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Motif-Research in Irenaeus, Thomas Aquinas, and Luther

WALTER H. CAPPS

When it was first inaugurated, motif-research was part of a much larger program in the philosophy of religion. As conceived by Anders Nygren, motif-research was meant to serve a more comprehensive undertaking in establishing the validity of religious experience.¹ In those days, when the problems men addressed were found in the echoes from Immanuel Kant, motif-research was both a skill and a strategy. Then, that context got shifted, and motif-research came to be applied to a variety of other subjects of interest, sometimes in theology proper and sometimes outside the field of philosophy of religion. But always, in the beginning and more recently, motif-research has been associated with structural analysis. Perhaps it is for this reason that it has retained its vitality as well as its adaptability to new forms of scholarly endeavor. Indeed, it is even arguable that Nygren's declaration of almost forty years ago is more apt today than it was then:

The most important task of those engaged in the modern scientific study of religion and theological research is to reach an inner understanding of the different forms of religion in the light of their fundamental motifs.²

The present study is an attempt to employ motif-research for purposes of structural analysis. Its context is not exactly the one Nygren outlined, and yet, in certain respects, it does take its cue from the impasse created in the history of western reflection by Kant's critical philosophy. But whereas Nygren employed motif-research to distinguish the structural tendencies of the Christian religion from those of Judaism and Platonism, our inquiry ad-

¹ Anders Nygren's program was articulated in *Religiöst Apriori* (Lund, 1921), *Filosofi och Motivforskning* (Stockholm, 1940), and is summarized in *Agape and Eros*, English translation by Philip S. Watson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963).

² *Agape and Eros*, *ibid.*, p. 35.

dresses the structural variations which have occurred within the Christian tradition. It employs motif-research to specify the likenesses and differences between three theological orientations which have been part of formative Christian history.

More specifically, our study focuses on three theological portrayals of human freedom (taken from Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*, Thomas Aquinas' "De Voluntario et Involuntario", and Martin Luther's *Tractatus de Libertate Christiani*). Our intention throughout is to employ motif-research to gain access to the rudiments of structural formation in three systematic conceptual instances. Admittedly, because of the vastness of the subject, we can do little more here than to chart some of the results of this examination; the details and documentation have been registered elsewhere.³ Yet, even in brief, we can point to the resourcefulness motif-research possesses in facilitating comparative structural analysis. We believe that motif-research is a useful way of conducting morphological studies in theological reflection. We claim that motif-research is properly fitted to exhibit the materials of which that sort of reflection consists, the formal canons by which it is shaped, and the methodological dispositions by which it is regulated. It is able to do this because, like Nygren's *Agape and Eros*, but unlike a great variety of other inquiries, it combines method-analysis with content analysis. But we must proceed with the analysis, first with Luther, then Irenaeus, then St. Thomas.

I

A. Martin Luther is a natural candidate for comparative morphological study for several reasons. First, he is of major and crucial importance to a time of extensive theological reformulation. Indeed, the theological reformulation which occurred during the Reformation has its roots in a shift in the style of apprehending the gospel – a shift which Luther championed. Secondly, the suggestion has been registered frequently that one can find in Luther's work a conscious reversal of the so-called process of "hellenization" (i.e. the placing and apprehension of the Christian gospel in the formal categories of Greek philosophies). If the suggestion can be sustained – or even if it cannot – it gives occasion for examining Luther's writings in the light of the methodological moves which are required to avoid "hellenization". Such moves should register in the theological pattern itself. Thirdly,

³ In larger, more detailed and comprehensive form, this study was originally a doctoral dissertation, submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Religious Studies in Yale University in 1965.

there is justification for examining Luther's position simply on its own merits. Luther did not understand himself to be seeking rapport with a more-generally prevailing world-view, nor did he profess himself to be refurbishing a given conceptual scheme in order to make it suitable for Christian affirmations. Rather, as he put it, the purpose of his endeavors was to restore centrality to the gospel. And that purpose one can expect to be reflected in the theological pattern itself. As we shall observe, the pattern which emerged – and pattern it was – was fashioned to disclose and then to safeguard a single core element.

Hence, the style of reflection reflected in Luther's essay on freedom (the *Tractatus de Libertate Christiani*) is not systematic in the usual theological senses. It does not give evidence of a desire to unify all things. Nor does it exhibit an attempt to shape the totality-of-things by means of all-comprehensive principle. Luther's interest is not in specifying that which pervades all things. Instead, his tendencies run in the opposite direction. He moves away from generality toward particularity. He shuns the all-comprehensive in order to single-out an independent locus. From start to finish, Luther's theological orientation is motivated by a concern to isolate and secure an irreducible – indeed, the irreducible – point of reference. And this methodological fact is fundamental to Luther's understanding of human freedom. Freedom, too, that is to say, will be one thing.

Luther's tendency in the *Tractatus* is to seize upon the elemental core, the irreducible principle. By definition, that principle is pre-composed instead of owing its existence to union, conjunction, correlation, or derivation from anything else. But the interest in the particular, rather than in the all-comprehensive, does not prohibit Luther's essay from qualifying as a coherent pattern of reflection. Indeed, in language reminiscent of St. Thomas' much larger work, Luther offers his essay as a "summary". It presents the fundamentals of the Christian faith in an orderly manner, but in two steps. First, the Reformer fixes his interest on that which qualifies as an unalterable point of reference. Second, he provides indications of the relationship between this fundamental element and other potential centers of human interest and involvement. A system very much different from either Irenaeus' or Thomas' emerges, a "system" whose lines are evident in Luther's discussion of the dialectics of freedom. As Jaroslav Pelikan describes the result:

This was not a random mob of ideas, united only by the fact that in some mysterious fashion one man could believe all these things at the same time. Yet these were not tin soldiers either, who stayed in line because they were tin and had no life. These were living ideas, deployed in as orderly a fashion as their military purpose required, held

together by the discipline of a common source, and a common master. If this was not systematic theology, we may well need another and a better term.⁴

In the beginning of the essay Luther advances two admittedly contradictory theses. The first states that "a Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none". The second states that "a Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all".⁵ The basis of human freedom is the way in which the two theses stand together. Luther states that both theses (as well as their contradictoriness) can be clarified by reference to a similar contrary, namely, the bipolar nature of man. Man is both spiritual and carnal. Next Luther announces that his attempt to clarify the conjunction of the two theses will be divided into two parts. The inner man will be dealt with first, followed by a portrayal of the external man. Two working axioms are then presented with respect to the relationships of inner and external man: a) spiritual things alone apply to spiritual man; and b) external things apply to external man.

It is important to note that the theses cannot be equated with the axioms. The declaration that "the Christian is a perfectly free lord of all" is not identical to the statement that "spiritual things alone apply to spiritual man". Nor is the declaration that "The Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all" equivalent to the statement which is explained in the second portion of the essay, namely, that external things apply to external man. Fundamental to both theses and axioms is the relation between the spiritual and the carnal. These two categories serve as the determinants of all that comes within Luther's range of concern. Though they stand in opposition to each, the human being is comprised of both of them. By reference to the spiritual and the carnal man is characterized, things are structured, and modes of appropriation are indicated. Eventually, freedom comes to depend upon a precise form of interaction between the two fundamental categories.

In the beginning of the essay, Luther had announced his intention as a presentation of a summary of the Christian faith. The summary was to be directed toward specifying the foundation not only upon which the Christian faith rested, but also upon which the individual could take his stand against any self-destructive threats. Luther sought a basis of security against the multiform menaces to which the religiously sensitive were being subjected.

