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Message from the President

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This issue of *ELEUTHERIA* is devoted to Father Lawrence Dewan's, o.p., Presidential Address to the American Catholic Philosophical Association, entitled *The Importance of Truth*, which was delivered on March 27, 1993, in St. Louis, Missouri, and which is reprinted here with the permission of the author. The text was also reproduced in the *Annual ACPA Proceedings*, of the *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 76 (1993), 1-20.

Father Dewan is a noted for his scholarship on St. Thomas Aquinas. Of particular interest to Institute members is the discussion of speculative knowledge in this address. Father Dewan states:

The most perfect power is the intellect, and its most perfect object is *the divine good* [*bonum divinum*]. This is not an object of practical intellect, but rather of speculative intellect.

What are some of the defining characteristics of the "speculative intellect" and "speculative knowledge?" Father Dewan's words go directly to the core of the speculative in its most original and truest sense:

Now, *God's knowledge of himself is speculative*. This seems to me worth stressing, lest it be thought that speculative knowledge is

something which pertains to created intellects merely because of their finitude, their being surpassed by the whole of reality and by God himself.

However, in God we find speculative knowledge *par excellence*, and in him it is pure actuality, the most lively of activities.

My point here is that speculative knowledge is knowledge *most noble because* of the ontological status of its object, viz something intrinsically worth seeing. That object is primarily the being which is the source of all being.

Before Christianity had understood the world as *creatio ex nihilo*, Aristotle articulated similar characteristics of the speculative and contemplative life in Book Lambda (1072b20) of the *Metaphysics*:

Therefore the possession rather than the receptivity is the divine element which thought seems to contain, and the act of contemplation is what is most pleasant and best. If, then, God is always in that good state in which we sometimes are, this compels our wonder; and if in a better this compels it even more. And God *is* in a better state. And life also belongs to God; for the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality; and God's self-dependent actuality is life most good and eternal. We say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God; for this *is* God.

This is perhaps one of the most celebrated and scrutinized passages in speculative philosophy. Aristotle has arrived at a discussion of the ultimate

object and thoughtful act of speculative metaphysics - divine thought as a thinking, on thinking, thinking.

It is curious how modernity has thoroughly inverted and moved away from these time-honoured speculative ideals. Our sciences are now believed to be noble because their objects are human-centred, finite and natural. That the nobility of humanity can only be understood in the context of the eternal and divine good is no longer seen as a necessary proposition. Potentiality, in the metaphysical sense, has taken on greater force and intuitive appeal than actuality, the most crucial of metaphysical concepts. Even more fundamen-

tally, modernity has validated only those mental activities that have as their objects something external to themselves - knowledge, perception, opinion and understanding. In speculative thought thinking is at one with its object. There is no issue as to correspondence, validation or falsification. There is no uncertainty as to whether there may or may not be a diremption between what is thought and what is thought about.

Father Dewan's address challenges us to once again take up the intellectual discipline and the ethical necessity of speculative thought and divine speculative knowledge.

TRUTH AND HAPPINESS

Lawrence Dewan, o.p.

INTRODUCTION

In proposing "The Importance of Truth" as the theme for this year's Convention, I had it in mind to provide a topic which would lend itself to contributions both theoretical and practical. However, as far as my own contribution was concerned, I was thinking along lines which straddle the borderline between the ethical and the metaphysical. I was thinking of my own education and the extent to which it took place in a milieu which brought home to students the primacy of contemplation. And I was asking myself to what extent the institutions in which I have since taught have succeeded in conveying that same view of human life, a view which I myself consider capital "T" true. And that led me to more universal considerations. If it is really true that human life finds its meaning in knowledge of the

truth, and if a society, a culture, be it a nation or a global village, fails to acknowledge that fact, what does that do to the society? Could it not affect the "will to live" of the entire human race? If so, the work of the philosopher ought to include the effort to present knowledge of the truth in such a light that as many people as possible will experience its appeal, and, perhaps, live their own lives and guide others in accordance with that ideal.

My paper today, accordingly, will be on the truth as the goal of human life, i.e. on the truth as happiness, according to Thomas Aquinas. Why "according to Thomas Aquinas"? I almost always give papers presenting what I take to be the doctrine of St. Thomas. Usually they get placed in the "history of philosophy" category. Generally my aim is philosophical, and, with Thomas, I insist that "...the study of philosophy is not in order to know what it is people have thought, but what is

the truth about reality."¹ However, agreeing as I do with my teacher Etienne Gilson that "great philosophers are very scarce",² and that the soundest approach in philosophical education is to live a sort of apprenticeship with a great philosopher, I have lived an apprenticeship with Thomas Aquinas. That at this relatively late date in my life I am still presenting his views, as well as I can, simply means that I am still an apprentice.

But there is another reason why I think of Professor Gilson. He focused in his career on the problem of Christian philosophy. Otherwise said, he kept in view the question raised by Thomas Aquinas in the very first article of the *Summa theologiae*, viz is there need for a teaching which transcends philosophy? An affirmative answer to that question cannot but affect one's outlook on philosophy itself. One of Thomas's considerations in that article is the *perennial* state of the philosophical mind. When, echoing Moses Maimonides, he speaks of how few attain to philosophical truth, and how long it takes them to do so, and when he adds that even then many errors remain involved in the result, he provides grounds for thinking that present-day turmoil in philosophical inquiry is not altogether new.³ The Catholic philosopher surely has reason to welcome guidance from divine revelation.⁴

¹ "...studium philosophiae non est ad hoc quod sciatur quid homines senserint sed qualiter se habeat veritas rerum.": Thomas Aquinas, *In libros Aristotelis De caelo et mundo expositio*, 1.22 (ed. R. Spiazzi, Rome/Turin, 1952: Marietti, #228 [8]). - In what follows, "ST" refers to Thomas Aquinas' *Summa theologiae*, "SCG" to his *Summa contra gentiles*.

² Etienne Gilson, *History of Philosophy and Philosophical Education*, Milwaukee, 1948: Marquette University Press, p. 21.

³ ST 1.1.1 (Ottawa ed. 2b9-20). Plato, in *The Sophist* 246A-C, speaks of a battle which is always being fought concerning what being is, as between partisans of sensible, corporeal reality and partisans of the objects of mind.

⁴ "Those, therefore, who to the study of philosophy unite obedience to the Christian faith, are philosophizing in the best possible way; for the splendor of the divine truths, received into the mind, helps the understanding, and not only detracts in no wise from its dignity, but adds greatly to its nobility, keenness, and stability." Pope Leo XIII, "On Christian Philosophy" [Encyclical Letter *Aeterni Patris* August 4, 1879], in Etienne Gilson (ed.), *The Church*

And if we ask whence comes that turmoil, we cannot fail to notice that revelation presents us with human nature as a wounded nature. The natural inclinations of the human being are still present, but in a weakened condition. Intellectual judgment is affected, especially in the moral order.⁵ We should not be surprised if there is deep division among philosophers, as to questions about the purpose of human life.

