ is successfully disproved by scientific findings then the idea would have no referent and could only be considered as a redundant idea to have as a foundation for philosophical anthropology. We will, however, as stated previously, argue that this scientific narrative of evolution does not disprove the existence of God. This chapter will start with a reflection on the theory of evolution as outlined by Darwin. Then it will outline the varying theories of evolution that have arisen over the years, before moving to the neo-Darwinian approach and their evidence for the non-existence of God. Finally a critique of neo-Darwinian findings will be undertaken to argue that their arguments do not disprove the existence of God.

⁷ See, Janet Radcliffe Richards, *Human Nature after Darwin* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 11.

SECTION ONE

CHARLES DARWIN AND THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

Charles Darwin's insights on the progression and adaptation of organisms through time began with his voyage on the *Beagle* in 1831.⁸ When Darwin arrived on the Galapagos Archipelago, he noticed the islands had a mouse (*Mus Galapagoensis*) which was confined to Chatham Island, and it was stated to him that the mouse belonged to a division of the family of mice characteristic of America. He also noticed a rat on James Island that was sufficiently distinct from other rats to be 'named'. Darwin commented that,

I can hardly doubt that this rat is merely a variety, produced by the new and peculiar climate, food, and soil, to which it has been subjected.⁹

After his conclusions about the mouse and the rat, he makes records of his observations of the twenty-six kinds of finches he found on the islands.¹⁰

For Darwin, then, the journey on the *Beagle* represented a turning point in his life. He had on board with him Charles Lyell's publication on the *Principles of Geology*.¹¹ This study was of particular significance to him as it opened up to Darwin

⁸ Charles Darwin, *The Voyage of the Beagle* (London: Marshall Canendish Partworks Ltd., 1987).

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

¹⁰ He noted that they were undoubtedly closely related with all the species exhibiting exactly the same display and song pattern and all belonging to the same sub-family of finches. As Darwin states 'seeing this gradation and diversity of structure in one small, intimately related group of birds, one might really fancy that from an original paucity of birds in this archipelago, one species had been taken and modified for different ends.' *Ibid.* pp. 364–365.

¹¹ As Darwin indicates 'I spent some days in examining the step-formed terraces of shingle, first noticed by Captain B. Hall, and believed by Mr. Lyell to have been formed by the sea, during the gradual rising of the land. This certainly is the true explanation, for I found numerous shells of existing species on these terraces. Five narrow, gently sloping, fringe-like terraces rise one behind the other, and where best developed are formed of shingle: they front the bay, and sweep up both side of the valley. *The Voyage of the Beagle*, p. 329. Also see Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology* (London: Penguin Books, 1997).

the realisation that the world was far older than 6,000 years as proclaimed by the religious institutions of his day. As Denton notes:

The *Beagle* proved [to be] a liberating journey through time and space which freed [Darwin] from the constraining influences of *Genesis* [...] we know that Darwin had Lyell's *Principles of Geology* with him on the voyage and that it exerted a powerful influence on his thinking as the journey progressed.¹²

The twin concepts of 'gradualism' and 'immense time' were central aspects to Lyell's work on the geological record, and they are in themselves fundamental to the idea of biological evolution.¹³ The *Voyage of the Beagle* was originally published in 1845, but Darwin did not hastily attempt to develop and publish his theories on transmutation (evolution) until much later. It seems that Darwin's observational and reflective mind carried the implications heavily. In his youth, Darwin had been convinced of the argument from design as outlined by Paley.¹⁴ He had set out like Paley as a natural theologian to discover the workings of God in nature, but Lyell's *Principles of Geology* in particular forced Darwin to question again the age of the universe. Lyell's work stood in contrast to the literal reading of Genesis, which was part of the biblical literalism of that time, and now Darwin's own observations on transmutation raised questions concerning the age and origins of the natural world.¹⁵

¹² Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (Chevy Chase: Alder & Alder, 1986), p. 25.

¹³ Geological exploration was not only revealing large numbers of fossils, but also highlighting that particular kinds of fossil appeared in particular strata, and that the simpler forms appeared in the older rocks. It seemed that life forms had originally been simple and then gradually become more complex through time, rather than everything been brought in at once in an act of creation.

¹⁴ See, Denton, pp. 19-20.

¹⁵ The question of God's existence of course had been raised in the writings of Feuerbach in the mid-1800s. Also, Nietzsche's works raised the question of God in the later 1800s. But, perhaps, what made Darwin's account of the theory of evolution problematic was its attack on a literal understanding of Genesis and that the Church responded in public debates to Darwin's thesis demonstrating that the theory had an impact on the popular level. As Dennett states, 'Darwin's views were utterly subversive to sacred tradition. Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, whose debate with Thomas Huxley in June 1860 was one of the most celebrated confrontations between Darwinism and the religious establishment, said in an anonymous review, 'man's derived supremacy over the earth: man's power of articulate speech; man's gift of reason, man's free-will and responsibility... — all are equally and utterly irreconcilable with the degrading notion of the brute origin of him who was created in the image of God ... [Samuel Wilberforce, 'Is Mr Darwin a Christian?' (review of *Origin* published

This tension eventually resulted in the collapse of Darwin's faith in the existence of God. It was a difficult time for Darwin, and for his wife Emma, and in some ways might explain Darwin's delay in publishing his findings on transmutation. As McEvoy notes,

The collapse [of faith] was [...] painful for him ('It felt like killing one's own father', he confessed), and he held back for years from occasioning a like pain on the widest public scale, through the publication of his views. He felt compelled to circulate his ideas only after the youthful Alfred Russell Wallace wrote to him, putting forward theories strikingly similar to Darwin's own.¹⁶

Having been spurred into action by Wallace's letter Darwin quickly assembled his writings and published his theory in 1859. This was some fourteen years after his insights on the voyage of the *Beagle*. From the moment of publication, Darwin's fundamental hypothesis 'inspired intense reactions ranging from ferocious condemnation to ecstatic allegiance, sometimes tantamount to religious zeal.'¹⁷ Darwin obviously was aware that the theory would cause much controversy and the 'Great Debate' surged resulting in six editions of the *Origin of the Species* being published by 1872.¹⁸ The theory of evolution was simple to articulate and the reality of what it conveyed could be captured in a single paragraph:

anonymously), in *Quarterly Review*, vol. 108, July, (1860) pp. 225–64] *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, p. 62. For a modern reprinting of this anonymous review see, Josephine M. Guy, *The Victorian Age: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* (New York: Routledge, 1998) pp. 273-277.

¹⁶ James McEvoy, 'Chance or Design: Update on an Ancient Debate' in *Maynooth University Record*, 1998 (Maynooth: Cardinal Press, 1998), p. 54.

¹⁷ Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, p. 17.

¹⁸ There were many debates and changes in this period, the industrial revolution was occurring as was a socialist revolution inspired by the writings of Karl Marx, 'in the period after 1880 mass socialist parties were formed in Europe, which subscribed to the teaching of Karl Marx. They argued that the state was the instrument of the bourgeoisie to give force and legitimacy to its economic domination, that the workers should organise separate socialist parties ultimately to take control of the state. The orthodox Marxist view was that the state had resorted to legal and military repression to destroy workers' movements [...] and that socialists must therefore counter repression by revolution, leading to the dictatorship of the proletariat and the expropriation of capitalism.' Robert Gildea, *Barricades and Borders: Europe 1800-1914*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 1st pub., 1987, p. 301. Marxism also had embodied within it a critique of religion, as Alister McGrath states, 'In his 1844 political and economic manuscripts the left-wing Hegelian political thinker Karl Marx (1818-83)

I can see no limit to the amount of change, to the beauty and complexity of the co-adaptations between all organic beings, one with another and with their physical conditions of life, which may have been affected in the long course of time through nature's power of selection, that is, by the survival of the fittest.¹⁹

Given the vast amount of time that had passed from the origin of the earth (as per Lyell's estimation), it was conceivable, according to Darwin, that life forms could have evolved from unicellular amoeba to complex organisms such as *Homo sapiens*. The process of transmutation revolved around the possibility of small adaptations being passed on to the next generation, if they proved to increase the chance of survival of an organism. If the adaptations prove to be of benefit to the organism, then they were more likely to be favoured by natural selection. If this process, therefore, continues from generation to generation, there will be, in theory, a gradual transformation of the population, such that there will be an overall increase of the characteristics which are related to the greater 'survival ability' of an organism through time.²⁰

develops an approach to religion which rests upon ideas that are clearly due to Feuerbach. Religion has no real independent existence. It is a reflection of the material world, and is derived from the social needs and hopes of human beings. "The religious world is but the reflex of the real world." See, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 5th edition (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011) p. 429. Also see, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (New York: Cosimo Publications, 2009) 1st pub., 1848. So, Darwin's theory was not the only conceptual challenge to religion in the era.

¹⁹ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of the Species* (New York: Collier Books, 1962) 6th ed., pp. 114–115.

²⁰ Yet, while mutations that occur can be helpful for an organism they can also in fact be devastating, 'many genetic diseases result from mutations that interrupt the normal function of proteins in the human body. While such mutations are usually rare, some are widespread, as with sickle-cell anemia, cystic fibrosis, Tay-Sachs disease, and G6PD deficiency. Evolution explains why these mutations are so widespread. The sickle-cell gene and the deficiency of the G6PD enzyme confer resistance to malaria; the cystic fibrosis gene confers resistance to typhoid fever. Tay-Sachs disease is particularly common among people of European Jewish ancestry. The mutation may have allowed people, living in crowded ghettos to resist tuberculosis. The greater health of the heterozygous carriers of these mutations is balanced by the poor health of those people who are homozygous for the mutation.' See, Stanley A. Rice, *Encyclopedia of Evolution*, (New York: Fact on File, Inc., 2007) p. 157.

Others had discussed the possibility of transmutation, prior to Darwin, including his grandfather Erasmus (1731–1802) who reflected on the idea of the one common ‘filament’ and also Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744–1829) whose theory accounted for the passing down of ‘inherited characteristics’.²¹ From Darwin’s perspective, however, evolution was the movement of blind forces of nature. Previous theories to Darwin’s, such as that of his grandfather and Lamarck, had difficulty in explaining transmutation. In fact Darwin was most likely dependent on a great array of historical reflection in order to come to his conclusions.²² But while Darwin’s theory accounted for transmutation he had enormous difficulty in explaining how the adaptations could be passed on from one generation to the next. He was unaware of the monk Gregor Mendel (1822–1884) who had published a report in 1866 describing many features of the mode of inheritance which Darwin was seeking to unravel. Indeed, the significance of Mendel’s work was not realised

²¹ Peter Bowler holds, ‘Erasmus Darwin and especially Lamarck are important because they elaborated the most complex of the Enlightenment’s efforts to deal with the problem of organic change; but we should not be misled by superficial similarities into assuming that they contributed directly to the Darwinian revolution.’ Peter J. Bowler, *Evolution: The History of an Idea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) p. 81, in particular pp. 81-90. Darwin’s grandfather set out his theories in poetic form in a number of works and in particular – *Zoonomia* (1794–1796). As Bowler points out, ‘Erasmus Darwin [...] was a deist who believed that God had designed living things to be *self-improving* through time. In their constant efforts to meet the challenges of the external world, they developed new organs through the mechanism that Lamarckians would make famous as the “inheritance of acquired characteristics.” The results of the individual’s efforts are inherited by his offspring, so that by accumulation over many generations a whole new organ can be formed. Darwin seems to have assumed that the overall results of this effort to adapt to the environment would be a gradual progress of life toward higher states of organisation.’ Ibid. p. 82. John-Baptiste Lamarck held that: ‘certain characteristics can be acquired by an individual during its lifetime and then passed on to succeeding generations — in the classic example it is supposed (wrongly) that by stretching to reach the topmost leaves on a tree, the neck of a giraffe gets longer during its lifetime, when that giraffe has offspring, they are therefore born with longer necks than if the parent had never tried to eat leaves.’ See, John Gribbin, *Science a History: 1543–2001* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 236.

²² Bowler makes this point that ‘the theory of biological evolution is really only part of a whole new approach to the study of the earth’s past that has been developed over the last few centuries. Long before Darwin tackled the question of the origin of new species, geologists and cosmologists had begun to challenge the world view of medieval Christianity by postulating that the earth itself and even the universe as a whole have changed significantly over a vast period of time. Only within this new vision of an evolving *physical* universe did it become possible to imagine that living things also might be subject to natural change. The essence of the modern scientific viewpoint is that all features of the natural world, cosmological, geological, and biological, can be explained as the result of natural forces operating over long periods of time. Within this general programme, we can distinguish basic issues that form the challenge to the traditional world-view.’ Bowler, p. 4

until the beginning of the twentieth century.²³ We turn now to outline the various different interpretations of evolutionary theory by scientists in the modern period.

SECTION TWO

EVOLUTION: ONE THEORY OR MANY THEORIES?

The theory of evolution has been understood in a number of ways. One can distinguish the following accounts of evolution:²⁴ Scientific Interpretations: the Neo-Darwinists (which we will treat in the next section), the Progressive evolutionists,²⁵ the Collectivists,²⁶ the Complexity Theorists,²⁷ the Directionalists.²⁸

²³ See, Randy Moore, 'The "Rediscovery" of Mendel's Work', in *Bioscene*, ed. Timothy Mulkey & Ethel Stanley, vol. 27 (2) (May, 2001), 13–27.

²⁴ See, Carter Phipps, 'The Real Evolution Debate' in 'Introduction', *What is Enlightenment*, ed. by Andrew Cohen, Issue 35, January–March, 2007, pp. 86–100 (p. 88).

²⁵ The progressive Darwinists are composed of such thinkers as Stephen Jay Gould and Eva Jablonka. This group of thinkers hold that the genetic mechanisms are far more complex than previously thought and further to this there is now evidence that there are several non-genetic systems of heredity that also influence the evolutionary process. Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hillaire (1772–1844) 'developed a variation of the evolutionary theme which went beyond Lamarck's ideas and suggested that there might be a direct role of the environment in evolution.' John Gribbin, *Science a History: 1543–2001*, p. 236. This form of progressive Darwinism ignited again 'in the early 1990s when scientists began to [wonder how] all life forms came from [what is a rather limited] number of genes. Humans [...] have only about twenty-five thousand genes [of which sixty percent] are shared with *bananas*.' 'The Real Evolution Debate', p. 90. The question arose as to how it was possible that we could share so much of our genetic story with bananas. In evolution-development analysis is undertaken in relation to an organisms development from embryo to adulthood and that of an organism's genes. 'It has been discovered for example that seemingly random sequences of DNA, also known as "junk DNA", act as "molecular fingers" that switch nearby genes on and off during development. Thus, part of how nature produces "endless forms most beautiful" [...] appears to be through the infinite combinations and patterns created when different genes are turned on or off at different times. There is also growing evidence that organisms can switch their genes on or off in response to their environment, and that the *memory* of this gene activity can be passed on to subsequent generations. This occurs through "epigenetics" — the nongenetic transfer of information through cells — and is only one of many systems of heredity that progressive scientists are now discovering influence evolution. So far, two other systems of heredity have been proposed in addition to the genetic and epigenetic behavioural and symbolic (language).' See, 'The Real Evolution Debate', p. 90. The implications of the evolution-development model of evolution means that random mutations of DNA is not the full story of how evolution progresses, there also has to be taken into consideration genes, cells, parents, offspring, and the environment and how they interact. Therefore, there are many dimensions of evolution beyond DNA mutation that work in concurrence with each other, one of the major questions that arise in relation to evolution-development is whether organisms direct their own evolution. See, Eva Jablonka and Marion J. Lamb 'Epigenetic inheritance in evolution' in *Journal of Evolutionary Biology*, vol. 11 Issue 2, pp. 159–183. The Progressive Darwinists thus move away from the simple view-point of the 'gene's eye-view' and hold that there are more elements involved in evolution than strict mutation.

²⁶ The Collectivists believe that evolution 'is not only driven by competition between genes but also by symbiogenesis – cooperation and altruism between organisms.' 'The Real Evolution Debate', p.

Spirit/ Mind Interpretations: the Transhumanists²⁹, those that believe in Intelligent Design,³⁰ the Theistic Evolutionists,³¹ the Esoteric Evolutionists.³²

91. This theory runs contra to the neo-Darwinists theory which holds that organisms are inherently selfish by nature and that symbiogenesis would not be favoured. This theory was put forward by Lynn Margulis in 1966. See, Lynn Margulis, *Symbiotic Planet: A New Look at Evolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1998).

²⁷ The complexity theorists hold that ‘evolution occurs not simply through natural selection or random “tinkering” but through the capacity of dynamic complex systems to spontaneously produce higher forms of order.’ ‘The Real Evolution Debate’, p. 92. Paul Davies is one of the forefront writers in this regard. Davies in his work *God and the New Physics* analysis the emergent qualities of matter as it moves into organisation and complexity on all levels up to human consciousness. See, Paul Davies, *God and the New Physics* (New York & London: Simon & Schuster, 1984).

²⁸ The Directionalists hold that ‘the process of evolution is [a progression] toward broader and deeper cooperation and complexity-evidence, [that evolution] may even be shaped by some form of purpose or design’. ‘The Real Debate’, p. 93. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin would have seen this teleology in nature – as things tended toward an end (*telos*) or omega point. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Perennial, 2002); originally published as *Le Phénomène Humain* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1955). Evolution in this view is not seen as random or aimlessness but is without doubt *purposeful* or *directional*. Everything is tending towards ever-higher complexity and ever-vaster webs of interdependence on all levels. Most of the modern Directionalist thinkers would not go so far as de Chardin where there is a God at the omega point. (John Stewart, *Evolution’s Arrow: The Direction of Evolution and The Future of Humanity*, (Canberra, Australia: The Chapman Press, 2000).

²⁹ The Transhumanists hold that ‘human beings must take control of their continued evolution – primarily through bioengineering, cybernetics, nanorobotics, and other technological means’. ‘The Real Debate’, p. 94. These thinkers believe we need to take conscious control of our evolutionary map from Mother Nature and to use every technological tool at our disposal to do so. Transhumanists wish us to be freed from biological chains – and onwards towards mastery of all matter and energy in the universe. Robert Ettinger, *Man into Superman: The Startling Potential of Human Evolution and How to be Part of It*, (California: Ria University Press, 2005), Simon Young, *Designer Evolution: A Transhumanist Manifesto*, (New York: Prometheus Books, 2006).

³⁰ The ‘intelligent designers’ (ID) hold that there are ‘certain features of the universe and earth’s biological complexity that are best explained in terms of an intelligent agent or cosmic designer, not an undirected process such as natural selection,’ ‘The Real Debate’, p. 95. ID theory has been particularly successful as a view in the United States. Writers such as Michael Behe argue that proof of a designer lies in the ‘irreducible complex’ biological systems made up of hundreds of cooperative functional parts, like enzymes/ or blood clotting system cannot have been produced via natural selection because if any one part of the system as a whole would not have been functional and would therefore have offered no evolutionary advantage. One must deduce, according to Behe that these systems were planned (Ibid). ‘Proponents of ID also invoke a version of the anthropic principle, saying that the laws of physics are so fine-tuned to give birth to life that they could not have been created by chance’ (Ibid). As Behe states: ‘by *irreducibly complex* I mean a single system composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning. An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced directly (that is, by continuously improving the initial function, which continues to work by the same mechanism) by slight, successive modifications of a precursor system, because any precursor to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part is by definition non-functional.’ Michael Behe, *The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution: Darwin’s Black Box*, (New York: The Free Press, 2003) p. 39.

³¹ The Theistic evolutionists hold that ‘the evolution processes of natural selection and random mutation are not contradictory with faith in a God who gives order to all existence, in fact, science and religion deal with different aspects of reality that complement each other’, ‘The Real Debate’ p. 96. John Polkinghorne, Francis Collins among others are of this standpoint. Francis Collins headed the Human Genome Project, and began his career as an agnostic scientist, but during the course of his study he became astonished with the evidence for design and purpose in the universe. ‘Most see that

Integration Theorists: the Process Philosophers,³³ the Conscious Evolutionists,³⁴ the Integralists.³⁵

The first five levels may be viewed as operating by natural scientific methods while the second set move towards the level of ‘spirit/ mind’ or ‘*Geist*’. The last three groups attempt to merge both positions — science and spirit/ mind. The neo-Darwinist position represents a view totally wedded to materialist explanations.

there is an exquisite attunement of the cosmos which allows life to spontaneously emerge as a miraculous event that proves God’s influence in creation,’ (Ibid). See, Francis Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*, (New York: Free Press, 2006) and John Polkinghorne, *The Way the World Is*, (London: SPCK-Triangle, 1983), *Quarks, Chaos and Christianity*, (London: SPCK-Triangle, 1994).

³² The Esoteric Evolutionists, hold that evolution ‘is both a physical and a metaphysical process and it proceeds according to hidden esoteric blueprints that are working themselves out in consciousness and matter,’ ‘The Real Evolution Debate’, p. 97. Many Esoteric Evolutionists harken back to the ancient idea of a cyclical cosmos, claiming that whatever is *evolving* in the universe must have already have been *involved* or buried in latent form, in matter (Ibid). See Richard Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2006).

³³ The Process Philosophers hold that ‘God is not a static creator outside time and space but the dynamic, creative dimension of the evolutionary process *in* time and space,’ ‘The Real Evolution Debate’, p. 98. Following Whitehead, process philosophers reject the scientific impulse to reduce all of nature to its most basic material components, instead looking to integrate science and spirit into a whole new understanding of God – and a whole new understanding of evolution. Whitehead noted that if you want to know the general principles of existence you must begin at the top to illumine the bottom and not the other way around. God was the highest occasion of all. God does not violate nature’s normal causal process – the course of evolution is still shaped by ordinary cause and effect while at the same time always infused with the promise of fresh possibilities and always, at all levels, subject to at least some measure of free will. (Ibid.) Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (Gifford Lectures 1927-1928): Corrected Edition, ed. David Griffen & Donald Sherburne, (New York: The Free Press, 1978)

³⁴ The Conscious Evolutionists hold that ‘we live in an unfinished cosmos, and its further development depends on us and our willingness to actively participate in the evolution of consciousness,’ ‘The Real Evolution Debate’, p. 99. They follow Teilhard de Chardin, ‘who saw evolution of the cosmos as an interwoven psycho-physical-spiritual process’, which he described as ‘complexity-consciousness’. All things from the lowest atom, to the human being, ‘are possessed of both exterior and interior dimensions that evolve in concert; as matter complexifies, consciousness deepens,’ (Ibid). The evolutionary process is seen as a co-creative act, and its continuation depends on our awakening to the unique cosmic role that comes with self-awareness. Barbara Marx Hubbard, *Conscious Evolution: Awakening Our Social Potential* (California: New World Library, 1998)

³⁵ Finally, the Integralists hold that ‘evolution is a holistic process that includes both objective and subjective dimensions of reality as it moves toward greater exterior complexity of form and greater interior depth of consciousness,’ ‘The Real Evolution Debate’, p. 100.. Ken Wilber is a leading author in this regard. Like Conscious Evolutionists and the Process Philosophers, the Integralists are reaching for a higher synthesis and a deeper integration between science and spirit (Ibid). See, Ken Wilber, *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science and Spirituality*, (Boston: Shambhala, 2001).

There are many views of the theory as listed above and the further one moves away from the neo-Darwinist position there is a greater acquiescence and identification with religious belief in the existence of the object of the image, God. The neo-Darwinist position is therefore the position to which we now turn in order to outline their understanding of evolution and the reasons why they believe that their understanding of evolution is the correct one (i.e. orthodox Darwinism) that ultimately disproves the existence of God in whom human beings are said in Genesis to be in the ‘image of’.

SECTION THREE

THE NEO-DARWINIAN ACCOUNT OF EVOLUTION

The neo-Darwinists, such as Richard Dawkins and Dennett, hold that they remain faithful to the implications of the theory as set out by Darwin both for biological and furthermore for religious and social belief.³⁶ The core idea of the neo-Darwinian world-view is that, evolution and biological complexity are the products of random mutation and natural selection at the level of the genes. Gregor Mendel’s insights have been integrated with Darwin’s original theory in this regard to create neo-Darwinism. This is what is commonly called the ‘modern evolutionary synthesis’, which highlights that natural selection is the mechanism of evolution and genes are the units on which it operates. What accounts for the diversity of organisms are

³⁶ The entomologist E. O. Wilson created the field of socio-biology in the 1970s, see, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2000) 1st pub. 1975, which has influenced the writings of Richard Dawkins in particular and has influenced the movement of biological findings to describe society/ social organisation *writ large*. Wilson originally posited the gene’s eye view of evolution, as he states ‘the central theoretical problem of socio-biology [is] how can altruism, which by definition reduces personal fitness, possibly evolve by natural selection? The answer is kinship: if the genes causing the altruism are shared by two organisms because of common descent.’ see chapter 1, of *Sociobiology*, ‘the morality of the Gene’, pp. 3–7. Dawkins brings this idea further to fruition in his *The Selfish Gene*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989; 1976).

random mutations in *genetic* material, these mutations (on occasion) give an organism an advantage and this is then passed on from one generation to the next.

One of the leading proponents of neo-Darwinian studies is Richard Dawkins. In 1976 his publication of *The Selfish Gene*, while remaining true to ‘orthodox Darwinism’, inverted the theory of evolution to take account of the ‘gene’.³⁷ Dawkins’ account of evolution moves away from Darwin’s original conception of the ‘Species struggling for existence [whereby] the individual seems best regarded as the pawn in the game to be sacrificed when the greater interest of the species as a whole requires it [...] to the level of the gene’.³⁸ Dawkins argues that the ‘most imaginative way of looking at evolution, and the most inspiring way of teaching it,’ is to see the entire process from the perspective of the gene. The genes, for their own good, are ‘manipulating’ and directing the bodies that contain them and carry them about.³⁹ As Dawkins states:

Life is just bytes and bytes of digital information. Genes are pure information — information that can be encoded, recoded and decoded, without any degradation or change of meaning [...] We — and that means all living things — are survival machines programmed to propagate the digital database that did the programming. Darwinism is now seen to be the survival of the survivors at the level of pure, digital, code.⁴⁰

The implications of this position for the *imago Dei* for Dawkins is evident from the title of the opening chapter of *The Selfish Gene*, ‘Why are People?’, which is a play on the teleological ‘why’, the answer to which is usually accompanied by a religious view of creation. The answer to this question regarding why people exist is not,

³⁷ Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, p. 7.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Alister McGrath, *Dawkins’ God: Genes, Memes and the Meaning of Life* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005) p. 19.

⁴⁰ Richard Dawkins, *River out of Eden* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1995) p. 19.

however, teleological in Dawkins' view, rather it is entirely mechanical. Dawkins, in other words, applies his 'gene's eye view' of evolution to explain human origins. In this way, the theory of evolution is set to explain the 'ontological why' of being. As he remarks in the opening lines of *The Selfish Gene*,

Intelligent life on a planet comes of age when it first works out the reason for its own existence. If superior creatures from space ever came to visit earth, the first question they will ask, in order to assess the level of our civilisation, is 'have they discovered evolution yet?' [...] Darwin made it possible for us to give a sensible answer to the curious child whose question heads this chapter. We no longer have to resort to superstition when faced with the deep problems. Is there a meaning to life? What are we for? What is man? After posing the last of these questions, the eminent zoologist G. C. Simpson put it thus 'the point I want to make now is that all attempts to answer this question before 1859 are worthless and that we will be better off if we ignore them completely'.⁴¹

Dawkins' move from science to social-theory has created a great deal of controversy.⁴² In basic terms the human being, mind and body, came to *be* through the long process of time which according to Dawkins is backed up by studies in radiometric dating methods,⁴³ and he concludes that those who hold to religious myth stories (in particular Creationists) are forced to confront this issue of scientific data or else try to defend their position by evading the scientific truth. Dawkins holds that in the face of scientific evidence one must rationally become an atheist. As he states in *The God Delusion*:

If the argument [...] is accepted, the factual premise of religion — the God Hypothesis — is untenable. God almost certainly does not exist.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, p. 1.

⁴² Dawkins has written many books that have moved from science into the realm of social theory, see, *The Blind Watchmaker* (London: Penguin, 2006; 1986), *River out of Eden*, (London: Phoenix, 1996; 1995), *Climbing Mount Improbable*, (London: Penguin, 1997; 1996), *A Devil's Chaplain* (London: Phoenix, 2004; 2003) and in particular *The God Delusion* (London: Bantam Press, 2006).

⁴³ Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, p. xv.

⁴⁴ Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, p. 158.

This reading of evolutionary theory means that God's relational status will be taken away from the *imago* idea and thus human distinction from animality will be undermined. This is the belief of John Gray in his book *Straw Dogs*:

Most people alive today think they belong to a species that can be master of its destiny. This is faith, not science. We do not speak of a time when whales or gorillas will be masters of their destinies. Why then humans? We do not need Darwin to see that we belong with other animals [...] let us note that Darwin teaches that species are only assemblies of genes, interacting at random with each other and their shifting environments. Species cannot control their fates. Species do not exist. This applies equally to humans.⁴⁵

According to Gray, the main reason that there is a problem with evolutionary theory (interpreted along the lines of Dawkins and other neo-Darwinian theorists) in the West is because of the influence of Christianity.

If Darwin's discovery had been made in Taoist or Shinto, Hindu or animist culture it would very likely have become just one more strand in its intertwining mythologies. In these faiths humans and other animals are kin. By contrast, arising among Christians who set humans beyond all other living things, it triggered a bitter controversy that rages on to this day. In Victorian times this was a conflict between Christians and unbelievers. Today it is waged between humanists and the few who understand that humans can no more be masters of their destiny than any other animal.⁴⁶

Yet not all neo-Darwinists would agree with Gray's position which we shall come to consider later. Gray does make an interesting point that other religions may be more accepting of the theory of evolution as it fits with their belief systems. However, it appears that Gray does outline that the other faiths have a consideration of an importance of the human being in relation to other animals, in Hinduism, the human being comes to be after many existences in previous lives as perhaps animal forms and if a human were not to live up to the right principles in life as a Hindu, they may

⁴⁵ John Gray, *Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and other Animals* (London: Granta Books, 2002), p. 3. Interesting that Gray outlines that Darwin refers to genes when in fact Darwin was unaware of Mendel's findings.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 4.

‘regress’ to animal status in the next life. Therefore Gray paints a simple picture of complex religions to try and highlight that Christianity is alone in its conception of the unique status of the human being.

SECTION FOUR
NEO-DARWINISM AND THE NON-EXISTENCE OF THE
PROPER OBJECT OF THE IMAGE (GOD)

Some members of the neo-Darwinian camp hold that to accept the theory of evolution is to accept that the origin of our species is based on pure chance and not on a Divine being bringing all things into existence (cf. Genesis). Dawkins however on closer inspection would hold that there is a high correlation between the reality of the theory of evolution and the non-existence of God. Yet, this correlation does not logically disprove the existence of God. In *The God Delusion*, Dawkins sets out why exactly he thinks that atheism is the outcome of the theory of evolution. He appeals to the great minds of science and outlines that these people of immense intelligence were mostly atheist (that is, the ‘brights’). Bright physicists, such as, Einstein, use the term ‘God’ metaphorically and in a pantheistic sense. Thus, according to Dawkins,

The metaphorical or pantheistic God of the physicists is light years away from the interventionist, miracle-wreaking, thought-reading, sin-punishing, prayer-answering God of the Bible, of priests, mullahs and rabbis, and of ordinary language. Deliberately to confuse the two is, in my opinion, an act of intellectual high treason.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, p. 19.

This God used by the physicists is seen by Dawkins as nothing more than the universe itself, and not a divine being (or personal god) in theological understanding – just a mere metaphor.

It appears that Dawkins wishes to make a further point, however, and argue from the fact that (some) intelligent people do not believe in God it follows that if these ‘bright’ people do not believe in God, then others with lesser (intellectual) ability should follow suit. Appealing to these ‘bright’ scientists Dawkins suggests that there is a very low probability of God’s existence due to the fact that science may well be able to offer an answer to the question of whether there is a ‘god’, or not. Thus,

The view that I shall defend is [...], agnosticism about the existence of God belongs firmly in the temporary or TAP [Temporary Agnosticism in Practice] category. Either he [God] exists or he doesn’t. It is a scientific question; one day we may know the answer, and meanwhile we can say something pretty strong about the probability.⁴⁸

Dawkins grades the ranges of belief in God from full knowledge (level 1) to full atheism (level 7). On this scale Dawkins situates himself with other ‘scientists’ at level 6, which he defines as follows,

Very low probability, but short of zero. *De facto* atheist. ‘I cannot know for certain but I think God is very improbable, and I live my life on the assumption that he is not there.’⁴⁹

Dawkins does not appear to allow for any position other than atheism even though he is fully aware that he is only working on the ‘assumption’ of atheism. Stephen Jay Gould, another eminent scientist and biologist, disagreed with Dawkins’ position that

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 48.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 51.

science could answer every question. Gould held that there are some questions that will in fact not be answered by science and that the proper relationship between science and its sphere and religion and its sphere is that the magesteria or area of competence do not over-lap, that is there is NOMA (non-overlapping magesteria).⁵⁰ Religious language and methodologies differ and ask questions which stand outside the tools and methodologies available to scientists. Dennett and Dawkins, however, would not be in agreement with Gould, as from their perspective there is and can only be one magesteria – one area of competence and that area is science. This leads to what is often termed ‘scientism’, which is a universal view of the world from the sole perspective of science.