⁴ Jaroslav J. Pelikan, *Luther the Expositor. Companion Volume to Martin Luther's Works* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), p. 45.

⁵ Christianus homo dominus est liberrimus, nulli subiectus. Christianus homo omnium servus est officiosissimus, omnibus subiectus. *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*; 1883, Vol. 7, p. 49, lines 22-25.

The essay sought to discriminate between legitimate and illegitimate forms of subjection. It attempted to measure the threats. This in turn led to an evaluation of the place of subjection vis-à-vis its opposite in the religious life. And freedom, from the very beginning, had to do with a discriminating skill in assessing forms of real and potential human subjection. Luther made it clear that the problems could not be clarified until an irreducible reference point had been established. He made it evident that it is from that point that the assessment of real and potential human subjection occurs. He introduced the discussion by raising the question: what is the one thing needful? The sense of the question is apparent. If the individual is called upon to measure his obligations, and to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate claims upon his strengths and enthusiasms, he must know where the priorities lie. On this basis, Luther asserts that there is but one thing necessary. The one thing needful was found among things spiritual, and is the Word of God.⁶ Because there is but one thing necessary, the Word of God is always "Word alone". The ascription "alone" marks the auspices under which the principle of orientation is construed. The singularity of that one necessary thing is the basis for delineating the relationships between men, things, and between men and things.

At this stage in the argument, one point is undeniably clear. Freedom is destroyed when the singularity of the fundamental principle is qualified by conjunction with other things. Luther takes every safeguard to insulate the fundamental principle (the "Word alone") against such forms of alignment or entanglement. And yet the restrictiveness and singularity do not comprise the only characteristics which can be ascribed to the fundamental principle. Luther also gives clues regarding the way in which his fundamental principle is related to those things from which it has been isolated. The specification of the one-thing-necessary implies yet other things with respect to which the one thing is made known. Coherence in reflection demands that the relation between the one and the other be articulated.

The articulation is given a variety of formulations. Luther states that God rules in spiritual things, and that earthly things are also made subject to him. The same sort of relationship is applied to *homo spiritualis* and *homo carnalis*: the former received the one-thing-needful to which the latter is subjected. A basis of priority is established between them according as the one needful thing is put in relation to that which is also necessary. External things cannot be used to satisfy spiritual demands, but external things are

⁶ Una re eaque sola opus est ad vitam, iustitiam et libertatem Christianam. Ea est sacrosanctum verbum dei, Euangelium Christi . . . WA 7, p. 50, lines 33-35.

also required. At the same time, the necessity of external things does not nullify the ascription of "necessary alone" to spiritual things.

Therefore, freedom, implies resourcefulness in arbitrating tension. It requires that one knows where to stand when being threatened by forces of opposition and possible destruction. Translated into classical philosophical terms, it is arguable that Luther is an atomist. And freedom demands that the one normative atom shall not be destroyed by any other locus of power and authority when all such loci are swirling about. It is not only the case that Luther has ascribed normativeness to one of the atoms. Nor is it simply a matter of believing that one of the atoms is the-one-thing-necessary. It is not merely ascription or belief, but identity. Luther identifies with the one-thing-necessary. Hence, he is no longer viewed by God in his own right, but is known in his identification with the one-thing-needful. Because of the exchange of possessions between Christ and self, Luther belongs to that one atom and is identified with it. Indeed, the identification is so full, according to Luther, that when God views Luther he sees Christ. And there are no logically-prior reasons why that one atom should be any more necessary than any other. There are no additional criteria to which one can refer in certifying the one-thing-needful. It is an arbitrary point of reference, but if it were not its singularity would not have the characteristics of irreducibility.

Freedom is made possible through a discernment of the loci of power and authority. Freedom is exercised in the assessment of the proper and illegitimate claims and services of the loci of power toward each other. Freedom pertains to the ability of one's own "atom" to move about without restraint. Freedom occurs when one's own "atom" is properly insulated against all possible forms of intrusion from the other "atoms". Because the one-thing-needful has been secured against alien incursion and compulsion, Luther can attest that all things are in fitting reference to God.

Viewed methodologically, the uniqueness of Luther's style of reflection has to do with its interest in isolating particularity. Luther's style is distinctive because it attempts coherence in thought from an arbitrary, irreducible, and singular point of reference. That point acts as the center of a "system" in which relationships are limited to identity and opposition.⁷ Because the center-point is irreducible, freedom is an either-or proposition. Man is

⁷ Our study is intended only as a methodological study, and does not pretend to be able to provide a genetic account of the influences which formed Luther's style of theological formulation. We have noted its bipolar character, and the pressure Luther forces for a selection of polar terms. If we wanted to support our contention we could draw upon the work of Lennart Pinomaa, for example, who (in *Die Heiligen in Luthers Frühtheologie*, in *Studia Theologica*. Vol. XII, 1959, pp. 1-50) treats the stress Luther gives to the idea of the Holy in very similar terms. Pinomaa points to the distinctions

either free, or he is not. He cannot be tending toward freedom, or moving away from it. And this is what enables Luther to contend that justification is freedom, and freedom is justification. This, of course, is also righteousness. And that is what it is to be both lord and servant simultaneously.

B. The freedom motif which one can trace through the pages of Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses* is formed by the author's intention to show that all things cohere. Whatever differences reality allows can eventually be comprehended within an all-encompassing synthesis. Irenaeus' perspective functions as a unifying technique. It brings distinct and disparate things together, and forms them by a unifying pattern.

There are two sorts of difference. The first is chronological. The second has reference to being. Irenaeus believes that both kinds of difference are self-evident. Chronological difference is implicit in one's ability to measure and periodize time. The other kind of difference is implicit in the distinction one makes between the creator and the creature. Thus, on the one hand, there are chronological distinctions between past, present, and future; and, on the other hand, there are ontological differences between the maker of all things and the things that he has made. The first sort of difference can be marked out along a time line. The second sort – a qualitative distinction – can be diagrammed by reference to two substantial realms.

between *opus alienum* and *opus proprium*, *coram deo* and *coram hominibus*, as well as the concepts of *theologia crucis* and *iustitia aliena Christi* in articulating the fundamentality of Luther's "das Gesetz des Gegensatzes". Pinomaa believes that the duality which this "law of contrariness" represents finds its source in Luther's understanding of the holiness of God, and that it is upon this foundation that the distinctiveness of Reformation thought rests. Regin Prenter's views are of a similar sort in "Luther's Theology of the Cross", in *Lutheran World*. Vol. VI, No. e (1959), pp. 222–233. In Biblical hermeneutics, the same law of contrariness is implicit in Luther's distinction between *sensus spiritualis* and *sensus literalis*, and in the philosophical distinction between *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata*. The hermeneutical aspect of this subject is explored by Gerhard Ebeling in "Die Anfänge von Luthers Hermeneutik", in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*. Vol. XLVIII (1951), pp. 172–230. And the influence of nominalism on this issue has been discussed in Bernhard Löhse, *Ratio und Fides. Eine Untersuchung über die ratio in der Theologie Luthers* (Göttingen: 1958), and by Bengt Hägglund in his *Theologie und Philosophie bei Luther und in der Occamistischen Tradition: Luthers Stellung zur Theorie von der doppelten Wahrheiten* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1956). It may also be the case – a possibility I intend to explore further – that the bipolar interest (the "ambiguous duality" or "the law of contrariness") has its roots in apocalyptic motifs, in which the forces of good and evil, light and darkness, etc., are posed in radical opposition. A portion of this possibility is explored by Aby Warburg, from very different interests, in his *Heidnisch-antike Weissagung in Wort und Bild zu Luthers Zeiten* (Heidelberg, 1920).