Moreover, moral issues dividing philosophers will cast their spell on the contemplative mind itself. As the same Professor Gilson pointed out in *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, very often our problems in speculative philosophy have their real roots in moral questions.⁶ The idea is that, were it not for our inclinations, we might be readier to recognize theoretical principles more spontaneously. This was long ago maintained by St. Augustine, speaking of the Manicheans concerning the metaphysics of good and evil. Augustine remarked that what he was saying hardly needed the support of argument, so evident was it - had it not been an issue which touched upon human conduct - morals - thus spawning controversy.⁷

Indeed, if we move outside the domain of revelation, and open *The Republic* of Plato, we see presented there a condition of human society in which the lower inclinations form society, and where the youths who have the highest natural aptitude for philosophy, that is, for a mind turned towards being, are the very persons whom the public, the greatest of all sophists, converts to its

Speaks to the Modern World: The Social Teachings of Leo XIII, Garden City, N.Y., 1954: Doubleday, p. 38.

⁵ ST 1-2.85.3 (1178b5-6): "...through sin, reason is rendered superficial, especially regarding the domain of action..."

⁶ Gilson, Etienne, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, New York, 1937: Scribners, p. 61: "There is an ethical problem at the root of our philosophical difficulties; for men are most anxious to find truth, but very reluctant to accept it."

⁷ Augustine, *De moribus Manichaeorum* IV. 6 (in *Oeuvres de saint Augustin* [Bibliothèque Augustinienne], t. 1, Paris, 1949: Desclée, De Brouwer, p. 262).

own interests.⁸ This situation Plato could only "account for" by means of the myth of the metals, and an error having crept into the mixture involved in human nature.⁹ Aristotle contented himself with talking morals with those whom there was hope that reason could sway, and pointing the way towards contemplation of truth for those who would listen.¹⁰

All of this I say to assure the listener that, while I am going to assert that certain things pertain to the primary human natural inclination - while, with Aristotle, I am going to repeat that the human being, by nature, desires to know¹¹ - still, I seek to avoid the scandal of suggesting that all human beings, as regards the desires of which they are most reflectively aware, recognize in themselves how fundamental this desire is.

Yet woe to him who locates our ultimate happiness anywhere else than in the life of the contemplative mind: no desire launches us unto such sublime heights as does the desire to have intellectual vision of the truth. That desire is never at peace until it arrives at God, as the summit and author of all things.¹²

⁸ Plato, *The Republic*, VI, 492A-B.

⁹ Plato, *The Republic* VIII, 545D-547C.

¹⁰ See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.3 (1095a1-11); 10.9 (1179b20-30), as to who will listen to argument; and 10.7-8 (1177a12-1179a33), on happiness as contemplation of truth.

¹¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.1 (980a21).

¹² SCG 3.50 [ed. C. Pera et al, Rome\Turin, 1961: Marietti, #2283]; cf. *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith. Book Three: Providence. Part I*, Garden City, N.Y., 1956: Doubleday, transl. Vernon J. Bourke, para. #9:

Also, quite apparent in this conclusion is the fact that ultimate felicity is to be sought in nothing other than an operation of the intellect, since no desire carries on to such sublime heights as the desire to understand the truth. Indeed, all our desires for pleasure, or other things of this sort that are craved by men, can be satisfied with other things, but the aforementioned desire does not rest until it reaches God, the highest point of reference for, and the maker of, things.

That truth is the goal of human life, according to Thomas, it is easy to document. Many impressive texts are available.¹³ It is, in a way, doubly easy to say, in that God is identified as the first truth, and the highest truth.¹⁴ However, such a doctrine only "hits home" to the extent that we have explored the nature of truth, and we do not do that by starting with God.¹⁵ Our ambition then is to present the nature of truth in such a way that it reveals itself to be the goal of human life.

HAPPINESS IN GENERAL

Since we are discussing truth as happiness, we should see what the requirements of happiness are, and what meaning of "truth" most suitably fits the role. A very direct presentation of happiness is that employed by St. Thomas in presenting the happiness of God himself. There, it is said that happiness is the perfect good of the intellectual nature.

Notice that I am translating "*beatitudo*" as "happiness". While other terms, whether on the Latin or on the English side, might be suggested, this procedure will serve our purposes.

Here is the presentation by Thomas:

...For nothing else is understood under the name of "happiness" but the perfect good of the intellectual nature, to which it belongs to know its own sufficiency in the good which it has; and to which it belongs that

This is why Wisdom appropriately states: "I dwell in the highest places, and my throne is in a pillar of a cloud" (Ecclus. 24:7). And Proverbs (9:3) says that Wisdom "by her maids invites to the tower." Let those men be ashamed, then, who seek man's felicity in the most inferior things, when it is so highly situated.

¹³ For example, SCG 3.37 (ed. C. Pera, #2152; Bourke, para. #1): "...relinquitur quod ultima hominis felicitas sit in contemplatione veritatis."

¹⁴ ST 1.16.5; and cf. SCG 1.1 (ed. Pera, #4-5; cf. *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith. Book One: God*, Garden City, N.Y., 1955: Doubleday, transl. Anton C. Pegis, para. #2).

¹⁵ It should be noted, as regards the nature of truth, that ST 1.16.1-4 revises in important respects the doctrine presented in *De veritate* 1.1-3. I will treat of this elsewhere.

something happen to it for well or for ill, and that it be mistress of its own operations...¹⁶

What I take as most important here is the intellectual being's "knowing its own sufficiency in the good which it has". This suggests that happiness pertains very much to the intellect's ability to know *itself*, and to know what is present in or to the intellectual nature.

