

# The Recovery of the Natural Desire for Salvation: Foundations for a Narrative Dynamic Theodicy Model Based on the Concept of Bodily Vulnerability

**JORGE MARTÍN MONTOYA CAMACHO**

Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona

[jmontoya.1@unav.es](mailto:jmontoya.1@unav.es)

ORCID: 0000-0002-6924-7154

**JOSÉ MANUEL GIMÉNEZ AMAYA**

Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona

[jmgimenezamaya@unav.es](mailto:jmgimenezamaya@unav.es)

ORCID: 0000-0002-6977-3963

**Abstract.** Dynamic Theodicy (DT) is a broad concept we bring up to designate some modern Philosophical Theology attempts to reconcile the necessary and perfect existence of God with the contingent characteristics of human life. In this paper we analyze such approaches and discuss how they have become incomprehensible because the metaphysical assumptions implicit in these explanations have lost their intrinsic relation to the natural human desire for salvation. In the first part we show Charles Hartshorne's DT-model, arising from the modal logic of perfection, and the modern rational problems of this position in making *infinite-necessary Being* (God) and *finite-contingent being* (human) compatible. We note that at the heart of the contradictions in this DT account is a dialectical mode of thinking that makes it difficult to find a correct solution to this dichotomy, and to assume a human desire that could be considered related to lifelong goals. In the second part, supported by the proposal of Hans Urs von Balthasar's DT, we develop the concepts of *bodily vulner-*

*ability, corporeal intentionality, and natural desire for salvation*, which come from an Aristotelian-Thomistic thought. This theory is established in order to build an argument, following Alasdair MacIntyre's ethical framework, on how to make possible the recovery of a metaphysical and anthropological desire that transcends natural aging and goes beyond death. We conclude that both human dependence and the virtues that arise naturally when human beings decide to seek the *good* of their transcendent condition, make it possible to recover the natural desire for salvation through divine and human love.<sup>1</sup>

**Keywords:** corporeal intentionality, death, God's necessity, human contingency, metaphysical transcendentals, narrative anthropology.

## 1. Dynamic Theodicy (DT-model) and God's necessity in Philosophical Theology

Dynamic Theodicy (DT) is a broad concept we bring up to designate modern models to make compatible God's necessity with the characteristics of human life. It is not simply an argument about the existence of God since this type of approach has become incomprehensible. This is because the philosophical or metaphysical assumptions implied in these explanations have become unintelligible for a rationality that seeks to have its starting point in the experimental sciences and trying to keep this perspective along its inquiry (Moros 2021, 15–23).

The question about the existence of God was, for centuries, a metaphysical topic with some established modes of argumentation, and was not simply restricted in a theoretical way to medieval disputes. It was a matter of reaching an understanding of the supreme origin of the world in which human beings lived. Thus, for an understanding of one of the

---

<sup>1</sup> A preliminary version of this work was prepared for the *International Conference. Pain and Suffering: Evolutionary and Theological Perspective*, Nicolas Copernicus University. Faculty of Theology. Torun, Poland (April 14–15, 2023) with the title "A God who saves. The relevance of Philosophical Anthropology in Humanistic Biomedical Sciences for a Dynamic Theodicy model" on behalf of the *Group Science, Reason, and Faith* (CRYF) of the University of Navarra. We thank Ruben Pereda (University of Navarra) and Patricio Fernandez (University of Texas at Austin) who reviewed earlier versions of this paper and made important suggestions for its publication. The translations of the texts cited from Spanish references have been made by the authors.

most cited arguments, such as the Thomistic Fourth Way (Aquinas 1972, Ia, 2, 3), it has been affirmed that “it is not just another way for the demonstration of the existence of God, but represents much more: the precise metaphysical situation of the participated being, with the fundamental consequences that derive from it for man and his life with respect to God, his origin and his end. The implications it entails are not only theoretical, but also vital and religious” (González 1995, 21).

Therefore, the value of the metaphysical demonstrations was not based on the simple exercise of intellectual skills but transcended the scope of the meaning of existing life. In consequence, there are existential factors referred directly to the belief in a good and omnipotent God, which set up the way in which human being can understand the metaphysical arguments in favor of the existence of the Christian divinity. However, in modern times, this medieval way of approaching reality has changed in such a way that it seems language referred to this topic has lost its original meaning making very difficult to resolve a dramatic and absolute separation between God and human being (Brague 1999; 2015).

According to Charles Taylor, in the transition to the Modern age, the interest in the natural world became increasingly prevalent, without the need to appeal to a God whose perfection was reflected by the cosmos (Taylor 2007, 95–99). In this regard, Hans Blumenberg points out that this attitude led to a sublimation of curiosity, which arises from a desire to know what comes up against the limits of the human being (Blumenberg 2008, 345–362). Thus, the insatiability of the human spirit would find its correlate in the inexhaustibility of nature, and not only in what concerns the aspect of a novelty of objects, but for the possibility to increase the precision of scientific knowledge.

In the current times, this search for exactitude and accuracy in the definition of epistemological objects was followed by the raise of Philosophical Theology, and the recovery of certain topics that brought back metaphysical questions such as God’s necessary existence (Moros 2021), the problem of the compatibility of evil with God’s goodness (Leftow 2021; Romerales 2021; Echavarría 2021), the attempts to understand God’s action in nature (Sánchez Cañizares 2021), the compatibility of God’s eter-

nity and divine providence with human free will (Stump 2021; Montoya Camacho 2021; Ortiz 2021), and the importance to avoid non metaphysical conceptions of reason to inquire about divine nature (Pereda 2021). In every issue the question about the implication of human desires in the search for God is present in an implicit or explicit way.