Irenaeus intends that both differential sets should be sustained. He does not want to dissolve them. On the contrary, he wants to bring them together so that time distinctions will modify ontological distinctions. The differences are meant to remain, but by being made members of a larger synthesis. Irenaeus finds one principle – one synthetic principle – which the two sets have in common. By means of that principle time differentiations and ontological distinctions become modalities of one and the same reality. And that principle is the process: a comprehensive, synthesizing process which both establishes and mediates the two kinds of difference. Temporal sequences, then, give the process its horizontal elongation: and, ontological differences provide the process with vertical expansiveness. But the two – temporal sequences and ontological differences – form one and the same unitary process. Temporal succession testifies to a unitariness which links the beginning with the end. The distinctions between creator and creature are not so extreme as to negate the truth that reality is one. Reality is one, by means of the process which blends temporal succession with differences-in-being. The process affirms a continuity between past, present, and future, creator and creature, and between the two differential sets. Time comes to regulate the relationship between creator and creature as the nature of time is determined by the creator-creature relationship. And all of this is necessary if freedom is to have a basis. There is freedom, according to Irenaeus, because the process secures order. Freedom is present there where the process rules. And the process rules by sustaining reality's fundamental distinctions even while referring them to a scheme of overall comprehension. There is freedom because being and time modify each other.

The key term in Irenaeus' portrayal of the basis for human freedom is *recapitulation*.⁸ In effecting his work Christ "sums up" or "recapitulates" all things. This implies two activities. First, Christ experiences each stage in the process as it was in itself. Second, Christ introduces into each stage a pattern of increase, or an instance of perfect fulfillment. In this way, Christ renews each stage in the human life process. At each point in the human career he perfectly achieves the full stature of man. In him, the *telos* of human life is

⁸ See, for example, Book III, chap. xvi of *Adversus Haereses* (in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca, Sancti Irenaei Contra Haereses*, ed. J. P. Migne, Paris, 1857, Vol. VII), in which Irenaeus writes: "Unus igitur Deus Pater, quemadmodum ostendimus, et unus Christus Jesus Dominus noster, veniens per universam dispositionem, et omnia in semetipsum recapitulans. In omnibus autem est et homo, plasmatio Dei: et hominem ergo in semetipsum recapitulans est, invisibilis visibilis factus, et incomprehensibilis factus comprehensibilis, et impassibilis passibilis, et Verbum homo, universa in semetipsum recapitulans . . ." (p. 443).

linked with the origin of human life. As the first man, Adam, contained within himself all of his descendants, so Christ, the second Adam, recapitulated within himself the whole race of mankind from the very beginning.

The opposition between the Gnostic scheme and that proposed by Irenaeus is radical. In a thoroughgoing way the emanationist scale has been replaced by one whose degrees or gradations are comprehended by means of a process which is marked by hours, seasons, and distinct order. The fundamental discontinuity between God and created order has been nullified by a horizontal dispensation which finds no inherent opposition between spirit and matter, on the one hand, and which can link together the beginning, middle, and the end. There is no fundamental opposition between the higher and the lower, or between the earlier and the later. Abraham, Moses, the prophets, and Jesus all own a place within or upon one and the same historical line. Furthermore, spiritual realities have been freed for participation in material conditions. There are no fundamental oppositions either temporally or ontologically, that is, since the two categorical sets have come to complement each other. But there are differences between seeds which grow to maturity and seeds which atrophy. Man, the formation of God, is designed for increase; but the possibility of deterioration is also there. Irenaeus juxtaposes perfection and deficiency. He places directed tending over against motionlessness. Realization stands in opposition to thwarted progress. Wilhelm Hunger, using an image which recalls Heraclitus, suggests that Irenaeus regards mankind in terms of a stream which is viewed all at once, at a glance, from source to consummation. The analogy is apt. The stream must progress in order to be a stream. Indeed, the stream is what it is because it flows on ceaselessly to a destination. For Irenaeus, humanity may be the stream which is viewed all at once.⁹ And the entire movement forwards bears the marks of divine determination.

Human freedom derives from being formed by God. There is freedom in being determined by God because that determination confirms human integrity. The purpose of man's being formed by God is not to restore a lost paradise, but to establish a state of being which is superior to the point of origination. If Irenaeus does not expressly utilize the word "deification" in this description, he certainly gives structural occasion for its inference. Man is free because he is subject to deification. Divinity can be ascribed to the Father, the Son, and to those whose destiny is shaped by the dispensation of liberty. From this perspective man both is and becomes God:

⁹ Cf. Wilhelm Hunger, "Der Gedanke der Weltplaneinheit und Adameinheit in der Theologie des Irenaus", in *Scholastik*. XVII (1942), pp. 161-77.

... no other God or Lord was announced by the Spirit except him who, as God, rules over all, together with his Word, and those who receive the Spirit of adoption.¹⁰

To have received the Spirit of adoption is to have been set free. But, this, in turn, is to have allowed oneself to be fashioned by the perfection-tending movement of the blending process. By means of the increments of time, the creature who is marked by beginning, middle, and end points (to which human exigencies the redemptive process has been adapted) is made fit for the description "deus". The creation is suited for man. Man was not made for the creation's sake, but creation for the sake of man. Thus Irenaeus can declare that *the glory of God is a living man*.¹¹ Here is man's freedom. But such glory is possible only through the preservation of the entire framework.¹² Man, the workmanship of God, awaits the hand of his maker in due season, at the proper time, at the time of increase.

Freedom, then, derives from identification with this forward tending, progressive, normative process. It is entirely appropriate that this should be. Methodologically it is never quite proper to use the differences between two conceptual systems as a genetic account of one of them. We will not say then that Irenaeus' thought-patterns can be explained in terms of his opposition to the Gnostic account. On the other hand, the contrast is very clear; and the lineaments of Irenaeus' position are evident in his disagreements with the other account. From the very outset the contrast between the two positions concerns the relation between what T. Andre Audet called "the two poles of all theological gravitation",¹³ namely, the divine and the human. In opposition to a radical disjunction between these two poles, Irenaeus seeks to facilitate a correlation. And, as over against a separation between dispensations and covenantal orders, Irenaeus argues for historical continuity. From start to finish his dominant interest is in securing and demonstrating the fundamental coherence of that process by which God determines the world. Coherence is achieved by means of a process which contains and combines the rudiments

¹⁰ Book IV, i. 1.

¹¹ *Gloria enim Dei vivens homo*. Book IV, xx, 7, p. 490.

¹² "Preservation of framework" is expressly mentioned by Irenaeus in Book IV, xxxiv, 2: "But by preserving the framework thou shalt ascend to that which is perfect, for the moist clay which is in thee is hidden by the workmanship of God . . . If, then, thou shalt deliver up to him what is thine, that is, faith towards him and subjection, thou shalt receive his handiwork, and shall be a perfect work of God". Cf. D. B. Reyners, "Optimisme et théocentrisme chez saint Irénée", in *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale*. Vol. VIII, No. 3 (1936), pp. 225-52.

