Paradise and the Groundlessness of Ethics

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The Dilemma in an Unfolding Relationship

The thought of paradise has exercised a particular hold upon the ethical imagination. Bringing us before those things that lie just outside of our reach, its language speaks to us of what has been there all along, before ever we appeared to take up our places in the world, and of what will still be there ever after we have gone from here. Paradise speaks to us of this enduring somewhere else than here, and so we are drawn to its lasting otherness, held in fascination by its suggestion that things might have been otherwise, and might still come to be so—if only. Ethics has been shaped within this 'if only', the cue for its opening lines taken from the lead of paradise that it is our truest beginning, and its action directed by a promise that all will end well. So the thought of paradise enables the self-understanding of ethics as an interim measure, fit for the time between times, living from out of a perfect beginning and facing towards the horizon at which the sun will rise again. Paradise thus discloses the world for ethics, illuminating the world as a place of change, and at the same time a place of failure and of loss, and so it gives an ever-available ground for ethics, sending it forth to do what work it can in the time given, and shaping the activity of ethics as the careful observance and restoration of what comes to be known there.

These preliminary things are said in order to begin an enquiry into the relationship of ethics and the thought of paradise, a relationship which seems today to have become troubled, perhaps even to have changed beyond recognition. For today it is possible to throw each one of these claims into reverse, and so to argue that the ethical imagination has exercised a particular hold upon the thought of paradise. That ethics, by bringing us before those things that lie within our grasp, speaks to us of what is here in our potential for the 'good enough' world we can make, and so holds us in thrall to one that has been prepared earlier. Ethics shapes paradise into its own

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foundational myth, as the ground of its being, from out of which it rises up to take hold of the world and make something of it. Paradise is then made to stand as that ideal of ultimate value which ethics can make real for us to enjoy now, so the place of paradise is to become an ethical product and proof of its power. Ethics reveals the world for paradise to be a place of many values and diverse perspectives, all of which are to be gathered up in a comprehensive vision that can be spun into numberless variations on its theme of peace and harmony. Paradise, once comfort of the homeless and dream of the oppressed, is declared to be here, realised by ethical action, found just down the road in that perfect world encased in glass, filled up with the many varieties of natural goodness and, best of all, sustainable in the careful management of life and its resources.

That Eden has now become for us a copyrighted project, the vision of an entrepreneur who wanted 'to make science sexy'[1] with 'hands on' workshops, that the interests of life itself are entertainment under the biome for the widest possible audience, that 'destination Eden' is not a future to be arrived at, but is based on an already fabricated attraction—these I take to be the signs of a changed relationship between ethics and the thought of paradise. And the change here seems to be one that admits of no return. On the one hand, the enchantment of the world in which things speak of a perfection embodied in and yet beyond themselves, cannot be made to reappear, for the polishing of things intrudes on the tale of faded glory with its own interest in how things look. The accomplishment of what we think ought to be only gives us back our own concerns and so becomes a self-consuming cycle. So the usefulness of paradise for ethics fills us rather with sorrow than hope, as we are fattened on the flavours of nostalgia. Alternatively, a decision to replace ethics in the account of paradise becomes, in our time, a presumption. The writing of a narrative to connect the past to our present situation, or the eternal realm to our transient one, and the attempt to find something original on which this connection is to be construed, alike appear to us as projects, things that we might choose from among the many options that could be realised. So that in a different way to those who precede us, we find the place of paradise to be a matter in which power lies veiled whether we intend it to be there or not. The dilemma posed here in this changed relationship of ethics and the thought of paradise reveals something of the general situation of theological ethics today. For it lies torn between a metaphysical account of its task that seems to have prevailed at least since Plato, and the material realisation of this work displayed before

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our very eyes. It is not just because I come from Kansas that I find the fiction of *The Wizard of Oz* so compelling in its portrayal of this tearing up of metaphysics as the dream of a lost hot-air balloonist from Nebraska, and of this tacky sugar-coloured world made up as the dreamland come true somewhere over the rainbow.[2] For this is a situation in which we all seem deeply to be implicated. We are ones whose identity as moral subjects has been formed in this unfolding relationship, and who no longer quite know how to bear ourselves in its present dilemma. Indeed, this unfolding seems to have borne us, to have become our inheritance, and now to have washed us up on the shore somewhat bewildered about how we came to be here and anxious about what we now are to do. In the midst of this situation, the theologian who would articulate the truth given to faith is drawn deeply into its confusion, disarmed of ready-made answers, and exposed to the elements of its trouble before a way may begin to open.