But, in late postmodern times, questions about the metaphysical foundations of the goals of human life became detached from rationality useful for scientific inquiry, leaving apart some important questions about the meaning of human life, especially of the afterlife. In this way, the meaning of human salvation from death became an unsolvable problem, since it tried to be solved with the same rationality that had led to meaninglessness through technical procedures, or by the romantic affection of a sensitive experience (Vicente 1990; Arregui 1992; Murillo 1999; Montoya Camacho and Giménez Amaya 2023). For this reason, the DT-models developed from a Philosophical Theology open to the meaning of human life seem to be important to recover the implication of human natural desires in the arguments about the existence of God. In this respect, we understand that the main desire to recover is the natural desire of the human being to be saved from death, which implies his essential condition as a free *finite–contingent being*.

Nonetheless, the problems with DT-models arise when inquiries of this type attempt to overcome modern difficulties to relate human beings with God, through metaphysical explanations, but without an anthropological consideration about the meaning of human life. In this regard, some DT proposals, which have been starting from the *logic of perfection*, tried unsuccessfully to overcome the classical metaphysical explanations about the necessity of God, especially when the Principle of Sufficient Reason is used to explain the ontological principles of the world (Pereda 2021). This is partially due to the type of methods employed for such a task, which seem to be strongly committed to the identity between “necessity” and the “a priori”. The consequence is a thick relationship between logic and metaphysics, which ends up establishing an immanent or physical world where the idea of a human relationship with a perfect God is meaningless (Montoya Camacho 2021); or, at least, irrelevant because of the difficul-

ties to define what *perfection* could mean (Leftow 2022). In this way, the natural desire of salvation becomes concealed and later removed from the sense of the human existence, as in the proposal of Process' DT of Charles Hartshorne grounded in an immanent *logic of perfection* that rules out any type of human desire.

## 2. Hartshorne's DT-model and the contradictions of the *logic of perfection*

Hartshorne's DT-model, following Whitehead, indicates that God is the main factor that gives consistency to the Cosmos, and that divinity and the World are interdependent in a panentheistic way (Dombrowski 2022). God is the powerful principle that gives existence to every actual and possible being, in a process that passes from the actual to the possible, and from the possible to the actual, warranting the creativity of this World that is *in* the divinity (Moros 1995, 13–103). It is, therefore, a dipolar God, who guarantee a process that goes from “actuality” to “possibility” (Hartshorne 1962). Hartshorne seeks to postulate the existence of this peculiar divine essence to establish the uniqueness of God (Hartshorne 1964; 1967; 1971). For him, there is an identity between the God of religion, who is worshipped: alive, dynamic, and existential; and the God of metaphysics, the necessity that underlies in all contingent possibilities (Hartshorne 1964). To carry out this identity, Hartshorne will require that the proposition “God exists”, of St. Anselm's argument, be existentially necessary. That is, it is not enough to conceive of God as a possible existent, but he must be actually existent, present in some way in every actuality and possibility.

Hartshorne's great concern, therefore, is the affirmation of the necessary existence of God. This is why he takes the proposition “God exists” to be necessarily true, following the definition of God as Perfect Being, established by the Anselmian dictum “unsurpassable excellence”. But it is not an absolute excellence, in a static sense. It is unsurpassable but only in the sense that it cannot be surpassed by any being other than the *Perfect or infinite–necessary Being* (Hartshorne 1948). Thus, wanting to go

a step further than Anselm, Hartshorne postulates a God who is *Perfection* that continually surpasses itself in the process described above as a *logic of perfection* (Hartshorne 1964).

Then, Hartshorne's *logic of perfection* is dipolar, and it works in some way as an "a priori" principle that governs reality. Within each element of the opposed pairs of elements there are good features that should be attributed in the preeminent sense to God (e.g., excellent permanence in the sense of steadfastness, excellent change in the sense of preeminent ability to respond to the sufferings of creatures). In each element in these pairs there are also invidious features (e.g., pigheaded stubbornness, fickleness). From this perspective, the task of Philosophical Theology seems to attribute the excellences of both elements of these pairs to God and to eschew the singular aspects of both elements. However, it should be noted that *some* contrasts are not fit for dipolar analysis (e.g., good–evil) in that "good–good" is a redundancy and "evil–good" is a contradiction. The greatest conceivable being, he thinks, cannot be evil in any sense whatsoever (Dombrowski 2022), so *Perfect* or *infinite–necessary Being* cannot be involved with the evil in the world. If that could be in fact the case, that Being could fall into the qualification of "evil god" (Echavarría 2021, 71–78).

Beyond the metaphysical problems that we will address below, the main point for the purpose of this paper is: what is the problem of this way to make compatible God's necessity and the contingency of the World for the meaning of human life? To understand it, we need to consider that, for Hartshorne, the essence of God is equivalent to his existence, and it is cognizable in its logical necessity by the Anselmian argument. Therefore, from this point of view, we would infer that whoever understood the logic of Anselm's argument, couldn't deny the existence of God. However, the same proposal affirms that, as perceptible by the human being, God has his contingent manifestation through this imperfect world. Then, in Hartshorne's approach the possibility arises that human experience may contradict such divine perfection. If that were the case, then human existence, immersed in a dipolar God, is prone to become a meaningless process. There would be no way to appreciate how the im-

perfect human nature of a free *finite–contingent being* could fit into this dialectic dynamic between necessity and contingency, specially when human dispositions would not be prepared to overcome a breakdown of the desire for well-being because of pain and suffering (Montoya Camacho and Giménez Amaya 2023).