¹³ T. Andre Audet, "Orientations théologiques chez Saint Irénée", in *Traditio*. Vol. I, No. 1 (1943), p. 27.

of the two formative differential sets. The process is constituted by the chronological distinctions of time and qualitative distinctions of being. But the two sets come to modify each other. In the process of time the divine is adapted to the human, and the human increases toward the divine.

We have reason to call Irenaeus' unifying process his formal principle of orientation. The process is that by which all things are ordered; it is that which gives substance to coherence. However, Irenaeus did not refer to the process as a principle of orientation, but instead, called it "the new dispensation" and on occasion "the dispensation of freedom". For him it not only established order and provided coherence. It also secured human freedom, and with that human dignity and integrity. The process locates freedom. Freedom is constituted by the process. Freedom has reference to the comprehensive workings of the normative process. Indeed, freedom is to be located there where the comprehensive process is exercised according to the dynamism of its own constitution. To be free is to be constituted by the process. To be constituted by the process is to tend toward God. It can be no other way. The process itself is formed by two simultaneous affirmations. It honors the truths that God is one, and that reality and goodness can be ascribed to created things. Man finds his freedom in being formed by God, to God, and for God. Man's freedom lies in the possibility of being determined to become God. It is fitting that man become God since God has adapted his activity to the exigencies of human increase.

In more formal terms, the principle of orientation has served as determinant in a synthesizing way. While calculated to comprehend the two basic kinds of difference, it also sought to maintain them. The creator is maker, while the creature is made. The creature is characterized by beginning, middle, and measure, while the creator is neither limited nor conditioned by temporal sequence. Temporal and ontological distinctions must be given status, but only that: the distinctions are never separations. Hence, they never lead to a positing of additional or alternative principles of orientation. This was the charge against the Gnostics: the mental disposition which proposes dominions beyond dominions – and principles beyond principles – finally leaves one with an incapacity to establish any one of the points of reference as the primary locus of perspective. There are so many implicit principles of orientation that the mind cannot seize a resting point. Irenaeus, instead, will comprehend diversity within unity without thereby destroying its reality or distinctiveness. Hence, the comprehensive principle – which is identified as the dispensation of freedom, the normative process – is fashioned by a dialectical method. Neither change nor measure is annulled. And differences are established by means of a process which can measure them out and comprehend all of them.

The comprehensiveness itself is achieved by time, by motion, and by gradations of increase. Time is the coordinant of diversity – both temporal and ontological. God regulates the world by time and time's increments. It is time which fixes the distinction between creator and created order. It is also time which provides the mediation of that distinction. Time supports both the similarities and the dissimilarities between God and the world. And, yet, it is by the increase of time that separation yields eventually to union. Because of time, the dispensation is not an apparent endless series of epochs or territories, but rather a purposeful succession within one and the same dominion. By the dialectic within the process, such succession also implies progress, advancement, and a tending toward perfection.

Freedom is the name Irenaeus gives to it. Freedom is that regulated motion which is characterized by the increments of time. Freedom is the process, and, from the human being's standpoint, it is conformity to the process. Freedom has reference to the fulfillment of the human being; it denotes his tending toward perfection; it stabilizes his growth; it insures his integrity. Freedom is the name for honoring the creature while glory is given to God; freedom is the name for glorifying God as one honors the creature. Man is free when God is glorified; God is glorified when man tends toward perfection.

In formal terms, and in summary, Irenaeus' position is characterized by a systematic pattern of thought whose principle of orientation is both comprehensive and synthetic, and whose dominant conceptual interest is in specifying the way in which difference is made to cohere within a totality. In Irenaeus the asymmetry which regulates the relationship between the divine and the human – which insures that God is one, and that reality and goodness can be ascribed to the created order – is understood as a dialectical process.

C. When one turns from Irenaeus' exposition of freedom to its treatment by Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) one is aware of having been transported into a new environment. No longer are there obvious opponents against whom the arguments are directed. Left behind are the polemics and the full-scale attempts to unmask the errors in alternative viewpoints. Instead one comes in contact with polished discourses, which proceed with utmost resoluteness and methodological deliberation. The author appears to be conversant with all relevant theoretical answers to questions of prime religious, theological, and philosophical significance. The product of his efforts is not an "adversus haereses" but a "summa theologica". "Summa" implies that its designer has had both time and occasion for reflection. It also means that he has been able to draw upon a large number of precedents – in both theological and philo-

sophical traditions – to illumine the issues which concern him. Therefore, his work could never be classified as mere situational reaction. He will not say one thing today, and something different tomorrow. Nor will he find it necessary to shift his stance when speaking to another audience. In no sense is his book an “occasional” piece. Instead, as its title indicates, it is a systematic summary of the major contentions of the Christian faith. It is nothing less than this; it could hardly be anything more. Hence, the questions its author takes up are significant not only for the age in which he lives. In addition, they are the sorts of questions which possess the formal integrative ability to sustain a particular pattern of thought, which, when developed in step-by-step progression, is able to supply the necessary ingredients of a full and unified perspective. Or, put in another way, the responses to the questions are themselves the components of the summary presentation of the Christian faith.

The topic of freedom is given fullest expression in “De Voluntario et Involuntario” of the *Summa Theologica*. The context is a discussion of man’s last end. Initially, man is defined in terms of that toward which he tends, his *telos* is that in which his happiness consists. The “good” is that which brings both fulfillment and satisfaction. Or, as Thomas puts it: “. . . the thing itself which is desired as end is that which constitutes happiness, and makes man happy”.¹⁴

Human happiness cannot exist apart from human activity. Activity constitutes both purposeful movement and life itself. Human activity, as over against other kinds of activity, is distinguishable in the same way that the human being is distinguishable. One begins by establishing that which is particular to the human agent as distinct from that which is characteristic of all activity. And freedom is construed by reference to the range of activity appropriate to the human being in seeking to attain his ultimate good. From the very outset, then, freedom distinguishes what it is to be human.

Thomas finds a certain logical propriety in moving from a discussion of man’s *telos* to an examination of the actions proper to man. That sequence is in order since the *telos* precedes a specification of activity. The *telos* is established; human acts do not create it. Or, in Thomas’ language, while the good is that which all men desire, they desire it in fact because it is good. This does not imply, of course, that the *telos* can be achieved even by indiscriminant human action. Some sequences of human activity are conducive to happiness, but others are not. Hence, Thomas believes, an individual must be given criteria by which to distinguish those acts which are beneficial from those which are deviant and detrimental.

¹⁴ *Summa Theologica* II, I, Question ii, Article vii.

Thomas proceeds by analyzing motion. Following Aristotle he notes that there are two kinds of motion: self-movement and movement by another. Hence, there are two kinds of activity: voluntary and involuntary. Eventually the several kinds of distinction can be correlated. The distinction between kinds of beings can be referred to the distinctions between kinds of motion and kinds of action. What distinguishes man from other animals, for example, is that he is master of his actions. To assert man's mastery over actions is to acknowledge that man is determined by self-movement. This is another way of saying that in man's case determination is voluntary. But self-movement is possible to man because of the kind of being he is: man is a rational animal, and is thus motivated toward the *telos* by a rational nature. To be self-moved, to act voluntarily, is to be determined by a rational appetite. In the same way, to be moved by another, to act involuntarily, is to be determined by a natural appetite. To say that man is one who has dominion over his actions is to note that man is determined by the "faculty of will and reason" (*facultas voluntatis et rationis*). And all of this stands behind Thomas' description of man as the one who possesses free will, and, at the same time, is both the principle and control of his actions.