The Grounds of Ethics in Paradise

So I attempt an exploration of the grounding of ethics in paradise, woven into the fabric of western thought and thus formative of its ways of ethical reasoning, but that today is so problematic to us as to be no longer available for a theological ethics that would open a way of holy living. One dimension of this groundwork has been to establish that in paradise the perfection of creation as intended by the Creator is to be found, within which are placed the human beings God made to be our forebears, and to understand this perfection as an origin from out of which all things are in some way to be descendent. This is broadly what we may find in Augustine's account of paradise in *De civitate Dei*. Especially in Book XIII, he considers the problematic posed by a Platonism that would so locate the essential life of the soul outside of this world, that its bodied existence becomes a weight dragging it down to earth and so away from its true abode[3] In order to establish the philosophical possibility of embodied souls that are capable of a life of bliss both on this earth and in heaven, and in order to understand such possibility as the benevolent will of a Creator God, Augustine speaks of paradise. This place of abundance is where human beings are first set as God's creatures made in God's image, and already for Augustine it is a place that portends the resurrection of the body which is to be our human destiny after Christ.

Affirmation of the goodness of this creation is generally taken to be Augustine's response to a popularised dualism that would disdain

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this earthly bodied life as one that subjects the soul to darkness and evil, and so prevents the realisation of its inherent goodness. Paradise appears here as the original and necessary location for that middle nature which is man's,[4] a setting therefore in which both body and soul are held together in goodness, and are directed in their integral relation towards a fruitfulness from out of which successive generations of life are to come. The entire appropriateness of this place as the habitation of those to whom God has granted being[5], and its existence as the realisation of a Creator's loving purpose are taken by Augustine also to signify what is to become the Church. Paradise points ahead of itself, and becomes for him prophetic, its objects 'prior indications of what was to come'.[6]

One of the emphases of Augustine throughout this account is that spiritual and material interpretations of paradise are not in opposition to one another, but are rather to be shown to be entirely consistent indications of precisely the uniting of flesh and spirit intended by the Creator. Thus we are directed not so to spiritualise paradise that its real existence drifts away in a cloud of esoteric symbolism, nor so to render it material that we miss what it portends[7] So I take it that the truth of paradise is also to live on in our being interpretative, and that, wherever this might happen, there is a work of understanding to be done in which paradise continues to figure.

So it is in good faith that Descartes reads this account of our origin in the midst of an upheaval in mathematics and science, and that he seeks to secure its foundational place in this new world. Yet something new is happening here. For Descartes's approach to these things reveals not so much a desire to secure the world in the intentions of a loving Creator, as an anxiety about securing the loving God in the face of human experience of the world's arbitrariness. With his reflections comes a kind of turning over that is to give priority to our receiving this assurance as clear and distinct ideas, on the basis of which the origination of the cosmos as a whole may confidently take place in the reasoning human subject. To establish by reason alone the creation of the world's perfection, a creation Descartes elaborated so logically according to the order of the first chapter of Genesis, is to provide the foundations of metaphysics and of science, as it is also to ground morality in a world rationally constructed in the human mind from out of the nothing of doubt.[8] That this is to be understood as an origin means that each individual is to place herself as though for the first time into its discipline of reason, discovering along with Descartes that 'the straight path of virtue' lies in knowing that we are rational beings.[9] Paradise, that

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middle ground in which heaven and earth are joined, is now located in the *ens certum*, its succession assured by the free choice of individuals to place themselves under the regime of its relentless deductions.