What we identify as the main point of our argument has its root in some metaphysical problems to which we must pay attention. Those problems do not allow us to find solutions from an anthropological point of view, i.e., from the rational development of the human life, for the perfection of his condition as a *finite–contingent being*. Thus, from the anthropological perspective, it would be possible to offer an explanation that contributes to give greater meaning to human existence through certain transcendent ends, or goals. However, this perspective must overcome epistemological limits inherent in proposals such as Hartshorne's. These are two characteristics proper to modern epistemology, founded in dialectics, which could deprive of sense a perfective relation between human being and God. These characteristics are that every "entity" in the world is: (a) contradictory, proper to idealism; and (b) essentially mobile, proper to materialism (Röd 1977, 44).

In the first place, the so-called "contradictoriness" of modern thought refers to the antagonism of opposing forces or tendencies that subsist in the entity. But, in addition, such "contradictoriness" means that the entities have determinations opposed to each other, and that, moreover, this happens at the same time and under the same aspect. But this epistemological situation is something that can only occur in a condition of abstraction with respect to reality. Indeed, from the point of view of idealism, to say that there is a "contradictoriness" rests, above all, on the assumption that concepts are formed when their content is placed in relation to everything that does not belong to the concept itself, thus finding elements that differ from it (Röd 1977, 44). Consequently, from this way of thinking, there is not only a conceptual distinction between "God" and the "human being" but a contradictory, opposed, and even antagonistic status is shown among them as *infinite–necessary Being* and *finite–contingent being*.

The problem relies in modern dialectic proposals that are grounded in an entire way of reasoning which makes unreconcilable any difference. In this way, an epistemological problem becomes an ontological one that leaves aside other ways of understanding the relation between God and the human being: if God's constituent property is *necessity*, and the human being is *contingent*, then there is no rational way of expressing a relationship between them that does not compromise human freedom (Montoya Camacho 2021). In this way, a large number of modern approaches, such as Hartshorne's, in trying to overcome this opposition, fall into new contradictions, since they keep the same basic methodology, which avoids other forms of relationship between the free *finite-contingent being* and an *infinite-necessary Being*, making the "contradictoriness" between both elements seem insurmountable.

But the merely opposition to idealism is not in itself a right solution. That is because, in the second place of the introduced problems by this dialectic way of reasoning, we find materialist philosophy with its idea that reality itself is "essentially motion." It is a "movement" that is understood as the concurrence of the contradictory determinations that have been pointed out above, and that unfold in the historical reality of the human being regardless of their contradiction. Therefore, for dialectical materialism, a thought that reflects reality must avoid the principle of non-contradiction (Röd 1977, 45).

In short, in dialectical materialism, contradictions would find their coexistence with the dogmatic postulate of an ideal end, or goal, to which everything is directed. We speak of a process of transformation, of continuous changes, in which the articulation of the opposites is the same "contradictoriness" of the elements, which is established as a kind of "law of nature" that unfolds in history and is presented as a certain progress (Röd 1977, 296–301). Unlike the abstract idealist mode of dialectic reasoning, the materialistic one seeks to explain the becoming of the events of the world and, therefore, attempts to explain the behavior of the human being having as its finality the movement of the historical World, as wholeness, in itself (Cohen 1951). From this perspective, God would become the driving force of the process in the same way as in Hartshorne

DT-model. And the fact that Hartshorne's proposal is susceptible to falling into two types of contradictions, contradictory to each other, should not surprise us considering the tradition of empirical idealism from which it comes (Moros 2021, 1–8).

Rational contradictions are also present in the *logic of perfection* of Hartshorne's DT-model, which works as an a priori principle that overlooks something that is taken for granted in a posteriori accounts such as the Thomistic Fourth Way (Aquinas 1972, Ia, 2, 3): this one assumes that there is a sensible and recognizable experience, a grasp of certain degrees of perfection in the creatures of the World. That is, there is a real sensible perception in the human being who seeks to understand the existence of God, and its relation to his life. This reinforces the idea that the identification between "necessity" and "a priori", and between "contingency" and "a posteriori" not only highlights the dichotomy and dialectical opposition between them, but lead us to the idea that this problem could not be completely overcome without a *human desire for salvation*.

As we have observed, a DT-model in which its starting point is an *a priori* principle like a process for the foundation of the change in this World, does not solve the problem of the compatibility among human contingent condition and God's necessity, especially if there is a frustration of the human desire for well-being through pain and suffering (Stump 2010). Therefore, it seems that a right DT-model needs to begin from some principles that make room for a human activity which help to build a method for the acceptance of the existence of God. This new approach could be grounded not in arguments that simply assure its necessity but from a metaphysical point of view, and that start from the awareness of human imperfection to face this knowledge in a more realistic way by implying *bodily vulnerability* not only as an obstacle to affirm God's existence, but also as a factor for the recovery of that natural desire, which every human being has within himself, to achieve salvation from death.