When it comes to an evaluation of the arguments for the existence of God,⁵¹ as set out by Aquinas, that is, *The Five Ways*,⁵² Dawkins focuses on the question of

⁵⁰ Stephan Jay Gould, *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life* (London: Vintage, 2002), p. 44 ff.

⁵¹ For a philosophical critique of Dawkins’ analysis and postulations in *The God Delusion*, see Michael Dunne, ‘How not to be an Atheist’, (Review) in *Yearbook of Irish Philosophical Society* (Maynooth: NUIM, 2006), pp. 213–220. Dunne notes, in particular, the flaws of Dawkins’ outline of Aquinas’ five ways, where, in fact, he gets the Third Way ‘hopelessly wrong’ (p. 217).

⁵² In ST 1a 2.3 Aquinas poses the question ‘does God exist’ and he answers that there are five ways in which we can prove that there is a God. The first way is based on change. When something undergoes a process of change it is changed by something else. For nothing can be undergoing change unless it is potentially whatever it ends up being after its process of change – while something causes change in so far as it is actual in some way. After all, Aquinas asserts, to change something is simply to bring it from potentiality to actuality, and this can only be done by something that is somehow actual. Something in a process of change cannot cause that same change. It cannot change itself. Thus, something else causes the change. And if this something else is in a process of change it itself changed by yet another thing, and so on. But there has to be an end to this regress of causes, otherwise there will be no first cause of change, and, as a result, no subsequent causes of change. For it is only when acted upon by a first cause that intermediate causes produce change. So we are bound to arrive at some first cause of change that is not itself changed by anything, which is what everybody takes God to be.

The Second Way, relates to efficient causes and the order of efficient causes which Aquinas believes cannot go back infinitely. So there has to be a first cause, which everyone calls God.

The Third Way relates to things which we encounter which are able to be or not to be. Aquinas believes not everything can be like regard, there must be something which is intrinsically necessary, owing its necessity to nothing else, something which is the cause that that other things must be.

The Fourth Way is based on the gradations found in things, some things are more good others less, some more and some less true, etc., we speak of various things as being more or less F in so far as they approximate in various ways to what is most F. So, something is the truest and best and most noble of things, and hence the most fully in being (*Metaphysics* 2.1, 993b30). But when many things possess some property in common, the one most fully possessing it causes it in the others. So, there is

the first three ways and holds that there is an infinite regress problem because each of these ways lead to the question as to who created God. He notes that ‘they make the entirely unwarranted assumption that God himself is immune to the regress’.⁵³ It would be highly confusing, however, to think that Aquinas, as one commentator points out, was not of sufficient temperament to actually consider the question of ‘what came before God’. And as Dunne also points out,

One can say that there is no First and that a potentially infinite regress is all that there is, but it is hardly fair that if someone holds that God is First absolutely to then ask what came before? As a question it makes little sense and even less as an objection.⁵⁴

There is, then, at least from a logical point of view, the possibility of a primary cause, a *prote arche*, which brings all things into motion.⁵⁵

something that causes in all other things their being, their goodness, and whatever other perfection they have, and we call this ‘God’.

The Fifth Way, is based on the governance of things. Aquinas noted that some things lack intelligence (i.e. material objects in nature) act for the sake of an end. But things lacking intelligence tend to a goal by purpose, not by chance). But things lacking intelligence tend to a goal only as directed by one with knowledge and understanding. Arrows, for instance, need archers. So, there is a being with intelligence who directs all natural things to ends, and we call this being ‘God’. The proofs are adapted from ST 1a 2.3.

⁵³ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, p. 77.

⁵⁴ Michael Dunne, ‘How Not to be an Atheist, The God Delusion’, p. 217.

⁵⁵ However, that stated, it must be outlined that some physicists argue that there does not necessarily need to be a first cause, that the universe itself can just simply ‘be’, As Hawking states ‘the quantum theory of gravity [outlines the possibility] in which there would be no boundary to space-time and so there would be no need to specify the behaviour at the boundary. There would be no singularities at which the laws of science broke down and no edge of space-time at which one would have to appeal to God or some new law to set the boundary conditions for space-time. One could say: “The boundary condition of the universe is that it has no boundary.” The universe would be completely self-contained and not affected by anything outside itself. It would neither be created nor destroyed. It would just BE’. See Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (London: Bantam Books, 1988) p. 151. To date the quantum theory of gravity remains a theory of Hawking. The integration of the force of gravity has been problematic for physicists in the past century because of the incompatibility of relativity theory with quantum theory, solutions to these problems have been put forward in terms of string theory and M-theory, see Hawking, chapter 10 but again the ultimate question of the existence of ‘matter’ is still not answered by Hawking’s postulations, it may mean the universe simply ‘is’ but its existence may still of course be dependent on a Being that transcends empirical observation. Also see, Stephen Hawking, *The Grand Design* (London: Bantam Press, 2010).

Dawkins offers scientific evidence based on ‘statistics’ for the ‘creation’/ emergence of human life. He outlines that given the large numbers of planets (something between 1 – 30 billion) in our galaxy and about 100 billion galaxies in the universe, this gives *circa* a billion billion planets in the universe. The emergence of life being highly improbable and of a statistic of what Dawkins considers 1 in a billion — there would still be at least a billion planets where life would evolve on them.⁵⁶ But the question that Dawkins appears to be avoiding is: where did the matter come from in the beginning so that life can come to be? As Dunne notes, one of the problems with this sort of postulation is that,

God [is treated] as an object within the universe. For Dawkins, the hypothesis concerning the existence of God must always be an empirical one and there is no way in which he [Dawkins] is willing to treat of God as a being which transcends the universe. If God cannot be the object of science, then for Dawkins he [God] has the same status as ‘fairies at the bottom of the garden’.⁵⁷

Proving the non-existence of God, or, indeed the non-existence of anything, including ‘fairies at the bottom of the garden’, *especially if they do not exist*, is a notoriously difficult task, but there is no reason to assume that the existence of God is in fact empirical. God may transcend the universe, as Dunne notes, thereby Dawkins’ position remains at the level of speculation rather than at the level of ‘proof’ for the non-existence of the Divine. If one cannot prove the non-existence of anything, one cannot disprove the non-existence of God.

Dawkins also aims to call into question the existence of God in his analysis of the origin of religion and the ‘idea of God’ as such. He begins by invoking the idea

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 137

⁵⁷ Michael Dunne, ‘On how not to be an Atheist’, p. 218.

that religion is a ‘virus of the mind’, this goes back to his work on memes, first outlined in his *The Selfish Gene*. In the final chapter of that work he defined memes as a ‘unit of *imitation*’.⁵⁸ These refer to cultural transmission, which is analogous to genetic transmission and that these ‘memes’ or units of cultural transmission can give rise to evolution.⁵⁹ Dawkins considers the ‘idea of God’ and outlines that we are unaware as to when this ‘idea’ arose in the ‘meme pool’. He is sure, nevertheless, that it is an old ‘meme’ which has undergone ‘mutation’, the survival rate of this meme being attributed to, according to Dawkins, its ‘great psychological appeal’, for,

It provides a superficially plausible answer to deep and troubling questions about existence. It suggests that injustices in this world may be rectified in the next. The ‘everlasting arms’ hold out a cushion against our own inadequacies which, like a doctors’ placebo, is none the less effective for being imaginary. These are some of the reasons why the idea of God is copied so readily by successive generations of individual brains. God exists, if only in the form of a meme with high survival value, or infective power, in the environment provided by human culture.⁶⁰

If Dawkins is right here, however, the question arises as to why this idea would have ‘psychological appeal’? This, in fact, is a question that Dawkins recognises in 1976 and states that the idea appeals to many brains – and that brains are shaped by natural selection to survive. Might one not conclude that the idea of God then, gives a higher level of survivability? Dawkins, however, neither states nor considers this. In *The God Delusion*, Dawkins postulates that belief in God is part of a childhood attitude and, as an analogy, refers to the invention of an imaginary friend called ‘Binker’ to shed light on why the ‘God-meme’ would come about.

I suspect that the Binker phenomenon of childhood may be a good model for understanding theistic belief in adults [...] companion and confidant, a Binker

⁵⁸ Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, p. 192.

⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 189.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 193.

for life: that is surely one role that God plays — one gap that might be left if God were to go.⁶¹

The question of memes is highly problematic⁶², for, if religion or the idea of God is a meme, what is to stop all of culture and science being a meme, and if it is all a meme, then what is a healthy meme and what is a virus, and, more importantly, who decides? Dawkins wishes us to see that religion(s) is/are a prime example of pathological *memes*. In this way a vast number of the human population on the planet have already been *infected* and these infected individuals continue to unleash these memes on unsuspecting innocent souls, especially innocent children. The later alignment of memes to viruses, however, forces Dawkins to reconsider the question ‘is science a meme?’⁶³ The answer in this case is, according to Dawkins, a resounding no:

No. Not unless all computer programs are viruses. Good, useful programs spread because people evaluate them, recommend them and pass them on. Computer viruses spread solely because they embody coded instructions: ‘Spread me.’ Scientific ideas, like all memes, are subject to a kind of natural selection, and this might look superficially virus-like, but the selective forces that scrutinize scientific ideas are not arbitrary or capricious. They are exacting, well-honed rules, and they do not favour pointless self-serving behaviour. They favour all the virtues laid out in textbooks of standard methodology: testability, evidential support, precision, quantifiability, consistency, intersubjectivity, repeatability, universality, progressiveness, independence of cultural milieu, and so on. Faith spreads despite a total lack of every single one of these virtues.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, p. 349.

⁶² Alister McGrath in *Dawkins’ God: Genes, Memes and the Meaning of Life*, outlines many issues with the concept of the meme, some of which are as follows: (i) While Dawkins considers God-as-a-meme/virus, he never considers atheism as a meme. McGrath presumes this is because atheism is ‘scientifically provable’, (pp. 123-124). (ii) scientific ideas become memes as all ideas are defined as memes, (p. 123), (iii) memes would deny the reality of reflective thought see, Simon Conway Morris, *Life’s Solution: Inevitable Humans in a Lonely Universe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p. 324.

⁶³ In fact, he poses the question ‘Is science a Virus?’ – he has already outlined that meme and ‘virus’ are in essence mutual terms expressing a similar reality. Dawkins, *The Devil’s Chaplain*, p. 137. He also refers to memes as ‘mind parasites’.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 171.

However, Dawkins does concede that:

You may find elements of epidemiology in the spread of scientific ideas, but it will be largely descriptive epidemiology. The rapid spread of a good idea through the scientific community may even look like a description of a measles epidemic. But when you examine the underlying reasons you find that they are good ones, satisfying the demanding standards of scientific method. In this history of faith you will find little else but epidemiology, and causal epidemiology at that. The reason why person A was born on one continent and B on another. Testability, evidential support and the rest aren't even remotely considered. For scientific belief, epidemiology merely comes along afterwards and describes the history of its acceptance. For religious belief, epidemiology is the root cause.⁶⁵

Dawkins in this instance appears to be less than objective in his analysis of the difference between scientific memes and religious memes. The question of 'who decides' what is a virus is still of paramount importance. It is difficult to imagine that science can pre-judge the theories that are true against those that are false, and Dawkins realises this when he states that science proceeds through a methodology – a causal methodology which satisfy the demanding standards of the scientific method. So, *reason* is what deciphers and separates good memes from *virus* memes. However, Dawkins notes (but not directly) that even *reason* can bring about a situation of epidemiology (this term is used instead of virus when science errs). Thus it follows that reason can cause memes which are wrong that can pass down through 'common-sense' like a virus, infecting the scientific community. The only way to route out these 'epidemiological' memes is to use reason. But what exactly does Dawkins mean by reason, and if reason can bring about epidemiology in science how can we trust reason to overcome this epidemiology? Perhaps here a reliance on Popper's method of falsification comes to the fore. But Dawkins would reject

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Popper's position as it opens up the possibility that Neo-Darwinism is open to revision.⁶⁶

This leads us to consider another presumption of Dawkins, namely, that religions do not proceed by reason.⁶⁷ McGrath finds this position of Dawkins quite perplexing and outlines that Dawkins' reading is highly 'simplistic'. He recalls how Dawkins lambasted Mary Midgley for criticising his 'selfish gene' hypothesis without any awareness of how scientists used language.⁶⁸ Yet, McGrath wonders is it the same with Dawkins,

who, knowing nothing about Christian theology, rushes headlong into the field, and tells theologians what they really mean when they use their own language. Or that [theologians] really mean 'blind trust' when they speak of 'faith'? There is a total failure on Dawkins' part to even begin to understand what Christian theology means by its language.⁶⁹

As a professional historical theologian (and scientist) McGrath has no hesitation in highlighting the point that the 'classic Christian tradition has always valued rationality, and does not hold that faith involves the complete abandonment of reason

⁶⁶ See, Dawkins, *A Devil's Chaplain*, p. 19ff. See, also, Gurmin, 'The Theory of Evolution from Darwin to Postmodernism', pp. 95–100.

⁶⁷ This is difficult to comprehend in relation to the Catholic Church in particular. In 1998 Pope John Paul II issued an encyclical on the relationship of faith and reason. In that encyclical it was outlined in keeping with the tradition of the church and in the imposition of Aquinas as the 'universal doctor of the church',⁶⁷ that faith and reason were like two wings which are both necessary in the apprehension of truth. As the opening lines of the encyclical state: 'Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises in contemplation of the truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth – in a word, to know himself...' Pope John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* (Dublin: Veritas, 1998).

⁶⁸ See, Mary Midgley, 'Gene-Juggling' in *Philosophy* 54 (1979) 439–458. Mary Midgley criticised Dawkins' use of the term 'selfish gene', she outlined that, 'Then comes the point where the quickness of the hand most needs to deceive the eye — the transfer of 'selfishness' from genes to organisms — 'we are born selfish'. The point Midgley makes is that Dawkins has personified the gene, but genes, according to Midgley cannot be 'selfish or unselfish, anymore than atoms can be jealous, elephants abstract or biscuits teleological.' (Ibid) Also see, Mary Midgley, *Evolution as a Religion*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2006; 1985).

⁶⁹ Alister McGrath, *Dawkins' Delusion*, pp. 97–98.

or believing in the teeth of the evidence.’⁷⁰ As evidenced in the interaction of philosophy and theology among the Fathers of the Church from the early Christian period, reason has undoubtedly been a constant dialogue at the heart of Christianity.⁷¹

Dawkins’ evolutionary arguments to prove the non-existence of God are less than persuasive, as we have noted above. The fundamental question of the existence of matter as such is not addressed by Dawkins; instead, the existence of the universe and the emergence of humanity are outlined through the mechanism and hypothesis of evolution. Dawkins, in other words, applies the theory of evolution as a meta-narrative to explain human existence without testing or supplying arguments for the applicability of such hypothetical reasoning and scientific theories in any explanation of what makes a human being human.

It is not a fact of natural science that human beings are like any other entity in the world but a hypothesis, and one natural scientists themselves do not agree upon. We shall now turn, therefore, to an investigation of the methodology utilised by natural science in their approach to philosophical anthropological concerns, specifically with regard to the question of what it is to be a human being.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 99

⁷¹ See, *Faith and Reason*, ed. Paul Helm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Helm gathers texts together on the relationship between faith and reason from Plato through the Church Fathers up to Flew and Swinburne in the twentieth century.

SECTION FIVE

THE NEO-DARWINIAN NATURAL SCIENTIFIC METHOD AND THE QUESTION OF ‘WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A HUMAN?’ A CHANGE OF METHODOLOGY REQUIRED?

Felipe Fernández-Armesto captures the implication of the movement from the medieval world-view to the current scientific-model when considering the human being, he states:

Until the Enlightenment era, when scientific taxonomy began to reshuffle the categories in which Western minds arrayed life forms, the prevailing images in the West were of a ladder or chain: the ‘ladder of creation’, the ‘chain of being.’⁷²

John Gray in his book *Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals*, argues that Darwin’s theory of evolution implies that there now is no difference between humans and animals – and therefore humans and animals are of the same image, not in the *imago Dei*, in fact, there are just animals – and arguing further suggests that all of ‘us’ animals are just automata following the *blind* forces of nature.

Most people alive today think they belong to a species that can be master of its destiny. This is *faith*, not science. We do not speak of a time when whales or gorillas will be masters of their destinies. Why then humans?⁷³

Gray uses evolutionary theory to go so far as to critique humanism, whilst identifying humanist beliefs essentially as a secular religion:

Darwin showed that humans are like other animals, humanists claim they are not. Humanists insist that by using our knowledge we can control our environment and flourish as never before. In affirming this, they renew one of Christianity’s most dubious promises — that salvation is open to all. The humanist belief in progress is only a secular version of this Christian faith.⁷⁴

⁷² Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *So You Think You’re Human?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 65.

⁷³ John Gray, *Straw Dogs*, p. 2, my emphasis.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Felipe Fernández-Armesto holds that if we were to follow this materialist/reductionistic methodology, then the consequences would necessitate that our current world-view would have to be re-evaluated and re-shaped,

Here is the paradox. Over the last thirty or forty years, we have invested an enormous amount of thought, emotion, treasure, and blood in what we call human values, human rights, the defence of human dignity, and of human life. Over the same period, quietly but devastatingly, science and philosophy have combined to undermine our traditional concept of humankind. In consequence, the coherence of our understanding of what it means to be human is now in question. And if the term ‘human’ is incoherent, what will become of ‘human values’? Humanity is in peril: not from the familiar menace of ‘mass destruction’ and ecological overkill – but from a conceptual threat.⁷⁵

Most neo-Darwinists, however, would not go to the extreme of Gray in their ‘rejection’ of humanity and all meaning. Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett do not implement the theory to its fullest and in fact believe that it is possible to ‘transcend’ the evolutionary influences of the ‘selfish genes’ alongside what Dawkins’ terms the cultural ‘memes’. Dawkins points to this special ability of humankind in *The Selfish Gene*:

The point I am making now is that, even if we look on the dark side and assume that individual man is fundamentally selfish, our conscious foresight — our capacity to simulate the future in imagination — could save us from the worst selfish excesses of the blind replicators. We have at least the mental equipment to foster our long-term selfish interests rather than merely our short-term selfish interests. [...] we have the power to defy the selfish genes of our birth and, if necessary, the selfish memes of our indoctrination. We can even discuss ways of deliberately cultivating and nurturing pure, disinterested altruism — something that has no place in nature, something that has never existed before in the whole history of the world. We are built as gene machines and cultured meme machines, but we have the power to turn against our creatures. We, alone on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *So You Think You’re Human?* p. 1.

⁷⁶ Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, pp. 200-201, (which is the last lines of the 1976 edition, i.e. of the first edition, with two extra chapters being incorporated into subsequent editions). Dawkins argues against those who accuse him of genetic determinism in the endnotes of the 1989 edition of *The Selfish Gene*, here he states again that ‘it is possible to hold that genes exert a statistical influence on

Thus, from Dawkins' perspective, human beings have, in sum:

- (i) conscious foresight,
- (ii) the ability to simulate the future in imagination
- (iii) the mental equipment to foster our long-term selfish interests
- (iv) the power to defy the selfish genes [and]
- (v) the selfish memes of our indoctrination.
- (vi) The ability to discuss ways of deliberately cultivating and nurturing pure, disinterested altruism (something that has no place in nature, something that has never existed in the whole history of the world)
- (vii) We have the power to turn against the genes and the memes – can rebel against the selfish replicators.

Yet, it is difficult to imagine transcending these genetic influences unless we have undergone a radical change as we progress from lower to higher forms and have 'freedom' to so rebel against the tyranny of the genes which, in Dawkins' view, control us (but paradoxically lose executive control when 'we' or 'I' go against their influences). Dawkins contends that evolutionary theory is not something to be applied to life as it were, not something that should be taken into the world of business or, indeed, into politics – where the theory of evolution has been seen to influence eugenics or ethnic cleansing.⁷⁷ This is the danger of explaining the human being from one perspective simply (in this case, the gene). While Dawkins has done

human behaviour while at the same time believing that this influence can be modified, overridden or reversed by other influences.' Ibid. p. 331.

⁷⁷Malthus's work on population control was influential in this regard and is incorporated into evolutionary theory in terms of understanding food-webs. When one predatorily animal type increases then the prey of that animal will decrease resulting in a decrease in the number of predators. Nature has an in-built 'mechanism' of controlling populations. Mankind has transcended this natural dependence on prey by developing agriculture and by controlling the lands through our intellect and ingenuity. This movement to agrarian society would not be seen as natural *per se* as our numbers ought to dwindle in terms of the availability of food stocks and as it stands the planet has 6.6 billion people with major projected increases by 2020. The question of the sustainability of our life form is brought into focus through Malthus's writings on population. See Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993; 1798).

this he recognises there is something amiss when he says that we can transcend the selfish genes, but our transcending of the genes if they ‘control us/ determine us’ is not an easy matter and creates problems of accounting for how we experience ourselves as human beings – as gene ‘transcendent’.

Reducing human cultural evolution to the principles of biological evolution and that of biological evolution to genetics seems to miss the question of the substantial nature of the human being as a system, but, as Eldredge and Tattersall note,

By reducing genetics to the architectural and chemical properties of a few macromolecules (DNA and the various forms of RNA), [the reductionists] get still closer. These gigantic molecules are made up of smaller chemical constituents (nuclear acids, for example). And all are made of atoms. Theoretically, *in principle*, a reductionist could explain human evolution in terms of the laws of physics. But failing that now, he can reduce one level of complexity to another, more general system: cultural evolution to general biological evolution, large-scale evolutionary phenomena to general genetics, and so forth.⁷⁸

In this regard, the human being has been studied under the study of zoology. Humans are therein reduced to being studied under a science that studies all other animals.⁷⁹

James Royce considers this reduction as problematic because:

To try and explain the origin of the intellect and will from the animal life by postulating a new ‘emergent’ derived from lower forms but not contained in them, still ignores the essential differences between material and immaterial and violates the logic of science.⁸⁰

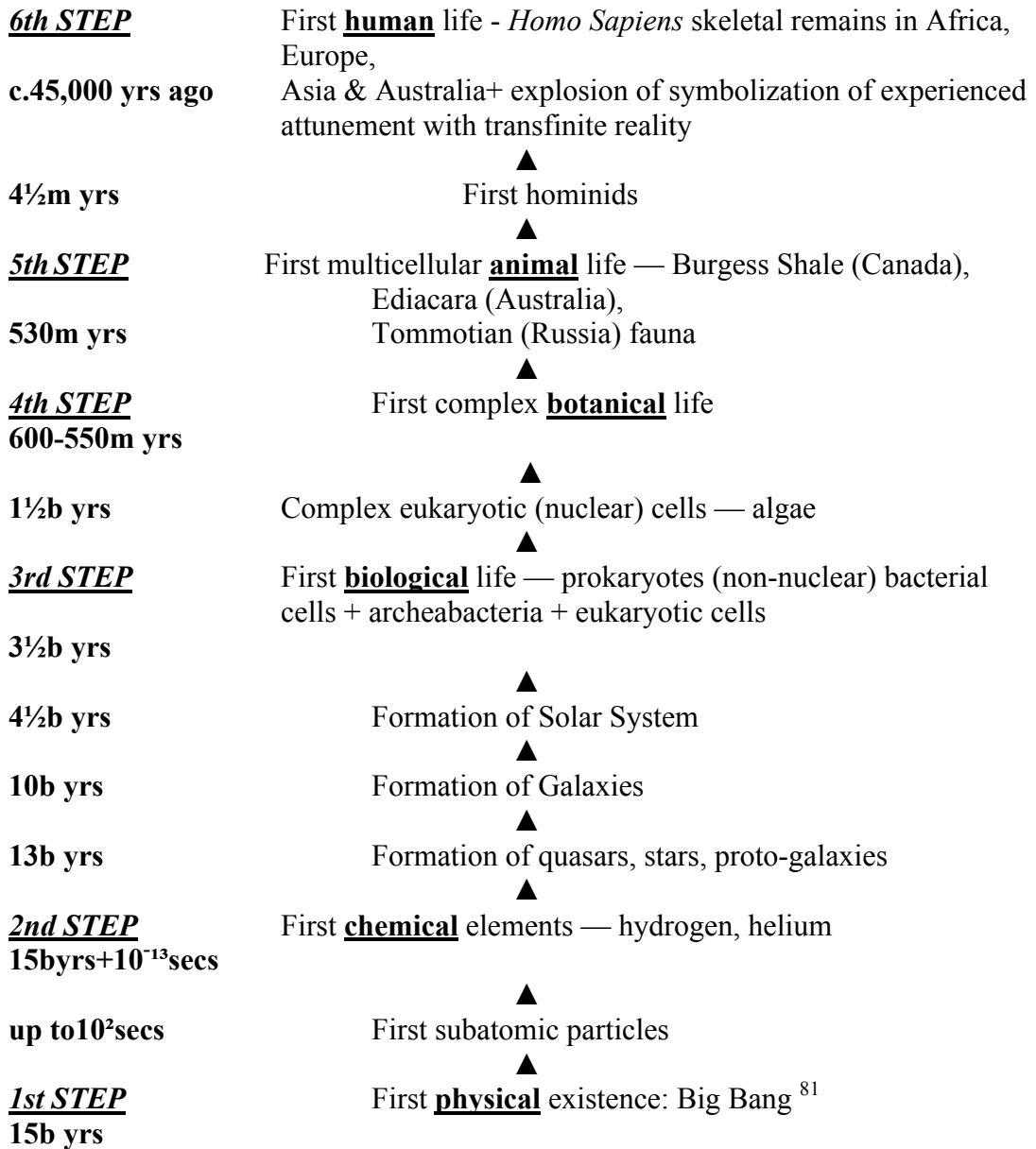
Royce makes an interesting point highlighting the illogical position of the fact that rational man emerged from irrational brute since this contradicts the laws of causality

⁷⁸ Neils Eldredge & Ian Tattersall, *The Myths of Human Evolution*, p. 14.

⁷⁹ J. Reichmann, S.J., *Evolution, Animal ‘Rights’ and the Environment* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000) – outlines the legal implications of this reduction of humanity to animality.

⁸⁰ James Royce, *Man and Meaning* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1969) p. 287.

by the fact that *causes* must always be higher and better than their *effects*. Purcell captures this hierarchical progression from lower-forms to higher diagrammatically:



This unfolding sequence of levels of *being* exhibits a series where the earlier levels can function without the later ones, but the later ones depend on the earlier.⁸² Some

⁸¹ Brendan Purcell, 'The Big Bang to Big Mystery: Human Emergence as Cosmic Horizon,' as yet unpublished presentation given to English/Welsh/Irish Bishops' Joint Bio-Ethics Committee. Carnlough, Co. Antrim, 26/03/2004. This schema is in many ways set out in the following: Brendan M. Purcell, *The Drama of Humanity: Towards a Philosophy of Humanity in History* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996).

hold that the lower forms are seen to be somewhat ‘directed’ towards the more complex (for example, directionalist evolutionists). Many, in this regard, see a type of ‘fine-tuning’ at work in the universe. These principles along with other mathematical and physical observations have been termed the ‘Anthropic Principle’.⁸³ This model of understanding that the lower-forms give to the higher is not new in philosophical thinking, one only has to look to Aristotle’s work on the soul from inanimate being to human-psychic life. As Voegelin comments on Aristotle’s hierarchy:

These tiers of the hierarchy of being are related to each other in: (a) the material dependence of the higher on the lower and (b) the organisation of the lower by the higher ones. The relations are not reversible. On the one hand, there is no *eu zen*, no good life in Aristotle’s meaning, without the basis of *zen*; on the other hand, the order of the good life does not emerge from the corporeal foundation but originates only from the centre of the existential tension [towards the ground of existence].⁸⁴

In this instance, therefore, we have moved into a ‘new world’. Lonergan believes that plants, animals, humans and all of being are in a relationship – where the lower levels provide the materials for the next highest level. In this way, ‘the arrival of the human level is marked by the existence of a being who himself or herself experiences an inner tension to go beyond the sequence and indeed beyond the universe or cosmos.’⁸⁵ Thus Purcell believes that there is the possibility of a philosophical perspective, which attempts to formulate a cosmological-

⁸² For example, the elements necessary for life could only come into existence through the process of nucleosynthesis. The only place hot enough to ‘cook’ the light element helium into the heavier element carbon, apparently, is the heart of a dying star. Some 10 to 5 billion years ago, the first generation of stars, when their hydrogen cores burnt up at a heat of 100m°K, an incredibly finely tuned process, released carbon and the other heavier elements into the universe. See, John D. Barrow & Frank J. Tipler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) pp. 252f.

⁸³ See, B. J. Carr, ‘Origin, Evolution and Purpose of the Universe’ in *Modern Cosmology and Philosophy*, ed. John Leslie, (New York: Prometheus Books, 1998) chapter 11 and in particular pp. 152–159.

⁸⁴ Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, trans. by Gerhart Niemeyer (USA: Notre Dame, 1978), p. 209.

⁸⁵ Purcell, *The Drama of Humanity: Towards a Philosophy of Humanity in History*, p. 31.

anthropological view of the world, and in which each level seems to make a *gift* of itself to be used by the next highest level and in man the entire sequence can be understood as dynamically oriented beyond itself.⁸⁶

From Lonergan and Purcell's perspective, then, our understanding of man has been inversed through the scientific method whereby the microscope has looked at the human being at the lower levels in order to explain the higher level of existence. A. N. Whitehead was of the opinion that it was necessary to consider the 'whole' in order to consider the parts and held that the best way of understanding the lower-forms is from the perspective of the higher forms of existence. What this seems to suggest is that the approach to what it is to be human in the twentieth and twenty-first century is dominated, if not monopolized through the outlook of science (i.e. scientism), and one that fails to consider a holistic account of the fact that human beings evidently sit at the top of the chain of being. Even if we are to consider the human being only in biological terms, we are, in effect, at the top of the food chain and have subdued the earth to our own ends. Purcell draws attention to this error in the application of the scientific method when investigating the human at the lower levels:

There is the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, in which each of the levels investigated by the sciences of phenomena is hypostasized in more or less unmixed ways [...] since everyone is aware that human reality involves a plurality of levels of some sort or another, these hypostatisation's are often accompanied by reversals of the relationship of material dependence and formal organisation, in which the higher levels are construed as being what they are by whatever lower level is considered decisive in classifying membership of the genus *Homo*.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Purcell, 'Understanding the Human Mystery,' p. 348.

The task that confronted us at the start of this section was to undertake an analysis and evaluation of the implications and strengths and weaknesses of a neo-Darwinian anthropology for understanding ‘what it means to be human’. We noted that Dawkins is prepared to admit that the human being is ‘special’ in that humans alone have the ability to transcend the selfish genes. In the final pages of his 1976 he poignantly postulates that:

Our capacity to stimulate the future in imagination [can] save us from the worst selfish excesses of the blind replicators. We at least have the mental equipment to foster our long-term selfish interests rather than merely our short-term selfish interests. We can see the long-term benefits of participating in a ‘conspiracy of doves’, and we can sit down together to discuss ways of making the conspiracy work. We have the power to defy the selfish genes of our birth, and, if necessary, the selfish memes of our indoctrination. We can even discuss ways of deliberately cultivating and nurturing pure, disinterested altruism – something that has no place in nature [...] we are built as gene machines and cultured as meme machines, but we have the power to turn against our creators. We, alone on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators.⁸⁸

Thus it would appear to be the case that the human individual, from this model, is to be separated from animality in this ability, and this is argued from a naturalistic perspective. The idea of the ‘image of God’ is not diffused as such, but it is given, instead, a naturalistic-philosophical underpinning in the neo-Darwinian model. Thus humans have the ability to transcend the genes (‘the power to defy the selfish genes [and] memes’), they have reason (‘stimulate the future in imagination’, ‘mental equipment to foster our long-term [...] interests rather than merely short term [...] interests’) and thereby have responsibility.⁸⁹ It is not something that the philosopher John Gray would agree with, even though he builds his conception of humans as akin

⁸⁸ Ibid, p.201.

⁸⁹ This is reminiscent of Aristotle’s definition of reason encountered in chapter II, where Aristotle notes that human beings can determine whether to do some action now in relation to the future consequence of undertaking such an action. This is something animals are not capable of in Aristotle’s understanding.

to other animals from a neo-Darwinist framework. Dennett also posits that there is something ‘unique’ about the human being, the existence of a centre of narrative gravity and moral responsibility sets us apart from other animals on the evolutionary line. Language brings this about and, as such, this is our significant status that imposes *responsibility* upon us.⁹⁰ In this way, the earlier conception of the ‘image of God’ being bound by responsibility is maintained within the neo-Darwinist framework by its two most prominent writers who also attempt to disprove the existence of God, upon which the idea of the *imago Dei* ultimately rests.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the question of God and his existence or non-existence is and has been a very complex problem through the history of philosophical thinking. The claims made by Richard Dawkins that the theory of evolution is capable of proving the non-existence of God is quite problematic. Firstly, it is very difficult to prove the non-existence of anything, especially if it does not exist. The fact that Dawkins derives the ‘probable’ non-existence of God from the probability of evolution indicates his own unease about this issue, as well as *evading*, rather than answering the ultimate question: whence matter? In this question, the boundary question of cosmology is what is of ultimate concern. Evolution may *explain* our existence on this earth, or be the best meta-narrative of origins at the present time, but it does not disprove the ability of a Being who transcends the universe to be involved in the creative process.