Is happiness, then, a matter of self-satisfaction? We should remember how primary a principle it is for St. Thomas that each being has appetite for its own perfection.¹⁷ Is this a principle which closes a being in upon itself, or which condemns one to exploit everything else entirely and exclusively in one's own interest? Not at all. As Thomas once explains:

...it is plain that even those things which lack [the capacity] to know can operate for the sake of a goal, and have appetite for *the good* by natural appetite, and have appetite for *the divine likeness*, and for *their own perfection*. It makes no difference whether one or the other [of these things] be said: for by the fact that they tend towards their own perfection, they tend towards the good: since each thing is *good* just to the extent that it is perfect. But according as it tends towards its being good, it tends towards the divine likeness: for something is assimilated to God inasmuch as it is good. However, this or that particular good possesses desirability just to the extent that it is a likeness of the primary goodness. Therefore, it is because of this that a thing tends towards its own proper good, viz that it tends towards similarity with God, and not the other way round. Thus, it is clear that all desire the divine likeness as the ultimate goal.¹⁸

Thus, even though in seeking to be happy we seek our own perfection, we seek a perfection which is

in accordance with our status in being, as beings ordered to a higher being, beings whose perfection consists in *admiring the perfection of another*.¹⁹ Let us remember that, according to Thomas, our *reverence* for God increases with the experience of authentic happiness, and abides for eternity.²⁰

HUMAN HAPPINESS

When Thomas undertakes to speak of human happiness in particular, he carefully locates it, as to both the object which it requires and the operation relative to that object. The object can only be God, and the operation can only be intellectual vision. While, clearly, as in all of *sacra doctrina*, Thomas is making his judgments according to what has been revealed to the believer, nevertheless, in accordance with the truth that grace perfects nature, and indeed that virtue and grace imitate nature,²¹ Thomas provides us with an exploration of the reflective philosophical pathway to the nature of happiness, an exploration which carefully scrutinizes human experience.

He first sets out to present the thing the possession of which will make us happy. The search quickly sets aside riches, honour, fame, and power, all of which in one way or another presuppose a prior recognition of something else as really worthwhile.²² It is when one comes to such candidates as human bodily well-being that more attention must be paid. Such goals as *health* and *survival* cannot be ultimate: the reason is that the human being itself is a being having the metaphysical status of a thing ordered to something else beyond itself:

...It is impossible, in the case of a thing which is ordered to another as to its end, that its ultimate end be the preservation of its own being. Hence, the steersman does not intend, as ultimate end, the preservation

¹⁶ ST 1.26.1 (179a10-16).

¹⁷ See, e.g., its role in as fundamental a presentation as ST 1.5.1 (27a25-26).

¹⁸ SCG 3.24 (#2051), my transl.

¹⁹ See ST 1.60.5, especially *ad* 1.

²⁰ See ST 2-2.19.10 and 11; also, 3.7.6. Cf. my "Review of A. Guindon, *La pédagogie de la crainte dans l'histoire du salut selon Thomas d'Aquin*," in *The Thomist* 43 (1979), 670-672.

²¹ ST 2-2.31.3 (1586b31-33).

²² ST 1-2.2.1-4.

of the ship given into his charge: because the ship is ordered to something else as to an end, viz to voyaging. But as the ship is committed to the steersman for direction, so man is committed to his reason and will... But it is evident that man is ordered to something [else] as to an end: for man is not the highest good. Hence, it is impossible that the preservation of human existence be the ultimate end of human reason and will.²³

We see, already, in a statement like this, how important for happiness is a sense of our own secondariness.²⁴ Human corporeal existence is viewed as *an opportunity* rather than as something which is its own justification.

What is such existence the occasion for? Thomas's consideration of the hedonistic position takes us closer to an answer. After pointing out that delight or pleasure itself is more of an accompaniment to experience than the very essence of the experience, Thomas teaches that the experienced good directly connected with bodily pleasure cannot constitute happiness. Such pleasure is had when we apprehend some good befitting the body, a good apprehended by means of our senses. The rational soul, inasmuch as it surpasses the body, has an *infinity* as compared to the body. Thus, the good apprehended by the sense is singular, particular, whereas the good apprehended by intellect is universal. The good befitting the body is something *minimal* as compared to the good of the soul.

Here, we are already considering acts of reason and will as our access to a domain of goodness which really befits human existence. When we consider, not only the society in which we live, but all we know of human history, we can appreciate the audacity of the claims being made here: human health, human survival, and bodily pleasure are *secondary* in authentic human living! And one sees here how important is *knowledge of the universal*, in contrast to *knowledge of the singular*, in this judgment concerning what is primary in

²³ ST 1-2.2.5 (722b2-12).

²⁴ Cf. ST 2-2.85.1 (1861b48-1862a6), on the natural reasonableness of offering sacrifice.

human life.²⁵

Are we then to find our happiness in the "goods of the soul", i.e. in paying due respect to the human soul, or else in cultivating the intellectual and voluntary life of the human soul? Is *culture* the goal? Is *liberty* the goal? Here, the nature of the situation requires that a distinction be made between the word "goal", as meaning the *thing whose possession* will make us happy, and the word "goal" as meaning *the very use or possession* of that thing. The thing itself in which we are to find delight is not to be located in even so noble a being as the human soul, that spiritual and immortal reality. The soul shows this by its intrinsic incompleteness. It is meant to be perfected through cultivation. Nor, again, can any of the soul's perfections be the ultimate goal. It is not free action or science or art or contemplation that constitutes our goal. As Thomas argues:

The good which is the ultimate goal is the perfect good, completely satisfying the appetite for good. Now, the human appetite, which is the will, is for the *UNIVERSAL* good. And any good inhering in the soul is a participated good, and consequently a particular good. Thus, it is impossible that

²⁵ ST 1-2.2.6. Thomas often specifies that it is knowledge of *universal* truth which constitutes happiness. Cf. e.g. *In De caelo et mundo* 2.18 (461 [4]):

...for beatitude there is required firstly the preservation of life, next the knowledge of sensible things, and lastly *the apprehension of universal truth*, in which "ultimate happiness" [*finalis beatitudo*] consists: and to this only the human being attains; plants attain to preservation of life through the operation of the nutritive part [of the soul], and non-rational animals, over and above that, attain to the knowledge of singulars.

As to the reason why this is so, see, e.g. *In Ethicorum* 6.3 (ed. Spiazzi #1152):

...because knowledge of contingent things cannot have the certitude of truth which repels falsity, therefore, as far as knowledge alone is concerned, contingent things are set aside by the intellect, which is perfected by the knowledge of truth...The theoretical sciences are not about contingent things, save according to universal aspects.

any of them be the ultimate goal of man.²⁶

We should underline that *contemplation itself* is not the goal. Our primary loved good is not *knowledge itself*; it is not in such a sense that "contemplation is an end in itself"; it is an end, a goal, precisely in the sense of the operation by virtue of which we attain to the goal.