In its totality, the universe consists of dynamic, active, and spontaneously operating substances, arranged in an order which is characterized by levels or degrees of being which, in turn, are represented by distinct kinds of motion. Everything that is is in movement, and everything in movement acts for a *telos*, either intrinsically or by means of an external agent. The distinction between externally-motivated movement and intrinsically-principled movement also divides inanimate from animate being. Then, with respect to animate beings, there are some which move themselves and some which do not. The ones capable of voluntary activity are those whose motion is intrinsically principled and who also possess knowledge of the *telos*. Voluntary activity is that whose motion and whose motion for an end both proceed from the agent's inclination.

But further refinement is necessary. Thomas considers that those beings whose action is voluntary are capable of both perfect and imperfect knowledge of the *telos*. Imperfect knowledge of the end, he states, "consists in a mere apprehension of the end, without knowing it under the aspect of end". In the same way, perfect knowledge of the end requires apprehension of the end as end as well as an ability to deliberate concerning one's relation to it. This is the distinction which separates the irrational from the rational animal. It is also the basis on which the human being is distinguished. On this basis, that is to say, one can refer to man as rational animal: man is the one who is principled by the faculty of will and reason.

To call it the faculty of will and reason is to imply a very specific rela-

tionship between the potencies. Voluntary activity proceeds from all of the potencies and not simply from one or another of them. In voluntary activity the potencies function reciprocally. Using a thesis found in Pseudo-Dionysius, namely, that "it belongs to divine providence not to destroy but to preserve the nature of things", Thomas asserts that there is continuity as well as difference between the ranges and activities of man's potencies. Fundamentally, it is the power of intellection which distinguishes the human being from other animate creatures. Yet intellection functions in dependence upon the other potencies that man also shares with other animals.

The discussion of the reciprocity of function and action in principled motivation makes it possible for Thomas to present his concept of the will. Reciprocity is the starting point because *choice* – the focal point of will – is a composite operation. The act of choice brings at least two distinctive orders into relationship, namely, the appetitive power and the intellective power. The continuity between the two, once again, is provided by motion. Thomas writes that "choice is substantially . . . an act of the will . . . (which is) accomplished in a certain movement of the soul towards the good which is chosen". But the reciprocity can be further refined. Within the act of will one can distinguish *exercise* from *specification*.¹⁵ In the exercise of choice, the will reduces itself from potency to act – from matter to form. However, with regard to the specification of its act, the will is determined by the intellect. At one and the same time Thomas can assert that "the appetite tends to the ultimate end naturally", and "the act of intellect precedes the will and directs its acts . . . insofar as the will tends to its object according to the order of reason". This makes it possible to say 1) that choice is free, and 2) that choice is determined by the intellect. Choice is a composite operation, yet proceeds from a single soul. Will, the efficient cause, can be distinguished from the good (or *telos*), the final cause. And both of these can be distinguished from the means by which the end is achieved as well as from the movement of the appetite to the good. In the act of choice these several operations occur simultaneously. Indeed, as Brian Coffey has suggested, this is how order is conceived.¹⁶ Order is calculated to specify the uniqueness of a being in relation to other beings. Thomas achieves this by distinguishing between the potencies of which beings are capable. At the same time he seeks to demonstrate that beings are unitary: their several composite operations can be

¹⁵ S.T. II, I, Q.x, Art. ii.

¹⁶ In his article, "The Notion of Order According to St. Thomas Aquinas", in *The Modern Schoolman*. Vol. XXVII, No. 1 (1949), pp. 1–18, Coffey has written: "order is the arrangement of a plurality of things or objects according to anteriority and posteriority in virtue of a principle".

principled. Eventually, then, both man's uniqueness and that which he possesses in common with all other beings can be specified. And this specification of the interdependence of man's compositeness and unity is the basis for Thomas' conception of human freedom as principled movement toward a *telos*.

In retrospect one can trace the steps in the analysis which resulted in this view of human freedom. Thomas began by assuming the Aristotelian question, "what sorts of beings are there?" He approached his subject with a view toward differentiating the kinds of things which comprise nature. He noted that everything is dependent upon motion for the achievement of its end. But the question about the sorts of beings there are is interlocked with the question about the particularity of each thing. Thomas asks, "what is peculiar?" Ultimately, the point of specific differentiation is the *telos* of each thing. But the *telos* – namely, that which exhibits a thing's uniqueness – is accessible only through an analysis of a thing in terms of its potency and act. And this, in turn, can be reached finally only through an identification of the four explanatory causes. These are the steps required to disclose the peculiarity of a thing. Freedom is action in accordance with one's nature. It is the purposeful operation of a thing in moving toward the realization of its uniqueness.

Throughout the presentation, Thomas does not depart from his focus upon the peculiar (or the distinctive, or the particular) within the total. His question "what is peculiar?" presumes Aristotle's question "what sorts of beings are there?"¹⁷ The peculiar, or distinctive, becomes intelligible by the manner according to which its essential properties are determined. But that determination can only be talked about by reference to causal categories. Indeed, the relation of the peculiar to the total is always construed in causal categories – which categories, as noted above, are placed within a participationist model. Human freedom begins to be discernible when man's location or place within the network of interacting organisms is determined. And that place is fixed by distinguishing kinds of organisms on the basis of the possible types and degrees of vital activity of which they are capable. Here, the starting point is the thesis: all beings are in motion toward their appropriate ends. Man, in whom all the vital potencies are operative, moves from potency to act by means of voluntary motion, since man, as distinct from all other animate beings, is principled by "the faculty of will and

¹⁷ William A. Christian, in "Some Uses of Reason", in *The Relevance of Whitehead*, ed. Ivor Leclerc (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961), pp. 45–89, lists Aristotle's questions in a most perceptive manner.

reason". Hence, for man, freedom comes to denote spontaneity. And spontaneity implies self-determination. And self-determination means movement by that in which man's uniqueness lies. Freedom is self-causation, and is facilitated by those powers and faculties which characterize man. Nothing in the entire schema can ever violate, destroy, or diminish spontaneity. Indeed, for Thomas, human freedom is spontaneity: the spontaneous realization of potentiality in accordance with one's nature.

But, finally, man's nature is specified by his *telos*. Hence, for Thomas, freedom also depends upon the attainment of the end. In this respect it is possible to speak of an "increase" of freedom, since freedom can be measured by specifying the state of attainment of the end. But this is simply another way of saying that the contemplation of God is ultimately characteristic of man's nature. This is what it is to be a man. Therefore, the movement from potency to act is principled both by "the faculty of will and reason" and by the relation of image-to-exemplar in which man's being stands to God. Once again, the teleological movement is fed into a hierarchical synthesis.

The achievement of freedom is dependent upon knowledge of God, and the realization of the human *telos* implies that man is finally determined by the *imago dei*. Freedom – the spontaneous realization of potentiality – is a natural movement, which, by complementation, culminates in the vision of God. Freedom specifies and actualizes the reciprocity between man and God. And the reciprocity between that by which the human being is determined and that by which the divine being is characterized insures that the creature's dependence upon the Creator for his perfection will not be construed as a limitation upon God. Nor does the determination of the creature by the Creator violate the spontaneity of self-caused motion. The human being, the rational organism, fashioned in the image of God, is capable of a free operation because of his distinctiveness within the network of interacting organisms. Freedom is the operation of that distinction-effecting capacity.