⁹⁰ ‘The freedom of [a] bird to fly wherever it wants is definitely a kind of freedom, a distinct movement on the freedom of the jellyfish to float wherever it floats, but a poor cousin of our human freedom. Compare birdsong to human language. Both are magnificent products of natural selection, and neither is miraculous, but human language revolutionises life, opening up the biological world in dimensions utterly inaccessible to birds. Human freedom, in part a product of the revolution begat of language and culture, is about as different from bird freedom as language is from birdsong.’ Daniel Dennett, *Freedom Evolves*, p. 143.

Natural-scientific explanations that seek to explain what it is to be a human being from hypothetical origins in lower life-forms run a serious risk of committing the genetic fallacy; that is to say, that even if it can be scientifically established that we, as human beings, or parts of our physical make-up, come from more primitive species, e.g., from monkeys or fish or reptiles, this does not mean that human beings *are* monkeys or *are* fish or *are* reptiles. Thus the very method of this type of genetic natural scientific analysis (scientism) precludes a proper approach to establishing the nature of what it is to be a human being. It is, therefore, one of the most trenchant critiques of just such a naturalistic approach to the study of human consciousness and the human being, instituted by Husserl and phenomenological philosophers of the twentieth century, that we now turn.

CHAPTER VI

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF NATURALISM AND ITS UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN

In the first chapter Westermann highlighted that the idea of the ‘image of God’ was bound to the question of what it means to be a human being. This question of what it means to be a human being came to the fore in the previous chapter in relation to the methodology of science particularly with regard to the world-view espoused by neo-Darwinism. Thus while it was shown in the previous chapter that the theory of evolution does not disprove the possibility of the existence of God, the focus of this chapter is to address the second part of the question – of what it means to be a human being and what methodology is best placed to answer this question. As such this chapter begins with an examination of Edmund Husserl’s (1859–1938) phenomenological critique of scientism (naturalism), paying particular attention to Husserl’s development of a phenomenological method of enquiry and to his search for a rigorous science (‘science of consciousness’) as a more appropriate way to consider the question of what it means to be a human being, over and against an approach that is based on a view of the human from the perspective of nature (and natural science) exclusively.¹ Husserl points out that consciousness and constitution

¹According to Theodore de Boer, Brentano and Husserl were ‘both [...] advocates of a radical reformation and renewal of philosophy. [For] Brentano, a renewal of philosophy would lead to a renewal of man and society [...]. Husserl speaks of philosophers as functionaries of mankind and of the rational organisation of a new humanity. The highest form of humanity is the “philosophical form of existence,” and therefore the function of philosophy is the humanizing of man. “The completely personal responsibility for our own true being as philosophers in our inward personal calling at the same time carries with it the responsibility for the true being of humanity”.’ [*Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie, Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, herausgegeben von W. Biemel, Husserliana, Band VI (The Hague: 1954), *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy* trans. D. Carr, (Evanston, 1970),] 15, 72, 429 (E 17, 71)]. See,

are essential in determining our understanding of natural causes and, as such, epistemologically grounds natural scientific investigation. In other words, consciousness gives rise to the scientific view in the first place. The phenomenological critique of scientism and naturalism will clear the way towards an examination of the human individual from the perspective of Husserl's method. Edith Stein, an early student of Husserl's, undertook this analysis of the human individual comprehensively. Stein places the study of the human individual person at the centre of her phenomenological reflections, both in her early and late writings.² Once we have descriptively outlined what it means to be human from the phenomenological perspective of Stein, we will consider, in the next chapter, the essence of the idea of the human being as made in the 'image of God', utilising the advantage point of Stein's later philosophical reflections on essentialities and essences.

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section considers Husserl's critique of naturalism. The second section looks at Husserl's early and later phenomenological developments. As the phenomenological method developed,

Theodore de Boer, *The Development of Husserl's Thought*, trans. by Theodore Plantinga (The Hague and London: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978) p. 494.

² As Mary Catharine Baseheart states, 'Edith Stein's approach to the person is an original blend of phenomenological and perennial ways of probing the question of what it means to be human', Baseheart, *Person in the World: Introduction to the Philosophy of Edith Stein*, (Dordrecht, Boston and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997) p. 30. Moreover, Stein's phenomenology gives us unique advantage points to investigate the question of 'what it means to be human' descriptively. The phenomenological method through Husserl has offered a critique to the methodology of the natural sciences as the means by which, through which and in which we are to understand our world-views. The inherent conflict of the natural sciences is the justification of their own methodology which stands outside science itself – in the district of 'rigorous science' as outlined by Husserl in and through his phenomenological method. Stein's development of Husserl's theories towards the 'constitution of the psycho-physical individual' provide foundations for the possibility of grounding the *imago Dei* concept philosophically – of explicating why the human individual should be considered 'part of nature' yet 'set apart' in the realm of the spiritual (*Geist*) for what previously was considered by the writers of Genesis as 'sacred duties', but not only to be set apart for such duties but to be described as inherently 'valuable' - of being an *image of God* not because of functionality but because of our humanity.

Husserl's thought underwent a turn to a version of Kantian-transcendental idealism, a turn which many of his earlier followers were not willing to take. It is important to situate Husserl's phenomenology in this section when setting forth Stein's philosophical anthropology because Stein will follow the early realist-phenomenological method of Husserl. Husserl's 'realism', of course, is still subject of much debate, but in his early thinking Husserl believed that there are essential features of intentional consciousness and its objectivities that can become the focus of a strict eidetic science of pure intentional consciousness. Stein, however, believes, like Husserl, that empathy brings us into contact with foreign experience, but this, for Stein, opens the possibility of analysing the issue of inter-subjectivity, and with it the constitution of inter-subjective reality (but not from the standpoint of a purified, transcendently reduced consciousness as advocated by the later Husserl). The third section sets out Stein's phenomenological approach to the question of what it means to be human. The fourth section discusses Stein's understanding of causality and motivation and her account of the way the human individual can be said to be free. Finally, section five considers the human type (*Typ*) and the importance of education in the unfolding of the human individual. In light of Stein's phenomenological deliberations on philosophical anthropology, we will encounter an understanding of the human individual which is open to the world of values, motivation, freedom, reason, learning and responsibility (and some of these ideas have already been outlined as characteristic of the *imago Dei* in the history of thinking, but here these ideas are grounded philosophically and phenomenologically).

SECTION ONE
EDMUND HUSSERL'S PHILOSOPHICAL CRITIQUE
OF NATURALISM (SCIENTISM)

In the previous chapter, we noted that when one views the human individual from the perspective of science alone various important issues emerge that cannot be addressed by natural science itself. For instance, we argued that while one can note the influences of genes as biological causal forces it is what we have outlined a genetic fallacy to *explain* what-it-is-to-be-human from what it is to be a gene. Likewise, to 'explain' the kind of being that we ourselves are merely from this one perspective can become a totalising framework that negates a considerable volume of reflection given in the humanities on the 'understanding' of the human condition.³ This, in fact, has been the case in cognitive science (which reflects exclusively on brain-states) until recently, for, as Evan Thompson notes, the subjective *experience* of the individual's own internal states tends to be annexed in scientific inquiry as a means of bringing about objectivity.⁴ Thompson also notes, however, that there is currently a shift occurring in cognitive scientific inquiry insofar as there is now a

³ Dawkins in his work *The Extended Phenotype* would hold that the gene extends into the cultural milieu of the humanities through the 'far reach of the gene', but does not consider the reflection of the humanities/ phenomenology on the question of 'what it means to be human'. However, he did outline that we are capable of transcending the genes and as such this 'transcending' might take us to the realm of 'meaning' and 'morals'. As previously outlined Dawkins believes that, 'we are built as gene machines and cultured as meme machines, but we have the power to turn against our creators. We, alone on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators', *The Selfish Gene* (1989) p. 201.

⁴ See, Evan Thompson, *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Science of Mind* (Cambridge, Massachusetts/London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007). As Thompson notes: 'In recent years [...] it has become increasingly clear to many researchers that cognitive science is incomplete. Cognitive science has focused on cognition while neglecting emotion, affect, and motivation. In addition, a complete science of the mind needs to account for subjectivity and consciousness.' Ibid. p. 3, Moreover, cognitive science (from Thompson's perspective) is becoming more aware of the need to consider 'subjective experience' in order to understand the psyche. However, traditionally cognitivism banished consciousness from the science of the mind (a taboo inherited from behaviourism): 'Mental processes as such are understood to be computations made by the brain using an inner symbolic language [and] taken to be entirely nonconscious [and therefore] the connection between mind and meaning [...] and subjectivity and consciousness [...] is completely severed.' p. 5

realisation of the necessity to reflect on internal subjective states when it comes to considering emotion and motivation. A complete, or totalising naturalisation of consciousness is rejected by phenomenologists, and in particular by Edith Stein who focused most of her philosophical life on the question of the human individual and his/ her psycho-physical constitution. In Stein's view, the human person is not only open to causal forces of nature but is also motivated by particular values as they adhere to constituted objects. Therefore, though we may be determined to act and react to our environment and to our own biological needs to some extent, as in the case of hunger, the human individual can chose to eat a banana (having the value of being healthy) or to eat cake (having the value of taste).⁵ In this regard, there is an intermeshing between causality and motivation out of which freedom to respond to values emerges.⁶

The phenomenological method adopted by Stein opens up an explanation of *the way* the individual experiences him/ herself as a human being from 'within'. As

⁵ In the last chapter we outlined that the neo-Darwinian model espouses that the human individual is free even in light of genetic and memetic causality, yet, it is still a rather restricted notion of freedom. In the terminology of Dennett it is an *as if* freedom. We are free only in the sense that we are capable of understanding that we are 'controlled' by genes and memes at the level of culture. It is a theory (in the neo-Darwinian interpretation of Dawkins in particular) based on the belief that materialism gives an ultimate account of the human being but one that we can transcend. Daniel Dennett's account of free will is argued more intensely from the philosophical perspective, he grounds free will from a *positive* perspective in *Freedom Evolves*, (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 2003). Dennett would state that naturalism is not an enemy of free will but gives free will a *positive* underpinning, see pp. 15-16, but such a natural underpinning, as Husserl outlines pre-supposes consciousness which grounds the naturalist approach. Dennett has aimed to deal with phenomenology and naturalism in his earlier work *Consciousness Explained*, (London: Penguin Press, 2001) but although he writes from the perspective of naturalism and sets forth a phenomenological position (heterophenomenology) which takes account of naturalism and as such is an examination of consciousness from the third person (neutral) perspective (*Consciousness Explained*, pp. 66-100). But moving to a third-person perspective makes it difficult to explain human subjectivity (the first-person). John Searle's critique of this move is on the lines that the third person perspective reduces consciousness to 'the behaviour of the body, to computational states of the brain' this, as such, cannot account for consciousness, which is an 'inner subjective, first person, qualitative phenomenon', See, John Searle, *Mind, Language and society: Philosophy in the Real World* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999) p. 50. Dennett's writings, notwithstanding these methodological issues, point to 'free will', to human 'consciousness' and 'responsibility' which, as stated, have been key features of the '*imago Dei*' idea in the history of thinking.

⁶ See Edith Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, p. 74 ff. ESGA 6.

such, phenomenology, being capable of reflecting on natural scientific analysis,⁷ offers a fuller account and reflection on human existence both from ‘within’ and ‘without’ as ultimately all knowledge is given to consciousness. The phenomenological approach to the study of human consciousness was first opened up for Stein through the writings of Husserl.

Husserl recognised in his time that logical positivism as a movement was spreading into all areas of thinking so that the human individual and human consciousness would not escape being explained by causal forces and thereby ‘naturalised’. Husserl’s method focused on the ‘objectivity of human consciousness as it relates to the one world we share’,⁸ and thus on the necessity of consciousness to be the starting point to investigate the world.⁹ This pervasive movement of science (or, what we might term ‘scientism’) as a means of explaining human

⁷ See J. Haydn Gurmin, ‘Edith Stein and Tania Singer: A Comparison of Phenomenological and Neurological Approaches to the Problem of Empathy’, in *Maynooth Philosophical Papers*, (Maynooth: NUI Maynooth, 2007) pp. 99-122.

⁸ Kearney and Rainwater point out that Husserl ‘presented an account of logic and reason that championed it’s a *priori* validity, but nevertheless required an investigation into the operations of consciousness that made such validity possible in the first place. Husserl accepted neither the extreme ‘idealist’ position that mind totally creates world, nor the extreme ‘empiricist’ position that worldly ‘impressions’ are arbitrarily associated as mere contents filling a passive theatre of the mind. Husserl wanted to force a middle path, a path that would reliably ground and confirm the objectivity of human consciousness as it relates to the one world we all share. He agreed with Kant that we *actively* engage our world in consciousness, but importantly disagreed with Kant’s two-world metaphysics that banished ‘true’ reality to some unknowable, ‘noumenal’ realm beyond the reach of consciousness. For Husserl, subjectivity and objectivity exist only in relation to one another, and he explicated the nature of this relationship as manifest in the “intentionality” of consciousness directed towards its intentional object. This “mode of intentionality” may vary and overlap considerably, in so far as I may perceive a tiger, imagine a tiger, remember a tiger, and so forth. In short, consciousness is always consciousness of *something*.’ See, *The Continental Philosophy Reader*, ed. Richard Kearney & Maria Rainwater, (London and New York: Routledge, 2003) 1st published 1996, p. 4. The *Logical Investigations* left some doubt as to whether Husserl held that the intentional object equated to some actually existing entity. In *Ideas I* (1913) he set out to describe the task of phenomenology to describe the ‘activity of intending consciousness (*noesis*) as well as the “intentional correlate” or thing intended (*noema*) and found in consciousness.’ Ibid, p. 4.

⁹ See, Edmund Husserl, ‘Philosophy as Rigorous Science’, in ‘*Edmund Husserl: Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*,’ trans. and introduction by Quentin Lauer, (New York: Harper Torchbooks/Harper & Row, 1965). Originally published as ‘*Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft*,’ *Logos*, I (1910-1911).

consciousness was discussed and critiqued by Husserl in his 1910/11 *Logos* article ‘Philosophy as Rigorous Science’.¹⁰ As de Boer remarks,

When Husserl wrote his famous article of 1910 entitled ‘Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft,’ it was partly to warn against the practical consequences of the philosophy that wanted to lay a natural scientific foundation for the normative sciences of logic, aesthetics and ethics.¹¹

Naturalism, according to Husserl, is a ‘phenomenon consequent upon the discovery of nature, [that is], nature considered as a unity of spatio-temporal being subject to exact laws of nature.’¹² Husserl notices in this work (‘Philosophy as Rigorous Science’) that the natural scientist looks at everything in terms of *nature*. This understanding of the world, however, stands in contrast to the understanding of the world espoused by the humanistic sciences which held that everything was based on ‘spirit’ (*Geist*).¹³ The naturalist sees only nature, and the psychical is attributed in its totality to the unified structure of nature, which is the physical.¹⁴ But, as de Boer notes, from Brentano’s writings Husserl learned that natural science ‘only tell[s] us what something *is* like and never what it *ought* to be like [...] the founding of the [...] sciences is the exclusive task of descriptive [*a priori*] psychology.’¹⁵ Following Brentano’s lead, therefore, Husserl, in the Prolegomena to his *Logical Investigations* (1900), outlines:

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Theodor de Boer, *The Development of Husserl’s Thought*, p. 495.

¹² Edmund Husserl, ‘Philosophy as Rigorous Science’, p. 79, ‘Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft,’ pp. 289-341.

¹³ According to Ullrich Melle, naturalism knows only nature, it identifies being and reality with nature. Spirit and ideas are naturalised and because of this they become, according to Husserl, ‘meaningless facts inside a meaningless world-machinery.’ It is the rescue of the spirit and with it of mankind from [a] naturalistic reduction that is ultimately at stake for Husserl in the problem of nature and spirit. Ullrich Melle, ‘Nature and Spirit’ in *Issues in Husserl’s Ideas II*, ed. Thomas Nenon and Lester Embree (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996) p. 18.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Here de Boer is drawing on Brentano’s writings in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, published as, *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* (Leipzig: Erster Band, 1874). See, de Boer, *The Development of Husserl’s Thought*, p. 496.

The outcome of our investigation [...] will be the delineation of a new, purely theoretical science, the all-important foundation for any technology of scientific knowledge, and itself having the character of an *a priori*, purely demonstrative science.¹⁶

The Darwinian revolution and account of what constitutes the nature of a human being, however, poses a particular challenge to such inherited epistemologies that relied on embedded *a priori* structures of the mind such as reason (e.g. Kant).¹⁷ The theory of evolution argues that the basis of all development in nature, including the human being and that being's consciousness, is change, and that there are, therefore, no fixed norms as such. In this way, natural science cannot provide fixed norms because as Hume acutely highlighted empirical generalisations are always

¹⁶ Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. J. N. Findlay (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 14. First published as *Logische Untersuchungen* (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1900/1).

¹⁷ Herman Philipse notes that 'Kant posited a transcendental mental life or ego, which was inaccessible to experience because of its *a priori* constituting condition of all experience. As such the transcendental ego became the seat of the epistemic structures that constitute experience and yield the *a priori* principles of physics. Since these principles are necessarily true, the transcendental ego cannot change structurally over time and all transcendental egos throughout history must be structurally the same. Each individual allegedly constitutes his or her experience transcendently. Therefore, each empirical human being must somehow contain an individual transcendental ego [...] the assumption of an immutable transcendental structure in human beings became deeply problematic after Darwin. The human mind has evolved from early cognitive structures [thus] it cannot contain anything immutable.' See, Herman Philipse 'Edmund Husserl and the History of Classical Foundationalism,' in *Husserl and the Sciences*, ed. Richard Feist (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2004) pp. 24-25. Husserl aimed to overcome this problem 'by positing the notion of regional ontologies - each factual item has its essential structure. Essences form hierarchies that conform to the law of the inverse variation of intension and extension. The highest genus of such a pyramid of essences is a 'material category' (in opposition to *formal* categories), for example, 'physical nature' or 'mental phenomenon'. Since each concrete entity falls under the categories of life, colour, three-dimensional object, etc., there is for each concrete entity a complex structure of interconnected highest genera or material categories. Husserl calls such a structure a 'region of being'. We can investigate these by eidetic intuition, and that the resulting truths are both synthetic and *a priori* [Husserl *Ideen*, 36]. The class of truths concerning a particular region constitutes a regional ontology. Each regional ontology has a number of fundamental truths (*Grundwahrheiten*), its axioms, that apply apodictically and with unconditional necessity to each of the individual objects belonging to this region. Since these truths are directly justified by eidetic-intuition (*Wesensschau*), they may serve as first principles to the factual or empirical sciences: 'each factual science has essential theoretical foundations in eidetic ontologies [Husserl, *Ideen*, §9, 23]. Indeed, to the extent that an empirical discipline approaches the idea of a theoretical or "nomological" science, it will be based upon such eidetic foundations, which are necessarily true. [Husserl, *Ideen*, 24].,' Feist, pp. 29-30. It is noted that Husserl's development is based on a hypothesis of essences which secures foundations for the sciences, foundations that are both general and necessarily true and this 'fits in with this fashion of Aristotelian, or rather Platonist, classical foundationalism.' Feist, p. 30

conditional to $x+1$ cases.¹⁸ Furthermore, the natural scientific method is concerned, as Brentano highlighted (and as Husserl agreed), with answering ‘questions of fact’ and not ‘questions of reason’.¹⁹ Husserl goes on to note that ‘mere “fact-sciences make mere fact people,”’ but a true human being cannot be a fact-person.²⁰

Husserl begins to put forward his criticism of this pervading positivistic critique of Kant by outlining that consciousness and constitution are essential in determining our understanding of natural causes and, as such, epistemologically grounds natural scientific investigation. Husserl points out that the scientist (or naturalist) is an idealist in the sense that he/ she justifies theories which deny what he/ she presupposes. That is, the naturalist, in Melle’s view, is,

going on presuppositions, to the extent that he [she] theorises at all, to the extent that he objectively sets up values to which value judgements are to correspond, and likewise in setting up any practical rules according to which each one is to be guided in his willing and in his conduct. The naturalist teaches, preaches, moralises, reforms. [...] But he denies what every sermon, every demand, if it is to have a meaning, presupposes. The only thing is, he does not preach in express terms that the only rational thing to do is to deny reason, as well theoretical as axiological and practical reason. He would, in fact, banish that sort of thing far from him. The absurdity is not in his case evident, but remains hidden from him because he naturalises reason.²¹

As such, Husserl notes the circularity of the naturalistic framework of argumentation.

There exists a necessary appeal to reason on the part of the naturalist (a reason which

¹⁸ For an account of the problem of induction, see, Robert Audi, *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge* 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2011) pp. 340 ff.

¹⁹ See, Husserl, *Krisis*, 6, 62, 65, 90, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. D. Carr, 9, 62, 64, 87.

²⁰ Husserl, *Krisis*, 4f (E 67), quoted by de Boer, *The Development of Husserl’s Thought*, p. 497. Fichte made this point, too, before Husserl. Husserl, of course, has much more time for post-Kantian German Idealism than his mentor, Brentano, who held such philosophy to be unscientific, windy mysticism. Husserl, nonetheless, believed that even the ancients recognised that man strove for a *philosophical* form of life in that he/ she wished to govern themselves and ‘all of his life on the basis of pure reason, on the basis of philosophy’ *Krisis*, 4f, (E 6f).

²¹ Ullrich Melle, ‘Nature and Spirit’ in *Issues in Husserl’s Ideas II*, ed. Thomas Nenon and Lester Embree (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996), my emphasis, p. 81.

must be ‘given’) to uphold their position. Naturalists are thereby compelled to account for ‘reason’, which they then, in turn, must account for using naturalism. Having highlighted the circularity of this appeal, Husserl continues to outline the foundations of knowledge, or a rigorous science by performing a phenomenological reduction (which we will consider later). Thus, as Moran concludes,

For Husserl, naturalism is not just only partial or limited in its explanation of the world, it is in fact *self-refuting*, because it has collapsed all value and normativity into merely physical or psychical occurrences, precisely the same kind of error made by *psychologism* when it sought to explain the normativity of logic in terms of actual, occurrent psychological states and the empirical laws governing them. The whole picture is absurd or ‘counter-sensical’ (*ein Widersinn*) in that it denies the reality of [the experiences of a valid normative logical] consciousness [as such] and yet is based on assuming the existence of [such normative experiences of *valid* logical] consciousness to give rise to the picture in the first place (*Ideas* I, §55). Or as Husserl says in [‘Philosophy as Rigorous Science’]: ‘It is the absurdity of naturalising something whose essence excludes the kind of being that nature has’ (PRS 107; Hua XXV 29).²²

All knowledge of science and rationality as such is dependent on conscious acts in this way, and these acts cannot be understood from within the position adopted in the natural standpoint at all. Moran holds that one should not think of consciousness creating the world in any ontological sense, which would result in subjective idealism (which could be a naturalising tendency itself with consciousness as cause and the world as effect) but that the world is opened up, made meaningful, or disclosed through consciousness.²³ In fact, for Husserl, all natural science is

²² Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p. 143.

²³ Ibid. pp. 143-144. Furthermore, ‘treating consciousness as part of the world, reifying consciousness, is precisely to ignore consciousness’s foundational, disclosive role for this reason, all natural science is naïve about its point of departure, for Husserl [...] Since consciousness is *presupposed* in all science and knowledge, then the proper approach to the study of consciousness itself must be a *transcendental* one—one which, in Kantian terms, focuses on the *conditions for the possibility of* knowledge, though, of course Husserl believes the Kantian way of articulating the consciousness-world relation was itself distorted since it still postulated the thing in itself.’ Ibid. p. 144.

‘naïve’.²⁴ (Husserl does not mean naïve in a pejorative sense according to Lauer, but in the sense that it does not consider its presuppositions).²⁵ Ultimately, then, Husserl wishes to secure knowledge by a return to the ριζομοτα παντων (the roots of all things), that is to say, to a presuppositionless science — a science which bases its justification within itself.²⁶

6.1.1 The Phenomenological Critique of Both Scientism and the Natural Scientific Method

Patrick Heelan outlines that, ‘the features of historical science that make it the current antithesis to phenomenology may be summed up in three characteristics, objectivism, scientism and technicism.’²⁷ These characteristics are ‘shared by the two most influential philosophical systems that are most strongly influenced by natural science, Cartesianism and Positivism’.²⁸ Objectivism, as such, holds that the world exists *per se* and its existence is independent of human intentionality-structures. The *scientific image* of the world is built on objective processes of measurement that ‘substitute the objective restrictions of causal interaction for the

²⁴ Ullrich Melle, ‘Nature and Spirit’ in *Issues in Husserl’s Ideas II*, ed. Thomas Nenon and Lester Embree (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996) p. 82 Moreover, Husserl sees that there is an irresistibility built into the progression of science as a methodology whereby ‘nothing will hinder its victorious advance’. Looked in this regard – in its ideal perfection science is seen as ‘reason’ itself – which would have no other authority equal or superior to itself. This is particularly true in relation to extending scientific theories into meta-narratives/ world-views and the danger of this movement is the failure of such world-views considering their pre-suppositions.

²⁵ Edmund Husserl, ‘Philosophy as Rigorous Science,’ p. 85, footnote 18.

²⁶ As such, Husserl outlines that we are to bring about this presuppositionless science by, ‘confinin[ing] ourselves purely to the task of clarifying the essence of cognition and of being an object of cognition, then this will be phenomenology of cognition and of being an object of cognition and will be the first and principle part of phenomenology as a whole’ (*Idea of Phenomenology*, p. 18; Hua II 23)’ quoted by Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p. 145.

Edmund Husserl, *Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. W. P. Alston and G. Nakhnikian (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1964) p. 18.

²⁷ Patrick A. Heelan, ‘Hermeneutics of Experimental Science’ in *Interdisciplinary Phenomenology*, ed. by Don Ihde and Richard M. Zaner (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1997) p. 8.

²⁸ Ibid.

subjective discovery of meaning within the life-world of man.’²⁹ There is an ‘ontic meaning of the pre-given life-world and all objectivated knowledge is a subjective structure, it is the achievement of experiencing pre-scientific life.’³⁰ In other words, the world opens up, or is disclosed in relation to consciousness, so an ‘objective’ approach presupposes a conscious approach, and Husserl’s rigorous science of phenomenology aims to be such an objective approach from consciousness.

The second issue that Heelan raises is in relation to *scientism*. We have noted that scientism is the belief, some might say dogmatic belief, that the methodology of the positive sciences is in principle capable of answering all *meaningful questions*, including what Husserl calls ‘questions of reason’. Philosophy, in this view, is relegated to ‘the pre-scientific’ and has no bearing in scientific culture on questions of meaning and value. Heelan characterises scientism as follows:

Scientism [...] comprises claims both about the comprehensiveness of the methodology of the positive sciences and about the superior rigour of that methodology vis-à-vis knowledge. Because of these claims, Boehm concludes, science is a threat to the very existence of philosophy considered as phenomenology.³¹

Darwin observed how animals differed from one species to another and within species. He accounted the way these changes were linked together bringing about different variations within forms and from form to form, this means of describing his observations makes the *Origin of the Species*, according to Gillian Beer a ‘literary

²⁹ Ibid. Moreover, ‘The world, in the objectivist view, comes to be an objective World-Picture, already-out-there-now-real, to which the human spirit merely adds the cultural superstructure of a *Weltanschauung* or World-Perspective.’ Ibid. pp. 8-9, Heelan is drawing on Bernard F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (London: Longmans Green, 1957) and *Method in Theology* (London and Darton: Longmans, and Todd, 1972) in relation to the term ‘already-out-there-now-real’, and Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 413-414, in relation to the World-Perspective.

³⁰ Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, p. 69.

³¹ Ibid. p. 9, see also Rudolf Boehm, ‘Les sciences exactes et l’idéal husserlien d’un savoir rigoureux,’ *Arch. de Philo.* 27 (1964), p. 425.

text' (story) as much as a 'scientific' text.³² Observation is a means by which we apprehend an object using the senses (with or without the aid of instrumentation) – the observed object is seen as being 'observed'. As Heelan notes:

Observation is judgmental, that is, what one observes is expressed in a statement like, 'such and such is the case,' and involves the use of a descriptive language. It aims at positing a public reality — public, that is, relative to some reference community. Observation, then, delivers ontic being, with the immediateness and directness of an element in the life-world.³³

What becomes apparent from this position is that observation of scientific 'states of affairs' take place within the *life-world* of the scientific community. There is an understanding of the 'world' of science (i.e. the learning of science, the skill of using a microscope and of instruments) which is borne on the actual observation of an 'object'. The understanding of science is in this sense 'context-dependent' – on what may be termed the 'horizon'³⁴ of expectations - these have to be in place in order that an observation can take place 'scientifically'. As such, 'the historical face of scientific revolutions confirms the *hermeneutical* aspect of experimental science and adds a dialectical movement to its history'.³⁵

³² See Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots, and Open Fields: Science in Cultural Encounter* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

³³ Heelan, 'Hermeneutics of Experimental Science,' pp. 26–27.

³⁴ See, Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, pp. 161-163, 165, 167, 252, As Moran outlines 'Husserl recognised that in all grasping of objects, there are aspects of the objects which are not directly grasped. Husserl calls this the 'horizon' (*Horizont*) [...] the 'horizon' is constituted by those aspects of a thing that are not given in perception but rather are possibilities which can be given in further acts of perception or reflection. As Husserl says in the *Cartesian Meditations*, "There belongs to every genuine perception its reference from the 'genuinely perceived' sides of the object of perception to the sides 'also meant' – not yet perceived but anticipated" (CM§ 19, 44; Hua I 82).' Ibid. pp. 161-162.

³⁵ Heelan, 'Hermeneutics of Experimental Science,' pp. 26-27.

6.1.2 *Ideas*: an Expansion of ‘Philosophy as Rigorous Science’

According to Robert Sokolowski, Husserl composed the first volume of his *Ideas*³⁶ as an expansion of the ideas set out in his 1910/11 article ‘Philosophy as Rigorous Science’.³⁷ Here again in *Ideas* we find Husserl reflecting on presuppositions and how assumptions persist which impede the possibility of ‘rigorous’ science or of knowledge as such.

The foundations of empirical science is an indication that even they are not fully rationalised. We do not really know what we are doing when we carry out mathematics or physics; we do not, [Husserl] claims, understand the foundations of these sciences. Phenomenology is to correct this defect, this ‘spiritual distress of our time’.³⁸

Ideas I outlines Husserl’s movement from the natural attitude to the phenomenological ‘way’. In the natural or pre-philosophical attitude, we hold that the objects in the world exist as real tangible objects. However, there is a distinction between the reality of objects and the appearance in which they are presented to the experiencing subject. So, the table may appear as a table but, from a natural scientific-theoretical standpoint, in ‘reality’ it is composed mostly of empty space between molecules which appears to us as solid.³⁹ As Thompson remarks:

Husserl sets out to find an absolute foundation for the rational science of reality [...] his first, and most crucial methodological step is to suspend the

³⁶ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. Ted E. Klein and William E. Pohl (The Hague/Boston/London, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers 1980).

³⁷ Robert Sokolowski, *The Formation of Husserl’s Concept of Constitution* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), p. 116. *Ideas* was given over to elaborate philosophy/phenomenology as a rigorous science/methodology that gave secure epistemological foundations to thinking. Sokolowski points out that Husserl wished to ‘establish philosophy as the radical clarification of knowledge [by] removing presuppositions and assumptions.’ Husserl, however, dates his own turn to transcendental idealism, defended and published in the first book of *Ideas* (1913), around 1907–08.

³⁸ Ibid. See, also, Husserl, ‘Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft’, p. 336.

³⁹ David L. Thompson, ‘Dennett and Husserl on Seemings and Presence’ in *Husserl and Stein*, ed. Richard Feist and William Sweet, p. 104.

natural attitude to reality, a step he calls the *epoché* or phenomenological reduction. The natural attitude, taken-for-granted belief that what we experience is real is neither confirmed nor denied by the *epoché*, but simply suspended. Husserl then proceeds by describing what we experience without concern for the question of its reality. The pure appearance we investigate he calls ‘phenomena,’ from the Greek word for appearance, and the investigation is phenomenology. Insofar as I restrict myself to describing how things are given to me in intuition – how they appear, without regard to their reality – there is no room for error and so, Husserl claims, we have an absolute [approach to the] foundation for scientific knowledge.⁴⁰

The suspension of the ‘natural attitude’ allows for an understanding of the human individual form from the perspective of the rigorous science of phenomenology.⁴¹

While the scientific method has seen developments through the history of thinking,⁴² the phenomenological method also has undergone development in this case mirrored by the development of Husserl himself. In this regard there is a necessity of speaking of an early and late period in the phenomenological movement. To understand Stein’s position, it is necessary to outline the early and late stages of Husserl’s development, as she, whose phenomenological account of the human individual we

⁴⁰Ibid. See also Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Book I*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982), p. 59. The object as experienced is described as it is given to appearance, the chair is described as having four legs, brown, etc., but the chair is not described as experienced from within the mind (as the mind is reduced under the phenomenological reduction – the chair is described as it appears – ‘over there across the room and not here in my head’). David L. Thompson, ‘Dennett and Husserl on Seemings and Presence’, p. 104.