### 3. *Corporeal intention and metaphysical conditions for the recovery of the human desire for salvation*

The *natural desire for salvation* is a desire for transcendence inherent in human rational nature. Its inclusion in the topic we are discussing could help to overcome the immanent *logic of perfection* previously exposed, in order to reach a DT-model that admits compatibility between *infinite–necessary Being* (God) and *finite–contingent being* (human). In this regard, the theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar makes what we consider a proposal from Philosophical Theology to explore the foundations of a narrative DT-model, based on a characteristically Christian metaphysical and theological form of thought. In his approach the relationship between God and the human being is based on dualities that arise epistemologically from the transcendentals of *being* (Balthasar 1993, 114–115; 2004, 53–85).

The starting point is the experience of a human activity, i.e., the experience of an ontic loving relationship (the experience of the manifestation of a love), and the subsequent awareness of the nature of the human being who discovers the transcendental characteristics precisely in his fundamental human experience, which is dialogical: being in unity of love with his/her mother, but being at the same time different from his/her mother, he/she discovers that this love unifies, is good and true, and brings him/her joy. From which he can deduce the transcendental characteristics of *being: unity, goodness, truth, and beauty* (Polanco 2017, 420–424).

The discovery of the free *finite–contingent being* of such transcendental characteristic of his existence is performed solving the historical tensions of his own life. These tensions are naturally implied in the metaphysical dualities defined considering the free human response to the Revelation that originates in God, and where each dual extreme will definitely find its culmination and its absolute complementarity. In this way, by structuring the deduction of the metaphysical dualities with the aim of inserting them into the dynamics of the freedom of the human being related to God, Balthasar gives them an anthropological perspective. Thus, in considering the case of the transcendental *being*, starting from the experience of ontic love mentioned above, the Swiss theologian

deduces that there is a fundamental bond by which every “entity” gives itself to others, and, at the same time, opens an existential space for other “entities”.

The relationship just explained would be paradoxical in the realm of the *finite–contingent being* (or entity), presenting serious tensions, since every individual existence would be experienced by the “entity” as a gift that it has not requested for, nor that it can be demanded, but that is required by itself to reach its individual perfection. For such “entity” it would not be possible to reach its own perfection without counting on the other “entities”, which would link it to that wholeness of which they are all a part. Therefore, the duality in the order of the transcendental structure of *being* would be that there is between “being” as wholeness, and “entity” as individuality (Polanco 2017, 420–424), both of which are related by “love”.

Thus, also, for the polarity of the transcendental *goodness*, after showing that remains a continuity of *being* and *beauty*, he follows Thomas Aquinas in affirming that all things tend or desire *goodness*, and this, in some way, appear to be desired (Aquinas 1972, Ia–IIae, q. 10, a. 1 and Ia, q. 82, a. 1). Every “entity” appears with a certain form in the world and aspires to what is perceived as good, because all other “entities” have a certain need for it. Therefore, according to Balthasar as we had shown above for the transcendental *being*, there arises in every “entity” in general, and in the human being in particular, an obligation to give himself to others, because others need him, just as the individual person needs others. But it is a need that, for the case of human being, must be satisfied by his own individual freedom. Hence the abysmal paradox that the human being cannot solve without the other “entities” or the others free *finite–contingent beings*: how to go from the desire for a *good* that transcends the *finite–contingent* perspective to its realization through free action? This is a question that Thomas Aquinas answers with the doctrine of will’s *imperium* (Enríquez Gómez and Montoya Camacho 2021). For Balthasar, we are speaking about a duality between two parts: “the obligation of every human being to do what reflects goodness”, which arises from the existence of other people and “the fact of its realization

from the subjective consciousness”. The conclusion is that both extremes that are relevant for the human drama (free *finite–contingent being* and free *infinite–necessary Being*) must be related by a need that is satisfied only by the free gift of self. A human activity that can only be satisfied by the activity of the love of the infinite–necessary Being (Polanco 2017), but that also requires the freedom of the will to perform human actions, and this means having a teleological nature (Enriquez Gomez and Montoya Camacho 2021), i.e., a kind of natural supporting structure of ends available to human decisions.

At this point, the question is: what could be that natural characteristic that supports this dynamic of teleological interweaving between the *finite–contingent being* and the *infinite–necessary Being*? Because, this kind of property, also must to freely lead the human being to rethink his whole life, fulfilling the task of being the non-deterministic trigger of acts analogous to divine love to help his fellow human beings in this whole dynamic process of integration of the tensions of human life. It seems a lot for a human factor but, from an anthropological perspective we think the response is in the concept of *human bodily vulnerability*, taken from biology and evolutionary medicine (Horvat 2023), which we explained as the starting point of an approach of a metaphysical scheme of ends, or goals. This question refers us, as we have indicated, to the concept of human nature, which leaves room for free acts such as the acceptance of a natural desire for salvation from inevitable death. It is true that this proposal cannot provide, from a philosophical point of view, a complete explanation of human uniqueness and the repercussions of this idea on personal freedom. But, in this way, the narrative of human life could incorporate to this topic the support of a rational nature, in which the *finite–contingent being* can be open to transcend its worldly-material condition, although it cannot do so by its own natural means.

As we have argued, individual finite–contingent existence is immersed in the narrative dynamics that imprint metaphysical dualities, which have as their central point the human action that seeks the realization of certain goals that are identified as good and could involve human existence. We talk, therefore, of the classical theory of salvation as a way

of perfection. And this occurs in the midst of the limitations imposed by its finite–contingent condition, a premise that makes this point of view very different from Hartshorne’s logic of perfection. However, as we will show below, this finite–contingent condition, which is fully shown in death, can be stated as the universal condition for the acceptance of this desire, as a voluntary act, i.e., it refers properly to freedom (Montoya Camacho and Giménez Amaya 2021, 156–202; 2023).