Completing this line of thinking, Thomas concludes that the happiness of man cannot be found in any created good. And it is fundamentally the same reason which is in play. The good is the object of appetite. The human appetite, the will, has as its object the *UNIVERSAL GOOD*, just as the object of the intellect is the *UNIVERSAL TRUE*. Since all created good is participated good, the universal good, which alone will satisfy the human appetite, is to be found in God alone. The good for which man has a capacity, after the manner of an object extrinsic to him and transcending him, is an infinite good.²⁷

Thus far, it is remarkable to what extent the capacity of the mind to know and will the universal is governing the judgments about human happiness.²⁸

In the same inquiry, Thomas goes on to specify happiness from the side of human *use* or *possession* or *attainment* of the universal, uncreated good which is God. Here, he locates it in an *operation*, since it is to constitute man as in a condition of ultimate perfection: it must be the thing *actually operating* which is the ultimate.²⁹ Also, it must be the sort of operation which *remains in the agent*,

²⁶ ST 1-2.2.7 (724b49-725a2).

²⁷ ST 1-2.2.8. *in corpore* and *ad 3*.

²⁸ Cf. ST 2-2.2.3 (1416a8-17): "Only the created rational nature has an immediate order to God. Because the other creatures do not attain to anything *universal*, but only to something *particular*, participating in the divine goodness either merely in being, as inanimate things, or else in living and knowing singulars, as plants and animals; but the rational nature, inasmuch as it knows the *universal* intelligibility of the good and being [*universalem boni et entis rationem*], has an immediate order to the *universal* principle of being [*universale essendi principium*]."

²⁹ ST 1-2.3.2.

since only such operation constitutes the perfection of the agent itself.³⁰

Here, Thomas makes a very important distinction, namely between the promised perfect happiness to be had in a future life, and the share in happiness possible to us in the present life. Even though our happiness here is imperfect, still, to the extent that it is available, it consists in the operation by which *man is conjoined to God*.³¹

In his further exploration, Thomas rules out the operations of the sensitive part of the soul, limiting the sought-after operation to the intellectual part. Moreover, while both the act of the intellect and the act of the will are required for happiness, it is the act of the intellect which is the substance of the experience, so to speak, the act of the will having the role of appropriate concomitant.³²

And it is the intellect as speculative, as theoretical, as contemplative, which performs the operation which is *being happy*. I will limit myself to the first reason Thomas gives for this, namely that we are

³⁰ ST 1-2.3.2. *ad 3*.

³¹ ST 1-2.3.2. *in corpore* and *ad 4*.

³² ST 1-2.3.3 and 4. It seems to me that the most important reply to an objection here is the fourth. The objector says:

If happiness is some operation, it must be the most noble operation of man. But the love of God, which is an act of the will, is more noble than knowledge [of God], which is an act of the intellect...

Thomas replies:

...love has preeminence over knowledge in moving [towards the goal] [*in movendo*], but knowledge has priority [*praevia est*] over love in the attainment [of the goal] [*in attingendo*]; for nothing is loved, unless [it is] known...And so we first attain to the intelligible goal by virtue of the action of the intellect, just as we first attain to a sensible goal by virtue of the action of sense (ST 1-2.3.4. *ad 4*.)

Notice that Thomas does not allow himself to be drawn into the precise question of "nobility". It is much more a matter of each power doing its appropriate job, and in the proper order.

seeking the most perfect operation, and this must be that of the most perfect power with respect to its most perfect object. The most perfect power is the intellect, and its most perfect object is *the divine good* [*bonum divinum*]. This is not an object of practical intellect, but rather of speculative intellect.³³

This conception of contemplation - the act of the speculative intellect - as the domain of happiness depends on the sort of *union* which obtains between knower and known, stemming from the very nature of knowledge, but it depends first of all on the nature of the object of such an operation. One sees something of this in *ST* 1.14.16, on whether God's knowledge of things is speculative. Thomas discusses three points on the basis of which knowledge can be speculative. The first and most commanding of these is the *things known*. Knowledge is called "speculative" as bearing upon things which are not doable [*operabiles*] by the knower: such is human science concerning *natural* or *divine* things.

Now, *God's knowledge of himself is speculative*. This seems to me worth stressing, lest it be thought that speculative knowledge is something which pertains to created intellects merely because of their finitude, their being surpassed by the whole of reality and by God himself.³⁴ Speculative knowledge might be conceived as *essentially passive*. This is not true. It is passive in the *finite* intellect, precisely because of the nobility of the object, which is *infinite*.³⁵ However, in God we find speculative knowledge *par excellence*, and in him it is pure actuality, the most lively of activities.³⁶ Indeed, Thomas, speaking of God's knowledge of operables, points out that, because he knows them

in his knowledge of himself, this knowledge does not lose anything of the *nobility* of speculative knowledge: he has speculative knowledge of himself, and in his speculative knowledge of himself he has speculative and practical knowledge of all others.³⁷ My point here is that speculative knowledge is knowledge *most noble because* of the ontological status of its object, viz something intrinsically worth seeing. That object is primarily the being which is the source of all being.

TRUTH

What meaning of "truth" is relevant to the doctrine that happiness consists primarily in the contemplation of truth? Would it make any difference if we were to say merely "the knowledge of God" or "the knowledge of being", instead of "the knowledge of truth"?

Particularly when we consider that God is the truth and the highest truth, might we not simply write "knowledge of God"? And even if we were to say that there is a difference between calling God "God" and calling him "the truth", still, if the truth meant in speaking of our happiness is precisely God, this will be a different point than if the truth we are speaking of is the truth which is found in *our* minds regarding whatever it knows.

Let us recall that when we speak of happiness, we are speaking of the operation of the intellect of the happy being. And we are speaking of its most perfect operation. As Thomas says, in speaking of God's own happiness, happiness is the perfection of the intellectual nature which can know *its own sufficiency* in the good which it has. This is to say that it is essential that *our own* knowledge of truth enter the picture of our happiness. Thus, *we* are very much in the picture. Still, we are in the picture precisely insofar as we are in the picture of our knowledge of the truth respecting the object. *Our* way of being in the picture is not the same as *God's* way of being in the picture in *his* contemplation of the truth. He is the direct and completely satisfying object of that act of contemplation. On the other hand, our act of perfect happiness, in accordance with the *passive* nature of our understanding, has as its object a *comparison*, and one in which God (and in lesser

³³ *ST* 1-2.3.5.

³⁴ See *ST* 1.79.2.

³⁵ See especially *ST* 1.54.2, on the infinity of the object of knowledge.

³⁶ This point is briefly touched on by Thomas. An objector says that speculative science is by abstraction from things, and this does not befit God. Thomas replies:
...that science be received from the known things does not belong essentially to speculative science, but happens to it [*per accidens*] inasmuch as it is human. (*ST* 1.14.16. *ad 2*).

³⁷ *ST* 1.14.16. *ad sed contra*.

acts, the being of creatures) is primary object and we are entirely secondary. In that sense, knowing the truth, like knowing our own act of knowing, is not knowing anything great.³⁸ Such an act, even though involving reflexion on ourselves, is rightly described as the consideration of God just in *himself*. That act is, indeed, the cognitive principle of our act of love for God just in himself.