Our way through to the fundamental things found in paradise has now to negotiate the interest of this human subject and its will to establish a place for itself, for these projections of the subject now lie in the path. One needs to posit no perverse intention to see that there is a concern at work here—concern for the distinctiveness of human identity, for how we stand in relation to all else that is created and not created around us, and for who we are as moral beings. Paradise serves as a place of disclosure, visited in order to reveal this nature to us, showing how it is that we are constituted of elements from two different realms, and are then poised at the place of their uniting. It is to be the ground of our ethical life, for our moral responsibility is to be true to what God has joined together, in order that our enjoyment of this union of body and soul may be full, and may lead us to our proper end in the completion of our nature as rational mortals.[10] This nature must be known to precede my individual existence, so that it furnishes the mould according to which I am shaped, and serves as the measure of my actions and thoughts. The privilege of the soul is to guide me into this knowledge, and so the soul's attachment to things heavenly and immortal is the means by which the divine loving purpose is revealed and its direction followed in my life.

Such a presentation of paradise in ethical matters may still be heard today. Faithful to Jesus' reference to the 'beginning' in response to a question put to him about divorce, the Holy Father sets out a 'reconstruction' of those elements 'that constitute man's original experience', and that remain 'always at the root of every human experience.'[11] He takes Jesus to mean what 'has been fundamental from the beginning',[12] and so he demonstrates to us these 'fundamental and elementary truths about the human being', which he believes Jesus himself was recalling, and which are now to provide for us a 'total vision of man . . . constructed from the beginning.'[13] But we may hear this fundamentalism too from the quite different voice of Rosemary Ruether, who finds in our original creation what she calls 'the intimations of healthy and life-giving relationality that persist in our intuitive sensibilities in spite of [...] ideological and social misshaping.'[14] She has no intention of arguing for the indissolubility of marriage, nor even for normative heterosexuality, and yet the same attraction of the paradisal ground compels her to find there a basis from which to overthrow the evil structures of

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dualism that dominate personal and communal life.

Yet isn't the fact that such diverse claims can be made about what is to be discovered in paradise, with such different and even contradictory things to tell us, already an indication that something has come adrift. For these declarations of what has been laid down for us, which are meant to be so plainly understood, appear now under the shadow of suspicion, as the projections of some interest or other, an interest we must be persuaded to share, and each offers a version of the original design that we are asked to choose. We have here not simply a fragmentation of viewpoints, so that each one is but a partial picture of the whole revealed at the beginning, or even so that they might be gathered up into some kind of jazzy composition that would include them all. Rather we seem to be caught up, as Nietzsche foresaw, in an epistemological failure to deliver to us a foundation for human life. He called it the 'family failing of philosophers' who 'involuntarily think of "man" as an *aeterna veritas,* as something that remains constant in the midst of all flux, as a sure measure of things',[15] and with the exposure of its pretence is released a flood of playful and unauthorised versions of its truth.

Whether or not we join in this fun, isn't our awareness of this failure already a feature of the aggressive and increasingly violent debates that now have to do with human distinctiveness, with our standing in the universe, and with our moral nature—exactly those things that are supposed to be disclosed in paradise. Nietzsche's critique was to draw attention to our being historical, and so to the way in which each vision of what remains constant throughout change is itself the reflection of some situation or other, given a secure foundation and a measure of value by the forging of a link with the everlasting. His consideration of the genesis of this event takes us to the grounding myth of the knowing subject, for which myth the identity of each thing with its own essence is required, and out of which the dream-thinking of metaphysics evolves, its logic requiring an imaginative leap away from immediate experience to the realm of ideas, followed by a guilt-ridden return.[16] That he calls this a "law" of thought suggests that the ethics it engenders will be regulative and judicial, concerned for the legitimacy of each thing that appears, for the measurement of its value as an adequate representation, and for the establishment of systems of classification so that the boundaries between things can be determined.