⁴¹According to Alfred Schutz, at the end of *Ideas I* there are several issues left by Husserl to be treated including: (i) the issue of constitution, (ii) the problem of intersubjectivity (iii) the relations of phenomenology to the various sciences especially to psychology and ontology. These issues were to be considered in relation to *Ideas II* and *III*. Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers III: Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, ed. I. Schutz, introd. by Aron Gurwitsch (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970) p. 16

⁴²Herman Philipse states that ‘according to many present-day epistemologists, the justification of scientific theories is relative in at least two respects. Whether a specific theory is justified at time *t* depends both upon the set *E* of empirical data available at *t*, and upon the set *R* of rival theories which are considered by the relevant scientific community at that time. Indeed, a theory is justified at time *t* if and only if it performs better than its rivals in terms of the accepted criteria for theory choice, and one decisive criterion for theory choice is some version of the criterion of empirical superiority. As a consequence, a theory that is now justified might cease to be justified in the future because of two reasons. New empirical data may tip the balance in favour of an existing rival theory, or a new rival theory may be designed that performs better.’ Herman Philipse, ‘Edmund Husserl and the History of Classical Foundationalism,’ p. 11.

will follow, identifies with the early Husserlian approach rather than his later transcendental turn.

SECTION TWO

HUSSERL'S EARLY AND LATER PHENOMENOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

In the *Logical Investigations* (1900/1) Husserl set out to analyse the nature of mathematics and logic. He wished, in particular, to clarify the proper object of logic. Logic as a discipline studies the necessary relations between ideal contents of expressions, what gets expressed, senses, propositional contents. In the *Logical Investigations* Husserl pays particular attention to epistemology, undertaking a phenomenological clarification of knowledge.⁴³ Due to these developments in Husserl's thinking, his phenomenological method has an interest in the epistemological processes at work. As Moran notes,

Husserl [...] distinguishes his interest in mental acts from the pure logician. The pure logician has no interest in the epistemological processes at work but solely in the *meanings* or *senses* which are asserted and the necessary, formal connections between them. But logic does not have the last word on our cognitive life. As distinct from both empirical psychology and pure logic, phenomenology is concerned with concrete *acts of meaning*, meaning-intendings, not as empirically occurring facts in the world or in terms of the ideal meanings they articulate, but in so far as they have essential, intentional, *a priori* structures. Furthermore, the clarification of pure logic as a science of pure meanings cannot simply rely on the meanings of words as ordinarily used, but must secure these meanings in concrete intuitions: 'we must go back to the things themselves' (*Wir wollen auf die 'Sachen selbst' zurückgehen*), [*Logical Investigations*, Intro. sec. 2, p. 252].⁴⁴

⁴³ As Moran points out, Husserl 'employs the terms "epistemology" here, not to refer to the kinds of epistemic justification usually marshalled to overcome the threat of scepticism, but rather, more in the Kantian sense of an *a priori* investigation into the nature of those acts which yield cognition (*Erkenntnis*), and chiefly the central acts Brentano had specified, namely presentations, judgements, acts of knowing in general', *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p. 92. Also see Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, p. 249.

⁴⁴ Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, pp. 92-93. The 'things themselves' here for Husserl are the 'essences' that are discernible in the experiences of a logical normative consciousness *as such*.

This movement back to the things themselves had a particular resonance regarding the sciences. In the *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena § 10, Husserl holds that the set of logical truths and as such scientific truths, are interconnected, that is ‘science requires [...] a certain unity of validatory interconnection, a certain unity [...] in attainment of the highest goal of knowledge.’ (*Logical Investigations*, p. 24). Science is the body of true propositions linked together in a systematic way (Ibid.). As such all

theoretical research, no matter how it is conducted, eventually comes to expression in a body of *statements* (*Aussagen*, *Logical Investigations*, Intro. § 2, p. 250) or propositions. Logic then studies propositions.⁴⁵

But, as stated above, logic itself has to be grounded in intuitions, so all of the sciences are underpinned by a ‘science’ that reflects on meanings as given in intuition.

There is, however, an active relation between consciousness and its objectivities, for, as De Boer outlines, consciousness, as such, for Husserl, has a ‘meaning-conferring role’.⁴⁶ In this way, we actively interpret what we are given as intuitional *content*. So, it is due to the ‘activity of consciousness that a certain design (or arabesque) or a certain sound appears to us as a meaningful word.’⁴⁷ Husserl highlights that,

A given presentation presents *this object in this manner* in view of its *peculiarly differentiated presentational quality*.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 95

⁴⁶ Theodor de Boer, ‘Husserl’s Idealism’, p. 324

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. J. N. Findlay, vol. 2, p. 133.

The study of meaning and its relationship to consciousness is of central importance in the *Logical Investigations*:

We look out and see *that it is raining*, and we focus on the fact or state of affairs itself, not on the meaning which we constituted in order that this be grasped as a fact for us. Husserl [...] wants to catalogue and analyse how, in the process of intending objects or state of affairs, we instantiate *meanings*. The difficulty of focusing on these meanings is due to the entirely ‘unnatural’ direction (*in der widernatürlichen Anschauungs- und Denkrichtung*) of this kind of reflection. [*Logical Investigations*, Intro. § 3, p. 254]. Instead of becoming absorbed in the objectivating acts, we must reflect on them.⁴⁹

Though perception is a mode of access through which things ‘appear’ to consciousness, Husserl, according to de Boer, came to the position that perception is active in the constitution of the meaning of its objects because:

in perceiving the subject is directed to the perceived object *via* the sensations (*Empfindungen*) [...]. Husserl places a great deal of emphasis on the difference between immanent colour-sensations (*empfundene Farbe*) and objectively perceived colour. The former is ‘*erlebt*’ and immanent, while the latter [perceived colour] is transcendent.⁵⁰

The ‘perceived’ colour, from a descriptive point of view, is ‘nothing but a sensation interpreted in a transcendent or objective sense’.⁵¹ The existence of the external world is thus ‘bracketed’ for descriptive-psychological methodological considerations, and so, any questions or interest in the objective colour in a realist sense, as existing independently of one’s actual experiences, is placed outside of the early phenomenological (descriptive-psychological) manner of inquiry. The question of the *causal* origin of the sensation, and how such a coloured object arises for the experiencing subject, is not addressed, nor considered. Examining the origin

⁴⁹Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p. 97. In the Second Edition of the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl inserts the reduction at this particular point – as the method which ushers in a movement from the natural reflection to phenomenological reflection.

⁵⁰Theodore de Boer, ‘Husserl’s Idealism’, p. 324.

⁵¹Ibid.

of such sensation and sense-perception, rather, is regarded as a ‘metaphysical’ (hypothetical) matter ‘which does not fall within the domain of what is phenomenologically given’.⁵² Phenomenologists are thus, on methodological grounds, precluded from the kind of investigations which are undertaken by the natural sciences, such as, for instance, physics. As de Boer puts it:

Husserl, like Brentano, [considers] the real, independently existing thing to be the object of physics (in later terminology, *das physikalische Ding*). It lies ‘behind’ the perceived phenomena and is the cause of the sensations. Consequently, Husserl is realist at this point, *but not in virtue of the doctrine of intentionality [of consciousness]*. The intentional object is not identical with the real object in the sense of the independently existing object.⁵³

In this respect, therefore, Husserl wishes to remain faithful to the Cartesian starting-point by proceeding only from that which is phenomenologically given, i.e., the sphere of consciousness and *its* objectivities. Phenomenology here is,

a science of essence of consciousness and of the ideal essence of the objective correlates of conscious acts.⁵⁴

Any questions pertaining to the existence of ‘extra-mental things’ are thereby consigned to metaphysics. Thus, for the early Husserl, as de Boer notes:

This means that, though the technical terms are still absent, there is in the *Logical Investigations* an [descriptive-psychological] epoché and a

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid. pp. 324–325.

⁵⁴ Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p. 145, ‘How to arrive at these essences without construing them psychologically is the function of the *epoché* and the phenomenological and eidetic reductions. The general thesis of the natural attitude, if left unbracketed, will inevitably distort our more theoretical consideration of consciousness itself: for instance, we will inevitably think of consciousness as something ‘immanent’ and objects as something ‘transcendent’. Instead of being drawn into this traditional epistemological way of proceeding, we must operate the *epoché*, assign to everything transcendent ‘the index zero’, as Husserl says “and now we operate with a new ‘reduced’ concept of immanence. Immanence does not now mean being within something factual, but that all claims of validity have been disowned. Similarly the transcendent is not understood as existent but as that which stands as object apart from the experience regardless of questions of existence or non-existence. [*Idea of Phenomenology*, pp. 4, 7]”.’ Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p. 145. Husserl moves forward in his Freiburg years to question this bracketing of the natural attitude and leads to *transcendental idealism*, ‘a position which is first argued for but not explicitly named in *Ideas* I, §§39–49’. Ibid., pp. 145–146.

disconnection of the existence of the extra-mental object. *And here 'reduction'* [means]; putting within brackets the real existence of the object.⁵⁵

The question of transcendence, formulated in terms of 'how I can gain access to the external world', still remains a problem, however, for the early Husserl, since implementation of the descriptive-psychological *epoché*, as de Boer acutely points out, 'does not solve the problem but eliminates it. It is an emergency measure which limits itself to the given (consciousness plus *cogitata*), because the real question cannot be answered.'⁵⁶ In other words, by maintaining the position that questions and issues about the extra-mental existence of things does not matter, in descriptive-psychological or phenomenological analyses of intentional consciousness and its objectivities, 'the problem of transcendence', on methodological grounds in Husserl's early investigations, 'is evaded rather than solved.'⁵⁷ The implementation of this descriptive-psychological *epoché*, nevertheless, still assumed that the natural attitude makes you prone to prejudice. Husserl realised that the presupposition of the existence of the external world was a *hypo-thesis* (of the natural attitude), that is, that the world exists in and of itself. So, from this reading of Husserl, we can conclude that there is an underlying realism in the early Husserl; and it is one that is based on what Husserl later calls the 'prejudice of an independent, absolutely existing world'. Husserl moves forward to consider the prejudice of the existing world⁵⁸ and to demonstrate the point that,

the presupposition of a naturalistic ontology — i.e. the (hypo) thesis of the natural attitude — has no phenomenological foundation. It is an illusion. The true presupposition (ground) of the world is consciousness. This is the Copernican revolution in ontology which Husserl desires to bring about by the

⁵⁵ De Boer, 'Husserl's Idealism', p. 325.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 326.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ For an in-depth analysis of the problem of existence, see Aron Gurwitsch, 'The Problem of Existence in Constitutive Phenomenology', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 58 (1962), 625–632

transcendental reduction. The effect of this transcendental reduction or epoche is not that being is put within brackets, as was the case in the *Logical Investigations*. What is put within brackets is a particular, absurd interpretation of being! [...] Husserl [is now] able to say that the reduction does not imply the loss of anything at all. What is lost is a mere naturalistic prejudice and its insoluble problem of transcendence. [...] The thing of physics [...] is not an independent reality behind the phenomenal world, but a particular formal interpretation of the latter; it is a conceptual cloak (*Ideenkleid*) which should not be taken ontologically as ‘true nature’.⁵⁹

Husserl moved consciousness away from nature as such and thereby held that matter was not the foundation of consciousness. Since one’s own actual consciousness is a necessary (pre-)condition for the very appearing of the world of things to consciousness, then ‘(T)he existence of a [absolutely independent] nature *can not* condition the existence of consciousness’.⁶⁰ Through the therapeutic act of the reduction of the natural attitude to the transcendental-phenomenological attitude, then, the ‘explanatory sciences of nature and consciousness are not rejected but freed from their implicit, naturalistic philosophy.’⁶¹

Consciousness in this regard is the necessary starting point or indeed becomes an ideal starting point to investigate or to analyse what-it-is-to-be-human, as it becomes the foundation of all inquiry.⁶² But Edith Stein’s philosophical

⁵⁹ de Boer, ‘Husserl’s Idealism’, p. 329. Thus it is of importance not to confuse or identify the ‘transcendental reduction’ and ‘eidetic reduction’ in the development of Husserl’s thought, but commentators often do. See, for example, Merleau-Ponty’s ‘Preface’ to his *Phenomenology of Perception* that confuses the ‘eidetic reduction’ and ‘transcendental reduction’ with the ‘natural standpoint’ and Heidegger’s emphasis on the facticity of *Dasein*’s ‘being-in-the-world’ (which is not a fall back into the natural standpoint as Husserl defines it, though Husserl thought Heidegger did fall back into the natural standpoint).

⁶⁰ *Ideen* Vol. I (1st edition), p. 96 quoted by de Boer, ‘Husserl’s Idealism’, p. 330.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* However, the methodology of the natural sciences which place particular importance in the objective reality of the existent object over and against that of the ‘subjectively’ perceived object would probably find this freedom from ‘naturalistic philosophy’ as a step backwards in technological and scientific progression.

⁶² The psychical, for Husserl, does not constitute a world for itself; it is ‘given as an ego or as the experience of an ego [...] and this sort of thing reveals itself empirically as bound to certain physical things called bodies. This, too, is a self-evident pre-datum.’ See, ‘Philosophy as Rigorous Science,’ in *Edmund Husserl: Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, p. 85. The self, therefore, is there prior to scientific investigation/examination itself. In other words, there is a self prior to scientific reflection. Darwinism, however, has been seen to be like phenomenology in that it is viewed by many

contribution to phenomenology which concentrated on the experience of the ‘Other’ and of oneself as persons does so from within the reduction of Husserl’s early ‘realist’ (=descriptive-eidetic) phenomenological approach. Thus her approach does not need to move towards transcendental idealism, which, in Stein and other followers of the early Husserl, is in danger of falling into solipsistic thinking out of which one is not able to identify the characteristics of the human individual. The human individual is not an isolated or isolatable ‘pure’ consciousness and is not experienced as such. An alternative approach to the natural scientific and Husserlian transcendental idealist approach, therefore, is called for.

SECTION THREE

EDITH STEIN’S POSITION IN RELATION TO HUSSERLIAN METHODOLOGY

Stein, among others, disagreed with Husserl’s movement towards transcendental idealism. Many from the Munich school saw phenomenology as a realist philosophy of pure *description* of objects, and emphasised the objective truth discoverable through close description of the essential features of such objects, i.e., descriptive-*eidetic*-phenomenological analyses. Regarding these early followers of Husserl’s descriptive-*eidetic* phenomenological analyses, Moran remarks that,

These students did not follow Husserl in his reductions and transcendental idealism, a position Husserl later characterised as ‘empirical phenomenology’ as opposed to his ‘transcendental’ phenomenology.⁶³ In 1907 a group of students at Göttingen founded a similar circle of phenomenology, the Göttingen Philosophy Society, led by Theodor Conrad and including Hedwig Conrad-Martius, [...] Jean Héring, Fritz Kaufmann, [...] Winthrop Bell, [...] Roman Ingarden, [...] Alexandre Koyré, and Edith Stein.⁶⁴

as a *descriptive* account of morphological change, rather than as a grounded scientific explanation *per se*. Neo-Darwinists, however, hold that the theory is founded on a scientific method of explanation.

⁶³ Moran refers to Husserl, *Ideas II*, p. 374; Hua IV 364; Moran, p. 77.

⁶⁴ Moran, p. 77.

In the case of Stein, the methodology of phenomenology does not preclude the reality of the external world, or the perception of one's own body which is an object of outer perception too, but, in keeping with Husserl's early descriptive-phenomenological methodology, questions pertaining to the external world are bracketed. Stein discusses the realism-idealism issue as a metaphysical question.⁶⁵ Even when Stein considers the reality of the psycho-physical individual, she does so from the sphere of pure consciousness.⁶⁶ Given that her descriptive analysis of the body, both in its living and physical dimensions, brings her to reflect on the causal processes that are given to consciousness, Sawicki believes that Stein has not remained totally faithful to the 'early' phenomenological reduction.⁶⁷ That being said, however, it does appear valid that Stein can legitimately analyse the realm of the causal from the 'sphere of pure consciousness' as she experiences 'that' (i.e. causal) reality as it is 'given' to the stream of (an incarnate) consciousness.⁶⁸

6.3.1 Stein's Phenomenological Approach to the Question of What It Means To Be Human.

In order to consider Stein's descriptive-constitutional analysis of the structure of the 'psycho-physical-spiritual' individual, it is necessary to give a brief overview and an

⁶⁵ See, Edith Stein, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, ed. Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz and Claudia Mariéle Wulf, (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 2004) ESGA 8, written originally 1918-1920, p. 79. Also see, Sepp's discussion in Edith Stein's, *Beiträge*.

⁶⁶ See *On Empathy*, p. 41.

⁶⁷ As Sawicki states: 'the third of the extant chapters of [Stein's] dissertation [*On the Problem of Empathy*] is unlike the other two [...] The exposition is no longer conscientiously phenomenological; the argument goes by fits and starts', *Body, Text, and Science: The Literacy of Investigative Practices and the Phenomenology of Edith Stein* (Dordrecht, Boston & London: Kluwer, 1997), p. 131.

⁶⁸ Later, Stein would come to realise that in comparison to the Cartesian-Lockean dualistic view of transparent consciousness and opaque body underpinning Husserl's modern phenomenological approach to human subjectivity, an Aristotelian-Thomistic account of the unity of human subjectivity would better accommodate her reflections on this matter of human incarnate consciousness.

account of her philosophical works from *On the Problem of Empathy*⁶⁹ to *Finite and Eternal Being*.⁷⁰

On Empathy is a pivotal text as it opened the way for Stein's reflection on what it is to be a human individual in all its complexity. As Baseheart remarks,

In this early work [*On Empathy*], [Stein] examined empathy as a particular form of the act of knowing and proceeded to the subject which would occupy her in all subsequent writings: the structure of the human person.⁷¹

Although we shall concentrate in principle on the early works, the later works are of interest in light of the fact, as Baseheart points out above, that Stein's writings, both early and late, are permeated with direct and indirect reflection on the structure of the human individual. Indeed, in *On Empathy* Stein holds that knowledge of empathy is a key to unlock the secrets of personhood.⁷²

A number of compositions form Stein's early body of works that were written between 1916 and 1921. These are published in English as follows – *On the Problem of Empathy* (1916), *Einführung in die Philosophie* (c. 1920), *The Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* (1922)⁷³ and *An Investigation Concerning the State*

⁶⁹ Edith Stein, *Zum Problem der Einfühlung* (Halle: Buchdruckerei des Waisenhauses, 1917), trans. by Waltraut Stein as *On the Problem of Empathy* (Washington D.C: ICS Publications, 1989). Henceforth: abbreviated as *On Empathy*.

⁷⁰ *Endliches und ewiges Sein: Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*. ESW Werke 2 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 1949, 1986). Published in English as, Edith Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent To the Meaning of Being*, trans. by Kurt F. Reinhardt, (Washington D.C: ICS Publications, 2002) CWES 9. This work represents an expansion of an early work (*Potenz und Akt*) which was written in 1931 but published in 1998. See, Steven Payne's forward to *Finite and Eternal Being*, p. xiv. Although *Finite and Eternal Being* is not merely an expansion of *Potenz und Akt* as this work has its own focus independent of *Finite and Eternal Being*. See, *Potency and Act: Studies Toward a Philosophy of Being*, ed. L. Gelber & Romaeus Leuven, trans. Walter Redmond (Washington, D.C.: ICS, 2009) CWES XI.

⁷¹ Mary Catharine Baseheart, *Person in the World: Introduction to the Philosophy of Edith Stein* (Dordrecht, Boston and London: Kluwer, 1997), p. 31.

⁷² See Baseheart, p. 30.

⁷³ See, n. 6

(1925).⁷⁴ Two works of her middle-period of writing or ‘Münster period’, (some might say they are in fact a twin work) and which reflect on the ‘human person’⁷⁵ include *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person* (1932)⁷⁶ and *Was ist der Mensch?* (1933).⁷⁷ Stein’s final work of particular significance was published in English as *Finite and Eternal Being*, a text that was written between 1931 and 1937.⁷⁸ We have as such outlined the principle works of Stein’s that concentrate on philosophical anthropology and philosophical-theological anthropology. We will begin by outlining Stein’s findings with regard to the structure of the human individual in *On Empathy* as her findings in this work are foundational for the rest of her philosophical investigations into the human individual. We shall follow a close reading of her epistemological findings before relating her findings to the question of human freedom (a characteristic as we noted above associated with the *Imago Dei* idea) in section four.

⁷⁴ Edith Stein, *Eine Untersuchung über den Staat*, 2 ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1970), published in English as, *An Investigation concerning the State*, trans. by Marianne Sawicki (Washington D.C.: ICS, 2006).

⁷⁵ Beate Beckmann-Zöllner, ‘Edith Stein’s Theory of the Person in Her Münster Years (1932–1933)’, in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 82, No. 1, pp. 47-70

⁷⁶ *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person: Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 2004) ESGA 14. In this work Stein considers the question of *What is the Human Being* and outlines the method as follows: ‘we will concentrate on the things themselves and build on that as far as we can. [...] The method with which I will look for a solution to the problems is the phenomenological one, that is, the method that Edmund Husserl developed and first applied in volume II of the *Logical Investigations*. But it is my conviction that it has been used by the great philosophers of all time, if not exclusively, and without a clear and reflective awareness of their own method.’ *Der Aufbau*, pp. 28-29, quoted by Beate Beckmann-Zöllner, ‘Edith Stein’s Theory of the Person’ p. 51.

⁷⁷ Edith Stein, *Was ist der Mensch?: Theologische Anthropologie* (Freiburg, Basel and Wien: Herder, 2005) ESGA 15.

⁷⁸ In her later works, Stein moves beyond her early methodological restrictions by attempting to merge phenomenology with Scholastic philosophy. The movement towards Scholastic philosophy is marked by Stein’s conversion to Catholicism and entry into the religious life where she undertook studies of Aristotle and Aquinas. As we have previously noted, however, the division of Stein’s works into early and late does not reflect a radical departure in thinking on the one object that she concerned herself with from her initial studies in psychology to her final work on *Finite and Eternal Being* – the human individual.

6.3.2 The Structure of the Human Individual in *On Empathy*

Stein's *On Empathy* was published in 1917 and represents one of the earliest phenomenological treatises on inter-subjectivity. Her supervisor, Edmund Husserl, had become interested in the question of inter-subjective experience around 1911 when he began his work on the natural attitude. Husserl believed that our 'natural life is a life in a community, living in a world of shared objects, shared environment, shared language and shared meanings'.⁷⁹ Moran outlines this natural attitude as follows: 'when I see a tree in the garden and know it is a publicly accessible object, a tree others can also see, not just as a physical object but indeed precisely as a *tree*. In other words, my perception of the tree already indicates to me that it is a tree *for others*.'⁸⁰ But Stein believed inter-subjectivity to be a lacuna in Husserl's work. Husserl had as such not adequately described the essence of the act of empathy and therefore Stein's thesis aimed to examine this phenomenological idea.⁸¹ According to Moran, however, Husserl did notice that:

connected with the focus on the ego necessarily comes the problem of the experience of other egos, of alter egos, the experience of the 'foreign', the 'strange', the 'other' (*Fremderfahrung*) in general.⁸²

Husserl also recognised that accounting for how we experience the foreign was problematic, especially after his discovery, around 1908, of the absolute mode of

⁷⁹ Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p. 175.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Husserl believed that our 'natural life is a life in a community, living in a world of shared objects, shared environment, shared language and shared meanings'. Dermot Moran outlines this natural attitude as follows: 'when I see a tree in the garden and know it is a publicly accessible object, a tree others can also see, not just as a physical object but indeed precisely as a *tree*. In other words, my perception of the tree already indicates to me that it is a tree *for others*.' Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p. 175. But Stein believed this to be a lacuna in Husserl's work. Husserl had as such not adequately described the essence of the act of empathy and therefore Stein's thesis aimed to underpin this phenomenological idea.

⁸² *Ibid.*

existence of one's own actual consciousness in immanent perception and the contingency of the mode of being of things given to outer perception upon the harmony of one's actual (conscious) experiences, a position which he later publishes in terms of his famous 'reduction' of the 'natural attitude' to the 'transcendental-phenomenological attitude' in *Ideas I* (1913).⁸³

Yet, the experience of the 'other' is, nevertheless, an experience, and as such, open, to phenomenological analysis.⁸⁴ Thus Husserl adopted the term '*Einfühlung* (in-feeling)' from Theodor Lipps to describe this experience; however, Husserl understood *Einfühlung* (empathy) in a manner different from Lipps. It appears, therefore, that although Husserl had not formulated a precise account of *Einfühlung* (before 1917), he followed Stein's characterisation of empathy as published in *On Empathy*.⁸⁵ In fact, Stein's publication of *On Empathy* predates Husserl's own published reflections in this regard in *Ideas II*.⁸⁶

⁸³ Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague, Boston, Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1983), first published 1913 as *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, I. Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*. (Halle S.: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1913).

⁸⁴ As Baseheart explains, 'like Husserl, [Stein] attempts to exclude from her investigation at the outset the consideration of anything that is in any way doubtful. She raises the possibility of one's being deceived in regard to the existence of the surrounding world and other subjects and even of the empirical 'I'. [But] unlike Husserl, however, she admits that there are difficulties in seeing how it is possible to suspend the positing of existence and still retain the full character of perception [See, *On Empathy*, pp. 4-5]'. Baseheart, p. 31. While this was a question that Stein formulated, she nevertheless followed the methodology of phenomenology in her investigation while being assured of the indubitability of the 'experiencing subject who considers the world and my own person as phenomenon, "I" am in experience and only in it, am just as indubitable and impossible to cancel as experience itself', *On Empathy*, pp. 4-5.

⁸⁵ It must be noted that Husserl's reflections continued to grow as phenomenology was in its infancy and a great deal of issues were yet to be considered. Stein's work *On Empathy* was obviously held in high regard by Husserl as he promoted her thesis for the doctorate degree which was awarded *Summa Cum Laude*. Furthermore, Stein later collaborated with Husserl on these issues. According to Moran, Stein's position in 1916-1917 most likely expresses Husserl's thinking at that stage. (Marianne Sawicki is not totally convinced of this identical mode of thinking in 1917; see, Marianne Sawicki, *Body, Text, and Science*: p. 131). Husserl's mature phenomenological work caused strain within the phenomenological schools that grew up around him. By 1923 the problem of empathy began to take on greater precedence for Husserl. Stein had noticed in her thesis that empathy was a central issue in the phenomenological enterprise. Husserl seems to have recognised the need to address the issue himself and in his lectures on 'First Philosophy' (1923-1924) he considers the problem of the

Stein believed that empathy was a ‘founding act’,⁸⁷ that is to say, empathy is a kind of foundation for other acts that is indispensable for their execution. More significantly, for Stein, empathy is a founding act *sui generis*;⁸⁸ in other words, it cannot be defined in any other terms except with reference to the kind of experience it is, i.e., it cannot be reduced to other, similar acts of consciousness, such as, memory, expectation, sympathy or fantasy (see *On Empathy*, chapter 2, §. III). According to Stein, then, empathy is a kind of act which allows us to experience the ‘foreign’ individual. For Stein, we ‘sense-in’ or ‘in-feel’ (*Ein-fühlen*) the ‘foreign experience’. In this way, we have a primordial experience which is led by non-

constitution of the foreign individual. He developed the problem further in his Fifth Cartesian Meditation. Husserl wished to maintain the primacy of the ego in constituting the foreign individual: ‘It is from out of myself as the one constituting the meaning of being within the content of my own private ego that I attain the transcendental other as someone just like me; and in this way I attain the open and endless whole of *transcendental intersubjectivity*, precisely as that which, within its communalised transcendental life, first constitutes the world as an *objective world*, as a *world that is identical for everyone*.’ ‘Phenomenology and Anthropology’, in Edmund Husserl, *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger (1927-1931)*, trans. and ed. by Thomas Sheehan and Richard E. Palmer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997) p. 498. But Husserl’s position vis-à-vis transcendental phenomenology alienated his earlier followers. His early followers noted that Husserl was now arguing for transcendental idealism (Husserl preferred the term ‘transcendental phenomenology’) over and against phenomenological realism (what Husserl termed ‘empirical phenomenology’), See Moran, p. 77. For a treatment of Stein and Husserl with regard to realist and transcendental phenomenology, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue 1913-1922* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), pp. 75–89.

⁸⁶Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book*, trans. R. Rojcewicz & A. Schuwer (Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer, 2002), originally published as, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch: Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*, ed. Marly Biemel, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952) (*Husserliana* IV). While Stein’s work predates Husserl in terms of publication Husserl was already working on these problems since 1912. Most likely Husserl accepted Stein to look after this issue of empathy when she began her thesis in 1915 because ‘Husserl had not formulated a precise definition of empathy himself’, See MacIntyre, p. 71. With regard to the publication of *Ideas II* Moran outlines that ‘Husserl seems to have hurriedly scribbled in pencil *Ideas II* and *Ideas III* in the summer of 1912. He wrote *Ideas I* earlier in 1912. However, in 1915 Husserl rewrote the manuscript of *Ideas II*, planning to publish it in his *Jahrbuch*, but he held back and continued revising it until 1928 when he finally abandoned it, in part because he felt that he had not worked out the problem of constitution. [...] Edith Stein closely collaborated with Husserl on the drafting and organisation of the work, which was finally published in 1952. The draft form of the work influenced Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger’. See Moran, p. 80. See Sawicki’s article, ‘Making up Husserl’s mind about Constitution’ in *Yearbook of Irish Philosophical Society*, ed. Will Desmond (Maynooth: NUI Maynooth, 2007) which analyses the contribution of Stein and her work to *Ideas II*.

⁸⁷ *On Empathy*, p. 11. Husserl saw phenomenology as being ‘engaged in the constant act of radical founding (*Letztbegründung*)’. Moran, p. 2.

⁸⁸ *On Empathy*, p. 11.

primordial content. This acknowledges the experiential fact that ‘we can *live in* the other’s experience in an intuitive manner but [we] don’t undergo that experience [ourselves] in an original fashion.’⁸⁹

Therefore, in the second chapter of *On Empathy* Stein descriptively analyses ‘the essence of the acts of empathy’ (*das Wesen der Einfühlungsakte*).⁹⁰ She begins her analysis by discussing the relationship between outer perception and empathy. This in turn leads on to her consideration of the primordial experience we have of our own conscious deliberations (such as perception, sensation) and the non-primordial content that we experience in a primordial fashion (empathy). Then Stein moves to outline how empathy differs from memory, perception and fantasy. These acts that are characteristic of human experience are differentiated through eidetic analysis and brought to bear on each other in order to situate each act in terms of each other.

Stein continues her discussion by outlining the distinction between empathy and fellow-feeling (*Mit-fühlung* - sympathy) this is necessary in order to offer a corrective to Lipps’ understanding of empathy.⁹¹ Thus it is of importance to see how Stein encounters the *problem* of empathy and sets up that problem for her analysis.

Stein encounters the problem of the way we distinguish empathy from other acts, the contents of which are given to us non-primordially such as memory and

⁸⁹ Moran, p. 176. Moran relates the relationship between Stein’s understanding and that of Husserl’s when he states: ‘Empathy is, for Stein as for Husserl, a non-primordial experience which reveals a primordial experience’ (ibid.). We could also describe empathy as a primordial experience with non-primordial content referring to a primordial experience.

⁹⁰ The first chapter of *On Empathy* which contained a hermeneutic analysis of empathy in various authors including Theodor Lipps, Max Scheler and Wilhelm Dilthey is now lost. Thus *On Empathy* now begins with chapter two’s analysis of the essence of the acts of empathy.

⁹¹ The concluding sections of the chapter consider genetic theories of the comprehension of foreign consciousness and finally Scheler’s and Münsterberg’s theories of comprehension of foreign consciousness.

fantasy. These acts of memory and fantasy are of course features of our experience. With regard to remembered joy we do not experience it as alive *per se*. In fact our experience of remembered joy is an experienced of ‘joy’ once having lived but not now alive. Furthermore, Stein outlines that it is possible for me to represent a past situation to myself and be unable to remember my inner behaviour in this situation.⁹² So memory can have the character of doubt, conjecture, or possibility, but never the character of *being*.⁹³ The experience of joy in empathy is given to us as having *being*, i.e., we do not experience the doubt that arises with the experience of memory. In terms of our experience of fantasy – Stein tells us that the ‘I’ producing the world of fantasy is experienced primordially while the ‘I’ living in that world (of fantasy) is experienced non-primordially. Fantasised experiences allow us to meet ourselves as in memory, i.e. to meet an ‘I’ which I recognise as myself. For fantasy, as in the case of memory, there is a connection between the primordial and non-primordial content in what we might call the ‘stream of the “I”’. But empathy is an experience of a foreign ‘I’ as such and in this way there is not a complete connection between our primordial and non-primordial experience in the ‘stream of the “I”’. In other words, there should be a disconnection between the primordial experience and the non-primordial experience which issues from a foreign ‘I’, for it to be empathy.