Therefore, the *natural desire for salvation* is a human craving that arises from the passing of time in the face of the experience of a corruptible corporeality in the life of someone who seeks the *good*. It is the universal experience of something that occurs inevitably, of a fragmentation of the corporeal that is in a fragile organic equilibrium, which is paradoxically harmonious, and which cannot be stopped by the mere forces of ordinary life, since matter in itself is not unitary, but has parts separated from one another (Aquinas 1952, lib. 1, 1.5, n. 3; Lombo and Giménez Amaya 2016, 147).

To be aware of this dynamic is important for an anthropological reflection on the experience, unified in the consciousness of the *finite–contingent being*, of its own biological limits, and the desire to transcend them, as a possibility universally open to every human being. In other words, the individual experience of a situation of material wear and deterioration must be perceived in a unitary way, within the understanding of the organic goal of the body and the purpose of his own life as a whole, and this implies human freedom as a necessary condition for it (Montoya Camacho and Giménez Amaya 2023, 72).

For a better understanding of what we have explained, it is important to consider that the unity of this experience in the consciousness of the *finite–contingent being* must start from the reflection on the ends, or goals, of his bodily as well as spiritual life, which already leaves open the question about the inclusion of freedom. In this regard, it is interesting to consider that Kant’s work already pointed, in the critique of teleological judgment, to the dilemma between *mechanicism* (without freedom) and *teleology* (that leaves room for human free will). For the philosopher from Königsberg, on the one hand, human understanding demands that

all strictly scientific knowledge about nature be mechanistic (appeal to efficient causes) and, on the other hand, what is characteristic of living organisms is that they have purposes or ends, something that can only be explained teleologically (Gherab Martin 2020, 460; Kant 1987, 32–38)<sup>2</sup>. However, due to the limits of our knowledge, Kant considers that it is not possible to unify both perspectives in the explanation of the same natural production. For this reason, he established a specific type of judgment for the ends within nature.

In Kant's proposal, which can be found synthetically in the Critique of Judgment, this teleological judgment about the natural world does not come from the determination of one of the faculties of knowing such as *understanding* (governed by the a priori concepts of nature), nor does it arise from the faculty of mind that is desire (which, governed by another faculty of knowledge, *reason*, becomes the superior faculty of *freedom*), and even less from the faculty of mind of the *feeling of pleasure or displeasure*. It is a judgment proper to knowledge that is reflective, and therefore open to freedom. Such a reflection has as its basis not a natural law or its content, but the way in which the subject can understand this nature. If such a judgment were to proceed from a content of the natural law it would not be teleological, but deterministic, that is, proceeding from the understanding, and therefore subject to mechanistic interpretations that preclude freedom. Thus, for Kant, the adjustment of the teleological judgment with reality is on the basis of a law that the *finite–contingent being* gives itself. It is, therefore, a reflection of nature that has as its object the way in which the subject understands nature itself: it is “as if” the natural world were understood. But in addition, this natural teleological judgment, in the Kantian perspective, cannot be united with the human experiences of freedom and moral action, since these involve relations with faculties of knowledge that are distinct and irreducible, thus breaking the possible vital unity of the experiences proper to human life (Kant 1987, 32–38; Montoya Camacho and Giménez Amaya 2023, 73).

---

<sup>2</sup> For a better localization of this texts in Kant's works, see *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Königlich Preussischen *Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 29 volumes. Berlin, 1900 (*Akademie-Ausgabe [AA]*): AA V 192–198.

#### 4. The recovery of the *desire for salvation* through the concept of *bodily vulnerability*

As we have been indicating, in order to keep the unity of human experiences, what seems to be most effective is to observe this process of organic deterioration from the perspective of an Aristotelian narrative of human life (MacIntyre 1999; Torre 2023), which fits with the natural requirements of our proposal, especially in the narrative that goes from aging to death as the cessation of this process. It is a process that expresses the chronobiology of all living beings, which makes this phenomenon a universal principle of reflection on the need to integrate the spiritual and material experiences of human life (Montoya Camacho and Giménez Amaya 2023, 74).

A teleological way, and in a certain sense phenomenological at the same time, for the understanding of this integration of the spiritual and material elements of the human being, is given through the understanding of the systemic character of the body, and the interweaving of this systematicity with the purposes of man's actions. Thus, the body is presented as a dynamic unit with a purpose that is not exhausted by the mere biological organicity, necessary for its subsistence, but transcends it. Such finalistic transcendence can be understood as a kind of *corporeal intentionality* (Lombo and Giménez Amaya 2016, 21–22), which can be defined as the set of all the formalizing activities of the organism that, although each of them has a certain degree of autonomy, are deployed for the benefit of its unity and the maximum development proper to it. From this perspective it can be said that any biological organism has more freedom than a machine. This is so because the types of formalizing activities that the organism develops and integrates are more complex than those of a mechanism. Moreover, the fact of developing such activities leads the organism to perform a certain act of securing its own stability or firmness, that is, of realizing its own organic identity (Choza 2016, 167–168).