Is it any wonder then that the troubled areas of ethical discourse that seem intractable of resolution today have to do precisely with the application of this law—and so with gender, with genetics, and with

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generation—each of which has to do with our beginnings, our origin, *ho genos*—and in each of which, the failure of this way of knowledge as a foundation for ethics is taking place, its promises emptied out even as they are made. How can paradise be disclosive to us in this situation without the further assumption of power?

To consider this more deeply, we need to turn to a second dimension of this groundwork, which also finds expression in Augustine. For ethics is to play a part in history, in the narrative of salvation history that flows out of and on to paradise, ethical knowledge and action being given its definitive rôle by the drama that unfolds between the beginning and the end. The drama is set in that 'never-to-be-forgotten place of happiness called paradise', a place 'where everything was so abundant and so good, where neither death nor bodily illness was feared, where there was neither anything lacking that a good will might want to attain nor anything present to do hurt to the flesh or mind of a human being as he lived his fortunate life.'[17] The appearance of such plenitude is taken to be a sign of the fullness of God's being, in recognition of which human beings may entirely enjoy its benefits. Paradise is upheld by a will, for it is God alone who hangs the earth upon nothing,[18] and so Augustine impresses upon us both the wondrous fragility of its being there at all, and the urgency of our observance of the loving will of Him who keeps it so poised. Our ethical obligation is to remember this full presence of being, to acknowledge it as truth, and to exercise this knowledge by continually willing its realisation.

That the first human being willed otherwise is the cause of a fall from this 'well-created natural state'[19] into a state of subjection to what has been fashioned from nothing at all,[20] in which he did not 'lose all being' but 'ended by having less true being than he had when he was rooted in him who has the highest being.'[21] Beginning with a loss, a deficit, the narrative of human history is given in this first act its central plot, as a struggle against coming nearer to the nothing,[22] that constantly tempts its efforts and shadows its designs. The drama is to end in a consummation, which Augustine describes, not as 'the finish in which good is exhausted so that it no longer exists, but the finished state in which it is brought to complete perfection'.[23] Thus the contrast of '*non sit*' with '*plenum sit*' marks out the course of human history, brought sharply into focus by the vision we have been granted of its abundance.

In this ongoing battle, we require prudence which, unlike its quite distinctive way of ethical knowledge described by Aristotle, is by Augustine rendered into a vigilante, discerning— which is here a

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discriminating work—good from evil, and so helping us to avoid straying into evil while we are in its midst.[24] Prudence is useful in the battle with this mighty power, but it is only one of the virtues required. For many virtues serve the work of ethics, which is to be restorative of that 'ordered agreement', that agreement of knowledge and action,[25] which existed in the beginning, and to use this *ordinata consensio,* wherever it may be achieved in personal, domestic, or social life, as a step in the attainment of the lasting peace of the city of God.[26] Such ordered agreement is the primary task of the church, that continuing sign of paradise in our midst, which is to say of it, 'hoc est civitas eius',[27] the city of heaven present here in history.

The curious thing about our contemporary hearing of this account of ethics is I think that we feel not so much the failure of its logic, as its entire success. For the accomplishment of what it has to say seems to be everywhere around us, bringing us before the outcome of its reasoning, and displaying for our amazement the fruitfulness of the promised end. The vast quantity of things that have been brought into being throughout the world, turned out by a system of inconspicuous production but conspicuous consumption, accumulated as possessions and then recycled in car boot sales and second-hand shops and landfill sites, or left floating about the skies as traces of human presence, this profusion is meant to be a manifestation of the goodness that can be ours today, and so valued as the sign of an unseen but powerful benevolence that rules the world. The shopping mall as new cathedral, complete with side altars of small shops where we can pay homage to selected representatives of this power, and overlooked by that modern symbol of our crucifixion, the clock, is no accidental expression of this system at work supposedly on our behalf. We are immersed in the order of things. And so I hear a poignant homily in the summer that the business of providing storage units—these boxes that look like garages strung together on empty lots—is the fastest growing business in America; we simply need more room to store our stuff.