Stein develops this position in relation to Lipps. According to Stein, Lipps’ theory of empathy in general agrees with her position in many respects. She outlines that Lipps depicts empathy as an ‘inner participation’ in foreign experiences.

⁹² See, *On Empathy*, pp. 8–11. As Stein states, ‘the past memory of ‘joy’ has the characteristic of a former ‘now’ which is remembered. The ‘I’ as such becomes the ‘subject’ of the act of remembering, and in this act of representation, the ‘I’ can look back at the past joy. The present ‘I’ and the past ‘I’ face each other as subject and object. They do not coincide, though there is a consciousness of sameness’, p. 8.

⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 9.

However, Lipps stresses that empathy is akin to memory and expectation. From what we have outlined above it is clear to see that at these points Stein will diverge from Lipps' position. Stein does not believe that there is a complete coincidence with the 'remembered, or expected, or empathised "I," that they become one'.⁹⁴ In this regard Lipps has failed to distinguish between the following two acts: (i) being drawn into the experience at first given objectively and fulfilling its implied tendencies with (ii) the transition from non-primordial to primordial experience. A memory is entirely fulfilled and identified when one has followed out its tendencies to explication and established the experiential continuity to the present. But this does not make the remembered experience primordial as Lipps maintains.⁹⁵

Stein elaborates the difference between her position and Lipps in an example that all of us can 'empathise' with to a greater or lesser extent – going to the circus we see an acrobat perform what we consider dizzying feats at dizzying heights. For Lipps, when we see the acrobat we become 'one' with him/her. For Stein, however, we would not be 'one' with the experience of the acrobat but 'at' the acrobat. In this way, Stein says we do not go through the acrobat's motions but *quasi*. Stein stresses that Lipps does not go so far as to say that one would outwardly go through the acrobat's motion but the inward dimensions are still a problem for Stein. According to Stein, the inward movements do not correspond to the movements of the body, the experience that 'I move' is not primordial, it is non-primordial for the seated individual. But through the non-primordial movement one feels led, accompanied by the acrobat's movements.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 12–13.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 16–18.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 17–18.

The major fault in Lipps' account is brought via the delusion of self-forgetfulness. In this case one forgets the self to any object, with a dissolution of the 'I' to the object. This happens when the 'I' being entertained by the acrobat becomes merged with the acrobat. Thus, strictly speaking for Stein, empathy is not a feeling of oneness as it is for Lipps. In sum, Stein's theory of empathy is a phenomenological account of *the way* we experience the foreign individual. It makes use of an epistemological distinction, based upon descriptive-phenomenological analysis, of the distinction between our primordial experience and the non-primordial content given to us from 'without'. In her inquiry Stein realises that there are problems with Lipps' account precisely in the area of primordially. Stein contends that Lipps, wrongly, holds that there is a 'oneness' in empathy that allows a merging with the foreign individual such that we 'forget' (in the sense that we un-constitute or lose our personal identity) ourselves. For Stein, the primordial nature of our empathetic experience prevents such a merging. However, she does note that it is possible to be taken over by contagion or imitation but contra Lipps she argues that we still are not 'one' with the other individual. While we can be 'saturated by [...] "transferred" feelings, we live in them and thus in *ourselves*'. Our primordially is maintained.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ As Stein states, 'A child seeing another crying cries, too. When I see a member of my family going around with a long face, I too become upset. When I want to stop worrying, I seek out happy company. We speak of the contagion or transference of feeling in such cases. It is very plain that the actual feelings aroused in us do not serve a cognitive function, that they do not announce a foreign experience to us as empathy does. So we need not consider whether such a transference of feeling presupposes the comprehension of the foreign feeling concerned, since only phenomena of expression can affect us like this. On the contrary, the same change of face interpreted as a grimace certainly can arouse imitation in us, but not a feeling. It is certain that as we are saturated by such 'transferred' feelings, we live in them and thus in ourselves. This prevents our turning toward or submerging ourselves in the foreign experience, which is the attitude characteristic of empathy', *On Empathy*, pp. 23-24

So, Stein's understanding of empathy to be an 'act which is primordial'⁹⁸ as present experience though non-primordial in content'⁹⁹ is expressed by Stein in the following (which gives rise to our experiences of our 'I' (*Ich*) as the pole of experience):

While I am living in the other's joy, I do not feel primordial joy. It does not issue live from my 'I'. Neither does it have the character of once having lived like remembered joy. But still less is it merely fantasised without actual life. This other subject is primordial although I do not experience it as primordial. In my non-primordial experience I feel, as it were, led by a primordial one not experienced by me but still there, manifesting itself in my non-primordial experience.¹⁰⁰

Primordial acts are given to us in a direct way as they issue live from the 'I' as such. Empathy is characterised as being non-primordial (as having non-primordial content), in this way, a feeling of joy, sadness, guilt, regret maybe issuing live from my 'I' in the present moment but when I encounter the 'joy' of another individual 'I' am aware that it (the joy of the 'other') is not flowing presently from my 'I' in an original fashion.¹⁰¹ Thus, we are capable of differentiating the primordial and non-primordial experience of 'joy' and, as such, 'I' can come to identify *my* 'I' as the pole of experience. This distinction is prior to my *constitution* of myself as a self and, in fact, this distinction brings about the phenomenological manifestation of the

⁹⁸ Stein uses the term primordial to refer to those acts which are given to us directly. She states 'there are things other than the outer world given to us primordially; for instance, there is ideation which is the intuitive comprehension of essential states. Insight into a geometric axiom is primordially given as well as valuing. Finally and above all, our own experience as they are given in reflection have the character of primordially [...]. All our own present experiences are primordial. What could be more primordial than experience itself?' *On Empathy*, p. 7.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 10.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p. 11.

¹⁰¹ On any given day we are open to the possibility of encountering foreign individuals who are energised to various different extents with what we might term 'life-power' (*Lebenskraft*). Some days 'I' am tired and cranky (low life-power levels), the experience I have of being de-energised is given to me in a primordial fashion. I am the subject that experiences this reality from within. It issues live from my 'I'. While I can be de-energised I can encounter a person who is full of joy on the street. From this causal encounter with an 'other' — I can experience the foreign individual. I know that the joy is not issuing *live* from my 'I'. The joy thus must come from some other place. Stein develops the analogy of life-power further in her *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities* (Washington D.C: ICS Publications, 2000), esp. pp. 24–25.

‘I’ (*Ich*, as a self, an I among other Is).¹⁰² So by having such ‘awareness’ we can decipher between our own experience and the experience that is brought about in us in relation to others. From this perspective, we are aware of feelings which issue primordially and those that do not arise or emanate *live* from our ‘I’. This is why, as Baseheart points out, for Stein,

One’s own individual is announced in perceived experiences; the foreign individual is announced in empathised ones. In the former, there is primordial givenness, while in the latter there is a non-primordial givenness of the constituting experiences.¹⁰³

Finally, while Stein considered the ‘act of empathy’ in chapter two she also realised that we as subjects are capable of recognising ‘re-iterated empathy’, we are capable of empathising another’s empathetic experience. Being capable of reiterated empathy means that an individual can recognise if another individual empathises with their particular feeling, whether it is sharing in another’s joy or another’s sorrow. By being able both to empathise and experience reiterated empathy each individual comes to share ‘reality’ whereby we recognise our inner experiences as being real. This also allows us to have ‘[The] ability to see ourselves as objects and “stand back” from ourselves, allows us to evaluate and decide what kind of people we want to become and, therefore, how we should act. It is the condition of our freedom’.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² As Sawicki notes, ‘This i in-feels the flow of appearances as *motivated*, that is, as exhibiting a teleological coherence not of the i’s own making. This motivation, registering inwardly with the i, is the raw material for its constitution of an object transcendent to the i itself. Constitution, then, is the transition *from* sequential ‘in-feeling’ of a motivated series of appearances, *to* all-at-once ‘in-sight’ into a fully formed essence for the object.’, Marianne Sawicki, ‘Making up Husserl’s mind about Constitution,’ pp. 195-196.

¹⁰³ Baseheart, p. 35 and as Stein states, ‘If I experience a feeling as that of another, I have it given twice: once primordially as my own and once non-primordially in empathy as originally foreign.’ *Die Frau, Ihre Aufgabe nach Natur und Gnade* (Louvain, Nauwelaers and Freiburg: Herder, 1959), pp. 133–134, quoted by Baseheart, p. 35.

¹⁰⁴ Borden, *Edith Stein*, p. 29. See, *On Empathy*, chapter 3, § 5.

Before considering the way empathy leads us to constitute ourselves as psycho-physical-spiritual individuals further we need to firstly turn to Stein's understanding of *constitution*, the term was also quite a problematic topic in Husserl's writings. Through Stein's description of the act of empathy and of her critique of the various theories of foreign consciousness the question comes to the fore, although Stein does not define or specifically discuss the term of constitution *per se*. The question pertains to how the individual is grasped, or arises in consciousness as such.¹⁰⁵

In the above analysis we can see that the human being is capable of reaching out to the other, and seems to point to a communitarian aspect to the individual. That humans (as animals) are types of beings that experience a movement outwards to in-feel *foreign* experience, we noted in the first chapter that a feature of the idea of the *image of God* idea might be seen to rest on the male and female to form a 'community'. Certainly from our inner experience – as phenomenologically and descriptively outlined by Stein above we have the capacity to form community (we will consider this further below).

6.3.3 Constitution (*Konstitution*) in the Early Works

As noted, Stein's second chapter in *On Empathy* analysed the 'essence of the acts of empathy', the third and fourth chapters undertake a constitutional analysis outlining

¹⁰⁵As Baseheart details, 'the act of empathy is linked with an understanding of the 'I' as person and the understanding of person is aided by descriptive analyses of empathy. If one follows the line of [Stein's] reflections and analyses, it may be seen that this is not a vicious circle but is a phenomenological viewing from all sides that reveals the ontic structure of the person. The first step is the constitution of the psycho-physical individual.' p. 35.

what the act of empathy adds to the constitution of the psycho-physical individual (examined in chapter three) and the person (examined in chapter four).¹⁰⁶ Sawicki tells us that the term *Konstitution* was not interpreted by Stein in an explicit fashion.¹⁰⁷ It appears that the term may be assumed from Husserl's usage.¹⁰⁸ Lebech also holds this position and notes:

'constitution' is a term [Stein] inherits from Husserl, who uses it systematically to mean the way in which things appear to form unities (for me, for us). Constitution happens quasi-automatically, but not without the activity of the 'I'. It is the primary activity of the 'I', its first expression. Whenever there is constitution, there is an 'I' (or several I's). This is why 'I's' are constituted as *constituting*, according to Stein. Constitution is the activity basic to intentionality, and therefore basic also to rationality — (rational in the sense that humans are able to compare impression and object).¹⁰⁹

We can see that constitution is a 'function through which *identification* takes place, it designates the way in which an object is "built-up" and "brought to appear" as a unified whole within consciousness.'¹¹⁰ Ultimately, then, anything perceived would be capable of constituting the object being constitutional analysis precisely because

any [intended] object can be analysed according to its constitution within consciousness, in its structures and its elements, as well as the kind of acts in which this structure and these elements are given. That objects are constituted, or that they can be analysed as such [as intended objects of acts of consciousness], means that their structure (or essence) can be rendered

¹⁰⁶ Moreover, constitution appears in the rest of the early works of Stein where we find descriptive analysis of various features of *our* experience from perceptions – to our constitution of objects particularly the constitution of the human individual, associations, States, communities etc.

¹⁰⁷ Sawicki notes that Stein has failed to define her understanding of 'constitution'. In this regard it appears to Sawicki that Stein picked up the term from Husserl and uses the word in a reflexive sense, i.e., something 'constitutes itself'. Moreover, the grammar in Sawicki's view indicates that 'constituting' is not transitive, it is not something that can be done *by* X to Y. See, Sawicki, *Body, Text, and Science*, p. 108

¹⁰⁸ Husserl himself appears to have been influenced by Theodor Lipps's use of the term in *Leitfaden der Psychologie*, see (Verlag Wilhelm Engelmann, 1909) 3rd ed. 1st published 1903. Lebech notes that 'Husserl purged [Lipps's understanding of constitution] from psychologistic naturalism and understood it as a purely transcendental function through which an object comes to make sense.' See, Lebech, *The Identification of Human Dignity*, pp. 200-201

¹⁰⁹ Mette Lebech, 'Study Guide to Edith Stein's *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*,' in *Yearbook of the Irish Philosophical Society* (Maynooth: NUI Maynooth, 2004), p. 69.

¹¹⁰ Lebech, *The Identification of Human Dignity*, p. 201.

intuitable and can be described. Constitution-analysis is therefore a way of handling phenomena by breaking them down into their intuitable elements, or, to put it another way, a procedure that reveals the intelligibility of the thing by demonstrating how it is apprehended.¹¹¹

We can imagine a ‘chair’ being identified in experience from various acts of seeing, touching, remembering, of usage and, perhaps, through comparative analysis in relation to other objects: the chair comes to be seen as a ‘chair’ from the experience of the various particulars such as its being brown, large, swivelled. These particular qualities (brown, large, swivelled etc.) of the chair rescind into the background when the meaning of the chair is constituted as a ‘chair’ as such. There is also an objectivity of constituting the chair as a ‘chair’ in relation to Stein’s theory of empathy. Because we, as human beings, are capable of inter-subjectivity, the ‘chair’ is constituted as a ‘chair’ not just subjectively but also inter-subjectively. I view what I think is a ‘chair’, and you say ‘there is a chair’, and I again look and see the ‘chair’. It is a chair not only for me but also for you and for the community. If I were to constitute the ‘chair’ as a living object that moved such as a ‘dog’, then the other/ the community would find that rather strange. Thus it turns out to be the case, as Lebech notes, that,

My experience, [...] comes to me as something that can be challenged by the experience of others, so that *our* experience does not necessarily coincide with *mine*.¹¹²

Here the inter-subjective dimension to constitution assures that when one is experiencing some ‘x’, that this ‘x’ truly is what this ‘x’ is constituted as, otherwise the community would reject the subject’s ‘erroneous constitution’ of ‘x’. This allows

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 201–202.

¹¹² Mette Lebech, ‘Stein’s Phenomenology of the Body: The Constitution of the Human Being between Description of Experience and Social Construction’ in *Maynooth Philosophical Papers*, Issue 5 (2008), ed. Simon Nolan (Maynooth: NUI Maynooth, 2009), pp. 16–20 (p. 17).

the individual to gain insight into their own act of ‘constitution’ and his/ her ability to constitute what truly ‘is’ correctly. We might think of colour-blind individuals coming to awareness of their colour blindness because those individuals without the condition would point out that those who suffer with the condition have failed to ‘constitute’ a particular colour in a painting etc. Thus the act of empathy aids subjects epistemologically.

In the *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* Stein explicates further her understanding of ‘constitution’ in terms of *function* and *act*. In this regard, Sawicki describes constitution as:

a *function* of consciousness, providing the bridge between the givenness of sequential multiple appearances and the givenness of unified essential form for the thing to which the appearances are referred. This *automatic* function achieves the teleological coalescence of multiple aspects or instances into singular identity (emphasis added).¹¹³

According to Sawicki constitution is more or less automatic in its *functionality*, this distinguishes constitution from *acts* that are not automatic.¹¹⁴ Constitution, however, has a particular relationship with acts in that it can *function* in and through acts themselves:

A function [such as constitution] functions in and through acts, in particular in the natural attitude, where we constitute unreflectively, and where what we constitute is generally characterisable as natural facts.¹¹⁵

Stein also develops her understanding of causality and motivation in the *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*. In this work, Stein develops constitution in

¹¹³ Marianne Sawicki, *Body, Text and Science*, p. 108, also See Husserl’s *Ideen* §86, Hua III: 213 (Husserl 1982, 208).

¹¹⁴ See, Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, §86.

¹¹⁵ Lebech, *The Identification of Human Dignity*, p. 202.

connection with her reflections on motivation¹¹⁶ this moves her understanding of ‘constitution’ away from a specifically Husserlian account.¹¹⁷ For Stein, constitution is motivated as such, constitution never occurs without motivation because;

extra-egoic data¹¹⁸ proper never emerge unaccompanied by egoic data [and furthermore] a value-constitution goes hand in hand with every-object constitution. Every fully constituted object is simultaneously a value-object.¹¹⁹

Yet it is only possible to see these value-qualities ‘for what they are when we turn away from the naturalistic attitude [...] towards what Husserl [terms the] ‘personalistic orientation’ [see *Ideas II*, §49, e], which is complementary to the methodical attitude of the natural sciences and required for the methodical attitude of the humanities [the *Geisteswissenschaften*]’.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Stein defines motivation as ‘the connection that acts get into with one another: not a mere blending like that of simultaneously or sequentially ebbing phases of experiences, or the associative tying together of experiences, but an *emerging* of the one *out of* the other, a self fulfilling or being fulfilled of the one *on the basis of* the other *for the sake of* the other.’ Edith Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, I.III, §1, p. 41

¹¹⁷ Stein resigned as Husserl’s assistant after editing *Ideas II*. Her work on the *Philosophy and Psychology and Humanities* represent her ‘contributions’ to the Husserl’s enterprise. Marianne Sawicki considers the *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities* akin to what could be considered *Ideas IV*. See, Marianne Sawicki, *Yearbook of the Irish Philosophical Society*, p. 208. However, Stein has developed her understanding of phenomenology in a progressive sense. In this regard, MacIntyre believes that ‘[Stein] has taken a direction very different from that in which Husserl was now moving and opened up questions that could only be answered from a significantly different stand-point.’ See, Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue 1913-1922* (Lanham/Boulder/New York/Toronto/Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), p.87. Yet, it seems that Stein in solving the issues that troubled Husserl (‘inter-subjectivity’) could only develop phenomenology in the direction her research had indicated.

¹¹⁸ Stein, defines extra-egoic data as the ‘sensory data’ whereas intra-egoic data refers to the internal experience of for example enjoyment. Extra-egoic data stand over against the ‘I’ while intra-egoic lie on the subjective side, see, *Phil. of Psy. and Hum.*, I, I, §4, p. 17. In this way, extra-egoic are alien or foreign to I (something impersonal or to another *fremdes Ich*, someone who is an I but is not I myself. Whereas *Ichlich*, ‘intra-egoic’ or I-like means something pertaining to I whether it is my own or someone else’s I’. Cf. translators’ elaborations, *ibid.*, p. 17, n. 22.

¹¹⁹ Edith Stein, *Phil. of Psy. and Hum.*, II, I, §2, p. 160. According to Stein, ‘the value-free world of mere things is an abstraction that [is] suggested to us by the fact that we aren’t equally persuaded by all the intentions that can arise on the basis of available material, but rather alternate between different “orientations”.’ *Ibid.* Sawicki notes these orientations have been worked out in *Ideas II*, (in for example §49 which deals with the ‘opposition between naturalistic and personalistic worlds’). *Ideas II* of course was not published at the time Stein was writing but she had expected it to be published once Husserl had approved. However, as stated previously, *Ideas II* was published posthumously.

¹²⁰ Lebech, *The Identification of Human Dignity*, p. 203.

Motivation, then, is not an ‘act’ but explains the *function* of constitution of that which is constituted and *why* it is constituted as such. This ‘why’ of motivation is, according to Lebech ‘a value’ – values in this way are the objects which explain motivation, in a similar way to how the object explains that which is constituted.¹²¹

Furthermore,

Values explain [...] more than sheer meaning does, they explain the influx of energy in motivation that powers the life of consciousness, this consciousness being either individual or shared.¹²²

The understanding of motivation is derived from Wilhelm Dilthey who viewed motivation as a ‘principle of coherence for the cultural world.’¹²³ Motivation in this way forms a unity in the world of *Geist* (that is studied in the humanities, *Geisteswissenschaften*) in a way similar to how causality is the principle of unity for the natural world:

What one understands of nature are its causal chains, and what one understands of culture, history, or the arts are the non-causal sequences through which human experience flows.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Lebech, *The Identification of Human Dignity*, p. 203.

¹²² Ibid. pp. 203-204.

¹²³ See Marianne Sawicki, *Body, Text, and Science*, pp. 7-16, 23-31.

¹²⁴ Marianne Sawicki, ‘Making up Husserl’s Mind’, p. 194. This point is re-iterated by Moran, when he remarks ‘The spiritual world [...] is a world that is explicable not in terms of causation that governs the natural world, but rather in terms of “motivation”, a conception discussed originally by Dilthey but which Husserl (and following him, Stein) had made central to the intentional life of persons (and indeed higher animals).’ Dermot Moran, *Edmund Husserl: Founder of Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), p. 30. This still leaves unaddressed, however, the study of the precise relation between the natural world, with all of its causality, and the human being’s immersion both in that world of nature and in that being’s ‘cultural world’ (a world that is not characteristic of higher animals or of the world as seen from a natural scientific point of view). Husserl’s later famous reduction of the natural standpoint to the transcendental-phenomenological standpoint where the very appearing of the world of things (nature) is but a moment in the life of one’s own actual consciousness solves this problem *for Husserl* as ‘motivation’ arises from within and stays within consciousness itself. For those who do not accept his transcendental-idealist solution an alternative explanation is needed. See, below, Stein’s remarks to Ingarden, n. 127.

For Husserl motivation represented *any* sequence that consciousness could as it were *live* through. Given Husserl's desire to found a *rigorous science* in 1910, motivation could be traced, as Sawicki outlines;

[motivation] embrace[s] *any* sequence that consciousness could live through: not only those expressing human creative decisions, but those tracing causal chains, those registering the sequential appearances of things in sense perceptions, and especially those that moved quasi-kinesthetically through the steps of a logical proof. All of these varieties of sequential experiences were 'moved through' not arbitrarily but with a kind of essential tendency toward completion; and to those determinately flowed-through patterns there corresponded the essential forms that would arise in subjectivity 'all at once' with *insight*. Instantaneous insight (*Ein-sicht*) into essential form therefore correlated with motivated sequential in-feeling (*Ein-fühlung*) through a series of live experiences, and served to recognise and ratify the latter.¹²⁵

This constitution of live experiences, which are sensuously 'in-felt', is based on the act of empathy which Stein outlined in 1916. The constitution¹²⁶ of 'others' and indeed *ourselves* as 'psycho-physical individuals' becomes possible through Stein's analysis of the essence of the acts of empathy. In this way, Stein will situate the human individual not in the realm of the causal (nature) alone but in relation both to the causal and to the spiritual (*Geist*).¹²⁷ The human individual being is able to

¹²⁵ Ibid. pp. 194–195, In relation to essences – 'they are supposed to be given all at once, whole, simple, and unwavering. Yet that sudden vision might require protracted, tedious effort to achieve. Thus eidetic insight is instantaneous only after the preparatory steps have been completed.' Ibid. footnote 7.

¹²⁶ Stein's understanding of the term underwent development in her middle-period of writing in the 1920s. In this period Stein uses the term *Aufbau* ('structure') instead of the term 'constitution' (*Konstitution*). In her later works *Aufbau* seems to capture the same dynamic reality of constitution where *Aufbau* is seen as 'structure' or 'construction', 'edification' or 'build-up'. Lebech in her commentary of Edith Stein's philosophy of education (a philosophy of education which is detailed in Stein's work *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person*), highlights that the term *Aufbau* 'is both active in terms of its building-up and passive in terms of "structure".' As such, there is a double sense to constitution being both active and passive. Constitution itself is a function and not an act – it is as noted a 'purely transcendental *function* in which objects make sense'. See Mette Lebech, 'Edith Stein's Philosophy of Education in *The Structure of the Human Person*' in *What Price the University*, ed. Thomas A.F. Kelly, (Maynooth: NUI Maynooth, 2006) pp. 163–177.

¹²⁷ Sawicki notes that Stein played a significant part in the writing of *Ideas II*. Marianne Sawicki, 'Making Up Husserl's Mind About Constitution,' in *Yearbook of the Irish Philosophical Society*, (Ireland, Mullen Print, 2007) pp. 191-217. Stein contacted Ingarden on 20th February, 1917 to tell him that she had succeeded in integrating '*Natur und Geist*' in this work. She had integrated the difficulty of 'constitution' that spanned the world of nature and the intellectual world. Stein then stated that the work was ready for publication – if only Husserl would look over it. Husserl kept putting off this

interpenetrate both sides unlike, for instance, a stone (material) or a completely spiritual being (i.e. a being without a body, for example, pure spirit).

Empathy, according to Stein, is the act that opens up these possibilities for us. Stein, however, differs from Husserl in that constitution (from her perspective) is *motivated* by a particular object.¹²⁸ Given that motivation is implicit with constitution of an object, Stein believes that a *value*-constitution takes place with object-constitution. Thus, a fully constituted object is also a value-object.¹²⁹ We now move to consider chapter three of *On Empathy* which pertains to the constitution of the ‘psycho-physical individual’, this is undertaken as chapter III sets out Stein’s analysis of what it means to be human from the perspective of analysis of our experience of the ‘pure I’, ‘the living body’, feelings, and personal motivation towards values.

publication. Ibid. p. 201, Sawicki outlines furthermore that commentators have assumed that Stein produced her additions to *Ideen II* by consulting Husserl’s manuscripts, and that he ultimately approved the work. In light of Sawicki’s findings the assumption that Stein was merely a scribe should be brought into question. At this stage, Stein believed that she understood what constitution was and noted this in her letter to Ingarden dated 3 February, 1917: ‘Now I imagine I know pretty well what ‘constitution’ is — but with a break from Idealism. An absolutely existing physical nature on one hand, a distinctly structured subjectivity on the other, seem to me to be prerequisites before an intuiting nature can constitute itself. *I have not yet had the chance to confess my heresy to the master.*’ Ibid. p. 202 (her emphasis added to the text).

¹²⁸ Moran thinks Husserl is in agreement with Stein on this, however, for, quoting Husserl, ‘We do not just causally interact with objects in the world; we deliberately turn our attention towards them, they “motivate” our interest: ‘The room’s stale air (which I experience as such) stimulates me to open the window (*Ideen II*, §55, p. 229; *Hua 4*: 218).’ The object that motivates me to open the window for Stein, however, is the existing extra-mental object (stale air) which is not dependent on my actual consciousness for its existence. Hence, her self-confessed *heresy to the master* and hence her different account of the interaction between the natural world around us and the ‘constitution’ of both objects and the constituting ‘self’.

¹²⁹ See, Edith Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, trans. by Mary Catharine Baseheart & Marianne Sawicki, ed. Marianne Sawicki, (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2000) p. 227, Stein states that ‘a person does not confront us as a value-free being, but rather as a value-tropic being [*Werthhaftes Stein*].’

6.3.4 The Constitution of the Psycho-Physical Individual

Following Husserl and Stein's method we can hold that we are conscious of ourselves and of others and indeed other objects in the world and that Stein believed that it is impossible to understand or know ourselves without relationships with others.¹³⁰ It is through being open to the 'foreign' that we come to *know* ourselves, that is, to constitute ourselves as 'psycho-physical individuals'.¹³¹

Thus the act of empathy itself gives insight into who we are and what we can become since we gain an objective distance from ourselves by looking at others, and by experiencing other foreign individuals we can get a sense of what it is to be a human being, that lives in the best possible way. Keeping in mind that the act of empathy opens up an objective distance towards ourselves we now return to the task of considering the several aspects to the constitution of the human person as experienced phenomenologically, in other words, how we experience ourselves as 'body', 'soul', 'psyche' and 'spirit' (*Geist*). We will analyse these various aspects under the experience of the following realms:

1. The Pure 'I'
2. The living body
3. The contribution of feelings to the constitution of the individual

¹³⁰ See *On Empathy*, p. 88.

¹³¹ As Borden explains, '[Stein] presents two ways in which other people are necessary for *self-knowledge*. First, it is through the other's perception of me as an "object" to be seen, understood (to some degree), and evaluated that I am able to do so for myself. Through the other's perception of me, I become real to myself... [Secondly] it is only when another sees me as an "object" that I have the consequent ability to do so myself [as such]. A second role for empathy in *self-knowledge* [-what] the other does informs me of what I may become. Potentialities are that which can be, but not yet [...] if [...] I see another act courageously before a group of peers or colleagues, I may recognise the yet-unrealised potential for courage in myself [emphasis added].' Sarah Borden, *Edith Stein* (London and New York: Continuum, 2003), pp. 29–30.

4. The foreign living body
5. The constitution of the Person

6.3.4.1 The Pure 'I'

A human individual has an experience of a pure 'I'. This 'I' is the pole of experience, it is, as such, purely immanent to experience. Stein holds that we are capable of encountering our 'self' in contrast to the 'otherness' of the other. The pure 'I' is the subject of all experience, the 'I' as such is always there, essentially related to experience. As Lebeck states,

This 'selfness' is experienced and is the basis of all that is 'mine' [...] it is brought into relief in contrast with another when another is given. This other is at first not qualitatively distinguished from it, since both are qualityless, but only distinguished simply as an 'other'. This otherness is apparent in the type of givenness; it is other than 'I' because it is given to me in another way than 'I'. Therefore it is 'you'. But since it experiences itself as I experience myself, the 'you' is another 'I'. Thus the 'I' does not become individualised because another faces it, but its individuality, or as we should rather say (because we must reserve the term 'individuality' for something else), its selfness is brought into relief in contrast with the otherness of the other.¹³²

So this experience of my pure 'I', brought into relief in contrast with the otherness of another if given, is held to be another 'I' like mine when it experiences itself as I experience myself, therefore the 'you' is another 'I'.

Stein realises that we are open to a lot of experiences and she outlines that the soul is the one basic experience given to us that together with its persistent attributes, becomes apparent in our experiences as the identical bearer of them. This is the substantial soul as Sawicki outlines,

¹³² *On Empathy*, p. 38.

the essential unity intuited from out of the many different instances of empathy in which I comprehend an I-whether that of another, or my own.¹³³

In this regard the soul is an important element in realising the foreign individual as another 'I' like my 'I'. The soul appears to stabilise the flux of experiential content flowing without order and, as such, it allows us to constitute others as a substantial unity. Indeed, Stein goes on to discuss psychic unity (or soul) in relation to the flowing stream of experiences as a two-fold process:

The peculiar structure of psychic unity depends on the peculiar content of the stream of experience; and, conversely (as we must say after the soul is constituted for us) the content of the stream of experience depends on the structure of the soul.¹³⁴

We not only experience our experiences as 'structured', however, but also as *embodied*. The body is persistently given when one experiences oneself, it (the body) is given in outer perception but not simply in outer perception alone, that is, while my physical body is given in acts of outer perception, outer perception is not sufficient to constitute it as a complete object.¹³⁵ The body as we experience it also makes it impossible to walk away from it, the body, as such, has a special relationship with me, with 'I';

I can approach and withdraw from any other thing, can turn toward or away from it. [The physical body] is given to me in an infinitely variable multiplicity of appearances and of changing positions, and there are also times when it is not given to me. But this one object (my physical body) is given to me in successive appearances only variable within very narrow limits. As long as I have my eyes open at all, it is continually there with a

¹³³ Sawicki, *Body, Text and Science*, p. 115.

¹³⁴ Borden-Sharkey, *Thine Own Self*, p. 194.

¹³⁵ Stein states that if the body were only given in outer perception then it would have 'the strangest object [whose] motivated successive appearances exhibit striking gaps [and] it would withhold its rear side with more stubbornness than the moon.' *On Empathy*, p. 41, III, 4, a.

steadfast obtrusiveness, always having the same tangible nearness as no other object has. It is always 'here' while other objects are always 'there'.¹³⁶

The body is not only physically experienced but sensually experienced from the inside, thus Stein describes her experience of the physical body (*Körper*) and her experience of the lived body (*Leib*).

6.3.4.2 The Physical Body (*Körper*) and the Lived Body (*Leib*)

Stein notes that she can 'sense' her body, she outlines that we are at a zero point of orientation and that all the sensations that are felt from the body go to make-up or constitute it as a felt-unity. We perceive the sensual body as taking up space in its constitution,¹³⁷ as Stein outlines;

I not only see my hand and bodily perceive it as sensing, but I also 'see' its fields of sensation constituted for me in bodily perception. [...] This is exactly analogous to the province of outer perception. We not only see the table and feel its hardness, we also 'see' its hardness [...] The seen living body does not remind us it can be the scene of manifold sensations. Neither is it merely a physical thing taking up the same space as the living body given as sensitive in bodily perception. It is given as a sensing, living body.¹³⁸

Lebech characterises the importance of the body as follows:

Movement, sensations (*Empfindungen*) like pain and pleasure, moods and spiritual feelings (*Gefühle*) are all experienced in the body; they are constituted from bodily experience. The body is thus as a whole a

¹³⁶ *On Empathy*, pp. 41-42. Even with eyes shut, however, one can experience one's own body thus visual outer perceptual sense experience is only one of the ways in which the experience of one's own body is given.