This secondary but crucial role of our own selves in the picture of knowledge of truth is interestingly developed in St. Thomas's successive presentations of the doctrine that truth is in the intellect's act of composing and dividing. In the *Sentences* explanation, in a quite Avicennian framework, composition and division is seen as the act in which our knowledge goes beyond quiddity to attain to the *esse rei*, the thing as it actually exists.³⁹ In the *De veritate*, the doctrine is explained in terms of the need for duality in order to have "adequation": there must be in the intellect something of *its own*, as distinct from what pertains to the thing known, and this something is the intellect's own *judgment* concerning the thing.⁴⁰ Finally, in the *Summa theologiae*, a new principle is introduced, namely that "truth" names primarily *truth as known*, and that this means that truth is primarily to be found in the *knowledge* of the *comparability* of what we have in mind to the being of things.⁴¹ Truth is in the apprehension of the object "oneself understanding that-which-is" [*se intelligere ens*].⁴² The way in which the knowing self figures in the scene is entirely dependent on the way in which the human intellect stands with respect to universal being, i.e. its passive character. This chimes in entirely with the understanding of

the "proportion" of created being to uncreated being; we are meant to *represent* the divine being and goodness.

What emerges from this is how great is the primacy of *being, ens*, that which is, in the appreciation of the nobility of knowledge of universal truth (or truth about universal being). Ultimately, it is knowledge of *God*, the being who is the source of all being, which constitutes the most noble of human operations. We, however, only have such knowledge to the extent that we appreciate the being which is found in God's effects.

KNOWLEDGE OF BEING

It is with regard to this that I see the importance of Thomas's discussion of the point: does happiness consist in the consideration of the speculative sciences? He begins it by distinguishing between perfect happiness (which cannot be had in this present life) and imperfect happiness, which is a participation in a particular *likeness* of perfect happiness. He will ultimately conclude that, though the speculative sciences had in this life cannot be perfect happiness, they do indeed constitute a *participation*, an approach to perfect and true happiness. Now, this is of great importance. If, from the viewpoint of *sacra doctrina*, looking down from the divine heights, science is seen as a mere participated likeness of happiness, still, from the point of view of the human mind, acting in accord with its own nature and its own pathways of investigation, it is in our experience of speculative science (including, of course, metaphysical wisdom) that we catch sight of and partake in some measure of happiness. Indeed, the presentation of science by Thomas, with a view to showing that it cannot be perfect happiness, is at one and the same time a view of its being a particular likeness of happiness.

Thomas teaches that the limits of science are determined by the investigative power possessed by the principles of the science. The principles of science are obtained through sense experience. Hence the entire consideration which is found in science cannot extend farther than the point to which knowledge of sensible things will take one. Thomas argues that such knowledge will not take

³⁸ Cf. *ST* 1.14.4.obj. 2 and *ad* 2.

³⁹ St. Thomas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, 1.19.5.1.*ad* 7 (ed. P. Mandonnet, Paris, 1929: Lethielleux, p. 489).

⁴⁰ *De veritate* 1.3.

⁴¹ *ST* 1.16.2. The Aristotelian locus for this doctrine is *Metaph.* 6.3 (1027b27), as is clear from the *sed contra* of *ST* 1.16.2. The doctrine of that article is repeated in Thomas's *In Metaph.* 6.4 (1234-1236). Knowing the truth means reflecting on the likeness of the thing in oneself, and judging of the quality of this likeness as compared to the thing.

⁴² *ST* 1.16.4.*ad* 2.

us far enough to arrive at perfect happiness. He says:

The ultimate happiness of man, which is his perfection, cannot consist [or be found] in the knowledge of sensible things. For something is not perfected by something inferior [to itself], except insofar as in the inferior there is a participation in something superior. But it is evident that the form of the stone, or of any sensible thing whatsoever, is inferior to man. Hence, the intellect is not perfected by the form of the stone inasmuch as it is that sort of form [*talis forma*], but inasmuch as in it there is a participation in something similar to something which is above the human intellect, viz *intelligible light*, or something of that order. But everything which is through another is to be traced to [*reducitur*] that which is by virtue of itself. Hence, it is necessary that the ultimate perfection of man be through knowledge of some thing which is above the human intellect. But it was shown earlier that through sensible things one cannot come to a knowledge of separate substances, which are above the human intellect. Hence, the conclusion is that the ultimate happiness of man cannot be in the consideration of the speculative sciences.⁴³

Notice how here we are catching a glimpse in sensible things themselves of something beyond them and beyond our own mind, but seeing it only through its likeness. That is, in seeing form as form, and the act of being which is its necessary associate, we are seeing the divine likeness, or, to limit ourselves to this text, the likeness of something above our minds. And we thus *reason* to what it is, above our minds, that is providing the *limited perfection* which the human mind is already obtaining through the consideration of sensible things.

Thus, the above argument brings out the grounds

⁴³ ST 1-2.3.6 (732b26-50). The expression "intelligible light" [*lumen intelligibile*] relates to Pseudo-Dionysius; see Thomas's *In De divinis nominibus* 4.4, where it is equated with "knowledge of the truth" [*cognitio veritatis*] (ed. C. Pera, Rome/Turin, 1950: Marietti, #325, and throughout). It names God as radiating knowledge of truth to angels and human beings.

for saying, as St. Thomas does, that since in sensible forms there is a participation in a likeness of the higher substances, the consideration found in the speculative sciences is a participation in true and perfect happiness. In the same context Thomas says that we have a natural desire, not only for perfect happiness, but for any likeness or participation in its nature: this with reference to the first sentence of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.⁴⁴ And in presenting the superior nobility of the theoretical intellectual virtues over the moral virtues, Thomas points out that the reason the theoretical virtues are not ordered to something else as what is useful is ordered towards a goal, is precisely that in them we have *inchoate beatitude or happiness*, which consists in the *knowledge of truth*.⁴⁵

What this suggests to us is that *only when seen in a certain light* does our scientific knowledge reveal *why* it is a source of happiness. It does, in fact, cause us joy, just by virtue of itself, and not merely as making life safer or leading to pleasure. But why it does so can only be properly appreciated when it is seen that it leads, however dimly, to a knowledge of God, the source of all being and goodness.

