

themselves and reality, time and space, and can see truer relationships between things themselves. There is not simple addition or subtraction here, but the changing of entire horizons or paradigms of vision.

So, fourth, like children who are happy to be at play, we are able to capture a sense of “lost possibilities” and immanent mysteries involved in our quotidian life, and to thwart the scientific gaze that has robbed us of these. She writes that “the world is not inherently mysterious for one who adheres to the strict scientific description of its essential structures” (p. 123). In that reopened and fluid state of childlikeness, we get to peer into what was previously ungraspable and to perceive the inner workings of things. Cognitively speaking, we are able to slip in between the categories of language and cross over the readymade relationships between things, and perceive more deeply into the existences of and between things. Here, “truer relations are exposed” (p. 38). Here there can be a gathering of space and time together. Here the world reveals itself as inexhaustible in its descriptions and as infinitely more than we can perceive.

All of these themes are approached by the phenomenologists who, like Merleau-Ponty, aim at experiencing the world, the ordinary world, afresh and also by the work of contemporary poets like Rilke and painters like Cezanne who wish to experience ordinary life but at the same time know that to arrive at a more profound experience of it, they must work at something extraordinary to see it. As Gosetti-Ferencei says:

Though quotidian life has its cadences, its energies and entropies, art and literature are manifestations of its capacity for self-renewal. Thus they have something to offer in revitalizing capacities for renewing or reinvigorating everyday life. Provocations of ecstasis initiate reflection on the structure of experience, on the place of the human subject vis-à-vis the world, on the habits and structures, through which its familiar configuration holds together. (p. 246)

This going outside oneself and ordinary experience in order to more authentically return calls to mind T.S. Eliot’s words: “We shall not cease from exploration. And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.”

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*Maurice Blondel, Social Catholicism, and Action Française: The Clash over the Church’s Role in Society in the Modernist Era.* By Peter J. Bernardi. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008. Pp. 297. \$79.75 cloth.

This volume makes an important contribution to the history of philosophy and theology. Bernardi expertly leads the reader through a set of disputes rich in implications for contemporary Catholic thought and commitments. The central axis of the book is the dispute between Maurice Blondel and Pedro Descoqs, S.J. While it is true that “Descoqs offered a defense of a Catholic alliance with the protofascist-monarchist movement Action Française” and that “Blondel defended the democratic, social Catholic against the charge of social modernism” (p. 2), underlying their disagreements from the start, and coming into the fore in the course of the exchanges, were fundamental and intertwined epistemological, metaphysical, social-theoretical, and theological differences, centering particularly on understandings of the relationship between the natural and supernatural orders. Bernardi points out: “[t]he exchange between Blondel and Descoqs was messy. It was marked by misunderstandings, accusations, and what the French term a ‘*procès de tendances*’ (conflict of mentalities). At

a certain point, each admitted that his adversary's positions could be given an acceptable interpretation" (p. 231).

Before summarizing its chapters, we should stress the book's strengths. It adds an invaluable scholarly resource for understanding the many sides of French Catholic thought and life from the *fin-de-siècle* to the early 1920s and provides French-less readers faithful and insightful summaries and assessments of some of Blondel's yet-untranslated "middle period" works. Writing good intellectual history is a difficult and demanding task, requiring immersion in the writings, concerns, and personalities of a foreign intellectual milieu, which this author has clearly carried out. It also requires sympathetic penetration into rival and often polemically opposed positions in order to discern what is genuinely at issue and to assess the value of their criticisms and contributions. On this point, Bernardi's book could be a model for scholarship in the history of ideas. He is scrupulously fair to Blondel and Descoqs as well as to the many other thinkers whose thought is examined in the work. He displays both of the central figures as real human beings and as intellectuals—at points flawed, unfair, or unnecessarily intransigent in their thinking, but genuinely committed to the search for and communication of truth, both striving to be faithful sons of the Church living out an intellectual vocation. He presents their positions through copious quotation in their own words but also unfolds their positions' inner logic, and with judicious rarity he proffers his own views. Translations figure heavily in the text, and those Bernardi provides are always competent and in some cases startlingly illuminating. While a few anachronistic renderings might be faulted (e.g., translating "char" as "tank" (p. 165) in a text published prior to the war in which that vehicle made its appearance), the choice for contemporary language is generally a happy one.