¹³⁷ Lebech outlines that 'the unity of my living body is constituted as taking up space from the sensations of all these places [...] and this unity is constituted as the same as the outwardly perceived body'. Lebech, 'Stein's Phenomenology of the Body', p. 19.

¹³⁸ *On Empathy*, pp. 44-45. According to Sawicki, Stein believes that the body in its completeness — both as a physical and sensing ensemble — is necessary for 'constitution'. In her letter to Ingarden on the 20th March 1917 Stein tells her former teacher that she was examining 'one of the points on which the Master and I differ (the necessity of a body for empathy)', Sawicki, 'Making Up Husserl's Mind About Constitution', p. 122.

sophisticated sense organ that allows me to interact as a constituting I with a material world that makes sense. I find myself experiencing in my body and by means of it.¹³⁹

Following Stein's reflections and her argument, it would be quite difficult (but not impossible) to imagine being able to in-feel the other without the body, as it may be possible to empathise with pure spirits who have no body. But, it is without doubt that the body is the means through which we have (lived) experiences as such and in which we experience as such. This position of Stein's seems to have worked its way into the publications of Husserl, for, as Sawicki argues:

a comparison of the published text of *Ideen II* with the passages that Stein excised — published as 'supplements' to *Ideen II* and *III* — indicates that Stein re-engineered the work to support her own theses: that the body and in-feeling are presuppositions for constitution. She accomplished this both by composing new sections, and by rearranging Husserl's manuscripts to conceal how he had begged the question of other people, other I's. Between material nature and culture now the mediating factor isn't *rational logic* (as in the 1911 *Logos* article), but an aspect of nature itself: the psychic, that is, the sensitivity of the living body.¹⁴⁰

The 'I', in constituting itself does so via perception and sensation and it is also embodied. The 'I' can only realistically escape the body via fantasy.¹⁴¹ Also, as constituting, the 'I' transcends the order of nature and faces it. This opens up the possibility of inner perception, but not only inner perception, for it also opens up the entire world of the spirit.

We constitute our living body (*Leib*) in acts of outer perception, memory, sensation, movement and action.¹⁴² Hunger or tiredness, among other feelings, fill the 'entire me' unlike such pain as that which is suffered when one gets dental

¹³⁹ Lebech, 'Stein's Phenomenology of the Body', p. 19.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ *On Empathy*, p 47.

¹⁴² Lebech, *The Identification of Human Dignity*, p. 216.

trouble. The feelings of hunger or tiredness can be seen through/ in the body, whereas dental pain is localised to a particular tooth rather than the complete unified body. I can constitute my body's unity via sensual feelings which 'fill' me, so that I constitute myself as an individual who is 'alive' and being an alive 'I' who can feel, is open to sensuous experience, and sensuous empathy. This understanding of sensuousness is given via the 'life of the body' itself.¹⁴³

For Stein, we sense the body as a unity, it is a living body which is constituted as taking up space from all of the various sensations and this unity is constituted in tandem with the outwardly perceived body.¹⁴⁴ We might also note at this point that the body in Stein's view is given an important role in our epistemological ability and it conveys to us information on many levels, it may be viewed as a rather positive view of the body as compared to views of the body outlined by the history of thinking, (e.g. Plato's view of the body as a 'tomb for the soul'). We noted Alcuin in particular held that the body was important to the idea of the *image of God* and that Aquinas recognised the importance of the body in light of the resurrection in that it maintained a trace of the divine. Stein of course is performing an objective description of the body and its role phenomenologically – but one can appraise or align a positive view of the body in her approach that fits in with a number of thinkers about the human being made in the image of God.

¹⁴³ Feeling is experienced as 'in need of relief or release', as if it were 'loaded with an energy which must be unloaded.' (*Empathy*, III, 4(d), p. 51 [57]).

¹⁴⁴ See, n. 129, *On Empathy*, p. 44–45.

6.3.4.3 The Contribution of Feelings to the Constitution of the Human Individual

The ability of the body to experience feeling and of the 'I' to constitute feelings such as sadness, pounding heart, anger on the sensuous level and 'grief, worry, shame' on the personal level (which we shall discuss further below) allows us also to have inter-subjective experiences of other sensuous beings. Plants and animals are sensuous beings – (for example plants are sensuous in terms of geotropism, phototropism, tigmotropism¹⁴⁵), while animals are more readily experienced as sensuous beings, a dog that squeals when her paw is stepped on or who walks the floor because of teeth problems exhibits feelings of 'pain' that can be empathised on a sensuous level. Sensuous empathy is the type of empathy that allows me to 'in feel' what the other sensuous being is feeling (pain, tired, happy). The motivation for such feelings is only truly comprehended by an 'I' at a 'spiritual level' which Stein considers in relation to the constitution of the person.

Spiritual empathy is inter-subjectively experienced between spiritual 'I's who are capable of consciously performing one particular mental act due to another. It involves the ability to *understand* the motivations/ motives of others, whether the other actually knows the motive for their own action, or not. Spiritual empathisers can work out the motivation of plants and animals also by understanding how their particular movements follow on from previous acts, why, for example, a dog who has its paw stood on (by accident), immediately comes to be petted by his/ her owner for 'reassurance'. Motivations can be understood insofar as they are expressed in a

¹⁴⁵ That is, sensitivity towards the earth – 'geotropism', to the light 'phototropism' and touch, 'tigmotropism'. Phototropism is seen as the sensitivity of the (plumule of the) plant to grow towards the light stimulus – it is a photosensitivity.

particular medium, whether via language (as in case with other human beings), an attitude (e.g. passive aggressive silence), or in text, art, or ‘cultural objects’.

This ability to understand coincides with previous reflections on the human being’s ability (because they were made in the image of God) to stand apart from the rest of ‘creation’ because of the ability to reason. Here human individuals are seen to be capable of rational reflection, are in other words able to understand. Here understanding is enhanced via empathy – the ‘other individual’ gives a perspective which is not one’s own so that one’s understanding can be bettered.

6.3.4.4 The Foreign Living Body

The foreign individual’s view of me, which is a perspective not my own, but akin to my own, helps to enliven my own view in important ways. The foreign individual, for example, allows me to constitute my living body as a physical body like others’ in ‘reiterated’ empathy. The foreign body of the same type (*Typ*) as mine, that is another psycho-physical individual not only possesses sensations like I do, he/ she also has an experience of a zero-point of orientation which is similar to my own experience.¹⁴⁶ The other also has a perspective on the world with its I and having such an ‘I’ so ordered as to have a soul also has the ability to instigate actions in the world. It is another who has the ability to freely act like I have (we shall discuss this freedom further in relation to Stein’s reflections on causality and motivation in her *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*). The other is also experienced as being motivated like I am, and through following the other’s motives one can understand

¹⁴⁶ *On Empathy*, pp. 61-63.

why they undertook such action. Motivation can be in-felt while causality cannot be so. Causal events, therefore, must be taken to be as they are given. Thus,

Whereas I can empathise a blush motivated by shame, by following the blush's motivatedness back to what motivates the shame, the blush caused by exercise cannot be empathised: there is no meaningful experience in it to follow, no motivated feeling only physiological, causal occurrences. This distinction between causation and motivation enables me to grasp the unity of motivated acts conditioned by causality as the *psyche*. The *psyche* is home to the phenomenon of lifepower — which seems to build up during rest and be spent on activity.¹⁴⁷

6.3.4.5 The Constitution of the Person

For Stein 'person' is not a synonym for the 'human individual'; rather, the human being is porous and stratified, and 'person' refers to one of its layers or realms. We have already discussed a number of these realms in the foregoing. They can be characterised as the 'physical', the 'sensate', the 'mental' and the 'personal'. All four of these realms are localised in the 'body' where all four of these realms express in their structure and orderliness the 'soul'. These realms are mutually permeable, hence influences cross from one layer to another. Therefore, in this manner, the human body itself *is* the interface of matter, sentience, and mind.¹⁴⁸ Sawicki's diagram of these layers is helpful to explicate how they are inter-related.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Lebech, *The Identification of Human Dignity*, pp. 220-221.

¹⁴⁸ See Sawicki's Introduction, *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, p. xv.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. xvi.

Phenomenal ‘realm’	‘Layers’ of the human being
The physical	matter, physical components of the body
The sensory/ sensate	sentience, the living responsive body
The mental, the intellectual	unindividuated mind, intelligence, spirit
The personal, the individual	individual person, unique personality.

At the level of the physical realm causality is what governs. When one feels hunger it is an experience of causal events involving the body, as experience itself is never directly caused. This experience of causal events can register in the sensory realm, here one might ‘feel’ nauseous at the experience of stepping on the nail, it makes one quiver. The physical realm is an invisible realm where the individual’s felt pain is invisible to my experience of that individual, however at the sensory realm, I can ‘in-feel’ or realise what it is like to feel pain as I have undoubtedly felt pain before from the various experiences of such casual events that I’ve had growing up,¹⁵⁰ whether putting my hand on the hot cooker and wincing or stepping myself on a nail in the garden. The sensory realm (the living body) transmits its experience of what occurred at the causal realm to the mental and personal. One might ‘feel’ weakened by the nail going into one’s foot and decide that it was now important to get a tetanus injection (intellectual reflection) and to forego cleaning the house any further (value-judgement, the value of health over the value of a clean house). At the personal level, I could have decided not to go to get a tetanus injection and instead make a cup of tea, or continue to clean the house. The decision as such, in other words, is not governed by causality *per se*. Motivation, as outlined before, governs the intellectual and personal realms, and in turn engage with the causal experiences.

¹⁵⁰ Unless of course one suffers from ‘congenital analgesia’ which would make it difficult for one to empathise the pain fully, but it is still possible to empathise the content emptyly.

Both the causal level and the personal level are invisible to others, then, but the sentient and mental realms allow us to in-feel, to empathise with another. At the sentient level, we empathise sensuously (as outlined above) and in the mental realm we have ‘spiritual empathy’. In this manner, therefore, the personal layer of the individual is open both to the world of motivation and to value-constitution. Motivated acts *per se*, then, do not merely issue from the ‘I’ but involve the ‘I’ in their deliberation. The various motivated acts that motivate an individual constitute the character of the I.

The ‘personal realm’ is capable of value responses. This is the person that we understand in spiritual empathy (at the mental realm). It is of importance to note, however, that ‘spiritual empathy’ is distinct from sensual empathy but sensual empathy allows us to come to experience the ‘spiritual realm’. Through our feelings, or rather perhaps, *in feeling*, we come to experience ourselves as constituted in a particular way. As such, feelings come to announce our personal attributes.

As memory is announced in acts of remembering and objectified by inner perception as a capacity of the I, and sensations announce the sensitivity of the I, feelings also reveal attributes of the I, but they do so in a different manner. They rely on theoretical acts, but they also issue at a level of depth of the I: they involve the I either superficially or deeply, and hence reveal the depths of the soul. They contribute to the substance of the soul as there is value in felt value, so that the depth of the soul really consists in the susceptibility to feel and respond to higher values. The I as personal is constituted as the I’s response to the value-world: it constitutes itself as a person in the possibility of this response, and it constitutes its personality from its actual, empirical response and the ensuing susceptibility for response.¹⁵¹

The personal realm is also composed of a ‘personal core’ which is a ‘*Seinsbestand*’, that is, an essential substance upon which and from which the character of the

¹⁵¹ Lebech, *The Identification of Human Dignity*, p. 222.

individual unfolds.¹⁵² The person as opened to the world of motivation and value is thus open to deciding between one value and another. By engaging with other individuals via empathy, it can be seen that some choices made by the individual are not valued as highly as others and thus a hierarchy of values is experienced by individuals. This is apparent from an early age when children, as individuals, receive direction and education from parents, teachers and other members of society.

Here we might see a link between the ideals already espoused by philosophers reflecting on the image of God idea (ideals such as reason and living according to the highest values) and Stein's anthropological account of what it is to be human. Augustine and Aquinas outlined these ideals in particular when they highlighted that one was to follow an ethical way to be *like* God. Stein's understanding of the person as open to a value-hierarchy, then, points to a philosophical grounding as to why people would associate the human being as a being that is 'unique' in that they (through experience) are capable of choosing higher values. For Augustine and Aquinas, God would be goodness *per se*, and thus humans in order to imitate God would need to choose (as far as possible due to our finiteness) the higher values. As Stein states in her later work *Der Aufbau*,

I look into the eyes of a human being and his gaze answers me. He either lets me enter into his inner being or he rebuffs me. He is master of his soul and can open or close its gates... If two people gaze at each other, an 'I' and another 'I' stand opposite each other. It can be a meeting before the gate or an encounter within the inner being. If it is an inward encounter, then the other 'I' is a 'Thou'. The gaze of the human being speaks. One sees an

¹⁵² *Phil. of Psy. and Hum.*, pp. 92-93. Stein outlines in *On Empathy*, that if we were to think of Caesar in a village of Italy or in Rome itself, or if he lived in the current century of the first century 'his historically settled individuality would [...] go through some changes, [yet] just as surely he would remain Caesar.' *On Empathy*, p. 110. There is as such a 'range of possibilities of variation within which the person's real distinctiveness can be developed "ever according to circumstances"' (ibid.). As such, Stein holds that each of us has a personal core, a personal structure that is in ways determinate for our personality.

autonomous, alert 'I'. For this reason we also say: *a free spiritual person*. To be a person is to be a free and spiritual being. That the human being is a person sets it apart from all other beings in nature.¹⁵³

6.3.4.5 Person and Value-Hierarchy

There are different types of personality possible for an individual person precisely because the person is free to choose between motivations. Some persons respond to lower values, and therefore other people constitute them as superficial or hedonistic persons. If persons respond to the higher values, they are constituted as deeper persons, having depth of personality/ character.

So when a person consciously chooses a value, he or she identifies with that value, i.e. with the kind of motivation specific to it, and hence he or she constitutes his or her personality as one motivated *in this way*.¹⁵⁴ The decision to choose this value occupies the totality of the person because every act of will (*Willensakt*) enters the personal realm in terms of its 'I can' which is implicit in the 'I will',¹⁵⁵ which directly determines the constitution of my personal capacities. We come, via intersubjective experience, to see values and how other people value what they value and how they are motivated to value what they value. Thus, if I was merely content with pleasure exposure to a person who valued courage may compel me to 'will' myself to take on this 'higher value'. Likewise, from this position, perhaps meeting a genius who valued intellectual pursuits might compel me to will to embrace this higher

¹⁵³ *Der Aufbau*, p. 78, quoted and trans. Beckmann-Zöller, p. 53.

¹⁵⁴ *On Empathy*, p. 106.

¹⁵⁵ According to Stein, 'the act of willing [...] is] "of itself not blind," but rather includes "within its essence a consciousness of what it wants". Within it there will be "a practical resolve deliberately set." And finally, there's an inherent spontaneity to the act of willing [...] the resolve "proceeds from the egoic centre, not as an event but as a peculiar doing, in which the egoic centre *itself* produces a mental stroke *out of itself* centrifugally.' See, *Phil. of Psy. and Hum.*, pp. 59–60.

value. Thus I could unfold until I arrive at meeting some individual that had all her values ordered in the right way, in what we might term a ‘Saint’. A person that is recognised as being truly a ‘person’, following all the right values in all the right ways, thus experiencing this ‘saintly’ individual might cause one to realise that one’s value system is askew and to aim to ‘will’ to take on even higher values to unfold one’s ‘person’ to the highest degree possible.¹⁵⁶

SECTION FOUR

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND HUMANITIES: AN INVESTIGATION OF CAUSALITY AND MOTIVATION

In the *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities* Stein undertakes an analysis of the freedom of the human individual, incorporating both causal and motivational aspects in that analysis. Her explanation of human freedom offers a descriptive account of what neo-Darwinists, such as Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett, suppose about the human individual, i.e., that the human individual is caused to a certain point but can transcend these causal forces because they are motivated as was outlined in the previous chapter. Thus, Stein offers a descriptive scientific account of the way the human individual embraces causality and is open to the world of value in motivation, and thus is capable of free acts.

¹⁵⁶ See Lebech’s adaptation of Scheler’s value hierarchy in this regard where Lebech speaks of the value hierarchy in terms of the (i) hedonist, (ii) hero, (iii) genius and (iv) saint. See, Lebech, *On the Problem of Human Dignity*, pp. 257-260 and in particular p. 270 drawing on Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, trans. M. S. Frings and R. L. Funk (Evanston: North Western University Press, 1973), I, 2, B, 3, p. 86-87, originally *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*, Studienausgabe hrsg. von M. S. Frings (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1985). Here we might interpret the ‘saint’ – as a person who is truly in the image of God, in that this would be in line with previous reflections on the *imago Dei* idea and ethics (Augustine and Aquinas). The person who is most like God in their moral character is commonly called the ‘saint’ or recognised to be a ‘saint’ because of their moral integrity. For the Christians this person might be seen as a heroic imitator of Christ the true image of God *per se*.

Stein, like Husserl, holds that causality characterises physical nature and it is that lawfulness which is investigated by natural sciences, but she opens a space between this causality and the ability of the human person to be influenced/motivated by values. The *imago Dei* idea was seen to include that human individuals were capable of responsibility. As such the idea implicitly rests on the notion that the human being is free to choose right from wrong, if human beings were shown to be fully determined, this idea of responsibility would in fact need to be revised. But Stein's account safeguards human freedom while taking into consideration the causal influences that we as material entities are subject to.

In the *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, Stein pays particular attention to human actions by looking at and providing phenomenological descriptions for inclination, willing, affirming, adopting, and other such attitudes and actions on the mental realm. By looking at these particular elements of human action, she aimed to understand 'free acts' which arise from a personal *fiat*. As Stein states,

There seems to be one factor within the unity of the action of will that's reserved to the individual, [...] I mean the impulse, the 'fiat!', with which every free doing is commenced. Even when I'm sweeping the other guy along toward an action that he wouldn't be capable of on his own, he's still got to commit himself to my influence with that 'fiat!' – or else you're not talking about any doing or acting at all. Within him is concentrated the spontaneity without which there can't be any doing, a spontaneity anchored in the individual ego. What develops on the strength of such spontaneity (which means, all 'free acts') might be one of the community's experiences. But the source to which it owes its existence lies with the individual ego.¹⁵⁷

While Dawkins could point to the possibility of human beings transcending the genes, as we noted in the previous chapter, the way of this transcending of the genes as we also noted was highly problematic — highly problematic because the genes

¹⁵⁷ *Phil. of Psy. and Hum.*, pp. 193–194.

were viewed as the executive decision makers at the reductionist level while memes of indoctrination were influential at the level of culture. Stein's phenomenological approach although complex in its analysis of each of the aspects of human experience in order to come to a thorough understanding of the influences of causal, sentient, mental (spiritual) and personal realms in our deliberations, accounts for free will precisely with regard to all these elements.

Causal connections are necessary connections between events in Stein's view. One can think of stepping on a sharp nail barefoot, there is a necessity of one's foot being punctured by the sharpness of the nail, it cannot be otherwise, or if one was to be out in a downpour of rain walking without an umbrella it is impossible that your clothes would not get wet. But at the level of motivation, while there is a rational connection, it is not in fact a necessary connection that exists between acts; one, for example, can decide to devote one's life to a particular cause and then totally have a change of heart and combat the original position defended.

Motivation, as we outlined previously, is the '*emerging* of the one [experience] *out of* the other, a self fulfilling or being fulfilled of the one *on the basis of* the other *for the sake of* the other.'¹⁵⁸ So, these motivated acts are related to past and future states of affairs; however, the fundamental point is that motivated acts are not necessary acts in the way causally induced acts are: in other words, the person can transcend the purely causal sphere. Motivated acts, nevertheless, are rational (i.e. they can be explained by their reason). It thus follows that although one may chose to do something other than what is expected, there is an amount of deviation which can

¹⁵⁸ *Phil. of Psy. and Hum.*, p. 41.

be expected. If one were to totally go beyond the ‘rational’ choices, one would then be acting irrationally. Stein outlines this as follows,

Motivation is a *coherence of meaning* in which experiences cannot coincide *randomly*. On the basis of any specific motive, various actions might be conceivable; yet by that fact a range of possibilities is defined and they alone obtain for any individual – regardless of the rest of the circumstances.¹⁵⁹

There is, then, a range of positions that can be made in response to previous acts and future expectations. The relation of these motivations, when rational, can be understood by others, for, as Borden points out,

causality [i]s a ‘*blind occurring*,’ whereas motivation is an ‘*insightful doing*’ [*Phil. of Psy. and Hum.*, p. 46]. Relations of motivation are intelligible and stand under rational laws [and the] motivations of others are available to me through empathy, whereas causal relations, because they are ‘blind’ [...] are not. One understands motivated sequences through empathy, through feeling into an experience and having insight into the sequence of acts. One understands causal sequences, in contrast, by subtracting motivations until one is left with the unintelligible yet predictable patterns.¹⁶⁰

Thus, for Stein, the human individual is capable of making free choices although she realistically outlines that we are open both to the realm of causality on the physical level and to rationality on the motivational level. We could of course choose to do something which is not rational. For example, normally we string words together coherently to form sentences to convey meaning, but if we decided to use words in an indiscriminate manner without any logical rules and coherence, then the listener would find this bizarre and think there was something irrational about the speech such that medical treatment might be enlisted to help determine the irrational conversant nature of the individual. So while we can decide to speak in numerous ways, via using words, we have to follow rules that are rational to convey meaning.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 94.

¹⁶⁰ Borden, *Edith Stein*, p. 32.

Understanding motives operates in the same way, but the ‘space’ here between choosing one direction over another opens up freedom for the individual and, as such, we can transcend the merely casual nature of inanimate objects that are compelled by physics alone.

SECTION FIVE
THE HUMAN TYPE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN THE
UNFOLDING OF THE HUMAN INDIVIDUAL

The fundamental necessity of understanding ourselves as human beings ultimately rests on the possibility to re-cognise our-selves as Is among other Is as one of a kind. Only in relation to other Is can I come to know *my* I as an I like other Is. It is the I as an I that is constituted in relation to the other. Hence, our experience comes to us not only as *mine* but *ours*. In this way, there is a double constitution in the stream of the ‘I’, whereby one has ‘I’ as its subject and one that has ‘we’ as the subject. Both of the constitutions find their origin in the ‘I’.¹⁶¹ Stein’s phenomenology has thus far helped us to identify, or constitute the ‘human individual’. We have done this by outlining Stein’s descriptive analysis of the pure ‘I’, the living body (sentient level), the foreign body and its ‘I’, and finally the foreign person as important for the constitution of the type of individuals that we both are. Lebech draws on this understanding of the human individual and brings it to bear on the question of the human ‘type’ as follows:

We can conclude, but now going beyond Stein’s explicit analysis while still drawing on her theory, that the type of the human person, the *Gestalt*-template I exemplify, my type, is the type that I am: it is constituted as such in a process involving others of the same type: other human persons. We have

¹⁶¹ *On Empathy*, p. 38, ‘each ‘I’ is made most visible in contrast with another ‘I’.

a need for this type, as it is the type that enables us to identify ourselves 'like' another 'human', and learn from him by empathetic fulfillment: learn from his experience with the physical world, the value-world and with himself [imagination enables us to fulfill what is only given in empty representations, and imagination sometimes makes use of reasoning to this end].¹⁶²

The kind of being that is of the human type is aware that it is a psycho-physical-spiritual individual open to the realm of values, that is, of constituting an object with a particular value. The human being also includes a zero-point of orientation, sensations, fields of sensations, sensuous empathy, embodiment in a particular body structure, a psyche, depth of soul, a personal core, will and understanding.

We can identify with animals also, to some degree, as we are physical beings just like animals, and indeed with plants. If we were raised as feral children it is possible that we could constitute ourselves on the type wolf or chicken, and not learn language. Though one has the potential to learn language in one's youth, in the wild. It thus can be imagined that the 'child' would constitute itself as a 'cub' and see its hands and knees like paws and legs for running upon, rather than standing upright, as it might be more probable that the 'child-cub' would walk on all-fours. We thus appear to mirror organisms that we first come into contact with. This is where education comes in and it has a very important role to play in the development of human beings for:

Education in a human community enables me to observe in others what I can find in myself, and it is indeed pointed out to me with great attention and care so that I would learn to identify myself as a person and consequently to be able to take my place in society and be capable of what we call responsibility.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Lebech, *The Identification of Human Dignity*, pp. 223–224.

¹⁶³ Lebech, 'Stein's Phenomenology of the Body' p. 20.

Stein outlined the importance of education for the human being in her publication *Der Aufbau*, the subtitle of which is ‘Die Idee des Menschen als Grundlage der Erziehungswissenschaft und Erziehungsarbeit’.¹⁶⁴ About this importance Lebech states:

The education of the human being was not only a subject in which [Stein] was lifelong engaged, education [*Bildung*] was also the *Mysterium* in which she lived. For [Stein], education is about discovering *that* image [*Bild*] after which one wishes one’s self to be formed as a human being.¹⁶⁵

The education of humans, as such, is not only a topic that concerns humans for their whole life, education itself is also a kind of *Mysterium*, we have to identify the ‘image’ (*Bild*) into which we wish to grow, the blueprint of who we are. This identification of the ‘image’ is possible and is indeed necessary because of our ability to constitute the foreign, the ability of the ‘I/we’ constitution, the necessity of constituting myself as being of a type.

Lebech speaks of the moment of ‘awakening’ where the metaphor of the ‘start’ is often emphasised with regard to understanding the experience of the small child. In order for the child to survive, another of its kind is needed, and so projection takes place. When the child ‘wakes up’, there is another experiencing into which the child can project itself and it thus meets the other which it is like. It is akin to the ‘chicken’ who wakes up and follows the first organism it sees. This appears at the mental realm, an experience of togetherness is given but such together

¹⁶⁴ ‘The idea of the human as ground for educational studies and educational work’.

¹⁶⁵ ‘So ist die Bildung des Menschen nicht nur ein Thema, mit dem sie sich ihr Leben lang beschäftigte, die Bildung ist auch das Mysterium, in welchem sie lebte. Für sie geht es in der Bildung gerade darum, *das* Bild zu entdecken, nach dem man sich selber als Mensch bilden lassen will.’ My translation, See, Mette Lebech, ‘Bildung der Menschen – Bildung Europas: Der Einfluss des Christentums in Lichte der Philosophie Edith Steins’. Paper given at the international conference Die Bildung Europas. Eine Topographie des Möglichen im Horizont der Freiheit, 15–18 Juni 2010, TUDresden, proceedings to be edited by Hans Rainer Sepp (et al.) published under same.

presupposes that the child is another ¹⁶⁶ of the same kind – or type (*Typ*). But if the child is educated by animals then it learns the language of the animals via *Mimesis*. As such, the child forms itself in terms of the first ‘image’ it sees and assumes that ‘image’ of the other as its own ‘image’.¹⁶⁷ In this way, the child learns to do and think what the other of its same type does and thinks, it learns what is possible intersubjectively when identifying with its same type. Thus education is an important aspect of the unfolding of the human individual who identifies with the correct ‘image’ of itself from the beginning. This process of identification with others of the like type circumscribes the fully human individual in its unfolding into his/ her proper *type* of image. Lebech believes that we might see the type as aligned to the biological idea of species, the type is identified from the various characteristics of individuals.¹⁶⁸ As a type we have a recognition from others like me that we share the particular experience of human experience, of being a human being, embodied, having an I as pole of experience and a soul, being a person and so forth.

Animal¹⁶⁹ and purely spiritual beings (i.e. non physical beings) would differ from the human type of experience. One cannot imagine an angel being able to sensuously empathise with a human being, and an animal would be incapable of spiritual/ mental empathy. One can try to teach a dog Pythagoras’ theorem daily, but

¹⁶⁶ ‘Das Moment des Aufwachens ist eine Metapher des Anfangs, die wir stets benutzen, wenn wir das Erlebnis des kleinen Kindes zu verstehen versuchen. Was für das Überleben des Kindes notwendig ist, ist das Vorhandensein Anderer. Und so findet Einfühlung statt, wenn das Kind aufwacht; es gibt ein anderes Erleben, in das es sich selbst einfühlen kann, und wobei es dem Anderen begegnet, der wie es selbst ist. Wie die Hähnchen dem ersten Lebewesen folgen, das sie sehen, so folgt der aufwachende Geist auch dem, der geistig erscheint. Ein so sprödes, offenes, verletzliches "Nachfolgen" wie das des Kindes kann nur in tiefer Zusammengehörigkeit erlebt werden. Solche Zusammengehörigkeit setzt aber voraus, dass das Kind ein Anderer als sein Gegenüber ist.’ Lebech, ‘Bildung der Menschen’, section 1.

¹⁶⁷ ‘Es bildet sich nach dem ersten Bild, das es als sein eigenes wahrnimmt: das Bild von dem, dessen Kind (oder kind) es ist, von dem, dessen Art es ist.’ Lebech, ‘Bildung der Menschen’, section 1.

¹⁶⁸ Lebech, *The Identification of Human Dignity*, p. 225

¹⁶⁹ Stein does not discuss animals as such, see Lebech, ‘Study-Guide to Edith Stein’s *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, p. 72

there will be little chance he will comprehend that, in a right-angled triangle, the area of the square whose side is the hypotenuse (the opposite side of the right angle) is equal to the sum of the areas of the squares of the opposite two sides, that is, that $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$.

Furthermore, as Lebech outlines, animals that are not rational would not be capable of forming a community with:

For animals as such the world does not make sense, and whereas we can share our lives with them, we cannot share our world with them. For this other selves are required, and hence the ‘perspective on perspectives’ that rationality provides.¹⁷⁰

Education plays an important role in the unfolding of the human individual and education depends on individuals forming or existing in communities. It is difficult to imagine a human being existing on his or her own from birth and unfolding without connection with others and by responding to this encounter with the other especially others of the same *image* or *type*. A human will best unfold in a human community rather than in a pack of wolves or other animals.¹⁷¹ A human community that ‘cares’ for the welfare, education and unfolding of the offspring of that same community – such that all can strive to be the best persons possible. Such unfolding requires responsibility on the part of the members for the community and the values that are shared in this community. These ideas of responsibility, care, community, are old ideas and can be seen to relate through the history of thinking to be associated with the idea of the image of God.

¹⁷⁰ Lebech, ‘Study-Guide’ pp. 72-73.

¹⁷¹ As Beckmann-Zöller outlines “‘The Social Being of the Person,’” the human person is in an interwoven relationship, his “Dasein is Dasein in a world, his life is life in community”, p. 61, quoting *Der Aufbau*, p. 134.

SECTION SIX
SOME PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

At the start of our examination we outlined Husserl's critique of naturalism in order to prepare the ground for a phenomenological investigation of what it means to be human. Husserl's reflections pointed to the fact that consciousness and constitution were essential in determining our understanding of natural causes and as such epistemologically grounds natural scientific investigation. After this we set out Husserl's early and late phenomenological method in order to situate Stein's philosophical anthropology. In section three investigated Stein's understanding of what it is to be a human being and noted that her phenomenological anthropology offers a descriptive-phenomenological view of what it means to be human based on or derived from human experience. She accounts for the complexity of human experience and for the way we come to constitute ourselves as human beings through our ability to be able to recognise the other via the act of empathy and reflection on reiterated empathy. Without this ability to constitute the other who is 'like me', is my 'type' and my 'image' it would be impossible to unfold as a human being or to realise that one is in fact a psycho-physical-spiritual individual with a zero point of orientation, an 'I', a soul, has a personal core and personal realm open to value. This is all given to us via the 'living body' in which and through which we experience the four realms or layers of human experience, the physical, the sensate, the mental and the personal.

Our body allows us to have sensuous empathy with others who are embodied.

While natural scientific accounts outlined that genes were the forces behind our

make-up, Stein brackets such questions, but does not bracket the question of causality that underpins the thesis of neo-Darwinian writers who believe that we are 'caused' but yet can somehow transcend these causal forces by some means. Stein's descriptive approach deals with the way she experiences our ability to overcome the causal forces, or rather not overcome but operate causally and spiritually (*Geist*) as a complete human individual which is psycho-physical and spiritual, and open to the world of motivations and values.

For Stein, then, the 'image' of the human person is central to the constitution of the human type precisely because without being able to see another like me (another of my image) we could not constitute our own 'image'. We are in the 'image and likeness' of each other as human beings. What it means to be a human being, for Stein, is outlined precisely in the description of the experience of the human being and of our ability to value and be motivated to rationally think and be educated to become a fully unfolded person.

In many respects, then, the idea of the image of God, which was seen to be related to responsibility, rationality, the body, ethics, care, and community, *could* be seen to permeate Stein's philosophical approach in her understanding of the human individual. In chapter five, it was noted that neo-Darwinism did not disprove the existence of God and, therefore, the final chapter aims to put forward rational arguments for the existence of Absolute Being that one might assent to credibly; as the meaning of the 'image of God' rests on such an assent.