These comments are not just to be pointers to what I think is a deep ambivalence in Augustine's understanding of material things, but to the collapse even of a critique of materialism which does not return us again to its logic. Two things may briefly be said here. The first is to note that the question phenomenologists have been putting to us for some time now is—'what is a thing?'—and the asking of it is not some quirky impulse on a philosopher's bad day, but a stab at the central ontological premise that underlies this account of paradise and its ethics. For the assumption at work, as Heidegger shows us,

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that a thing is constituted by material used by its maker for its construction, and that it now can stand as an object at our disposal, misses the thing qua thing. Isn't it rather the case, he suggests, that a thing is a gathering place, a place for the receiving of what comes to be there, and thus that our relation to things is characterised by their approach to us with an invitation to come closer to what it is they may reveal.[28] So that until we can turn from our preoccupation with what is most being-ful about things, that is also a concern for which being is the highest,[29] our relation to them will ever be one of instrumentality and of management. What other language is available for ethical discourse than this, reverberating as it does through discussions of those all-encompassing world systems, ecological and economic, and turning us each into mini-managers of the things within our domain? Dare we call its purpose 'viability', when the things in its care are already as dead?

The second thing is to say that the reliance upon the human being as decision-maker, upon whose good or bad use of free will so much seems to depend, has also become inaccessible to us. For the notion that a person is a sustaining and sustained presence of being has been so overworked in the unfolding of western culture, that it lies now worn out through its usefulness to the political economy, and exhausted of its theoretical potential to reveal us to ourselves. In Baudrillard's critique, we find a demonstration of this subject as itself the product of the system of production, as the necessary fiction of an independent being for whom the system is intended to deliver its goods. The free human being is here understood to be a figure, inscribed into the text of the prevailing 'myth of terrestrial paradise'. 'Every great social order of production (bourgeois and feudal)', he argues, 'maintains an ideal myth, at once a myth of culmination and a myth of origin.' He finds the same account in political economy as in theology, a myth of the fulfilment of man which is directed towards the same finality, namely—'an ideal relation of man to the world through his needs and the rule of Nature; and an ideal relationship with God through faith and the divine rule of Providence'.[30] That the human being is not some detached source of information or knowledge which might be used to change this system, that every protest against inexorable commodification itself becomes yet another brand of politics or a party within the church—these bring to a kind of end that ordered agreement sought by Augustine, as it is carried out and finished at once.

Baudrillard's analysis brings us to the question of who will hear what is said of paradise in this situation, and to a further

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consideration of what will be heard in the saying of it. As competitions for the best portrayal of paradise extend now into the church's own advertising, as appeals are made to the ever more weary consumer to choose this day whom they will serve, I consider this to be a question of the most profound pastoral consequence. We are not I think, as Cardinal O'Connor would have it, the selfish and greedy ones who misuse our freedom;[31] rather are we completely fed up with its riches and still starved of truth.

The Groundlessness of Ethics

These reflections on the grounding of ethics in the thought of paradise lead me to wonder how it is that paradise may come to feed the hungry. I do so as one whose academic work in the field of ethics has become caught up in an intensifying cycle of expectation to provide solutions, answers, valuations, definitions, regulations, protections, schemes, projects and assurances so that the world may be safe for us, and we can make a difference to its ways. Ethics has become a demanding business, itself part of the very spiral of endless revaluing that it would seek to halt at some point of perfect agreement. And so the if—only continues to haunt its efforts while dragging it again and again into mere pragmatism. How the way of the ethical is to be understood and be taught is something I daily wonder about. But I do so also as one who is drawn by faith to the place of its receiving, and who still does, perhaps naïvely, enter church to be touched by paradise. Am I the only one who is made more weary there by the onslaught of moral shoulds, oughts, musts, and have to's that clutter up the way. I hear homilies on the most astonishingly generous gospel texts that pressure me into submission to what I must do to receive it. When actually am I not the one who is hanging on the words of Jesus from the cross; convicted as I am on every count, I nevertheless am given to believe what he says, 'Today you will be with me in paradise.'[32] And because I understand this to be a call, a promise, a bringing of my life into its future and not a return to its past, I am drawn to speak of the sheer groundlessness of ethics. It has no foundation for what it says, and only speaks from out of what is to come, and so can only be heard as a beckoning of my life into what is really nothing substantial at all.