His first chapter narrates background material for the eventual disputes between Blondel (writing anonymously as "Testis") and Descoqs by providing a history of the *Semaine Sociales*, Blondel's strong influence on the movement, and the accusations of "social modernism" brought against it by integralist Catholic critics. Bernardi convincingly shows that in addition to "contrasting estimations of the political and economic legacy of the French Revolution, there were properly philosophical, epistemological differences" (p. 44) at work. The second chapter provides an overview of Blondel's early philosophy of *Action* (1893), his defenses and applications of that philosophy, and his reaction to the encyclical *Pascendi's* diagnosis and condemnation of Modernism. Early on in his *Testis* articles, as Bernardi shows, he defended *Semaines Sociales* against "social modernist" charges, both by outlining its methods of bringing Christianity into society and culture, and by critiquing the philosophical grounds and assumptions of its opponents (whom he termed "monophorists" and "extrinsicists") as espousing commitments ultimately incompatible with the Catholicism that they claimed to defend. Blondel made several main charges against integralist Catholics: a deficient rationalist and passive epistemology; a rigid, compartmentalized, and static ontology; a purely extrinsicist understanding of the nature-supernature relation; an authoritarianism in politics and ecclesial life; and a separation of fields of theory and practice.

Chapter 3 turns to the Suarezian Jesuit Pedro Descoqs and to Charles Maurras, the atheist philosopher and social theorist whose thought and influence were at the core of *Action Française*. Bernardi sketches how and why integralist nationalism, anti-Modernism, and certain interpretations of Thomism had become so closely aligned in the French political, intellectual, and religious contexts. Descoqs's interpretation of Maurras's thought, while critical of his atheism and positivism and arguing that his philosophical system "could find ontological solidity and completion in the theistic metaphysics of the *philosophia perennis*" (p. 113), provided a reasoned defense of Catholic collaboration with *Action Française*. This

brought Descoqs within Blondel's purview: "He deemed an alliance between Catholic and Maurras to be an egregious illustration" (p. 118) of the tendencies he signaled. Chapter 4 is devoted to Blondel's continued critique of monophorism on epistemological, ontological, and social-theoretical grounds, where he "finally took aim at Descoqs" (p. 128). Bernardi identifies "the neuralgic point of the dispute: the different understandings of the nature-supernatural relationship" (p. 134). Chapter 5 begins with that issue and an exposition of Descoqs's work *Monophorisme et Action Française*. While setting out his defense of his position against Blondel's charges of "extrinsicism," Descoqs granted connections and even compenetration between the natural and supernatural order and argued that Blondel "undermine[d] the distinction of orders by extending the limits of the supernatural to the point of apparent absorption of the natural order by the supernatural" (p. 151). He also again defended practical cooperation between Catholics and Action Française on the basis of "the existence and validity of independent political and social sciences" (p. 151). Blondel's own responses, discussed in the rest of the chapter, merely solidified the trenches between the opposed positions.

The sixth chapter addresses Descoqs's counter-responses. On the one hand, he consolidated his defense of Maurras's social theory and philosophical commitments, and by extension the legitimacy of Catholic cooperation, in order to combat liberalism and modernism and to promote well-ordered society. On the other, he specified his position on the natural-supernatural relationship. "Descoqs stressed the fundamental distinction, indeed 'separation' between the 'state' of supernatural life and the 'vocation' to a supernatural destiny" (p. 187). Against Blondel's charge that he interpreted the supernatural gift as something purely external to the subject, he "appealed to the notion of 'obediential potency,'" (p. 191) and in turn accused Blondel of being an immanentist and by implication a modernist. This chapter ends with *Annales de philosophie chrétienne's* 1913 condemnation, seemingly signaling the controversy's end, and victory to Maurras and Descoqs.