Not all scientists see this. In a recent article, Steven Weinberg, a Nobel laureate in physics, making a plea to the Clinton Administration for the funds to support the "Superconducting Supercollider", brushed aside the supporting arguments of those who held out the promise of technological spinoffs and new high-tech jobs. Instead, he made his stand on the basis that the supercollider would make possible research leading to a "final theory", a theory "that incorporates gravitation with the other forces of nature". This quest for the final theory he presented as "one of the noblest efforts of humankind". In an effort to shed light on the nobility of the endeavour, he held out the following hope:

...news that nature is governed by impersonal laws will percolate through society, making it increasingly difficult for people to take seriously astrology or creationism or other

⁴⁴ ST 1-2.3.6.ad 2.

⁴⁵ ST 1-2.66.3.ad 1 (1055b45-51).

superstitions.⁴⁶

I should add that he went on to assure us:

Knowledge of the final theory will not mean the end of science. There will be countless complicated phenomena, from turbulence to thought, that will still need to be explained.

I must first greet here this recognition of the nobility of scientific theory. Secondly, the search for a final theory strikes me as a wholesome human inclination. With others, I welcome Professor Weinberg's realism regarding laws to be found in nature. He tells us in his book *Dreams of a Final Theory*:

It certainly feels to me that we are discovering something real in physics, something that is what it is without any regard to the social or historical conditions that allowed us to discover it.⁴⁷

Moreover, I agree with him in his hope to eliminate the sort of ignorance manifested in such things as astrology, creationism (at any rate, what I mean by that term), and indeed all forms of superstition. "Evolutionism", in one sense of "-ism" (suggesting the fanatic), should also be banished.

However, in reading such an article, I am reminded of Socrates' account in the *Phaedo* of his experience in the schools of the ancient Greek physicists. When one hears from a practitioner of elementary particle physics that thought is a "complicated" phenomenon (though, I am sure, he sees it as covered by the final theory), one cannot help but call to mind those who asked:

Do heat and cold, by a sort of fermentation,

⁴⁶ See Steven Weinberg, "The Answer to (Almost) Everything", *New York Times*, March 8, 1993, p. A17 [An "Op-Ed" item].

⁴⁷ Steven Weinberg, *Dreams of a Final Theory*, New York, 1992: Pantheon, p. 188. In Paul Davies' review of that work, "The Holy Grail of Physics", in *The New York Times Book Review*, March 7, 1993, p. 12, we read: "We physicists, he [Weinberg] writes, 'have a belief in the objective reality of the ingredients of our scientific theories' and 'a powerful impression that the laws of physics have an existence of their own.'"

bring about the organization of animals, as some people say? Is it the blood, or air, or fire by which we think? Or is it none of these, and does the brain furnish the sensations of hearing and sight and smell, and do memory and opinion arise from these, and does knowledge come from memory and opinion in a state of rest?⁴⁸

That "nature is governed by impersonal laws" I would not have thought was "news".⁴⁹ "Impersonal" suggests to me, however, precisely the *absence of thought*. And one might well wonder how thought ever appears on the scene, as it obviously does in the noble human being.⁵⁰ And, still

⁴⁸ Plato, *Phaedo*96B (transl. H.N. Fowler, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass., 1960 [original 1914], Harvard University Press).

⁴⁹ Professor Weinberg claims that even the Greeks he admires most, viz the Hellenistic natural philosophers, "never came close to the idea of a body of laws that would precisely regulate *all* nature." This, I would say, is a judgment dependent on a too narrow vocabulary. In *Dreams*, pp. 10-11, he says that in antiquity, "law" was used rarely as regards governance of anything other than human conduct (he says NEVER in Aristotle or in the Bible). Now, this is not true as regards the Bible. See Psalms 148:6. Here the word is Hebrew "*haq*"; Greek "*prostagma*"; Latin "*praeceptum*"; English "decree" or "law". - In any case, this is making too much of the word "law". If one looks at a passage like Job 38:1-39:32, one sees the view of God as fixing the measures and natures of all things; so also in *Wisdom* 7:15-8:6, we see God, through wisdom, making all things. And while the particular phrase may be intended in a more limited way, one should be aware of the historical importance of passages such as *Wisdom* 11:20: "But thou hast arranged all things by measure and number and weight" (RSV).

⁵⁰ Discussing "emergence", Weinberg insists that all the things such scientists as biologists talk about "work the way they do because of the underlying quantum mechanics of electrons, protons, and neutrons." (*Dreams* 44) He says (speaking of chemists, but by implication of all such scientists):

I see no reason why chemists should stop speaking of such things as long as they find it useful or interesting. (43)

He clearly thinks that his objects of interest are more "fundamental", but obviously "fundamental" is as "slippery" as the word "why".

He brings this discussion of emergence to a climax with the case of "consciousness", by which he means specifically

further, what are we to make of the presence of laws which "govern", even if in a thoroughly impersonal way?

Socrates' first glimpse of the answer was the doctrine of Anaxagoras, that a *mind* must be at the origin of nature, that the work of nature is a work of intelligence. And Socrates' own solution was the primacy of *form*. And it is this focus on form which I would hope for in the approach of present-day scientists to their findings.

However, Aristotle criticized the approach to form as found in Plato. Plato himself had characterized mathematics as still merely "dreaming about being",⁵¹ and Aristotle found the Platonic conception of form and nature still too mathematical.⁵² Weinberg is struck by mathematical form in nature,⁵³ but it certainly does not suggest to him a divine mind at its origin.⁵⁴

Is it being too optimistic to look for more awareness of form and its *metaphysical implications* in years to come? Writing in 1971, Etienne Gilson, in a letter to Jacques Maritain, lamented the inability of contemporary scientists to grasp the importance of form. Speaking of "la science moderne" he says:

What separates us irreparably from it is the

human consciousness. He admits he finds this issue "terribly difficult", but envisages coming to an understanding of "objective correlatives to consciousness" in terms of physics. It "may not be an explanation of consciousness, but it will be pretty close". (45)

⁵¹ Plato, *The Republic* VII (533b-c).

⁵² Aristotle, *Physics* 2.2 (193b35-194a6).

⁵³ *Dreams*, p. 251-252: "Other physicists including myself prefer another, realist, way of looking at quantum mechanics, in terms of a wave function that can describe laboratories and observers as well as atoms and molecules, governed by laws that do not materially depend on whether there are any observers or not."

⁵⁴ See *Dreams* p. 250: "...I would guess that, though we shall find beauty in the final laws of nature, we will find no special status for life or intelligence. A fortiori, we will find no standards of value or morality. And so we will find no hint of any God who cares about such things. We may find these things elsewhere, but not in the laws of nature."