CHAPTER VII

STEIN'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL ASCENT TO THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Traditionally, reflection on the image of God idea has been connected, from medieval (e.g. Aquinas) to modern times (e.g. Descartes), to the idea of the existence of an Absolute Being (God) who has the various attributes of omnipotence, goodness and simplicity. But this connection between the image of God idea and the existence of Absolute Being was brought under suspicion in terms of the writings of Kant¹, Feuerbach, Hume and Darwin among others.

Stein does not offer, as such, an ontological, cosmological or teleological argument for God's existence, hers, rather, is a phenomenological ascent to the existence of God. It is not, therefore, an argument where a conclusion will be drawn from premisses in order to 'prove' or 'conclude' the existence of God; it is, instead, a way based on the particular experience of the I's contingency, the contingency of the content of experience and on the feeling of felt security. It is from this experience of one's own existence, (from the perspective of the being of the 'pure I'), that Stein asks us to follow its implications and freely assent. By following this descriptive-analysis of experience Stein believes that one would come to 'see' the rationale behind positing the existence of Eternal Being to answer the questions of 'whence' we came and to 'whither' we go.

¹ However, we must note that Kant put forward his own argument for the existence of God from his moral philosophy, so while Kant's reflections raised questions about the existence of God, Kant himself was not an atheist.

The question of the existence of Absolute Being has been shied away from in many modern philosophical inquiries. Baseheart, however, remarks that there have been a number of contemporary philosophers, mainly from the phenomenological school of thought, who have not rejected the problematic of the existence of God but addressed questions relating to religious experience and the existence of God.² In the first section we will outline Stein's phenomenological starting point and in section two Stein's particular approach to proving the existence of Eternal Being with regard to the 'contingency of the being of the I', the 'contingency of the contents of experience' and in relation to 'felt security (certitude)'. It will be argued that Stein's argument confronts the question of ultimate origins while others have either evaded or side-stepped these questions. Finally, it will be argued that the full meaning of the image of God idea rests on an assent in belief in Absolute Being upon which the idea rests.

SECTION ONE

STEIN'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL STARTING POINT

Stein offers a proof for the existence of God which is found in her work *Endliches und ewiges Sein*. The proof is generally regarded as largely Thomistic in nature, but it is 'unique in its details, starting with the life of the ego (*Ichleben*) and ascending to the being of God'.³ The question of the sensefulness of being (*Sinn des Seins*)

² Baseheart, p. 110. Baseheart details for example the work of, Henry Duméry, *The Problem of God in the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. C. Courtney (Evanston, IL: Northwestern Press, 1964); Karl Rahner, *Spirit in the World* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968); W. Norris Clarke, *The Philosophical Approach to God* (Winston-Salem, NC.: Wake Forest University, 1979). One might also add to this, Dominique Janicaud, *Phenomenology and the Theological Turn: The French Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 1st pub. 1991, which debates the branching of the phenomenological method into theological concerns.

³ Karl Schudt, 'Edith Stein's Proof for the Existence of God from Consciousness', in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, (82 No. 1, 2008), 105–125 (p. 105). Here, we may note a combining of Augustinian and Thomistic approaches in that Stein reflects on inner experience and the power of understanding and memory following Augustine, but she also focuses on that which is given via the

becomes an important aspect of Stein's investigation in *Finite and Eternal Being*, it is an account of the meaning of being that originates from the most basic experience of being, up to and including an ascent to the meaning of Being (*Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*) in *Eternal Being*. In Schudt's estimation, then,

It is a book of great scope, working out an ontology that attempts to show the complete dependence of all beings, real, mental, and ideal, on God. It is an ascent [...] from the realms of physical, mental, and ideal beings to the fullness of being, which [...] is intellectual and free. In other words, the plenitude of being is a person. In the concluding sections of [*Finite and Eternal Being*] she examines the self-disclosure of this divine person [persons] to the human person.⁴

Our focus shall be on Stein's argument for the existence of God which she undertakes in chapter II section two. Here she begins by exploring dependent being in relation to the non-dependent source of being. She starts her exploration from the being of the I, and in relation to the phenomenological experience of 'felt security' which is an experience she speaks about in her early phenomenological writings.⁵ It is a proof which is grounded in the experience of the contingency of being, the being which Stein is concerned with is one's consciousness. As such, the argument is influenced by an existential-phenomenological method, reflecting on the 'self' and the feeling of

senses to inner experience – here Aquinas's method of reflecting on experience (cosmological arguments etc.) is drawn inward, as Borden remarks, 'Stein insists that reason, although working with our senses, must be a faculty distinguished from our senses, and it is reason that draws meaning from the senses [...] Stein [also] discusses the importance of memory and significance of memory [in *FEB*]. We are never merely here and now, but our lives and powers are shaped by what we have experienced. [...] Stein believes our reason, heart, and body, are all interconnected: information is received through the senses, it is understood by our reason, its meaning is retained [...] and expressed through our bodies. All work together and function best when each is fully developed. Our faculties [...] are ultimately united and rooted in the interior of the soul, in the centre of the person.' Sarah Borden, 'Introduction to Stein's "The interiority of the Soul," from *Finite and Eternal Being*,' in *Logos: A Journal for Catholic Thought and Culture*, vol. 8, No. 2 (Spring, 2005), 178–182 (pp. 180–181). It is not surprising, given this inclusive approach of Stein, that she was able to bring traditions and thinkers such as Augustine and Aquinas into harmony in her philosophical reflections.

⁴ Schudt, p. 105.

⁵ See, *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, pp. 84–85, here Stein speaks about the 'feeling of being safe'.

the security in one's being. It is a feeling of security that is, perhaps, opposite to that of Heidegger's more pessimistic feeling of 'Angst'. As Baseheart writes,

[Stein's is] a consciousness-conscious philosophy always, and a God-conscious philosophy [...] it was [thus] natural that she should seek Eternal Being (*Ewiges Sein*) through the being that is consciousness (*Bewusst-sein*).⁶

Stein begins her question of the starting point of her reflection by discussing the 'starting point of the inquiry: the fact of our own being' in chapter two. Here she outlines that:

The human mind in its quest for truth has sought an indubitably certain point of departure, it always encountered the inescapable *fact of its own being or existence*: 'of all the things we know, how much do we know with the same certitude as we know that we exist? In this knowledge we have no fear at all of being deceived by a mere appearance of truth, since it is indubitably certain that even the one who is being deceived exists'.⁷

As we have seen, the phenomenological method required an *epoché* of the natural attitude, and what 'remains after this phenomenological reduction [according to Stein...] is the area of *consciousness* understood as the *life of the ego* [*Ichleben*].'⁸

This life of the ego, however, 'is not the mere *cogito* or thought, but rather is the ever-present I-am (*Ich bin*) that is seen in every act of perception, thought, or experience'.⁹

According to Stein, then, the life of the ego is 'most primordial in the sense that it is the most intimate or immediate knowledge [that] I have: it is a knowledge of that

⁶ Baseheart, p. 110. Baseheart goes on to explain that 'the scaffolding of [Stein's] ascent bears some resemblance to the framework of the traditional ways of the mind's climb from the knowledge of finite effects to infinite cause. The finitude with which she begins is that which she selects as best known to us: that founded in the consciousness of our own individual, precarious possession of a fleeting, flowing being. In the analysis of this experience, she brings within the frame of the Aristotelian-Thomistic doctrine of potency and act, the Husserlian doctrine of the stream of experience and of phenomenological time. She also brings to bear on the cognitive aspects of experience the affective experiences, some of which have been stressed by phenomenological existentialism.' p. 111.

⁷ FEB, p. 35 (chapter 2, section 2). (This is reminiscence of St Augustine's remarks against scepticism regarding the existence of the self in *Contra Academicos*.)

⁸ Ibid., p. 36.

⁹ Schudt, p. 107.

which is inseparable from me, and it is therefore a primordial starting point.¹⁰ This ‘pure I’ (*das reine Ich*) accompanies all experience.¹¹ It is not something that it is possible to walk away from. As such, it does not fall under the phenomenological *epoché* (that suspends belief in one’s own existence as a being in the world like other things in the world) and cannot be excluded from experience precisely because it is the primordial starting point that is given in experience and it is identical in each experience.

Like Husserl, Stein regards the transcendental ego as the primordial starting point of phenomenological enquiry, but even at this stage of her writing, Stein moves away from adopting the version of the transcendental ego that Husserl elaborated completely, for, as Schudt explains,

We find [Stein] begins with the transcendental ego that is left over after Husserlian bracketing, the *Ichleben* or life of the ego. This seems to parallel the transcendental ego that for the early Husserl becomes the point of origin of the constituted being of the whole phenomenological world; as Husserl says, [...] ‘Nature *is* only as being constituted in regular concatenations of consciousness’ [*Ideas I*, p. 96]. But, fully in accord with [Stein’s] epistemological realism, [she] attributes no such absoluteness to the I.¹²

It has already been shown that in her early works, Stein argued that it is via the I and the body, and in particular through the act of empathy, that we are opened to the ‘other’. It is through this experience of the other that we arrive at the experience of the personal realm. The human individual, therefore, is not simply pure consciousness, and cannot be regarded as such, as Husserl argued in the

¹⁰ FEB, p. 36.

¹¹ The I in ‘I perceive, I think, I draw conclusions, I am glad, I wish, and so on’, Baseheart, p. 112, FEB, pp. 46–47.

¹² Schudt, p.108.

transcendental-phenomenological reduction, but an incarnate reality and personal being that cannot be bracketed entirely.

The human being, nevertheless, is still an incarnate *consciousness*. Thus Stein raises an important set of questions in relation to the experience of the intellect of its own being: ‘what is that being of which I am conscious?; what is that self which is conscious of itself?; what is that intellectual [*geistige*] movement in which I am and in which I am conscious of both myself and the movement itself?’.¹³

7.1.1 What is the Being of which I am Conscious?

In relation to the question ‘what is that being of which I am conscious’, Stein realises that when she turns towards being it reveals a dual aspect, that of being and of non-being. The experience of the ‘I am’ is unable to endure this dual perspective, the ‘I am’ is subject to change and since being and the intellectual movement (‘in which’ I am) are not separated, this being is likewise subject to change:

the being of which I am conscious as mine is inseparable from temporality [but] as actual being – that is, as actually present being – it is without a temporal dimension [*punktuell*]: It is a ‘now’ [*Jetzt*] in between a ‘no longer’ [*Nicht mehr*] and a ‘not yet’ [*Noch nicht*] [...] by its breaking apart in its flux into being and not-being, the *idea of pure being* is revealed to us. In pure being there is no longer any admixture of not-being, nor any ‘no longer’ and ‘not yet’. In short pure being is not temporal but *eternal*.¹⁴

¹³ FEB, p. 37.

¹⁴ Ibid. Schudt points out, ‘Like Heidegger and Husserl, for Stein the present moment of the I is the key to an understanding of being. It is the prime instance of being that we are capable of grasping in insight. [...] When one reflects upon one’s own being, one finds that each moment is different. Although I am the same, my consciousness is moving through a torrent of experiences as I live. The past me has gone and the future me has not yet appeared. The ‘former’ state of being is past and has given way to the ‘present’ state of being. [FEB, p. 37]. I can never recall perfectly the experience through which I lived before. Consider the past experience of joy that I once felt and relive it, but always in a different way. ‘But this kind of joy is not fully alive: it is merely an experience of a past joy. ... The experience of joy lags behind the being-fully-alive of my present joy [FEB, pp. 50-51.] I cannot escape the fact that my joy in my loved one is in the past. One cannot say that the past

Stein, therefore, holds that we have ideas of eternal, temporal, immutable and mutable being (and also of not-being), we encounter these within ourselves, they are not borrowed from anything outside us.¹⁵ The idea of the *punktuell* arises from Stein's reading of Hedwig Conrad-Martius, it is worth quoting at length to convey Stein's appreciation of Conrad-Martius's work with regard to this concept of 'ontic time', as this concept of 'ontic time', of 'being-suspended' between not-being and being is the first step to her ascent to Eternal Being. Stein holds that Conrad-Martius

has strikingly depicted the contrast between the phenomenal breadth of existence and its non-dimensional [*punktuell*] actuality ['Die Zeit', 2: 170 ff., 4: 387].¹⁶ There is (in time!) no dimension in which existents could disappear in such a way that they are, 'as it were... still preserved in it'; nor is there 'a dimension which could release something previously contained in it, so that it

absolutely does not exist, since I can recover it in memory. So the past appears on the horizon of the present as potentiality. By speaking of the past as potential, Stein does not mean that it has some sort of enduring being in the present outside of the life of the I, but that it is not nothing. The past *is*, in some way, 'inasmuch as it can pass over again from its present mode of being into a state of full vitality' [FEB, p. 39]. It is recoverable, in a way that something which has no being is not. The I stands before the future as well. I am not now all that I can be. My future remains undefined: I can become any of a multitude of different things, and I can undergo any number of different experiences. Strictly speaking the future does not exist. It is a not-yet that has not been reached. I am continually progressing toward a region of indeterminacy. But in another sense, this future cannot be said *not* to exist; the future is constrained to certain channels of actuality, based upon what exists in the present moment. I cannot be anything I want, I cannot experience anything I want. [...] The future has a determinate structure, and exists before it exists, in a diminished sense, 'provided it once possessed that seminal mode of being in a preceding span of time' [FEB, p. 39] 'Reflection on the being of the I presents us with a region of actuality, the present, and two regions of potency, retention of the past and protension into the future.' See, Schudt, p. 109. Stein has different conceptions, nevertheless, of what that 'self' is, compared to both Husserl and Heidegger's depiction of the self as either a purified transcendental consciousness or angst-ridden being-for-its-own-death. For Stein, much like Augustine, one's memory recalls the realities that it encountered and one's memory (*Confessions*, Book X) extends into the future as in 'Remember man that thou are dust and unto dust they shalt return'.

¹⁵ Stein seems to be following Augustine's approach to God from 'within'. McEvoy accounts for Augustine's search for God when he notes that in the '*Confessions*, bk X [we find] a search for God, who is both beyond and within the creation. [...] The mediation on memory is a spiritual exercise through which Augustine seeks to mount within the contents of the mind, from level to level, in order to identify by means of self-knowledge the presence of God within the soul. The better he knows himself the more he appreciates God's transcendence of his creature. Yet God has left at the deepest point of human self-consciousness a distinctive mark of presence that corresponds to his transcendence, namely that *gaudium de veritate* which is completely ineradicable (Augustine believes) from the human mind and memory.' See, James McEvoy, 'Patristic and Medieval Neoplatonism' in *The Perennial Tradition of Neoplatonism*, ed. John J. Cleary (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), pp. 383–396 (pp. 387–388).

¹⁶ Cf. Hedwig Conrad-Martius, 'Die Zeit', in *Philosophischer Anzeiger II*, 2 & 4, (1927/ 1928), pp. 143–182, 345–390. In this work, Stein, notes that Conrad-Martius presents a 'profound analysis of the frailty of temporal being and of the way temporal being is related to eternal being'. See, FEB, p. 554, n. 8.

might pass over into existence. Past and future do not actually contain what, in the phenomenal view, they seem and promise to be' [Ibid, pp. 172 f.]. Here, then we get a glimpse of the enigmatic nature of *time* and *temporal existence*. Although the present moment could not be without past and future, these latter two dimensions of time are not static: They are containers in which something could be preserved or from which something could emerge; no enduring being can be concealed in them. The peculiar nature of enduring being cannot be understood from the point of view of time, but rather, conversely, time must be understood from the point of view of non-dimensional actuality. The 'ontic birth of time' takes place 'in the fully actualised present,' in that 'actual existence [...] which establishes a contact with being [...] at only one point,' [Ibid, pp. 154f.] as something which is given and which in its 'givenness is simultaneously something privative': a 'being-suspended between non-being and being' [Ibid., 157].¹⁷

Here Stein drawing on Conrad-Martius' reflection on being and time notes that the contact of being is a contact which is fully actualised only in the present, only in this point does actual existence establish a contact with being, and it is there that being is suspended between non-being and being. Time, is, as such, the *absolute* present which continually passes over the point of existential contact and past and future are not,

presuppositions of the present but are constituted 'with and in the present' ['*Dei Zeit*', p. 166]; they are vacuous formal dimensions [*Leerdimensionen*], [Ibid., p. 167] owing to that original movement which makes them rise out of nothingness and allows them to sink back into nothingness. This original movement is either a movement into being toward nothingness or it is a movement out of nothingness toward the temporal dimensions themselves (i.e., toward whatever is being posited). 'Being' understood in *this* sense, 'is and always remains a becoming, [...]' [it] stands in need of time. The 'position' which has to be gained and regained again and again posits of necessity a formal dimension as its habitat; it posits actuality or the present in the strict sense, as the place or space in which the act of positing can be performed [Ibid., p. 346]. 'Wherever this primordial ontic act occurs, "there" is the present. [...] this can only be a point, never a breath [...] the firm anchorage of time lies in the *passing present*.'¹⁸

This reflection on being and its relationship to 'pure act', which she finds in Conrad-Martius' work, allows Stein to consider the experience of the *Is*' being in the *passing*

¹⁷ FEB, pp. 39–40.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 40.

present (i.e. actual being) as somewhat analogical¹⁹ to Eternal Being's life as 'pure act'.

7.1.2 The Experience of Finite Being as Analogical to Eternal Being

Stein analogical holds that a relationship exists between temporal and eternal being. She tells us that *actual being*, at the moment at which it *is*, reveals something of the nature of being as such, that is to say, of the fullness of being which knows of no temporal change. Because this experience of 'actual being', nevertheless, is only in the 'moment' – it is not at this moment the fullness of being – its experience of being is but of a particular moment, that is to say, it is frail [*Hinfälligkeit*] – and so, it cannot but be taken as an *analogon* of eternal being which is immutable and plenitude of being at every moment. As such

momentary or temporal being, [...] is merely a remote image or likeness [*Abbild*], related to the primordial prototype of its similitude but yet infinitely far removed from it by its dissimilitude.²⁰

Here, however, we have come to a position (which we stated previously above) where:

the *idea of pure being* is revealed to us. In pure being there is no longer any admixture of not-being, nor any 'no longer' (*Nicht mehr*) and 'not yet' (*Noch nicht*). In short, pure being is not temporal but *eternal*.²¹

¹⁹ Stein did not define analogy in her writing as such but would have been aware of Aquinas and Aristotle's reflections on analogy in her later writings, see Chapter III, n. 96, pp. 125-126 for an account of analogy in terms of Aquinas and Aristotle's philosophy. Stein would also have looked at analogy from the phenomenological perspective – that is, the experience one has of existence in relation to other entities and their existence, this experience would have been given via the act of empathy which permeates all of her philosophical writings from early to late.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 37–38.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39. Stein elaborates this further when she outlines, 'the ego is then, we conclude, always actually always actually living present. On the other hand, there appertains to it an entire stream of experiences, comprising everything that lies 'behind it' and 'ahead of it', that is, everything in which it was once alive in the past and everything in which it will be alive again in the future. It is this very

We have to distinguish two distinct but related things here. First, we come to an experience of what ‘pure being’ is from our experience of limited being, our experience of the ‘I am’ in the ‘now’ gives us a realisation of pure act. Secondly, our understanding of ‘pure act’ as finite beings is always given in the ‘life of the ego’ which is in continuous flow, thus we can but analogically conceive of a being that is totally ‘pure act’, ‘full being’ (*volles Sein*) where there is no past and present lifestream. Here Stein is influenced (via Husserl)²² by the writings of St Augustine on time found in the *Confessions* (Book XI).

7.1.3 The Emptiness of the Pure I

Baseheart captures the contingency of the Pure I, as we know it or experience it, as follows:

The pure I is empty in itself and is dependent for its content on experience: ‘whence comes this content...? A noise “breaks in on me” – that is something that comes *from without*; it does not rise from the I. ... Joy ‘rises in me’ – it comes *from within*, though as a rule it is a response to something coming from without. ... Thus the conscious *Ichleben* is dependent in its content on an outer world and an inner world’.²³

The human mind receives into itself material from the body *via* sensation and perception to allow ideas to emerge. For Stein, knowledge of our own being, as we

totality which we designate as the ‘life of the ego’. But this totality *is not actual as a whole* [emphasis added]. Only the part of it which is alive ‘now’ is a present reality. In other words, the vitality of the ego does not embrace everything which appertains to it: The ego is always alive as long as it is, but its *vitality is not that* of the all-embracing being of the *pure act* but rather the *temporal* vitality advancing from one moment to the next.’ FEB., p. 52

²² See, Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* trans. by John Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1964); originally published as *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*, ed. Rudolf Boehm (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1969) composed 1893-1917.

²³ *Finite and Eternal Being* 318-319, *Endliches und Ewiges Sein*, p. 51-52. Baseheart, p. 112 quoting Stein, *Endliches und Ewiges Sein, Versuch einer Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts; Friburg: Herder, 1952).

have outlined previously in relation to her early works, ‘is dependent on the external world of nature and of other human beings, [...] a certain priority [though is given to one’s own being as it] is the being that is closest, and, [...] best known *quoad nos*.’²⁴ Baseheart, however, wonders whether Stein has prematurely jumped to Eternal Being from an experience of limited being.²⁵ Stein, nevertheless, has not only discussed the experience of limited being, she has discussed the experience of the I in the ‘moment’ as an experience of ‘actual being’ and, by analogy, it is possible to comprehend a being that exists in ‘pure act’. Of course, even in the moment the I would have experience of external stimuli that raises reactions within (such as joy etc.) so the *Ich* would realise that it is not the fullness of being itself. Yet, Stein does establish her argument on firmer grounds in her analysis of potency and act, as potency and act is experienced or given to consciousness. As such

the finitude of the being of the I is revealed in the awareness of the continuous passage from potency to act, and the concrete awareness of becoming is uncovered in the analysis of ‘experience-units’ (*Erlebniseinheiten*).²⁶

The fleeting movement point of actuality (that is the actuality of the ‘now’) highlights the tension that is experienced between actuality and potentiality in our being, but even in the present actual instant (now), one’s being is both actual and potential.

Schudt points out that Stein now moves to put forward philosophical arguments to establish the existence of Absolute Being. And highlights (as previously outlined above) that Stein puts forward ‘three avenues for this proof: (i) the

²⁴ Baseheart, p. 112

²⁵ Ibid., p. 113, Schudt also raises this question quoting Baseheart and also making reference to the possibility that Stein has executed an instance of Rahnerian *Vorgriff* or ‘pre-apprehension of being, running ahead of what the evidence supplies by virtue of an innate intuition of being’, Schudt, p. 111. However, Schudt then points out, in agreement with Baseheart, that Stein is ‘philosophizing in faith’ and will thereby ‘see connections that others will not’, Schudt p. 111.

²⁶ Baseheart, p. 113.

contingency of the being of the I, (ii) the dependence of the I in content, and (iii) the felt experience of security.²⁷ We will follow Schudt's delineation in our analysis of Stein's ascent to Absolute Being.

SECTION TWO
THE CONTINGENCY OF THE I,
ITS CONTENT AND THE FELT EXPERIENCE OF SECURITY

In this section we will consider Stein's reflections concerning the contingency of the I (which she has already brought to the fore in the previous discussion), the contingency of the *content* that is given to the I, and finally her reflections on the 'felt experience of security' which arises in relation to Stein's consideration of Heidegger's philosophical understanding of *Angst*.

7.2.1 The Contingency of the I

We have already outlined the contingency of the I in the preceding section. There is, perhaps, one further idea to be drawn with regard to the I. Stein notes that 'in the experience of its "capability" (*Können*) the I becomes conscious of the "powers" which are "dormant" in the soul and which sustain the ego-life (*Ichleben*)'.²⁸ The I draws upon powers that are beyond itself, one's ability to learn some foreign language may not yet exist, but it is not the case that this possibility does not exist at all, it exists in potency as a capacity, one can, for instance, study and take classes and learn. This ability exists in the soul, according to Stein. We have already outlined the role of

²⁷ Schudt, p. 111.

²⁸ FEB, p. 376. See Schudt, p. 112.

the soul for Stein in her *Phil. of Psy. and Humanities*²⁹ and it seems that the role of the soul follows closely her early understanding. But as Schudt points out,

it is not important what she calls it [that is, the place where the ability of something exists in potential]. The fact that is important is that the I as point of highest actuality has a necessary relationship to regions of potential being *external* to the ego. The I lives by actualizing previously latent but *existing* potencies.³⁰

This again demonstrates the contingency of the I, that the I, is not the author of its own existence; it is not pure act because it chooses an activity from a range of possibilities, a range of potentials to actualise. With God's 'being is his essence' in contrast, there is no potentiality. We, on the other hand, from our experience, are not, as such, in full possession of our own being and in contrast to human beings who have a soul, God does not have a 'soul from which he actualises possibilities'.³¹ Stein goes on now to discuss the 'content' that is given to the I in experience and how this 'content' is, in fact, also contingent in nature.

7.2.2 The Contingency of the I in relation to its Content

Stein realises that not only is the being of the I contingent but also the *content* of experience itself is contingent. Stein uses the term *Erlebniseinheit* or *experiential unit*³² to convey the idea of a,

²⁹ See, *Phil of Psy. and Humanities*, p. 25 and Schudt, p. 112 for a comprehensive discussion of the relationship between the idea of soul in *FEB* and *Phil of Psy and Hum*.

³⁰ Schudt, p. 112, my emphasis.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 113.

³² In German the term *Erlebenis* refers to the 'lived experience', or one's own experience in particular, whereas *Erfahrung* is utilised more in terms of an exchange of experiences or a set of experiences. See *Oxford Duden German Dictionary*, eds. W. Scholze-Stubenrecht, J. B. Sykes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) pp. 231, 234. Gadamer in particular drew out the differences between *Erlebenis* and *Erfahrung* in his work on *Truth and Method*. Bernstein outlines that *Erlebenis* and *Erfahrung* 'are translated [in English] as "experience". But Gadamer carefully shows [that] *Erfahrung*, [...] does not have the heightened subjectivistic resonances of *Erlebenis*. See, Richard J. Bernstein,

structural whole which during a certain period of time grows up organically in the conscious life of the individual and thereby ‘fills’ this temporal span [...] the mode of thinking in which I exist at this moment differs as *Erlebniseinheit* from my meditation on the same subject a few hours ago. While the ‘present unit’ began only a few minutes ago, the ‘past unit’ has been disconnected, and in the meantime a whole series of other experiential units has forced its way in between my present and past thinking. As against the ‘past unit’ the ‘present’ one has the distinction of being *actual*. But upon closer view we recognise that this so-called *actual* unit is not actual in its entirety. Strictly speaking, only what takes place in the immediate now is ‘fully alive’. We know, however, that this now is an indivisible moment, and whatever fills it ‘sinks’ in the next moment ‘back into the past’. And every new now is filled with new life’.³³

The question of the movement of experience into the past raises questions for Stein; she wonders whether ‘experiential units’ are possible because ‘we are [...] aware by now that neither in the past nor in the future can [anything] really “be”. There is no actual ‘being’ in these two temporal dimensions.’³⁴ As such, all real ‘*fullness* or *fulfilment* is in the present moment’. But Stein, contra this, highlights that,

we really *do* experience joy, fear and so on, and moreover, we experience these as units which are construed in a time-consuming movement [...] this movement is my life or my living being [and] whatever structures ‘arise’ within this movement, I encompass (each individually) from the vantage point of this present moment in which I am alive. Nothing of all this ‘stands’ in the past. Whatever of all that I have been is still alive, is within me, and with me in the present moment.³⁵

Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983) p. 249, n. 17. Weinsheimer & Marshall highlight that Gadamer used *Erfahrung* to convey ‘the specifically hermeneutic way we are related to other persons and to our cultural past [...] this kind of “experience” is not the residue of isolated moments, but an ongoing integrative process in which what we encounter widens our horizon, but only by overturning an existing perspective, which we can then perceive was erroneous or at least narrow. Its effect, therefore, is not simply to make us “knowing”, [...] but to give us that implicit sense of broad perspectives, of the range of human life and culture and of our own limits that constitutes a non-dogmatic wisdom. *Erlebnis* is something you have, and thus is connected with a subject [...] *Erfahrung* is something you undergo, so that subjectivity is overcome and drawn into an “event” (*Geschehen*) of meaning’. See, Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer & Donald G. Marshall (London: Continuum, 2004) translators’ introduction p. xiii. While Gadamer’s reflections on these terms come after Stein’s writing, it is nevertheless important to keep in mind that these distinctions exist in the German language. *Erlebnis* as ‘lived experience’ was central to Stein’s phenomenological method as compared to *Erfahrung* which has a more hermeneutical component. The ‘experiential unit’ in the above quotation should be thought of in terms of *Erlebnis*.

³³ FEB, pp. 43–44.

³⁴ Ibid. pp. 44–45.

³⁵ FEB, p. 45.

So, we can experience ‘joy’ on many different occasions and yet it is the *one* feeling of ‘joy’. I can be joyful over the birth of a baby, over winning a game or accomplishing some project. The joy, as such, is the same content, for the various experiences, it is only because it is the *same* (one) that we can categorise all these various experiences as ‘joyful’. One can conceivably encounter a joyful occasion without, in fact, experiencing joy — here there might be a reason as to why I do not feel joy, perhaps due to grief, depression or some other unexplained reason. Schudt explains:

The experience [of joy seems to depend] upon something other than the I. [The] I is contingent in its being [and here too] we see that it is contingent with respect to experience, in that the I cannot force itself to experience joy. The experience of joy depends on something out of the control of the I. I may not be able to experience joy because of some obstacle that is not accessible to the I, some problem in the soul. The I does not need a soul only as a source of possibilities of actions, but also as a source of the possibilities of experiences.³⁶

The I is particularly contingent on ‘experience-units’, according to Stein, and she believes that Husserl is justified in speaking of a *stream of experiences* because ‘the ego always alive, proceeds from one content to the next, from one experience to another, so that its life is *one* constant flux’.³⁷ And as Schudt highlights, the I requires experience in order for the I to live, (otherwise the I would be complete emptiness), just as the experiences themselves need an I for them to be living experiences.³⁸ The I is that which is given to us most primordially; everything else, in content, is given to us *via* consciousness.

³⁶ Schudt, p. 115.

³⁷ FEB, p. 50.

³⁸ Schudt., p. 115. As Stein states, the I ‘is empty in itself, and all its fullness derives from the experiential contents; and these in turn receive their life from it.’ FEB, p. 49.

The I does not have control over itself, it can draw upon the soul which can structure it in a particular way and the I is also dependent on content to be given to it in order for it to be:

there [is a] peculiar weakness and fragility of this *preeminent being* [that is, the being of the ego]. The ego, [...] is always alive, but it is nevertheless unable to keep enduringly alive those experiential contents which it needs to sustain its own life. Without these contents, the ego is an empty nothing.³⁹

Stein comes to the position that ‘the conscious life of the ego depends [...] by virtue of its contents on a twofold *beyond*, an *external* and an *internal* world.’⁴⁰ The I is dependent on such experiences as given either externally or internally. So the I does not know from whence it came, or to whither it goes, the mystery of its past cannot be called into being and sustained in experiential content:

The ego knows itself as a living, actually present existent and simultaneously as one that emerges from a past and lives into a future; *itself and its being are inescapably there: It is a being thrown into existence [ins Dasein geworfen]*. This, [...] marks this being as the extreme opposite of an autonomous and intrinsically necessary being *a se* (by itself).⁴¹

Reflecting on Heidegger’s philosophical theme of *thrownness*, Stein ponders how ‘thrown’ being aims to find a firm ontological ground. The question of the being of

³⁹ FEB, p. 53, Then Stein asks where does the I in fact acquire the contents, the contents that without which the I is nothing. She wonders about the way a noise can ‘break in upon one’ from *without*, it is not, as such, arising from the ego from ‘within’. The ‘ego’ merely lends an ear to the noise. Stein realises that the noise comes from outside or ‘externally’. She also notices that experiential-contents such as a feeling of joy can arise internally and wonders about its source. It causes Stein to ask the question, ‘does the joy originate in the *pure* ego’. She sees the ‘pure ego’, in accord with Husserl’s position, that it is the self that is alive in every ‘I think,’ ‘I know,’ ‘I desire,’ etc. and which is conscious of itself as a thinking, knowing, desiring ego. If we follow this definition, then we ‘must conclude that this joy originates in a transcendent [*jenseitige*] depth which discloses itself in the conscious experience of joy, without, however, becoming transparent’. Stein thus believes that, ‘the conscious life of the ego depends thus by virtue of its contents on a twofold *beyond* [*transcendence* in Husserl’s sense of the term] an *external* and an *internal* world both of which manifests themselves in the conscious life of the ego, i.e., in that ontological realm which is inseparable from the ego [*immanence* in Husserl’s sense of the term].’, FEB, p. 54. The content of the I, coming from the external world, or from the undisclosed depth of the soul highlights again the dependence of the I.

⁴⁰ FEB, p. 54.

⁴¹ Ibid. here Stein is referring to Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Halle, 1927), p. 179; see, FEB, n. 34 p. 556.

the I as thrown into existence requires one to ask the question of the ‘thrower’, this question, according to Stein, cannot be suspended and thus she comes to the question of the existence of a ‘thrower’, as the *thrown* is dependent upon being brought into being as such (as thrown).