For this, we refer to a dimension of subjectivity that, from the organic level, imprints other levels not in a merely causal physical [or physicalist] way (Montoya Camacho 2021, 121–125), with subordinate ends or goals

in view of the wholeness of the life of the *human being*, which opens itself to the world, relating to other physical realities with ends that have repercussions for the benefits of his own biology. These ends to which the aforementioned *corporeal intentionality* tends do not have to belong merely to the order of the useful or the functional human activities, but that are open to the noble and the beautiful, and that offer a vital unity to human behavior. And this happens because they direct the whole life of human beings towards goals that are willed in themselves, and not because they are means to achieve another end (Aquinas 1972, I, q. 5, a. 6 ad 2).

However, what has been described up to this point is not enough to clarify the issue of the interweaving of the spirit with the ends of the body. Moreover, it might seem that this proposal instrumentalizes corporeality if it is identified with what is good and useful by nature, as if noble and good ends or goals were something juxtaposed to the intentionality of the body. To avoid this misinterpretation, we must pay attention to the fact that, in this kind of biological-spiritual intentionality, the body is open to physical and biological objects, but not simply in order to let them determine its functionality. The human being is capable of organizing the material elements, even its own biological constitution, in such a way that they remain elevated as constituents of subjectivity (Lombo and Giménez Amaya 2016, 21). The paradigm for this is the relationship human beings experience between their rationality and their hands in their capacity of manipulation. Thus, between intelligence and hands there is a practical continuity, by virtue of which the human being is open to the relationship with other beings in the corporeal realm. This relationship occurs in two linked directions. On the one hand, the field of technology that has to do with the useful; on the other, symbolic expression and communication, which go beyond the sphere of utility (Lombo and Giménez Amaya 2016, 21).

Therefore, the same functional plasticity of the hands in the human being goes beyond their simple categorization as tools: they transcend all sectorial functionality, in such a way that they are a way of manifesting the person's own rational world, which reaches its most accomplished point with the appearance of the face and language.

Our argument about the unity of biological and spiritual ends makes sense if the goals inherent in the intentionality of the body, which are good by nature, correspond to the ordering reason of the free human being, in a unity that possesses mutually implied levels of interrelation. These levels can be integrated in a non-rigid way by means of human habits such as the Aristotelian virtues when pursuing a good life as a whole through human action itself (Lombo and Giménez Amaya 2014; 2016, 36–51), despite tensional dualities in the life of *human being*. These tensions could come from his deliberation, trying to decide what to do: following what is merely pleasurable or useful, accomplishing some corporal functionality, or trying to do what is within the framework of the moral virtues (Montoya Camacho and Giménez Amaya 2021, 185–202).

Thus, from this point of view, there can be no dichotomy between body and spirit, since the right experience of the functionality of the body makes every object related also to a transcendental metaphysical subjectivity. Thus, the relation of the spirit to the body may be not considered as simply instrumental. But also, this transcendental metaphysical subjectivity of body and spirit can support the integration of human ends to pursue right action, in a moral sense. Thus, if human action is directed towards an evil goal, outside of the framework of the moral virtues, such integrations between biological and spiritual ends may not be realized.

In this unitary understanding of the human being and his corporeal and spiritual action, subjectivity is not simply circumscribed in the mind of the subject, but we speak about a corporeal factor [body and spirit] as a basis of all his experiences (Lombo and Giménez Amaya 2016, 36). Thus, in a chronobiological and unitary context of human life, the *process of aging until death* becomes an occasion for the accumulation of experiences that affect every human being in a universal way, but, at the same time, it is an opportunity for each free *finite–contingent being* for reflection and amendment of errors or faults that occur in life. The fact that he temporarily goes through life with the same body that progressively loses its functionalities, added to the need to correct mistakes and to try to get his own life right in all its aspects, allows him to incorporate into his identity the idea that it is not possible to reach a fulfilling life only through his

own biological and moral forces. Then, from this perspective, there is no right *logic of perfection* without this singular *logic of imperfection*, because the human in a natural and contingent sense is a rational and dependent animal (MacIntyre 1999; Torre 2023).

Following Balthasar's Christian paradigm, in the same way that at the beginning of life the human being becomes naturally capable of grasping a certain understanding of his vulnerability and dependence on another human through the love of one's own mother, it becomes necessary to order rationally social life through the specific virtues that are related to coexistence and to the attention and care of vulnerability (MacIntyre 1999, 63–165; Lombo and Giménez Amaya 2016, 164–173; Torre 2023).

With this argument we can understand that *corporeal intentionality* is a biological-rational-subjective human condition that opens human being to the world through habits, especially within the framework of Aristotelian virtues. Likewise, this *corporeal intentionality* requires *bodily vulnerability* to be inserted in an honest human moral purpose that not only affects all of a human being's life or makes him question his dependence on others, and the way in which others depend on him, but also makes human beings able to receive the freely giving of divine love. Indeed, fragility or *bodily vulnerability* could accomplish with the status of the natural factor which claims for not only social virtues, but also make present the awareness of the dependence from others to overcome such fragility. In this way, *bodily vulnerability* would also be established as the condition of possibility for a *logic of imperfection* that is claimed for a right *logic of perfection* of an *infinite-necessary Being*. Arguably, it is a natural condition that cannot be satisfied by merely natural conditions.

Indeed, the natural desire that is unveiled in this dynamical process is the *natural desire for salvation* which, because of the finitude of this life, is projected to an end that transcends this existence beyond its biological manifestation. The human being is, therefore, warned of the need to be saved by means of his dependence on others, i.e., by the unitary experience of his vulnerability that is also integrated in his condition as social being (Giménez Amaya and Lombo 2022; Torre 2023).