Aristotelian (and common sense) notion of Substantial Form [*his caps*] ... Descartes rid nature of it. They understand nothing anymore since they forgot Aristotle's great saying that "there is no part of an animal which is purely material or purely immaterial". It is not the word "philosophy", it is the word "nature" which separates us from our contemporaries. Since I do not have any hope of convincing them of the truth (which yet is evident) of hylomorphism, I do not believe it is possible to propose our hypothesis to them as scientifically valid.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, it seems to me that, with the great advances which continue to be made in the techniques of observation, the reality of form is being brought to our attention as never before. While there is no essential incompatibility between the doctrine of evolution and the reality of form, still it seems to me that the popularity of evolution has worked on the *imagination* in the direction of flux schemas which tend to have us overlook the reality of form; this is especially true with *gradualist* imagery. From that point of view, it is helpful to have underlined the reality and importance of *stability* in nature. To take only one example among countless recent discoveries, I will refer to the find of George O. Poinar Jr. and Benjamin M. Waggoner. To quote a report:

The oldest preserved soft-bodied creatures ever found, single-celled microorganisms that lived at the dawn of the age of the dinosaurs have been identified in fragments

⁵⁵ Etienne Gilson, Jacques Maritain, *Correspondance, 1923-1971*, Paris, 1991: Vrin, p. 250 (letter of Gilson, Sept. 8, 1971):

Ce qui nous en sépare irréparablement est la notion aristotélicienne (et de sens commun) de la Forme Substantielle ... Descartes en a dépeuplé la nature. On ne comprends plus rien depuis qu'on a oublié la grande parole d'Aristote, qu'il n'y a "aucune partie d'un animal qui soit purement matérielle ou purement immatérielle." Ce n'est pas le mot philosophie, c'est le mot nature qui nous sépare de nos contemporains. Comme je n'espère pas les convaincre de la vérité (pourtant évidente) de l'hylémorphisme, je ne crois pas possible de leur proposer notre hypothèse comme scientifiquement valide.

of amber from a sandstone deposit in Germany. The creatures - protozoa, bacteria, algae, pollen and spores - are strikingly similar to present-day species... Evolution seems scarcely to have changed these microorganisms in more than 220 million years...The discovery..."opens up a whole new world for us, a new field of micropaleontology," Dr. Poinar said in an interview...."It's hard to say why these organisms underwent so few evolutionary changes over the last 230 million years, unless their genes just hit on a winning formula and found no reason to change," he said. "Perhaps there is some factor in nature that accelerates evolutionary change only in response to environmental pressures, which these organisms didn't experience."⁵⁶

What we mean by "form", after all, is a principle of being, of endurance.⁵⁷

And that brings us back to the question: how does being impress us? What considerations will reveal "the good side" of being to us? Jacques Maritain insisted on the *intuition* of being, an experience of the intrinsic wealth of being as being. Whatever name one gives to this experience, can a *recipe* be provided, as to how to awaken the mind to the intrinsic wealth of the nature of being? The entire curriculum proposed by Plato in *The Republic* was aimed at this.⁵⁸ Aristotle's review of his predecessors, to see to what extent they had caught sight of the types of causal explanation, surely was intended to awaken the minds of his hearers to the wealth of being.⁵⁹ St. Thomas sketches levels of investigative curiosity which he sees as typical of the human mind in its historical encounter with reality: the scientific project having as its focus beings as beings comes only as the result of seeing beyond earlier "final theories".⁶⁰ We are endowed, from the start, with a share in

the light of the first and highest truth.⁶¹ We know from the start the intelligibilities: being, act, potency, and the like. In company with those who have gone before us, we must set out the distinctions between substance and accident, form and matter, natural being and being in the mind; we must present efficient causal hierarchy and the act of being. Some will see. But we must not expect the battle to be over in this world. Plato, in *The Sophist*, was right in speaking of a battle which is *always* being waged concerning what being is, as between the partisans of sensible, corporeal reality and partisans of the objects of mind: an adequate theory must include both.⁶²

WHY SURVIVE?

However, I am most anxious to avoid the idea that forms and natures are good as mere recipes for survival. This would leave us with a valuing of things in function of a "clinging to existence". What is so good about existence? Are things good because they are survivors, or have they been provided with the wherewithall to survive *because they are considered to be of such a nature that they merit to survive?* We must go beyond the conception of being as the answer to the question: does it exist?⁶³ We must come to being as the *act of the essence*.⁶⁴ An essence is such that it *ought to be*. But how do we see beings as goals, i.e. as intrinsically lovable?

⁵⁶ Malcolm W. Browne, "Early Creatures Are Found Intact", *New York Times*, January 8, 1993, p. A14.

⁵⁷ *ST* 1.42.1.ad 1 (264b29-37).

⁵⁸ Plato, *The Republic* VII (523a, 518c, etc.)

⁵⁹ Cf. e.g. *Metaph.* 1.10 (993a12-20).

⁶⁰ *ST* 1.44.2 (one of many such presentations).

⁶¹ *ST* 1.16.6.ad 1:

...the soul does not judge regarding all things on the basis of just any truth, *but on the basis of the primary truth, inasmuch as it [the first truth] is reflected in it [the soul], as in a mirror, by virtue of the primary intelligibilities* ["...sed secundum primam veritatem, in quantum resultat in ea sicut in speculo, secundum prima intelligibilia"]. Hence, it follows [merely] that the primary truth is greater than the soul. And, nevertheless, the created truth, which is in our intellect, is greater than the soul, not unqualifiedly, but in a certain respect, inasmuch as it is its [the soul's] perfection; just as science also could be said to be greater than the soul. But it is true that no subsisting thing is greater than the rational mind, save God.

⁶² Plato, *The Sophist* 246A-C.

⁶³ "Being", so meant, applies even to privation or evil, which has no essence; cf. *ST* 1.48.2.ad 2.

⁶⁴ See, e.g. *De potentia* 5.4.ad 3.

Inasmuch as the species is *more immaterial* than the individual, we see more clearly *form* as the goal in nature. The spectacle of a species of animal, an insect e.g., and the way it dominates a milieu, converting all comers to serve its nature, lets us glimpse "a power of being". Form has as its proper effects being and operation,⁶⁵ and the operation is turned back towards that form.⁶⁶ The operation, "pragmatic" as it may be, still serves to reveal the presence of a *nature*, i.e. a radical *unity*, a being.

We admire form just in itself. We see in it, as present in matter, a *product of mind*. And so, in it, we are loving the nature of mind. But why is mind lovable? Is it not the fullness of being of the object of mind which we are catching sight of and admiring? And that object is being as being; and being just is lovable. We see more of it in a thing which has a form such as to be an *efficient cause*, relative to some other form or nature. As cause, a thing reveals ampler being than another, i.e. than its effect.