A full consideration of this of course would require a more extensive discussion of the relationship of nature and grace, an exploration of what is meant by nature at all, and a proper engagement with those many moral theologians who have sought to describe the character of this 'supernatural' in our lives. I don't

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undertake that here. I point only to the theme which has been the undercurrent of this paper, the neglect of which in western thought brings Nietzsche to say in his genealogy of morals, 'We knowers are unknown to ourselves',[33] and only this, he suggests, is what we have grounds to say. For we have left unattended what it is for us to be in time, and thus have sought so to stabilise the appearance of ourselves, as if we too were things constituted by the stuff of which we are made and standing out to be used for some purpose, that we lose touch with ourselves as places for a receiving. I know that I must study Aquinas more closely to indicate something of this in what he says. For the moment I conclude this paper with only two small reflections.

In answer to the question whether paradise is a corporeal place, Aquinas gives a qualified yes. He speaks of its situation as 'shut off from the habitable world by mountains, or seas, or some torrid region, which cannot be crossed'.[34] To stand before paradise is to stand at an unbridgeable place, a place that I cannot cross over into and am unable to write anything about as would a geographer. It lies out of my reach. The material things that belong in paradise are, he suggests, so-called not because of some stuff of which they are made, but because of what happens, after they appear. The tree of life is a material tree because of its fruit, as the tree of knowledge of good and evil is a material tree 'in view of future events'.[35] For Aquinas to suggest that the corporeality of paradise is what comes of it, and not what has been prepared earlier, and for him to suggest that it requires a crossing over, a *pertransiri*, which does not lie in my power, but which is to carry me over to itself, is to put my life at stake in the considering of it, and to ask of me that I let it be given to me, so that what it has to tell of may come to matter in my life.

In answer to the question whether *caritas* precedes hope, again Aquinas turns our attention to time. We do speak of hope, he says, according to the order of generation and of matter, and in this way hope is prior to love. So it seems that love is to make a beginning in us through hope, and so through all of those things that trouble us about our origins, hope seeks a way to give birth to love. But it is also the case, says Aquinas, that we speak of hope according to the order of perfection, and here we must say that it is love which is prior. Again, this is not because of its standing somewhere in an invisible realm above us, but it is prior because it comes, it is an event, it happens. So he can say that with the advent of love, something happens to hope as it is made more perfect, given to be already what awaits it as its true end, and so taken on into a future it cannot cross and certainly cannot comprehend.[36] With this coming of love to dwell

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among us, paradise appears, looking really just about like everywhere else, and only crossed over as we are given to eat of that very odd thing—the bread of heaven.

1 Tim Smit, 'Showbiz meets science', *The Economist*, 18th August 2001, p. 29.

2 L. Frank Baum, *The Wizard of Oz* (London: Fontana, 1969). Originally published in 1900, this story was made into one of the first colour films in 1939. At least, the land of Oz was shown in colour; Kansas, it must be said, remains in black and white!

3 Saint Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, Philip Levine (tr.), Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), Book XIII xviii which is called 'De terrenis corporibus, quae philosophi adfirmant in caelestibus esse non posse quia quod terrenum est naturali pondere revocetur ad terram.' 'On earthly bodies, which according to the philosophers, cannot exist in the heavenly region because anything earthly is drawn back to earth by its natural weight.' p. 198-9.