If the human were a merely material being, the *corporeal intentionality* would be reduced to immediate, functional, or useful ends, even at the peak-moment of his fragility, prior to death. However, as we have shown, it seems clear that this is not the case, but rather that the awareness of his vulnerability allows him to evoke what is spiritual and shared in community. In this way, the ends that properly belong to the body are integrated with those that correspond to human life as a whole (Montoya Camacho and Giménez Amaya 2023).

From a Christian religious perspective, this last point not only has important anthropological connotations, but also, above all, theological ones, since it sheds light on the true nature of man: the need for dependence refers, through Christian Revelation, to an act that exceeds all the possibilities of merely human acts, and that comes from a God who offers His Salvation.

## Conclusions

We have used the broad concept of Dynamic Theodicy (DT-model) to characterize some attempts from Anglo-Saxon Philosophical Theology to reconcile the necessary and perfect existence of God with the contingent characteristics of human life. In this sense, analyzing the modal approach of Charles Hartshorne, which is governed by a principle of *logic of perfection*, we detected rational problems in his proposal to make compatible the *infinite-necessary Being* (God) and the *finite-contingent being* (human). These problems are based on a rational dialectical way of thinking that can be solved neither by idealism nor by empiricism. As a consequence, we have identified that, from this point of view, the meaning of human action, and therefore the meaning of the freedom of *finite-contingent being's* life loses its importance. At the root of this last question lies the impossibility of this position to offer a realistic idea of a human desire that can be considered related to the goals of human existence as a whole.

Later, supported by the proposal of Hans Urs von Balthasar's narrative DT-model, we develop the concepts of *bodily vulnerability*, *corporeal intentionality*, and *natural desire for salvation*, which come from an Aristotelian-

Thomistic thought. We stated that *corporeal intentionality* is a biological-rational-subjective human condition that opens human being himself to the world through habits, especially the framework of the Aristotelian virtues. Likewise, this *corporeal intentionality* requires *bodily vulnerability* to insert itself into an honest human moral purpose that not only affects his whole life but makes human being questioning himself about his dependence on others, and how other people depend on him. In this way the human being can recover the meaning of his life through the *natural desire for salvation*. Following the ideas of the Thomistic thought of Alasdair MacIntyre, we have shown that the virtues of care that arise from the awareness of *bodily vulnerability* led to an integration of this *desire for salvation* into life as a whole, which causes it to be projected towards an end that transcends this existence beyond its biological manifestation. The human being is thus warned of the need to be saved through his dependence on others, that is to say, through the unitary experience of his caducity which is experienced more intensely with the *process that goes from aging to death*. Moreover, the virtues of care are also integrated in its condition of social being, since the inclination to it comes from a whole metaphysical frame of reference that has at its center the human action that seeks the realization of the *good*.

In this way, the recovery of the natural desire for salvation, starting from the awareness of the condition of vulnerability and dependence as a logic of imperfection open to divine and human love, leads to the establishment of a desire that transcends the mere human contingent condition that helps to build a DT-narrative model in which God is omnipotent and good.

## References

- Aquinas, Thomas. 1952. *In Aristotelis libros: De caelo et mundo, De generatione et corruptione, Meteorologicorum expositio, cum textu ex recensione leonina*. Torino: Marietti.
- Aquinas, Thomas. 1972. *Summa Theologiae*. Torino: Marietti.
- Arregui, Jorge Vicente. 1992. *El horror de morir: el valor de la muerte en la vida humana*. Barcelona: Tibidabo

- Balthasar, Hans Urs von. 1993. *My Work: In Retrospect*. San Francisco: Ignatius.
- Balthasar, Hans Urs von. 2004. *Epilogue*. San Francisco: Ignatius.
- Blumenberg, Hans. 2008. *La legitimación de la edad moderna*. Valencia: Pre-textos
- Brague, Rémi. 2015. *Le Règne de l'homme: Genèse et échec du projet moderne*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Brague, Rémi. 1999. *La sagesse du monde : Histoire de l'expérience humaine de l'univers*. Paris: Fayard.
- Cohen, Robert. 1951. "Marxism and Scientific Philosophy." *The Review of Metaphysics* 4: 445–58.
- Choza, Jacinto. 2016. *Manual de antropología filosófica*. 2nd edition. Sevilla: Thémata.
- Dombrowski, Dan. 2022. "Charles Hartshorne." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, and Uri Nodelman, URL: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/hartshorne/>.
- Echavarría, Agustín. 2021. "El desafío del Dios malvado: una aportación reciente al debate sobre el mal." In *Providencia, libertad y mal. Estudios en teología filosófica analítica*, edited by Agustín Echavarría, and Rubén Pereda, 69–88. Granada: Comares.
- Enríquez Gómez, María Teresa, and Montoya Camacho, Jorge Martín. 2021. "Imperio y causalidad en Tomás de Aquino." *Scientia et Fides* 9, no. 1: 329–55. <https://doi.org/10.12775/SetF.2021.013>.
- Gherab Martín, Karim. 2020. "Biología y filosofía de la complementariedad en Niels Bohr." *Bajo Palabra. II Época* 24: 450–73. <https://doi.org/10.15366/bp.2020.24.023>.
- Giménez Amaya, José Manuel, and Lombo, José Angel. 2022. "Dependencia y vulnerabilidad en la ética de Alasdair MacIntyre." In *Cuarenta años de After Virtue de Alasdair MacIntyre: relecturas iberoamericanas*, edited by Francisco Javier de la Torre, Maximiliano Loria and Lucio Nontol, 105–14. Madrid: Dickinson.
- González, Ángel Luis. 1995. *Ser y Participación. Estudio sobre la cuarta vía de Tomás de Aquino*. Pamplona: EUNSA.
- Hartshorne, Charles. 1948. *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God*. London: Yale University Press.
- Hartshorne, Charles. 1962. *The Logic of Perfection and Other Essays in Neoclassical Metaphysics*. LaSalle (Illinois): Open Court.
- Hartshorne, Charles. 1964. *Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism*. Connecticut: Archon books.
- Hartshorne, Charles. 1967. *A Natural Theology for Our Time*. Chicago: Open Court.