II

By analyzing their portrayals one can recognize that Irenaeus, Thomas Aquinas, and Martin Luther conceive freedom in three different ways. In the first instance, freedom is identified with directed, expansive movement – the fulness-intended motion of a comprehensive and normative process. In the second case, it is regarded as the spontaneity of the human organism in its movement from potency to actuality within a network of natural interaction. In the third example, it is defined as the unrestrained rule of a center of force and authority. None of the *essayists* duplicate the formulation of any

of the others. Nor is it readily conceivable that any of the formulations is comprehensible apart from the perspective and context within which it originally occurred. Luther, for example, would find it impossible to conceive of freedom in terms of Irenaeus' regulative process. Thomas would have great difficulties placing his articulation of freedom within Luther's context. Irenaeus' directed-tending can hardly be contained by the spontaneity accorded to the organism within Thomas' position. Yet, all of these orientations articulate biblical statements – sometimes identical biblical statements – concerning the liberty which is occasioned by the Christian gospel. All can claim kerygmatic support. Each could receive both methodological and religious justification, since each subscribes to the rules of conceptual order proper to its own orientation while giving expression to meaningful aspects of freedom which are inaccessible to the others. Thus, the development of the concept of freedom in the three cases is tantamount to the cultivation of three different but coherent systematic outlooks.

We have been arguing that differences between theological outlooks are accessible when the analyst pays attention to their respective starting points, purposes, and methodological dispositions. It is significant for an understanding of the differences which exist between St. Irenaeus, Thomas, and Luther to note, for example, that the one attempts to achieve the continuity of that which had threatened to become disjointed and disparate, that the second seeks the variety of kinds of things and then the activity appropriate to each, and that the third attempts to secure that which is alone the final and necessary authority. The resulting structural patterns exhibit the functions their authors intended.

Richard P. McKeon, the distinguished medievalist and analyst of systematic conceptual methodology, has a way of talking about such structural characteristics and propensities.¹⁸ He has found it useful to look at conceptual patterns by distinguishing (1) "principles of orientation" and (2) "interests of reason". The principle of orientation is the point from which definiteness or determination issues. And, the interest of reason denotes the auspices under which definiteness or determination occurs. A principle may be simple in nature and function, or it may be complex. It may serve, as it did for Descartes, as the "*one thing* which cannot be doubted", or it may be the agent of conjunction. If synthetic, it may serve as the container of all else, or as that which all else implies. Simple or complex, it may be that to

¹⁸ Two of McKeon's articles are particularly helpful in this regard: "Philosophy and Method", in *The Journal of Philosophy*. Vol. XLVIII, No. 22 (1951), pp. 653–682, and "Principles and Consequences", in *The Journal of Philosophy*. Vol. LVI, No. 9 (1959), pp. 385–401.

which all else points. But, under any circumstances, the principle of orientation specifies a scheme's modus operandi. It brings to focus the proportion or measure of inclusiveness and exclusiveness which a conceptual pattern is equipped to enforce. The interest of reason performs a similar function by specifying the mode in which one thing stands to another. The relation between things may be formed by discrimination (as it is, for example, when an analyst endeavors to refer instance to kind, and kind to class). Or the interest may be the isolation of one thing, or even, on the other hand, the unification of all things. The interest of reason spells the measure of assessing likenesses and differences. It provides the schema for regulating approximations. And the two together – the principle and the interest – form the pattern of coherence. The principle assigns the ratio of inclusion and exclusion which the orientation is prepared to establish, and the interest stipulates the relation in which one thing stands to another.

For example, Luther works to isolate the "alone" – the one thing necessary. For Thomas, on the other hand, the *alone*, or, more properly, the *this*, is always seen in conjunction with the *all*. For him the matter-form composite is the principle by whose reciprocity specific and generic likenesses can be sustained within a synthetic hierarchy. In Thomas' scheme the network of interacting organisms is necessary to maintain both individual beings (and their appropriate powers and operations) as well as the totality of grades within the plentitude of being. Irenaeus, in the third place, conceives the comprehensive and regulative process to serve as the means by which difference is included within a specifiable chronological and ontological totality: the principle is one of synthesis and unification, the means through which disparity and opposition are correlated.

It is apparent from the outset that the systematic response to the question "what is the one thing needful?" will be different from the response to the question "how do all things cohere?" The former will proceed by an exercise in elimination, as Luther's does, until an ultimate, authoritative foundation can be established. The latter will attempt to achieve completeness by apprehending the totality, or by discovering the basis through which all things can be held together. The author of the *Tractatus de Libertate Christiani* begins, for example, by seeking the one thing to which the validity of anything else must finally be referred. But that one thing cannot be isolated unless there also are other things with respect to which the one thing can be differentiated. Hence, Luther discovers determinants which regulate two things and two men: determinants which are known in each instance by their contrast with the other. The concept of freedom which emerges under these circumstances is one which depends upon a perception of the significance of that contrast with respect to both men and things. As Luther noted, that task

is made exceedingly difficult by the simultaneous presence of their two orders. The author of the *Adversus Haereses*, on the other hand, seeks the comprehensive rather than the particular. His goal is not the isolation of the individual and the unique, but the tracing of a normative process whose dialectic includes, mediates, and completes the fundamental boundaries of the totality. Irenaeus' task is then the demonstration of the dimensions of unification and fullness which freedom implies. The author of *De Voluntario et Involuntario* begins in still another way. For him the goal is not a discovery of one thing (though he does seek the peculiar) nor the totality of things (though the peculiar is made intelligible within the totality). His approach is to gather the whole range of the possible or existent things into one. Then he distinguishes between kinds of beings on the basis of the operations and faculties which are characteristic of each one. And freedom depends upon the spontaneity of the differentiated being in operating in its appropriate manner as prescribed by its place, function, and purpose within the network of interacting organisms.

For Irenaeus, the reality of the parts is dependent upon the reality of the totality. This is just the opposite of Luther's tendency. For Luther, a synthesizing of all parts is simply out of the question. Even an attempt to achieve synthesis runs contrary to his driving intention. In Luther's scheme, the existence of each part is nurtured by its opposition to the others. His approach proceeds by decomposing wholes into indivisible elements and simple relations. For Luther, the reality of opposition and conflict becomes the occasion for freedom. But, though there is no attempt to totally synthesize, Luther's pattern exhibits a need to keep its components in regulated order. The exclusivity ascribed to the one-thing-needful requires that it be rescued from the tyranny of "other things" and from any form of subjection. The one thing necessary (which Luther identifies as the Word of God) cannot be subordinated to – nor can it be implicated by – any other thing. It can be neither of these and still be Word alone. But, on the other hand, an orientation which is motivated by the opposite tendency fashions its concept of freedom not by securing the one thing (by contrasting it to all other things) but by finding means of comprehending all apparent conflict and opposition. Freedom for both Irenaeus and Thomas is integrative. For Luther it is isolative. One thing makes man free for Luther. The comprehension of disparate things makes man free for Irenaeus and Thomas. But this is tantamount to recognizing once again that the principle of orientation is *simple* in Luther's orientation, while, in the other two instances, it is *complex*.