Mind is always secondary with respect to being, as regards the object. It is the fullness of being, as seen in form and act, form and act as transcending matter and potency, causal hierarchy, which just is the spectacle of being; and only as sharing in the allness, the universality, of being does mind show its lovability. As such, it can be seen as permanent, and as meant to be permanent, and as having a *raison d'être*. Or have we forgotten the significance of the primacy of contemplation? It is the operation which is most of all intrinsically worthwhile, and so it is the operation which characterizes the being which is most of all intrinsically worthwhile. I.e. it is we ourselves, as knowers, who manifest the goodness of form and being. And we do so as ourselves secondary beings, mirroring the divine being. Thus, it is God who is primarily intrinsically worthwhile: it is his being which primarily has the quality of being. Our being is of interest as like his. Things lower than man are not merely "survivors", "existence machines". As each having a form, as each revealing "the light of mind", they are intrinsically good; and as fitting in in the universal order, they have an even higher mode of goodness and

being.⁶⁷ Things lower than man have a further value insofar as we humans have a mind which comes to a vision of ourselves and God through such things.⁶⁸

Once more, it is form which strikes us. And that is the being of the thing. It is only inasmuch as the thing requires an efficient cause that we see that its own proper form is participating in what is proper to a higher nature, and thus see form and "act of being" as distinct, and form as participation in higher form, in what has more of the nature of being; as St. Thomas says: "*Esse* is most formal of all".⁶⁹ And our mind is valued as giving us access to universal form, and so to "all things", and so to God, the being who is the origin of being. And we ourselves, as possessing mind, have a special mode of form, meant to live contemplatively forever. Our worth is our kinship with supreme being.

The desire to survive is reasonable, but the lovability of our life and operation of contemplation derives from the goodness of the *object*, which is divine being. God's own happiness is contemplation having as object his own being, and all other things in himself. We find things "interesting", not merely because they reveal a *mind* at work originating them, but because that mind at their origin produced them while contemplating *himself*, i.e. the fullness of *being*.

CONCLUSION

I do not believe I can overstress the importance of the *practice* of contemplation, if one is to "get the idea of life". We are living in an atmosphere soaked with interest in survival. We do not ask often enough: "survival to do what?" We have made magnificent progress in developing the means of observation. We have hitherto unimaginable ability to study nature. And we have the means of communicating very widely such access to things. However, our mentality, in these endeavours, remains lamentably *pragmatic*. Knowledge of new species will reveal new *medical* possibilities. Quite true. But there is a more

⁶⁵ ST 1.42.1.ad 1 (264b29-33).

⁶⁶ ST 1.77.6 (469a52-b1): the accidental form is for the completion of the subject; *ibid.* ad 2: the subject is the final cause of the proper accident; 1-2.3.2.ad 3: the operation which remains in the agent is the perfection of the agent.

⁶⁷ ST 1.65.2.

⁶⁸ SCG 3.112, ed. Pera #2861.; ed. Bourke, #6.

⁶⁹ ST 1.7.1 (37a43-44): "Illud autem quod est maxime formale omnium, est ipsum esse..."; and cf. *Qq. de anima* 1.ad 17: "...licet esse sit formalissimum inter omnia..."

important dimension to the situation. Knowledge of natural beings is a perfection of the mind, of the human person.⁷⁰ It makes a human being

happy. It makes life worth living. It is an introduction to God. It is an anticipation of eternal life.

⁷⁰ SCG 3.22, ed. Pera #2031c; ed. Bourke, #8.

KAMAKURA DAIBUTSU

Peter McCormick

If you were to walk quietly along a certain winding path in Kamakura late in the afternoon on an Autumn day, a different kind of path than the one under the summer trees near the lake, you might hear the wind moving through the leaves and then catch sight of a very large bronze figure of Amida Nyorai etched against multicolored trees in the closely surrounding hills. This imposing figure is neither the historical founder of Buddhism, nor the healing Buddha, nor the Buddha of the future, nor even the Buddha who is the cosmic origin of all things. Rather the Amida Buddha, the Kamakura Daibutsu as the descendants of the common people who first contributed to its construction in the thirteenth century like to say, is the lord of a previous existence and the personification of compassion and eternal life.

As you approached Amida Nyorai you would notice the harmonious folds of the drapery disrupted curiously at the sleeves with the hands folded on the lap in the gesture of contemplation, the massive torso displaying the chest bared almost to the navel, and then the looming rounded beard with heavily modelled slightly tensed lips, eyes lowered, sweeping eyebrows, the byakugō at the center of the forehead, and the unevenly stylized hair. Walking round the figure you would come to see that the enormous shoulders are hunched, the head bent forward and almost hidden from behind.

This is not Jōchō's eleventh century Amida Nyorai near Kyoto with its classical proportions, clear and shallow features, meditative and ethereal, lips relaxed, eyes somewhat open, seated on a lotus petal, and serenely gracious when glimpsed from the wood across the pond through the window of the Phoenix Hall of Byōdō-in. Rather, the wave-like robes here, the strongly muscular chest, and heavily rounded shoulders embody a realism and a revival of the Sung Dynasty style in the figure of the ninth-century Great Buddha at Todai-ji in Nara so carefully restored by the

Kei sculptors before they travelled to the Izu peninsula to help transform a fishing village into the capital of Minamoto's shogunate.

But were you to pause under the enormous figure and gaze up at a sharp angle to the face, you would see the shadow projected down onto the torso, the lines left in the face by the casting process, the protruding eyebrow repeated in the extended eyelid, the slightly flared nostrils, and the contraction of the lips. And you would, if you looked long enough, come to see that the deeply shadowed eyes three quarters closed are empty. For the Amida Nyorai here in Kamakura no ceremony has ever celebrated the opening of the eyes.

The Kamakura Daibutsu is an anonymous masterpiece constructed, we are told, by neither Unkei nor Kaikei himself but most likely by unknown followers of the Kei School. No one knows who built this extraordinary figure. The Buddha represented here, Amida Nyorai, is fashioned very carefully to contrast with the serene and idealized Fujiwara sculpture like Jōchō's work. We find here no tender grace, no marvellous regularities, no stable meditative proportions. Rather, like the supreme Buddha at Nara, the Buddha of compassion and eternal life is figured here in ungainly proportions, with hunched shoulders, drooping head, much of the casting everywhere visible as in the rough-hewn *natabori* statuary the Kei sculptors found in the East. Amida in Kamakura the Buddha is figured without his two usual companions, Kannon whose mission is salvation and Seishi whose wisdom is so widely-ranging: the Buddha here is alone. And were you to gaze upon the face of the Amida Nyorai at Kamakura, late on an Autumn afternoon with the sound of the wind in the trees and in the leaves, you would find the face of the Buddha in shadow, a deep ineradicable line graved across the visage, and the great empty seeing eyes fully empty.

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