- Hartshorne, Charles. 1971. *Creative synthesis and philosophic method*. Open Court.
- Horvat, Sasa. 2023. "Pain, Life and God: Theodicy Informed by Biology and Evolutionary Medicine." *Religions* 14(3): 319. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14030319>.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1987. *Critique of Judgment*. Werner s Pluhar (tr.) Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Leftow, Brian. 2021. "Providencia, determinismo e infierno." In *Providencia, libertad y mal. Estudios en teología filosófica analítica*, edited by Agustín Echavarría and Rubén Pereda, 89–103. Granada: Comares.
- Leftow, Brian. 2022. "Is perfect being theology informative?". *The Philosophical Quarterly* 73: 164–83. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pq/pqac015>.
- Lombo, José Angel, and Giménez Amaya José Manuel. 2014. "The unity and the stability of human behavior. An interdisciplinary approach to habits between philosophy and neuroscience." *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2014.00607>.
- Lombo, José Angel, and Giménez Amaya José Manuel. 2016. *Biología y racionalidad: el carácter distintivo del cuerpo humano*. Pamplona: EUNSA.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. 1999. *Dependent rational animals: why human beings need the virtues*. Chicago: Open Court.
- Montoya Camacho, Jorge Martín. 2021. "Del determinismo naturalista al teológico: bases epistemológicas de un debate contemporáneo." In *Providencia, libertad y mal. Estudios en teología filosófica analítica*, edited by Agustín Echavarría and Rubén Pereda, 121–40. Granada: Comares.
- Montoya Camacho, Jorge Martín, and Giménez Amaya, José Manuel. 2021. *Encubrimiento y verdad: algunos rasgos diagnósticos de la sociedad actual*. Pamplona: EUNSA.
- Montoya Camacho, Jorge Martín, and Giménez Amaya, José Manuel. 2023. "El deseo contemporáneo de una salvación tecnificada." *Razón y fe* 287: 69–94. <https://doi.org/10.14422/ryf.vol287.i1461.y2023.005>.
- Moros, Enrique. 1995. *El argumento ontológico modal en Ch. Hartshorne y N. Malcolm*. Cuadernos de Anuario Filosófico. Serie Universitaria N° 28. Pamplona: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra.
- Moros, Enrique. 2021. "Introducción al origen y configuración de la teología analítica." In *Providencia, libertad y mal. Estudios en teología filosófica analítica*, edited by Agustín Echavarría, and Rubén Pereda, 1–26. Granada: Comares.
- Murillo, José Ignacio. 1999. *El valor revelador de la muerte: estudio desde Santo Tomás de Aquino*. Pamplona: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra.

- Ortiz, Eduardo. 2021. "El determinismo teológico según Derk Pereboom." In *Providencia, libertad y mal. Estudios en teología filosófica analítica*, edited by Agustín Echavarría, and Rubén Pereda, 141–55. Granada: Comares.
- Pereda, Rubén. 2021. "El principio de razón suficiente y el teísmo." In *Providencia, libertad y mal. Estudios en teología filosófica analítica*, edited by Agustín Echavarría, and Rubén Pereda, 105–20. Granada: Comares.
- Polanco, Rodrigo. 2017. "Understanding von Balthasar's Trilogiy." *Theologica Xaveriana* 67: 411–30. <https://doi.org/10.11144/javeriana.tx67-184.uvbt>.
- Röd, Wolfgang. 1977. *La filosofía dialéctica moderna*. Pamplona: EUNSA.
- Romerales, Enrique. 2021. "El 'teísmo abierto' y el problema del mal." In *Providencia, libertad y mal. Estudios en teología filosófica analítica*, edited by Agustín Echavarría, and Rubén Pereda, 43–68. Granada: Comares.
- Sánchez Cañizares, Javier. 2021. "La acción divina en la naturaleza: el diálogo con Alvin Plantinga e Ignacio Silva." In *Providencia, libertad y mal. Estudios en teología filosófica analítica*, edited by Agustín Echavarría, and Rubén Pereda, 157–69. Granada: Comares.
- Stump, Eleonore. 2010. *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stump, Eleonore. 2021. "La apertura de Dios: eternidad y libre albedrío." In *Providencia, libertad y mal. Estudios en teología filosófica analítica*, edited by Agustín Echavarría, and Rubén Pereda, 27–42. Granada: Comares.
- Taylor, Charles. 2007. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Torre, Javier de la. 2023. "Vulnerability: the human depth of a principle of bioethics." *Revista Iberoamericana de Bioética* 21: 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.14422/rib.i21.y2023.007>.
- Vicente, Jorge. 1990. "Sobre la muerte y el morir." *Scripta Theologica* 22: 113–43. <https://doi.org/10.15581/006.22.16299>.