Chapter 7 begins with a later reversal, the 1926 condemnation of Action Française, and discusses Descoqs's reaction and renewed critique of Blondel. One particularly telling note stands out: Descoqs's likening Catholic appropriation of Maurras to Thomas's appropriation of Aristotle (pp. 213, 225). The final chapter systematically examines the fundamental divisions between Blondel and Descoqs: epistemology, ontology, and the nature-supernature relationship. On the latter, Bernardi compares the two thinker's positions on two main sets of sub-issues: the modes of human being's orientation to the supernatural, and the function of external religious authority. He also helpfully provides three models for the nature-supernature relationship. Locating Descoqs in a model different from the extrinsicist one that Blondel attacked, he convincingly defends Descoqs from Blondel's charges. He then discusses the two thinkers as representatives of "two fundamentally different conceptions of the Christian renewal of society" (p. 252), thereby "imply[ing] very different assessments of modernity and, at bottom, different conceptions of the dynamics of salvation" (p. 259). Descoqs is a "restorationist," Blondel a "transformationist," and the book ends by mapping these attitudes onto post-Vatican II developments.

What the book does, it does superlatively, but it has two small shortcomings. First, the promised discussion of "contemporary analogues in which different understandings of the nature-supernature relationship continue to play a pivotal role" (pp. 4–5) is very brief, occupying less than six full pages. While Bernardi brings up "theological ideology on the 'left' that has parallels with the experience of Action Française" (p. 262), he discusses only a sliver of left-leaning Catholics ostensibly fitting this bill (those enchanted with Marxism), then mentions neo-conservatives, and finally discusses John Milbank and his critic Gregory

Baum. Second, a perhaps unavoidable truncation of perspective about Blondel's position occurs. The book's principal aim is to present the background, the content, and the central issues of the Blondel-Descoqs exchanges, requiring sketching the backstory of Blondel's philosophical development and engagements prior to 1910. Anglophone readership is typically aware only of these early works and ignorant of the existence or content of his "middle period" works and his later systematic metaphysical trilogy. The impression such an audience might easily get from this volume is that Blondel's positions on knowledge and on the nature-supernature relationship set out in his debates with Descoqs and interpreted in this volume represent his finished and final position. From 1931 to 1936, while engaged in the Francophone debates about Christian philosophy, Blondel more fully articulated his position on the natural and supernatural orders. He also staked out what must be considered his final position about knowledge in his 1934–1937 trilogy, explicitly adopting a more ontological "method of implication" in place of the earlier controversial "method of immanence." Bernardi himself clearly knows the blondelian corpus with an intimate familiarity and has produced such a definitive piece of scholarship on Blondel (and Descoqs as well) that his readers might easily and understandably take it as providing the last word on his thought rather than opening up areas for further research.

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*The Philosophy of Edith Stein.* By Antonio Calcagno. Pittsburgh PA: Duquesne University Press, 2007. Pp. xv + 151. \$48.00 cloth.

Antonio Calcagno's book on Edith Stein's philosophy is one of those needed to feed the growing demand for treatments of Stein's philosophy. Its several merits include the following: (1) It treats her entire work, pre-baptismal and post-baptismal, as the work of one person, whose motivations remain recognizable throughout. (2) It engages with her early phenomenological work and is aware of, and takes account of, some of its political dimensions. (3) It tackles texts that the author knows to be not very well explored in the secondary literature. In all three areas it will be an icebreaker for some people.

There are some weaknesses too. In this review I shall deal with one of these, because doing so may prove of general interest to other readers of Stein, and because it seems to represent a misunderstanding of Stein's position characteristic of the author, one that is present not only in this book but in other publications of his also.

It meets us first in the introduction. Here Calcagno says of his second chapter, where he treats of Stein's *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, that it "explores the unique claim that the relationship between the individual and the community has a peculiar consciousness, which Stein calls the *Gemeinschaftserlebnis*, or the lived experience of the community" (p. xiii). However, a *relationship* has no consciousness, nor does it have one according to Stein; what she describes is the consciousness that has a community for its subject, and the way in which the individual accesses this consciousness, of which the individual is also a bearer. The individual is aware of what the community is aware of, so that the former knows—to some extent, and fallibly—what is generally thought about something. The individual knows that by means of empathy. It knows, for example, what words are generally supposed to mean and can also detect when some other meaning is intended by a subgroup of people. We can write the history of a nation because we can constitute (i.e., identify) super-individual subjects like the nation; because we can constitute that subject as the "we" that constitutes itself from the fact that the subjects making it up constitute