The matter of the proportion of inclusiveness-and-exclusiveness is one of the large differentiating factors in the three cases. Irenaeus' normative process, for example, is calculated for full but disciplined inclusiveness. It is

equipped to correlate the divine with the human as well as the beginning with the end. The stress in the "alone" of Luther is in the opposite direction. And Thomas seeks neither full exclusiveness nor full inclusiveness, but the peculiar: the unique within the totality. Irenaeus' process, then, is fitted to confirm the "both-and", while Luther seeks only to secure the necessary "alone". Thomas, articulating freedom in terms of spontaneity, wants to finalize neither the "both-and" nor the "only", but the "this" vis-à-vis the entire range of "other" things. When the proportion of inclusiveness-and-exclusiveness varies, so also does number. As noted, the Reformer emphasizes the "one", Irenaeus the "all", and Thomas the "one" known in reference to the "all". So too with inflection: just as number and proportion differ in the three cases, so also does tense. Irenaeus can incorporate all three time tenses by conjoining them within the normative process. And yet his movement is toward the future. Hence, his stress is on the new: the new which (illustrating the continuity built into its cohesiveness) is also recapitulative of the old. For Irenaeus access to the future is available, since it is that to which the process tends, and, more fundamentally, since that to which the process tends is also regulative of the process. Thomas, also, can utilize all three tenses when tracing the movement from potency to actuality. That which is causally responsible for the movement requires qualities for which all three time tenses are necessary. For example, spontaneity is unknowable apart from a kind of underlying, timeless permanency and by reference to that which it is in process of forming. But Luther's "alone" is almost insensitive to tense. It has no connectors. Hence, its isolation occurs independently of inflections. Apparently the future can provide nothing which is not already available, since, if one possesses the Word, he also owns all other things. This tendency of Luther's is also implicit in his inability to articulate a *telos*. Nor does Luther need the past as a basis of contrast with the now. For this reason there is probably little difference between the Word-alone in its past, present, and future manifestations, that is, if simultaneity rules what was, and is, and is to come.

Despite such variations, there are also substantial areas of agreement. For example, each would be prepared to accept an operational definition of freedom as "absence of constraint". Irenaeus could refer that definition to the directed motion of the normative process which serves both as the locus of divine disclosure and the occasion for human maturation. In the same way, Thomas could apply "absence of constraint" to the spontaneous movement of the individual in accordance with his nature. And Luther could utilize the definition to speak about the full, undiminished, unhampered reign of the Word of God in the achievement of its objectives. The ability to use the terms of the definition, however, does not imply that the terms are

used in the same way. For Luther "absence of constraint" means *emancipation*: the freeing of his principle of orientation from every influence and determination not its own. For Irenaeus "absence of constraint" is construed by reference to *law*: when the normative process is honored as law then liberty is tending toward fulfillment. And for Thomas "absence of constraint" is developed in terms of *law* also, but law accessible through the cultivation of self-consciousness: the individual self-mover when he recognizes the *telos* as *telos*.

Each of the three writers would also be willing to talk of freedom in terms of self-determination. For Luther it is the emancipation of the one-thing-necessary which safeguards its self-determinative abilities. For Thomas it is self-movement which characterizes both spontaneity and self-determination. For Irenaeus self-determination is implied in calling the process "norm" and in ascribing to it the function of law. In all instances freedom implies a release from other potential sources of subjection so that the principle of orientation operates under its own control. And yet both "absence of constraint" and "self-determination" are applicable to all three views of freedom because both are given contextual reference. It is not the same thing which is self-determined in the three cases. Nor does absence of restraint imply the same form or mode of release. Freedom is different in the three instances, even though there is some terminological unanimity, by virtue of the presence of alternative principles of orientation and varying interests of reason. Hence, if a more than superficial basis of unity can be sustained, it must refer beyond terms to structure.

We note, for example, that each of the orientations is ordered according to a bipolar scheme. This is a significant fact. Just as the form represented in a triangle, for example, must be either scalene, equilateral, or isosceles, so too are patterns of conceptualization distinguishable by the number of loci from which they seek to establish coherence. If theological reflection is bipolar, then it must employ either one or both of two determinants in providing religious affirmations with structure. Or, in other words, theology's bipolar form requires that it be shaped according to one of the possibilities open to that form. If that form be symmetrical, then the relation between poles A and B is identical to the relation between poles B and A. The dependencies between both parties to the relation are the same. If the relationship is non-symmetrical, then either the dependencies only apply in one direction or the polar parties are so distinct that coherence is impossible. And, if the relation be asymmetrical, then the two dependencies are distinct even though both pertain. Asymmetrical bipolarity implies that poles A and B are related and poles B and A are related, but the relationship in the two cases is not the same. The form of dependence in the first instance is not identical to the

form of dependence in the second instance, although within bipolarity both forms can be sustained. As we shall further illustrate, the employment of asymmetrical bipolarity in theological reflection gives structure to the two-fold affirmation, namely, that the relation between God and world and the relation between world and God imply different forms of dependence which, nevertheless, simultaneously pertain. God is related to world, and world is related to God, even though the form of relation in the two cases is not the same. Both relationships imply dependencies, but those dependencies are not identical. God is related to world differently than world is related to God. And the two relations cohere simultaneously.

Each of the three orientations we have been examining cultivates bipolarity by means of two distinct designations. First, the determinative principle is identified. Then, the manner according to which it operates is specified. For Irenaeus, as we have noted, the principle of orientation serves to comprehend that which it determines. For Thomas the aim is reciprocity between determinant and determined. For Luther the determinative principle seeks to isolate its own uniqueness and particularity. In none of the three cases is the fundamental methodological bipolarity between determinant and determinable violated or qualified.

Furthermore, each of the writers identifies his principle of orientation with the locus of divine determination of the world. The context in which determinant functions with respect to determinable is the relationship conceived between God and the world. For Thomas, the part-whole structure is the point from which the world is ordered. For Irenaeus, the process is that in terms of which God determines the world. The interests under which determination occurs differ from scheme to scheme, as does that with which the locus of divine determination is identified. But each discussion of freedom occurs under the auspices of the kinds of conceptual determinations which are possible when God and world stand in bipolarity as referent and relata.¹⁹ Each principle of orientation is the point in the scheme to which the determination is referred.

¹⁹ Were this a genetic rather than a strictly methodological account we would argue that the basis for the identification of the formal bipolar determinants with the divine and the human may be traced to the association of the relation between "God" and the "world" in Christian theology with the relation between "Being" and "Becoming" in classical philosophy. The Greek categories became, as it were, the model or structure to which Christian theological reflection was fitted. God – at least structurally speaking – was identified with Being since both demanded the status of eminent reality. Hence God-world and Being-becoming were not simply relations which operated in identical

In none of the essays is the principle of orientation identified with God as such. Irenaeus' normative process is not God, nor is Thomas' spontaneous organism, nor is Luther's Word. Rather, each principle denotes the locus of, or the point from which God determines the world. Though the principle of orientation is not then identified with God, it can be regarded as the "God" which is accessible to human recognition and order. For Irenaeus, that which functions to give humanity continuity with God is the normative process. In Thomas the same function is performed by the matter-form composite, which, quite appropriately, is even referred to as *imago Dei*. In Luther, the continuity between man and God is established on the basis of God's Word. Each of these loci of continuity are also described by reference to Christ. Christ, for Irenaeus, represents the form of the process which mediates the beginning and the end as well as the divine and the human. For Thomas Christ is indeed the *Imago Dei*, the true man. And, for Luther, Christ is identified as Word of God, the basis and locus of God's self-disclosure. In all cases, the function ascribed to Christ is predelineated in the function assigned to the scheme's principle of orientation. In Luther it is Christ "alone". In Irenaeus it is the extension of the form of Christ which characterizes the process. And, in Thomas, Christ is he in whom one sees most visibly that nature is perfected by grace without being destroyed.