4 *De Civitate Dei*, Book XII xxii, 'Hominem vero, cuius naturam quodam modo mediam inter angelos bestiasque condebat ut, si Creatori suo tamquam vero domino subditus praeceptum eius pia oboedientia custodiret, in consortium transiret angelicum, sine morte media beatam inmortalitatem absque ullo termino consecutus, si autem Dominum Deum suum libera voluntate superbe atque inoboedienter usus offenderet, morti addictus bestialiter viveret, libidinis servus aeternoque post mortem supplicio destinatus . . .' p. 110-1.

5 *De Civitate Dei*, Book XII ii, '. . .he granted being to the objects that he created out of nothing. . .' '. . .rebus, quas ex nihilo creavit, esse dedit. . .' Loeb, p. 10-11.

6 *De Civitate Dei*, Book XIII, xxi: 'Possunt haec etiam in ecclesia intellegi, ut ea melius accipiamus tamquam prophetica indicia praecedentia futurorum, paradisum scilicet ipsam ecclesiam . . .' p. 218-9.

7 See esp. *De Civitate Dei*, Book XIII xxi: 'De paradiso, in quo primi homines fuerunt, quod recte per significationem eius spiritale aliquid intellegatur, salve veritate narrationis historicae de corporali loco.' 'That some spiritual symbolism may well be found in the account of paradise, the abode of the first human beings, without detracting from the veracity of the historical narrative of its existence in the material world.' pp. 216-7.

8 René Descartes, 'The Foundations of Metaphysics', *Discourse on the Method*, bilingual edition, George Heffernan (ed./transl.), see esp. Parts IV and V. 'For, first, even that which I have already taken for a rule, namely, that the things that we conceive very clearly and very distinctly are all true, is assured only for the reasons that God is or exists, that he is a perfect being, and that all that which is in us comes from him.' 'Car, premièrement, cela même que j'ai tantôt pris pour une règle, à savoir que les choses que nous concevons très clairement et très distinctement sont toutes vraies, n'est assuré qu'à cause que Dieu est ou existe, et qu'il est

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un être parfait, et que tout ce qui est en nous vient de lui.' pp. 56-9. Amos Funkenstein says of this, 'Descartes's rational account of the formation of the world was an archetype of knowledge-through-construction.' *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the 17th century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 325.

9 Descartes, *Discourse*, ". . . droit chemin de la vertu . . .", p. 82-3.

10 See esp. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei,* Book XIII, xxiv.

11 'Original Unity of Man and Woman: Catechesis on the Book of Genesis' in *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston, MA: Pauline Books and Media, 1997), p. 51.

12 'Original Unity', p. 25.

13 'Original Unity', p. 87.

14 Rosemary Radford Ruether, 'Dualism and the Nature of Evil in Feminist Theology', *Studies in Christian Ethics*, 5:1, p. 39.

15 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human*, R. J. Hollingdale (tr.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 12. 'Erbfehler der Philosophen . . .Unwillkürlich schwebt ihnen "der Mensch" als eine aeterna veritas, als ein Gleichbleibendes in allem Strudel, als ein sichres Maß der Dinge vor.' *Menschliches allzu Menschliches* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1993), p. 16.

16 *Human All Too Human*, see pp. 14-22. 'Grundfragen der Metaphysik.—Wenn einmal die Entstehungsgeschichte des Denkens geschrieben its, so wird auch der folgende Satz eines ausgezeichneten Logikers von einem neuen Lichte erhellt dastehen: "Das ursprüngliche allgemeine Gesetz des erkennenden Subjekts besteht in der inneren Notwendigkeit, jeden Gegenstand an sich, in seinem eigenen Wesen also einen mit sich selbst identischen, also selbstexistierenden und im Grunde stets gleichbleibenden und unwandelbaren, kurz als eine Substanz zu erkennen." p. 31.

17 Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, Book XIV x, 'in illo memorabili beatitudinis loco, id est paradiso . . . in tantorum tanta afluentia bonorum ubi nec mors metuebatur nec ulla corporis mala valetudo, nec aberat quicquam quod bona voluntas adipisceretur nec inerat quod carnem animumve hominis feliciter viventis offenderet.' pp. 320-1.