7.2.3 The Proof of the Existence of God from the Being of the I

Stein questions the origin of this received being of which the I knows it is not the origin, she wonders where it comes from, and she sees that there seem to be several answers to this question. She reasons that the ego must either have received its life as well as the contents of its experiences from the ‘transcendental worlds’, that is, the external or internal, or from both, or that the ego must ‘owe its being directly to that pure being which is by itself and in itself (*a se* and *per se*), eternally immutable, autonomous, and necessary.’⁴² The second possibility, she notes, does not exclude the first one, for, as Stein argues:

If it were admitted that the ego is placed into and sustained in existence by a direct act of pure being, then there might well be assumed an additional dependence of its life on either the external or the internal world, or on both. A received being, on the other hand, that is independent of eternal being is inconceivable because, aside from eternal being, nothing exists that is truly in full possession of being.⁴³

The position of, perhaps, the possibility of receiving being from contingent sources seems to be side-stepped by Stein. In modern cosmology there are arguments that the universe just ‘is’ – in a steady-state so that, there may have been an infinite possibility of causes that can go back to infinity, so that the being of the I may be dependent on

⁴² FEB, p. 55.

⁴³ Ibid.

its existence from our parents and their being from their parents and so on and so forth. Yet, as Schudt lucidly points out,

Why can the I not receive its being from some previous, similarly contingent being, and so forth throughout an infinity of previous causes? [...] It is not so simple: if there is no first causes, the whole series still has no explanation. As [Christopher] Martin explains it ‘if we grant that a system of things which display feature X itself displays feature X, and therefore requires an explanation in terms of a relation to something else, it does not matter how large the system is’.⁴⁴ If a chain of ten beings that depend progressively on each other needs a being to get them started, so does a chain of a hundred, a million, or an infinity. [...] Multiplication is not explanation, and cannot substitute for a first cause.⁴⁵

Thus, while many may argue that the being of the I can be considered to be contingent on a ‘multiplication of causes’ to infinity, the logic of such an argument from Martin’s perspective is incredulous because multiplication of causes does not explain the existence of the series of infinite causes, as these causes are dependent on a previous cause, and therefore the system of causes are dependent on being explained with regard to some ‘X’ that itself is not caused, and so we arrive back at the problem of the ‘first cause’ which was raised by Aquinas. If a finite act of existence harbours no self-guarantee to be (at all), yet is, and if one asks a question as to why *that* finite act of existence is, pointing to another finite existence is not an answer, never mind a solution, to *this* metaphysical question.

Schudt believes that Stein is following Aquinas’s lead in her discussion of ‘receiving being’ and draws upon Thomas’ discussion in chapter four of *De ente et essentia*. Stein, of course, would have been very familiar with this work given her

⁴⁴ Cf. Christopher F. J. Martin, *Thomas Aquinas: God and Explanation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), p. 142.

⁴⁵ Schudt, p. 117.

translation of it and her use of it in *Finite and Eternal Being*.⁴⁶ Aquinas in *De ente et essentia* chapter four discusses the being of ‘separate substances’, that is, beings that can exist apart from matter. So Thomas held that whatever belonged to a being (*ens*) did so either by its nature, or by something extrinsic to its being. But existence is not something which belongs to a being. As Aquinas explains:

Everything that pertains to a thing, [...] either is caused by the principles of its own nature, as risibility in man, or else comes from some extrinsic principle, as light in the air from the influence of the sun. Now, it cannot be that existence itself is caused by the very form or quiddity of the thing (I mean as by an efficient cause), because then the thing would be its own efficient cause, and the thing would produce itself in existence, which is impossible. Therefore, everything the existence of which is other than its own nature has existence from another. And since everything that is through another is reduced to that which is through itself as to a first cause, there is something that is the cause of existing in all things in that this thing is existence only. Otherwise, we would have to go to infinity in causes, for everything that is not existence alone has a cause of its existence, as said above. It is clear, therefore, that the intelligences are form and existence and have existence from the first being, which is existence alone, and this is the first cause, which is God.⁴⁷

In light of the above, Stein might have set out her argument for the proof of the existence of God through the fact that the I is not its own cause as it lacks power over its own being’.⁴⁸ So, for Stein, the received being of the I cannot be received from an entity that receives being itself, but must be received from a being that is being *per se*.

Whether Stein’s argument follows *De ente et essentia* (as Schudt outlines), or is added to the question of the ‘First Cause’ in Aquinas’s *Five Ways*, the outcome is quite similar. The analysis of ‘received being’ in *De ente et essentia* appears to follow

⁴⁶ See, FEB, p. 32.

⁴⁷ Aquinas, *On Being and Essence (De ente et essentia)*, trans. Robert T. Miller, cf. Internet Medieval Source Book (Fordham University Centre for Medieval Studies), ed. by Paul Halsall, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/aquinas-esse.html#f2> [accessed 1/09/2010], chapter IV. Miller is translating from the Leonine edition of Thomas’ works vol. 43 *Sancti Thomae De Aquino Opera Omnia* (Rome 1976) pp. 368–381.

⁴⁸ Schudt, p. 118.

Stein's phenomenological investigation more closely than observation of 'First Causes' as such. The experience of being contingent, however, leads to a reflection on a Being that is not dependent on extrinsic factors for reception of its being. Hence, via phenomenological reflection on the experience of the being of the I, the experience of the *existence (and not merely of an idea)* of the necessity of a 'First Cause' also comes into view.

7.2.4 Security as a Revelatory Mood

Stein wonders about the possibilities of discussing Eternal Being from the perspective of the limitations of being finite.⁴⁹ She realises that even though her own being is null and void [*nichtig*], she is not a being *a se* or *per se*, that she is, in fact, nothing, and that she finds herself,

face to face with nothing, [...] from moment to moment [and although nothing] must be endowed with being [she realises] this empty existence [which she is] is *being*, and at every moment [she is] in touch with the fullness of being.⁵⁰

The question is in what way she is in touch with the fullness of being? Schudt explains that it is at this point that,

Stein looks within, to the experience of the I itself, in order to show that consciousness finds in itself evidence of its close relationship to God. [...] Stein [already] introduced the notion of pure being as derivable from the limited being of the I: it exists in a constant present, moving from experience-unity to experience unity. [FEB p. 37].⁵¹

⁴⁹ FEB, p. 55.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Schudt, p. 119. Stein appears to be following the *via negativa* of Aquinas in this process of arriving at pure-being of *separation* to arrive at pure-being. In this way we arrive at an 'idea' of pure being but the existence of the pure-being now becomes a central question. As Anselm's *Proslogion* also operated on the 'idea' of pure-being, but Kant's critique of the ontological argument which questioned the *existence* of such a pure-being, that is, while one might have the 'idea' of a 'pure-being' it is not

Stein proceeds by analysing *Angst* – a concept she takes from Heidegger’s writing in *Being and Time*.⁵² Stein characterises Heidegger’s *Angst* as follows,

The ego also touches upon [the] depths of its own being prior to all reflective and retrospective existential analysis in the experience of anxiety [*Angst*]. Existential anxiety accompanies the unredeemed human being throughout life and in many disguises — as fear of this or that particular thing or being [and] this anxiety or dread is the fear of being no more, and it is thus the experience of anxiety which ‘brings people face to face with nothingness’.⁵³

But Anxiety is not something that dominates human life, according to Stein, because if it were to overshadow everything else it would be *pathological*. We do not ordinarily go through life with anxiety but, in fact, the opposite, we normally go through life almost as ‘securely as if we had a really firm grip on our existence’:

The undeniable fact that my being is limited in its transience from moment to moment and thus exposed to the possibility of nothingness is counterbalanced by the equally undeniable fact that despite this transience, I *am*, that from moment to moment I am *sustained in my being*, and that in my fleeting being I share in enduring being. In the knowledge that being holds me, I rest securely. This security [...] is not the self-assurance of one who under her own power stands on firm ground, but rather the sweet and blissful security of a child that is lifted up and carried by a strong arm.⁵⁴

Here Stein moves to consider the origin of this ‘security’ of being, she holds that we encounter in this feeling of security, in one’s own being, another kind of being that is

sufficient just to have an idea to then confer existence on that ‘idea’ and thus consider this idea a real existent reality.

⁵² Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005); 1st pub. 1927, this English translation is taken from *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer) 7th edition.

⁵³ Stein quotes Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit* (Halle, 1927), pp. 184 ff, See FEB, p. 57 and n. 36 for Stein’s detailed understanding of Heidegger’s concept of *Angst*. For a more comprehensive account of Stein’s analysis of Heidegger’s philosophy, see, Edith Stein, ‘Martin Heideggers Existentialphilosophie’, in *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, Gesamtausgabe, Bd. 11/12 (Freiburg: Herder, 2006). In English as follows: Edith Stein, ‘Martin Heidegger’s Existential Philosophy’, trans. Mette Lebech, in *Maynooth Philosophical Papers Issue 4 (2007)*, ed. by Cyril McDonnell (Maynooth: NUI Maynooth, 2007), pp. 55–98.

⁵⁴ FEB, p. 58.

not one's own but that is the support and ground of one's own unsupported and groundless being.⁵⁵ There are two ways, in Stein's view, to come to realise eternal being as the ground and support of one's being. The first is the *way of faith*, where God has revealed himself as *he who is* (cf. Exodus 3:14) and who reveals himself as love itself (cf. John 3:16) and, therefore, Stein feels that it is 'rational' to trust and [irrational] to fear falling prey to nothingness.⁵⁶ The way of faith, nevertheless, is not sufficient for philosophic endeavour, hence she considers here the *ways in which the existence of God is rationally demonstrated*. As she explains,

The ground and support of my being — as of all finite being — can ultimately be only one being which is not some received being (as is all human being). It must be a *necessary being*, i.e., it must differ from everything that has a beginning in that it alone cannot not be [cf. Aquinas, *S.T.* 1, q. 2, a 3.]. Because the being of this existent is not received being, there cannot be any separation between *what is* (and what could or could not be) and its actual existence: It must be its very act of existing [Ibid., 1, q. 3, a. 4].⁵⁷

For Stein, the experience of security that she feels is one that is immediately anchored in an *ultimate* hold and ground (notwithstanding the fact that there may be some mediate supports of one's being).⁵⁸ And as Schudt explains, Stein's analysis points to the desire of the I to achieve this ultimate 'security' in its longing for eternal being,

For Stein, the I finds itself within a passing stream of experiences, but it wants to possess all at once, in an eternal now. The fact that can be observed is that humans (in large part) are not content with the fleeting being available to them, whether in the world or in consciousness, Augustine draws here a religious conclusion that one ought properly to worship God, who does not

⁵⁵ This experience of the other being is akin to her 'in-feeling' of the 'foreign' in terms of her understanding of empathy in *On Empathy*.

⁵⁶ FEB, pp. 58–59.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 59.

⁵⁸ According to Calcagno, for Stein, 'death is a rupture of the natural security with which our persisting being is marked. [As such] death is unnatural, for it does not belong to the experienced sense of security prevalent in our being.' See, Antonio Calcagno, *The Philosophy of Edith Stein*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2007) p.126. For an extensive commentary on Edith Stein's analysis of Heidegger's Existential Philosophy, see Calcagno, chapter 7.

pass away, whereas Stein simply concludes with the observation that consciousness is concerned about and longs for eternal being.⁵⁹

Yet Stein realised that this argument is in fact a ‘dim and indefinite feeling that can hardly be called *knowledge* [of Eternal Being]’.⁶⁰ This is why Schudt believes that the phenomenological method does not as such lead to conclusive *proof* for the existence of God, rather it is a means, or a method that leads one to a rational assent of the existence of Eternal Being based on analysis of experience, for, as he argues,

These phenomenological appeals to experience do not, of course, prove the reality of that which is the object of the experiences. What phenomenology does [instead] is [to] unfold the experiences in order that the reader or hearer can see for herself. An effective phenomenological argument does not result in a conclusion ‘All S are P’ but rather in the exclamation, ‘Oh, I see!’⁶¹

One might ask the question does the phenomenological description of security that Stein outlines lead people to the position of ‘Oh, I see!’? Some of course may follow Stein’s rationale, while others may not, but Stein’s ‘proof’ is an ‘ascent’ to the meaning of Being. Schudt’s highlights this by adding that Stein’s arguments from the ‘desire from plenitude and eternity of being, and from the experience of security are not logical, demonstrative arguments. They do not attempt to prove the existence of God’.⁶² But Stein, *via* her reflection on experience, highlights that the questions that are raised by our experience of the I and of our experience of ‘pure act’ in a moment, and our longing for ‘pure act’ outside of time, alongside the not-knowing of the origin (whence) of the being of the I or to whither it goes, alongside the feeling of security in

⁵⁹ Schudt, pp. 121–122.

⁶⁰ FEB, p. 59, Stein realises that her position is akin to St. Augustine who ‘groped his way to God pre-eminently from the experience of his inner being and who emphasised in ever new verbal expressions the fact that our being points beyond itself to true being, is always equally emphatic in affirming our incapability of comprehending him who is incomprehensible. “Those who...believe,” he writes, “that it could occur to someone, while in this mortal life, to attain to the radiant brightness of the light of immutable truth and to adhere to it steadily and unswervingly with the mind totally detached from the habits of this life—these people [are] those who seek...”[Augustine: *In Ps.* 99, 5f]. FEB, pp. 59–60.

⁶¹ Schudt, p. 123.

⁶² *Ibid.*

the face of what should be perhaps constant anxiety, leads to a position where rational explanation is required to account for all these various experiences, the most reasonable explanation, for Stein, is the existence of Eternal Being, which she catches glimpses of *via* her finite being. As Schudt notes,

by working through Stein's natural theology, it is hoped that the unbeliever steps into the focal point, coming thereby to the conclusion that without a divine being that is providentially concerned with creation, the world makes no sense; [...] if God exists, however, everything comes into focus.⁶³

SECTION THREE

THE IMAGE OF GOD IDEA AND THE NECESSITY OF AN ASSENT TO BELIEF IN THE EXISTENCE IN GOD

The idea of the image of God would also make most sense from the point of view of an assent to belief in the existence of God because everything that we have outlined would, as Schudt points out, 'come into focus'. If one does not assent to belief in the existence in God, then the idea of the image of God would have meaning insofar that the idea made some positive contributions to advancements in the history of thinking. It has as an idea (from earliest times) highlighted that human beings are 'unique' in the known world in our capabilities to reason and as such have responsibility for creation in a degree that other creatures do not. Human beings are from observation the only species capable of responsibility on this large scale, a scale that takes into account how the planet as such be sustained and the environment protected.

If one does not assent to the existence of God then the idea of the image of God has, as such, no referent. The image refers to its object, and if God is not

⁶³ Ibid. p. 124.

assented to then the human being cannot be understood to be the image of God from within that perspective. Perhaps, from this perspective, the referent might be changed to say that the human being is in the 'image of the human being', as humans depend on the human community to unfold as human individuals. But the human community does not ultimately answer the questions that Stein raised in her ascent to the existence of God.

The existence of God, if assented to, draws us upwards to aspire to attain, to be in the image and likes of the attributes of God, his simplicity, oneness, goodness, existence, perfection and so on. An assent to belief in the existence of God should philosophically be taken by means of deliberation not simply assented to for its own sake. Stein has put forward in *Finite and Eternal Being* a number of philosophical and phenomenological reasons that rationally account for an ascent to God and ultimately an assent for his existence.

Stein's proof for the existence of Eternal Being, then, is based on her experience of the contingency of the being of the I. The I as such, has an experience of 'pure act' within a moment of its existence, but this 'moment' continues to fly past resulting in its (the I's) inability to transcend temporality. Yet the I, from this finite experience glimpses what it would be like to be 'pure act' by means of analogy. Here we might see this desire of the I to be eternal, to be 'pure act', as a desire of our being to 'image' Divine Being in its existence. The I wishes to be eternal, and this is why death is seen as something that is undesirable and indeed unnatural from this perspective. The I as contingent needs to find its origin in an ultimate ground, a firm ground, from which it 'receives' its being. This firm ground for Stein is Eternal

Being. This Eternal Being does not receive being from anything extrinsic to its nature for its essence is its existence.

The proof of God's existence is not something that can be demonstrated conclusively and Stein understands this; rather, she threads a path that aims to rationally ascent to that which gives us finite being, 'being', from whence I come and to whither I go. The ultimate origin of the I is of concern to Stein, she knows that it lies in darkness and that we do not have clarity as to where 'the I' comes. This, however, raises a question in and of itself that desires to be answered. The answer she comes to is that the I in its experience of contingency and its feeling of 'security' receives its being and is held in being by Eternal Being.

We have seen in previous chapters that those who do not believe in the existence of an Eternal Being, aim to explain their being by an appeal to other 'natural', rather than 'metaphysical' causes. The theory of evolution proponents, such as Dawkins, point to the theory of evolution as an explanation for human existence, but it does not address the question of where the evolving matter comes from, from which the material evolves to produce the various finite beings. The question of where the material comes from goes back in our current scientific understanding to the theory of the 'Big Bang', but the Big Bang raises the question of what caused it. Stephen Hawking's highlights that the 'Big Bang' does not need a God to explain it as it came about via physical causes,⁶⁴ the Membrane or M-theory holds that this universe is surrounded by a M-brane and that the Big Bang was, perhaps, a collision between two M-branes (of other universes in the multi-verse) and then this universe

⁶⁴ See, Hawking, *The Grand Design*.

developed from that collision. If this is the case, then it is possible that the Big Bang as an event is no longer a singularity (something that would be beyond scientific explanation) because physical and mathematical methods of investigation would be capable of capturing and explaining the Big Bang and thus the origin of the universe. This, description of the Big Bang, by physics and mathematics, however, still does not address the question of where the material of the multi-verse comes from.

Science progresses by looking at the relationship between causes and effects, but interestingly many scientists tend to sidestep, or to evade the question of where everything arose from in the first instance, the question of why there is something rather than nothing. But these scientists who side-step the issue may be doing so because science as a discipline is concerned with explaining the physical rather than the metaphysical. Stein's argument is not *per se* a 'First Cause' argument, but a phenomenological argument from experience, it is an argument that asks the reader to follow the line of experience and, having followed the line of her descriptive analysis of experience, to go 'yes I see' how this *ascent* is rational and that it addresses the question of our experience of contingency, in terms of the being of the I, its received content and its felt security. In this regard, the question of 'whence matter' is, to all intent and purpose, a metaphysical question in the current time, and perhaps in the future science will be able to answer where 'matter' originally came from, but the ability to do that would require science to move beyond what is known to science precisely because scientific knowledge relates to observation of the 'material universe', and so, to answer the question of 'where matter came from' would require different instrumentation and reflection that lies beyond observation of matter itself, it would be as such an *ultimate* point of 'singularity'.

Finally, we noted that the history of the idea of the image of God requires belief in the existence of God for the idea to have ultimate meaning. Without assent the image of God idea would have no referent although it has reference for others, for believers. Such an assent, or belief in God's existence is approached by Stein philosophically; that is to say, it is as such not just a matter of faith, but a matter of employing reason to answer many questions of human experience which make full sense only when referred to Absolute Being.

CONCLUSION

This study addressed the question of what the ‘image of God’ idea *is*. Thus, in the first four chapters of our investigation, we undertook a historical-critical investigation of what the idea of the ‘image of God’ could mean for those engaged reflectively in addressing this issue in the context of a particular historical moment in time. The first chapter, therefore, aimed at in particular to elicit that initial meaning from the context of the wider writings in the book of Genesis and Old Testament literature. The pre-eminence of reference to the Genesis text, nonetheless, became apparent through-out the first four historical chapters, where pivotal thinkers in the canon of philosophy and theology reflected on what exactly the writers of Genesis meant when they stated that human beings were made in the ‘image and likeness of God’.

Westermann’s analysis pointed to the fact that the ‘image of God’ idea raised the question of what the nature of the human being *is*, that is to say, of what it is to be a human being. The idea of the ‘image of God’, nevertheless, pre-existed the Old Testament story of Genesis, and that it was used by the Kings of the Near East to empower their Royal authority — their ‘divine right to rule’ — given that these Kings represented a particular god. Unlike its usage in the Near East, however, the term ‘image and likeness of God’ was not restricted to a particular king, but referred to every human being, male and female in the Biblical text of Genesis. It, therefore, exemplified more precisely a relationship between human beings and God; it thus pointed to a sign of sharing or participation in divine rule (*rada*) and responsibility. Furthermore, human beings were seen to occupy a position of responsibility that was not given to other creatures. From this it followed that human beings were as such,

like God, responsible *for* creation, for building up and taking care of the world. To be responsible, however, presupposed that the human being is a being that is, by nature, capable of insight, of the ability to foresee, to know ‘good and evil’, and to be capable of reasoning and making judgements. Animals, for the writers of the Old Testament, were not capable of reflecting on the long reach of actions, or able to evaluate ‘good’ or ‘evil’. Humans, by comparison, were called upon to rule and to ‘shepherd’ the other animals and all of Creation.

In the second chapter, we continued our historical-critical approach by moving to consider ‘Jewish-Hellenistic understandings of the Idea of Beselem Elohim’, from c. 515 BC to 300 AD. Here the time-frame of the literature is of importance because it brings us into close contact with interpretations of the Genesis text from the time of its inception. This chapter revealed that the idea of the ‘image of God’ became important in the legal tracks of the Jewish people (*Mishnah*), pointing to the sacredness and uniqueness of each individual human life before the law. Later, Plato and Aristotle’s philosophical reflections on the ‘image’ and the inception of Hellenistic ideas into Jewish thinking via Philo of Alexandria were also, at the same time, very important in that it enabled Philo to prevent too close of an anthropomorphic reading of Genesis (cf. Plato’s influence). Aristotle’s reflection on images, however, was more positive and played a central role in his theory of cognition. For Aristotle, the ability to convert images into understanding was only given to rational animals, that is, to human beings. This theory was influential in the Middle-Ages when Aquinas came to reflect on the ‘image of God’ idea and the way the human being was capable of being made in the image of God. While Plotinus’ reflection on the *One* pointed to the fact that it was necessary for the ‘image’ to refer

back to its point of emanation in order for it to retain its likeness (more at the level of spirit, however, than at the level of matter). This later idea of the referring of the image to its source (the *One*) was developed in the light of Christianity by Augustine and Aquinas.

The third chapter reflected on the advent of Christianity and its interpretation of Genesis 1:26 in light of the early Christian community's understanding of Christ as the 'Son of the Father'. The intermeshing of Judaic, Hellenistic and Christian thinking in the first centuries AD created a conceptual pool upon which our Western tradition has emerged. St Paul's commentary on the image of God idea considered Christ to be the 'image of God' *par excellence*. This set the foundation for further reflection on the idea by the greatest of Christian thinkers, including Augustine and Aquinas. Augustine placed the site of the image of God in the human mind, and the human ability to reason was considered vital, but it is when our thinking, memory, understanding and will (ethical) is turned towards God (in this earthly life) that we are truly in the image of God. Ultimately, therefore, to be in the 'image of God' was, for Augustine, reserved for the continued existence of the soul after death of the body, when the soul was in heavenly beatitude gazing on God. This would seem to point to the fact that Alcuin is non-augustinian in that the body was seen by Alcuin to be an important element in the image of God idea.

In the fourth chapter, Renaissance, Modern and Contemporary writers were considered in order to outline their understanding of the 'image of God' idea. Here the development of the idea and its relationship with human dignity came to the fore in the writings of the Renaissance thinkers, a development that unfolded, in many

respects, as a reaction to Cardinal Lotario dei Segni's reflection on *The Misery of the Human Condition*. While it was noted that Hume and Kant's critique of Descartes's ontological argument for the existence of God called into question the legitimacy of philosophical reflection on the existence of God in the 1700s, our historic reflection on the idea of the 'image of God' had to address this very issue. Thus in chapter five, the question of God's non-existence was critically analysed in relation to the scientific theory of evolution. It was seen that neo-Darwinism did not prove the non-existence of God, or answer the ultimate question of 'whence matter'. The evolutionary endeavour to explain the reality of human beings from the perspective of lower forms of life was also outlined, and found that explaining humans from the perspective of fish, monkeys or reptiles committed the 'genetic fallacy'. It was also found that many proponents of evolutionary theory hold that the human being is capable of transcending the genes of 'nature', and that human beings have the ability to be responsible, which was a characteristic of the 'image of God' pointed out by the exegetes of Genesis. The limit of application of evolutionary theories of natural science to understanding the nature of what it is to be a human being, therefore, indicated that the question of what it means to be a human being required another method of approach and analysis, other than that as proposed and followed in contemporary natural science.

Chapter six examined 'a phenomenological critique of naturalism' and its understanding of what it means to be human. The phenomenological method was seen to be a method that is better suited to dealing with the question of what it means to be human. This is because the scientific method merely explains what it is to be a human being from one perspective (causal) without taking into considerations the

actual experiences of human beings themselves. In this regard, the phenomenological method of enquiry, as a contender, engenders a more holistic manner of reflection, taking into consideration a wider perspective of the subject (incorporating reflections within the humanities, culture and the natural scientific concept of causality). Edith Stein's phenomenological method in particular provided a holistic approach to describing what it is to be a human being by analysing the causal, sentient, mental and spiritual realms of the human individual, thereby, avoiding the kind of 'genetic fallacy' that we encountered in our examination as characteristic of advocates of the scientific method. The human individual, from Stein's perspective, was seen to unfold in the human community. By seeing other human individuals who were the same 'image' or same 'type' as oneself, knowledge of our own individuality came more into focus. To be a human individual was to have the ability to value and be motivated, to rationally think and to become a fully unfolded person. From this point of view, to have all the various values ordered in the right way (because they are rationally held to be the highest values) is a more accurate description and depiction of what it is to be a human person. As such, Stein's phenomenological analysis of the human individual highlighted that the human person was capable of 'reasoning' and open to the world of values and the understanding of a value-hierarchy, so that one could reason to chose the highest values and to become a 'saint'. A saint would be a person who lived their lives in an ethical way. Her philosophy makes salient links with ideas that are expressed by the idea of the 'image of God' by other philosophers. She grounds these understandings from the perspective of natural and spiritual (*Geist*) approaches through the philosophical method of phenomenology. As such, ideas of the 'image of God' are

rationally argued for in and through Stein's account of what it is to be a human being.

That the image of God implies some recognition of the existence of God required us to assess, in the final chapter, Stein's argument for God's existence, utilising Stein's phenomenological ascent from finite to Eternal Being. Stein's reflections on finite and eternal being, leading to the acknowledgment of the existence of God, nonetheless, is not something that can be demonstrated conclusively. Yet it must be understood in its context and in its trajectory, for, if one follows her examination of the contingency of the being of the 'I', the contingency of the 'content of experience' and the feeling of 'felt security' in conjunction with *the question* of whence the being of the I receives being, then the necessity of a rational explanation of origins come to the fore. The *very fact* that I exist, as finite, becomes a *metaphysical question* (much in the same way that the very fact that the Cosmos exists, as finite, becomes a metaphysical question for St Thomas Aquinas where it does not for Aristotle or Plato). Any explanation to account for these experiences that evoke a questioning of their origins in existence would require that this being have both the fullness of Being and not be contingent on any other cause to sustain its being; in other words, it itself must be 'pure act', that is, the origin that keeps all being in existence, whose essence is its existence, must be Eternal Being. While not following Husserl's position in transcendental idealism, the focus on the openness of the human being towards the existence of the infinite, in legitimating religious experience, is a genuine phenomenological fact of human experience, and Stein's philosophy and elaboration of phenomenology can be seen to be a genuine heir to Husserl's call for philosophy to return to 'the things themselves' characteristic of human experience

itself. If God's existence is not assented to, one can still recognise that the idea of the human being made in the image of God has been of value in the history of thinking, but the idea would have to be discarded as a misconception. This is why we argued in chapter seven that the meaning of the image of God idea makes most sense when the existence of God is assented to.

Even if God does not exist, the idea of the human being as a being made in the image of God, viewed from the perspective of being a misconception, can still be seen to have had an impact on the ideas that philosophers down through the history of thinking have entertained about what it is to be a human being. An idea which inspired other positive ideas about the human individual that we would value — for example, ideas that see the human being as a creative force, a rational and responsible being, of being infinitely valuable, of having dignity and inalienable rights. These ideas may have come about through philosophical reflection of their own accord, but the image of God idea has been in the background of Western philosophical thinking for at least 2,000 years and known to most of the Great philosophers of the Western tradition (and from our historical analysis commented upon by them) and therefore has been an inspiring idea throughout Western history.

Stein, however, points to the fact that an assent to the existence of God is credible and, indeed, that a failure to assent is incredible. She considers many features of our experience as human individuals including the experience of being contingent. Our I notices that it 'receives being', and so, that is not author of its own being or the content that it receives. Yet while the I feels contingent in this manner, it also has experience of the possibility of atemporal existence. It has this experience in

the ‘now’ of existence, in this ‘now’ the I experiences actuality. As such, the I who experiences this momentary ‘actuality’ that is constantly fleeting, strives and desires to exist perpetually. We, as human beings, who can experience and reflect on the I and its momentary actuality can empathise and thereby desire to exist like Absolute Being in whose *image and likeness* we have been made.

Looking back over our study, we can see that from its first documentation in ancient Jewish writings down to the present day the idea of the ‘image of God’ underwent, throughout the ages, many major revisions and interpretations. Yet it was an idea that exercised the minds of religious thinkers, theologians, philosophers, prophets, scientists, and many more, during these various epochs. Sometimes, the question of the ‘image of God’ may have been viewed in purely theological terms, given that the object to which the image refers is ‘God’. It becomes apparent towards the end of our investigation, however, that for the ‘image of God’ idea to have full meaning, the existence, or, at least, the possibility of the existence of God must be acknowledged. From Stein’s phenomenological analysis it is evident that such an assent is reasonable, but other *ways* to God’s existence abound in the philosophical literature and not only from the modern phenomenological approach. Kant, for example, though he gained the famous reputation as ‘the Great Destroyer’ (*der Allzermalmende*) of all (ontological, cosmological and teleological) arguments for the existence of God, puts forward his own argument from moral experience to the existence of God. In this way, he also thought it rational to, at least, ‘postulate’ the existence of an Absolute Being.

For others, the existence of God can never fully be assented to and thus agnosticism is the only viable option. Some agnostics, though, would continue to seek possible solutions to their agnosticism while others would hold there was no solution to the question regarding whether God exists, or not. The significance of the 'image of God' idea for agnostics rests, nevertheless, on its historical value, that is, the perceived positive influence of the 'image of God' idea for values, such as, for instance, equality between the sexes, and the special status of the human being as a rational being and the resulting responsibility that emerges from this ability to reason and care for fellow human beings and for the planet.

Those that are convinced of the non-existence of God and, therefore, espouse atheism cannot find any significant meaning in the idea of the 'image of God' as such. Yet again, like the agnostics, it is probable that atheists may value the ideals that the philosophical content of the 'image of God' idea espouses, as outlined above, namely of equality between the sexes, the special status of the human being on this planet, given that being's ability to reason and so forth. Thus the content of the 'image of God' idea would still have meaning, even if the existence of God is not assented to.

The Renaissance period saw a move towards recognising the special status in humans with reference to '*dignitas*'. This could possibly have come from Renaissance authors reflecting on man's reason and recognising its ability in comparison to all other known beings in the cosmos. This recognition may not have been brought about by the 'image of God' idea as such, or it may be difficult to

prove such links, but certainly the ‘image of God’ idea is something that would have been in the background, given the Christian culture of that time.

It might be noted also that it is highly problematic to try to distil one essential idea of the ‘image of God’ given that the idea has existed for over two thousand years and has been interpreted through many historical epochs. It is true that the idea had some obvious stability in that it was contained in the book of Genesis and thus passed from one generation to the next in the Bible. But there does remain a tension in defining the idea in a universal way, yet something of the idea must remain constant for it to be intelligible, otherwise, if it were to be so different from one generation to the next, nothing could be meaningfully said about the idea or the continuity of that idea. Yet, each historical era will undoubtedly interpret the significance of the ‘image of God’ in light of its own particular mode or set of experiences. After the theory of Darwin and later neo-Darwinian critiques, the idea of the ‘image of God’ would be read *in a different light*, given that many embraced Darwin’s scientific world-view which seems to point, from findings in nature (e.g. fossils, mutations, genes, etc.), to the possibility that the book of Genesis is in fact a *myth* rather than a literal truth. But the non-existence of God is not proven by neo-Darwinists. Thus the challenge facing theologians and philosophers after these findings would be to interpret the *significance* of this idea of the ‘image of God’ for contemporary thought and the *significance* of belief in the existence of God for the understanding of what it is to be a human being.

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This bibliography contains a selection of works that were found to be most relevant to answering the question of what the idea of the ‘image of God’ could mean. The bibliography outlines selected primary texts first (in Section (A)) and all secondary texts in alphabetical order (in Section (B)). Multiple publications by an author are listed in chronological order, with regard to their original composition or publication. Where there is an original work in a different language, the English translation is listed first, while the title is then given in the original language of composition and publication.

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