

actual reality. It is the God who is sheer gratuity who alone makes possible the inhabiting of the world as gift, and thus the 'social miracle' of charity. The conviction of pre-modern societies that some truths of human life, though they be at once culturally transmitted and impervious to logical demonstration, are nonetheless *givens* points to this ultimate truth: the giftedness of our being.

This is a satisfying conclusion, but by no means a complete one. Even allowing for Williams's decision to address himself to a largely secular audience, it is dismaying that the Incarnation which, if it really is *saving*, must have power to address the multiform wastage of human substance these chapters describe, puts in an appearance only as a demonstration of the notion of non-competitiveness of divine and human. I find myself wondering if this lacuna may not be connected to the preceding account of the self—which, it appears, achieves authenticity, and in that sense salvation, by a continual psycho-social death and resurrection, an existential paschal mystery of its own. The 'charitable conversation' of properly socialised humanity would seem to render superfluous the charitable communion of the Church. Archbishop Williams tells us, indeed, that 'much more would need to be said about how these religious conceptualities [Trinity and Incarnation] relate to what has been addressed in this book'. I hope that, in more dogmatically meaty fashion, he will feed elsewhere the curiosity in the reader he has thus aroused. It is not a promising start, however, that by apparent denial of the *soul's* immortality, he seems to have erected a 'no go' sign on one *crucial* highway: the influx into human being of the life everlasting.

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**ON THE FORMAL CAUSE OF SUBSTANCE: METAPHYSICAL DISPUTATION XV** (Medieval Philosophical Texts in Translation, No.36) by Francis Suarez, tr. by John Kronen & Jeremiah Reedy, intro. and notes by John Kronen *Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, 2000, Pp. 217, \$25.00 hbk.*

Suarez (1548–1617), introducing *Metaphysical Disputations* (1597), says he was forced back to metaphysics after commenting in detail on Aquinas's treatment of the incarnation in the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa*, and that he aims in the *Disputations* to examine in detail the metaphysical underpinnings of theologians' theology.

In Disputation 15, translated here, he treats 'form', but 'only as informed or received in matter' (p.17); leaving aside the (platonic) Forms/exemplars (which Christian theologians had already been given to identifying ontologically with the divine nature), and 'separated' forms (angels, or the intelligences of the spheres). In other words he is concerned here with what it is that makes ordinary physical things to be things of precisely the kind they are. If it is, as he argues, in virtue of instantiating a 'substantial form', then he can exclude *inter alia* that 1\*) they are products of mere necessity, and that 2\*) they can be said to be the things we may take them to be, merely because we choose to deem things so. 1\*) had been canvassed by ancient atomists, and would soon be revived in a different mode by Hobbes (b.1588). 2\*) had had something

of an airing in discussions of medieval nominalists, but was to be put more disarmingly by Locke (b.1632) in his *Argument from Apples in Market Stalls*. If 1\*) is true, there can be no strictly infinite God, and Catholic Christianity is ultimately bogus. If 2\*) is true, it makes it harder, if not impossible, to argue that 1\*) is false.

So the rarefied air of so much of the argumentation should not delude theologians, now any more than in Suarez's day, into thinking that they do not need to worry about this kind of concern with underpinnings. The detectable 'modern' tone—in part from uses of Schoolmen's formulas to different purposes, or uses of formulas we might associate rather with cartesians, to older purposes?—need not show 'the first truly modern philosopher' (MacIntyre, cited by the translators). Perhaps, rather, an anti-modern before the moderns really got going.

Despite his declared concentration on forms of physical things, he rounds off with a section on a 'form' that is not really a form, but was appealed to by theologians in presumed extensions of form/matter contrast. This 'metaphysical form' is form 'only by analogy and by a certain metaphor' (177). Thus 'in a human being the head is like the form of the other parts...in artificial things the roof, for example, is like the form of a building' (177). He then immediately continues: 'in accord with this analogy, theologians also distinguish the matters and forms of the sacraments.' (This does not suggest that Suarez thought much of form/matter terminology in sacramental theology.) And having given one impression by 'we conceive the Deity as the form which essentially constitutes God and each divine supposite insofar as a supposite is God', he kicks it away by noting that 'essence' in the locution 'God's essence' lacks the note of being a form which 'essence' carries when we are speaking of creaturely essences. P.179 puts this slightly differently, but correctly inserts a helpful gloss. In this Sect.XI, he looks like someone gathering disparate fragments of doctrine mentioning 'form' in one sense or another, and trying to fit them into a consistent sense. But is he not at least sometimes consciously subverting theologians' excesses in extending application of form/matter contrast beyond what he judged sensible limits?

Disputation 15, though only one out of a total of 54, is solid enough to show how a Suarezian tradition of philosophising was able to endure in Spain, right up to the 1960s at least, and how the thought of Suarez could have played the part it is often said to have played in German hands, up to the time of Kant. Both translation and notes are helpful, but the Disputation is hard going, and hard to get into: Suarez stands farther apart from Schoolmen's perspectives than at first appears, and closer to the sympathies and interests of the early moderns than his language might suggest. If serious students of early modern philosophy ought to be giving the metaphysics of Suarez more attention, this addition to Marquette's helpful series is to be welcomed. It certainly shows that ignorance of Suarez's metaphysics, which many of us can own up to, is a more serious lack than I at least have hitherto realised. But I still think that for non-specialists, there are vastly more accessible starting-points. Read 'Harré', not 'Hare' at 7,8, and 'Roderick' at 16. At 169 n.48 read '33'.

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