18 Augustine here refers to Job 26^7.

19 *De Civitate Dei*, Book XIV xi, 'bene condita natura', p. 322-3.

20 '. . . de nihilo factam . . .', p. 326-7.

21 *De Civitate Dei,* Book XIV xiii, 'Nec sic defecit homo ut omnino nihil esset, sed ut inclinatus ad se ipsum minus esset quam erat cum ei qui summe est inhaerebat.' pp. 336-9.

22 '. . . nihilo propinquare.' pp. 338-9.

23 *De Civitate Dei*, Book XIX i, 'Finem boni ergo nunc dicimus, non quo consumatur ut non sit, sed quo perficiatur ut plenum sit. . .', pp. 96-9.

24 Book XIX iv, 'Quid illa virtus, quae prudentia dicitur, nonne tota vigilantia sua bona discernit a malis, ut in illis appetendis istisque vitandis nullas error obrepat, ac per hoc et ipsa nos in malis vel mala in

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nobis esse testatur?', pp. 128-9.

25 See the numerous uses of this phrase in Book XIX xiii, '. . . ordinata temperatura partium . . .', pp. 174-5; xiv, '. . . ordinata cognitionis actionisque consensio. . .', pp. 182-3; '. . . ordinata concordia. . .', pp. 184-5.

26 Book XIX xvii, 'Hanc pacem, dum peregrinatur in fide, habet atque ex hac fide iuste vivit, cum ad illam pacem adipiscendam refert quidquid bonarum actionum gerit erga Deum et proximum . . .', pp. 198-9.

27 Book XIX xxiii, pp. 228-9.

28 See e.g. Martin Heidegger, 'The Thing' in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Albert Hofstadter (ed./tr.), (New York: Harper & Row, 1971); first published as 'Das Ding' in *Vorträge und Aufsätze 1936-53* Teil II (Pfullingen: Neske Verlag, 1954).

29 The preoccupation with this double question, he understands to lie at the root of western thought, and is given the name 'onto-theology'. See Martin Heidegger, 'Kant's Thesis about Being', Ted E. Klein Jr. & Wm. E. Pohl (tr.), in *Pathmarks*, Wm. McNeill (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 340. First published as 'Kants These über das Sein', in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1967): 'Die Frage: "Was ist das Seiende?" fragt zugleich: Welches ist und wie ist das Seiende im Sinne des höchsten Seienden?', p. 277.

30 These comments come in his reflection on the significance for political economy of the myth of Robinson Crusoe. Jean Baudrillard, 'For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign', Chas. Levin (tr.), in *Selected Writings*, Mark Poster (ed.), (Oxford: Polity Press, 1988), p. 74–5.

31 In a speech in Leeds to the National Conference of Priests, 5 September 2001.

32 Luke 23^{43}.

33 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On The Genealogy of Morals*, Francis Golffing (tr.), (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1956); first published as *Zur Genealogie der Moral: Eine Streitschrift* in 1887. 'Wir sind uns unbekannt, wir Erkennenden, wir selbst uns selbst: das hat seinen guten Grund.' (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1988), p. 3.

34 St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Prima Pars, Q. 102, Article 1, 'Ad tertium dicendum quod locus ille seclusus est a nostra habitatione aliquibus impedimentis vel montium, vel marium, vel alicuius aestuosae regionis, quae pertransiri non potest.'

35 'Ad quartum dicendum quod lignum vitae est quaedam materialis arbor, sic dicta quia eius fructus habebat virtutem conservandi vitam . . . Similiter etiam lignum scientiae boni et mali materialis arbor fuit, sic nominata propter eventum futurum . . .'

36 *Summa Theologica*, Secunda Secundae, Q. 17, Article 8, 'Utrum caritas sit prior spe . . . Sed secundum ordinem perfectionis caritas naturaliter prior est. Et ideo, adveniente caritate, spes perfectior redditur . . .'

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