But, noting that each theologian utilizes his principle of orientation as the locus from which God determines the world is not enough. Nor does it suffice to recognize that in each case the form of determination depends upon the way in which principles and interests qualify each other. Beyond that we know that there are religious commitments which inform the way in which the relation between God and the world is to be conceived, and which, therefore, have formative influence upon the respective patterns of thought. We noted earlier that the bipolar relation between God and world in Christian theological formulation is asymmetrical. That is, the two forms of dependence within the relationship are not the same. Priority is ascribed to God, with respect to which the reality of the world is derivative. Yet, looked at from the other side, the created order is given its own reality and good-

ways though in parallel columns, but also came to be interchangeable with each other. I have discussed this interdependency at greater length in "'Being and Becoming' and 'God and the World': An Analysis of Whitehead's Account of their Early Association", in *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*. No. LXIII (1965), 572-590. The discussion depends upon two key articles of William A. Christian's: "God and the World", in *Journal of Religion*. Vol. XXVIII, No. 4 (1948), pp. 255-262; and "The Creation of the World", in *A Companion of the Study of St. Augustine*. ed., Roy Battenhouse (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 315-342.

ness: a status which is not entirely dependent upon the reality and goodness of God. God and world are dependent upon each other, but dependent in different ways. Their relationship is asymmetrical. The characterization of either of the two terms by means of the other is the only device available within the bipolar context, yet Christian affirmation calls for the simultaneous perspectives of both vantage points. Each vantage point is incomplete by itself. The two of them are confictory when isolated. Yet, when taken together, and simultaneously, they accurately depict the manifold dimensions of asymmetry.

The attempt to capture the asymmetrical relation between God and the world is evident in each of the three essays on freedom. It is implicit, for example, in Irenaeus' insistence that both creator and created are real (as opposed to the Gnostic-inspired tendency to reduce the human and the carnal to shadow or derivative image). It is evident in Thomas' rejection of the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of matter because of his commitment to the same doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* which is implied in Irenaeus's account. Thomas' concern is twofold. On the one hand, he finds it necessary to safeguard the priority of the divine by insuring the contingency of the world. And, at the same time, he is compelled to affirm that the reality of God does not diminish but rather confirms the reality of the natural order.

But the point is not simply that each theologian has felt obliged to honor a commitment to asymmetrical bipolarity. Beyond that – and much more significantly for our purposes – each has had to negotiate that relationship by means of the formal and methodological techniques available within his own conceptual outlook. Luther, for example, must compose that asymmetrical relation within a framework which is shaped by a simple principle of orientation and an interest of reason which is isolative. Asymmetry can only be effected within the endeavor to safeguard the necessary singleness of the Word. This rigorous discrimination of his chosen principle of orientation from all other claimants to that status is the mark of Luther's position. However, given that interest in singleness and irreducibility, asymmetry further demands that the Word-alone be referred (though not conjoined) to the other locus of power in terms of which it was first distinguished. That is, to achieve bipolarity Luther cannot stop with statements about the Word. He must also show how that characterization of the Word is used to regulate the order which proceeds from his selected locus of divine determination. In short, asymmetry requires that the reality of the other imperium also be affirmed. It demands that the one who has been set free by identification with the self-determinative powers of the Word live out that liberty in relation to the neighbor and to external demands. Asymmetry also prescribes that exclusive necessity be attributed to spiritual things, for example, while some

other necessity also substantiates carnal things. Were both forms of necessity not present, then Luther's position would not be asymmetrically bipolar. (Furthermore, it would be susceptible to the same charge of "gnosticism" which is appropriate when reality is restricted to only one of the two poles of the relation.) All of the several contentions within asymmetry are implicit in Luther's formulation that the Word alone is responsible for mediating the both-and of the Christian's lordship and servanthood.

In all three cases, therefore, principles and methods serve to condition and specify the techniques according to which asymmetry can be achieved. For example, the integrative principles of orientation of both Irenaeus and Thomas enable asymmetrical bipolarity to be established by means of motion. Irenaeus' process is dialectically ordered. Thus, it allows a projection of asymmetry: a projection out along the line of directed succession wherein distinctions are both maintained and mediated by divine adaptation and human increase. In Irenaeus' scheme, the form of the line sustains the distinction between creator and creature; the creature is marked by time, limits, and change. But that same form also denotes continuity between creator and creature. Both continuity and distinction are affirmed simultaneously. The reality and priority of the divine, as well as the reality and dignity of the human, are both affirmed in the conception of freedom which is formed by the process. Thomas, also, is enabled to refer asymmetry to motion since the supernatural comes to sustain the movements of the natural from potency to act. The operations of creatures imply the causal priority of the creator. But the dependence of the natural upon the supernatural does not violate the reality and integrity of the former. By substantiating the reality and efficacy of natural powers, while at the same time demonstrating their insufficiency, this schema perfectly illustrates an asymmetrical bipolarity vis-à-vis man and God. The actualization of human potentiality implies the priority and sustenance of the power of the divine; but neither are present to qualify the other. In Thomas, as in Irenaeus, asymmetry can be effected by projecting its integral components out along a line of growth-inspired movement from possibility to fulfillment.

In the non-integrative orientation of Luther, however, asymmetry cannot be achieved by motion. The author of the *Tractatus* possesses no structural ability to conceive bipolarity by means of the increments of time and change. Nor can he have recourse to the implicit tension within a scheme of synthetic hierarchization. Both temporal and spatial projection have been ruled out by the basic direction and temper of his orientation. Instead, he finds it necessary to set forth two contradictory theses; these are illumined by two contradictory axioms in an essay of two distinct parts which also have to be taken together. The asymmetrical relation is implicit both in the assertion that the

two antagonistic theses are necessary together, and in the determinations which they foster. The two declarations depend upon each other. Each is invalid when taken individually or in isolation from the other. What is said by the two can be said by neither alone. Luther's task is to distinguish the powers of the imperia which regulate both men and things, and to substantiate the indispensability of each. And this can be done only through a scheme of priority in which the one is subjected to the other in order to be free to determine itself. The two imperia are not simply separated. If this were all that occurred the occasion for asymmetry would be destroyed. Nor is the reality of the one imperium derived completely from the reality of the other. If this were the case bipolarity would be dissolved. Instead, Luther affirms both theses, both imperia as determinants of men and things, and ascribes to freedom – as well as to the Christian man by faith – the power to mediate the necessary tension and balance. A Christian is free because he is servant and lord. Ultimately, he is free because there is one-thing-necessary from which also issues the distinctions which secure the authoritative form of relation between God and man.

The form of freedom is the same in the three instances. Each affirms that man is free when dependent upon God, a dependence which also confirms the rightness of man's engagement in the created world. But that form of freedom is approached from different starting points, and is effected under different auspices. Such starting points and auspices influence and alter the content of the presentations since they elicit different structural patterns in terms of which freedom's several dimensions are recorded. The respective patterns provide the materials of the formulation, and are ordered according to canons of coherent reflection. The disposition of the patterns has its source elsewhere, since it reflects the distinctiveness of Christian religious affirmation. Asymmetry can be regarded then as the formal relational determinant of the three bipolar conceptual schemes. The essayists are united in prescribing an asymmetrical bipolarity to the relationship between God and the world. And the unity which their treatises exhibit seems to refer ultimately to the process of this identical formal asymmetry. Similarly, the diversity which they manifest seems traceable to their use of variant principles and methods for portraying that form.

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